

VAN BUREN TO POLK

MANIFEST DESTINY

1837 to 1845



Election of 1840 Harrison v. Van Buren

- Whig slogan: “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too!”
- The “Log Cabin and Hard Cider” campaign.
 - No party platform issued - ran a “hurrah” campaign
- Van Buren branded as Aristocrat. Harrison as a man of the people.
- Clay and Webster want Harrison as “figurehead President.”



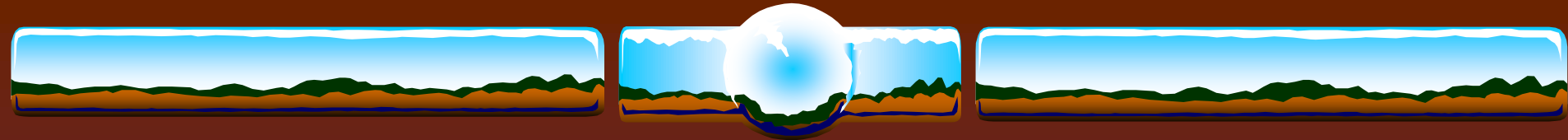
Harrison wins 234 to 60

- First President from the Whig Party
- Clay and Webster expected to run the administration.
 - Harrison makes Webster his Sec. of State and promises to defer to Congress.
- One month later - April 4 - Harrison dies of pneumonia.



John Tyler Becomes President.

- 1st President to take office by succession.
- Tyler is more Democrat than Whig
- A states' rights supporter, not a Whig nationalist.
- Vetoes Clay's Fiscal Bank Bill
- Vetoes Fiscal Corporation Bill
- Whigs call Tyler "His Accidency."



The Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842)

- Settled a border dispute between the U.S. and Great Britain.
- Established the border between Maine and New Brunswick, Canada.

Texas, Oregon, and California

Winning the West



“Manifest Destiny”

- ◆ “Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” Editor John Louis O’Sullivan (1845)
- ◆ More Americans crossing the barriers of the “Great American Desert” and the Rockies

Mexican Control of Southwest

- Spain controlled southwest of North America
- Struggled to hold onto it
 - British, Russians, French all posed a threat to California
 - Forts and missions set up along coast
- Mexican Independence in 1821
- Mexico now in control of SW but govt. far away.
 - American traders and settlers began moving into Mexican territories in ever-larger numbers

American Economic Influence

- Long before the U.S. conquered the Mexican territories of Texas, New Mexico and Californian militarily, it had conquered them economically
 - New Mexico a thriving hub of trade w/ U.S.
 - New England traders soon dominated California
 - Southerners spread the plantation economy into eastern Texas



Santa Fe

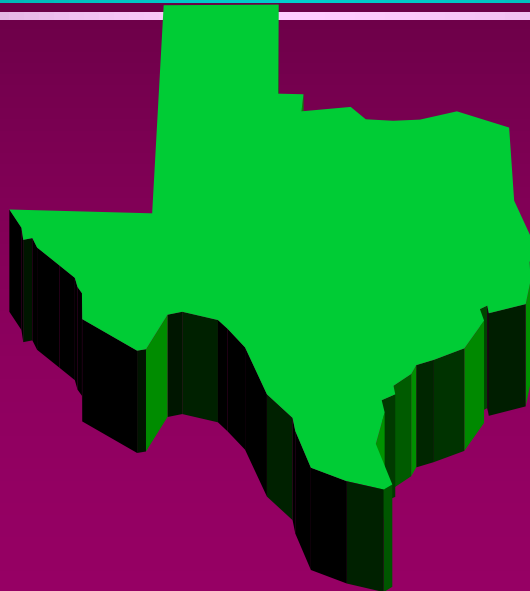
- ◆ Remote outpost of Spanish Empire founded in 17th century
- ◆ Capital & trading ctr. for 60K Mexicans & Indians in New Mexico
- ◆ 1821 - Mexico welcomed U.S. traders
- ◆ Santa Fe Trail formed by eastern merchants
- ◆ U.S. goods traded for Mexican gold, silver, furs
- ◆ Wagon trains for mutual protection



Texas

Independence 1836

Statehood 1845



American Settlement in Texas

- Stephen Austin founded a settlement in east TX
- Mexican govt. encourage Americans to settle there – would help Mex. economy
 - » By 1830 7,000 Americans in Texas
 - » Mexico worried it would lose TX to U.S.
- Mex. Govt. halted colonization in 1830
 - » Americans continued to come despite ban
- In 1832 Texans called for more political freedom from Mexico City

Texas Independence movement

- Austin initially advised loyalty to Mexico
 - » Changed mind when Santa Anna declared himself dictator
 - » Texans declared indep. & Santa Anna led troops to Texas to put down revolt
- Col. William Travis led 187 men against 4000 Mexicans at the Alamo
 - » Inflicted heavy casualties on Mexicans but all of the Texans were killed
 - » “Remember the Alamo!”

Sam Houston & Victory for Texas

- After slaughter of 371 Texans held as prisoners in Goliad, Texans were united in cause
- Texans declared independence 3/1836
- Sam Houston commanded TX troops
 - » Surrender is not an option after Goliad
- Victory at San Jacinto April 1836
 - » Houston caught Santa Anna's troops at siesta time!
- Santa Anna forced to sign treaty granting Texas independence
 - » Houston the President of Repub. Of Texas

The Lone Star Republic

1836 to 1844

- Jackson and Van Buren avoided political problems of annexation
- Mexico threatened war if Texas annexed
- The South demanded annexation in 1844. “Texas or Disunion!”
- The election of 1844: Polk (D) v. Clay (W).
 - » Polk an expansionist
 - » Slogan: “54,40 or Fight!” (Oregon)
 - » Polk wins 170 to 105
- Tyler wins annexation of TX before leaving office – becomes 28th state

More... on election of 1844

- But only a 1.5% margin in the popular vote
- The Liberty Party polled 60,000 votes.
- Tyler the “Lame Duck” claims a mandate to annex Texas.
- Calls for a “**Joint Resolution**” from Congress. Texas becomes 28th State.

“Young Hickory”'s goals as President:

- Resolve Oregon boundary
- Lower tariff rates.
 - » Walker Tariff 1846 slashes duties
- Restore the Independent Treasury (dropped in 1841 by Whigs)
- Acquisition of California.

Utah & the Mormons

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
 - » Founded by Joseph Smith in NY – 1830
 - » Harassed for beliefs
 - » continually moved west to find a homeland
 - » Smith murdered in Illinois – Brigham Young the new leader of the Mormons
- Brigham Young chose Great Salt Lake Basin
 - » Isolated from rest of America (at that time)
 - » Created successful settlements
 - » U.S. annexed Utah in 1848 – became 45th state in 1896

Risking it All

Moving West Along the
Oregon Trail





Oregon Fever

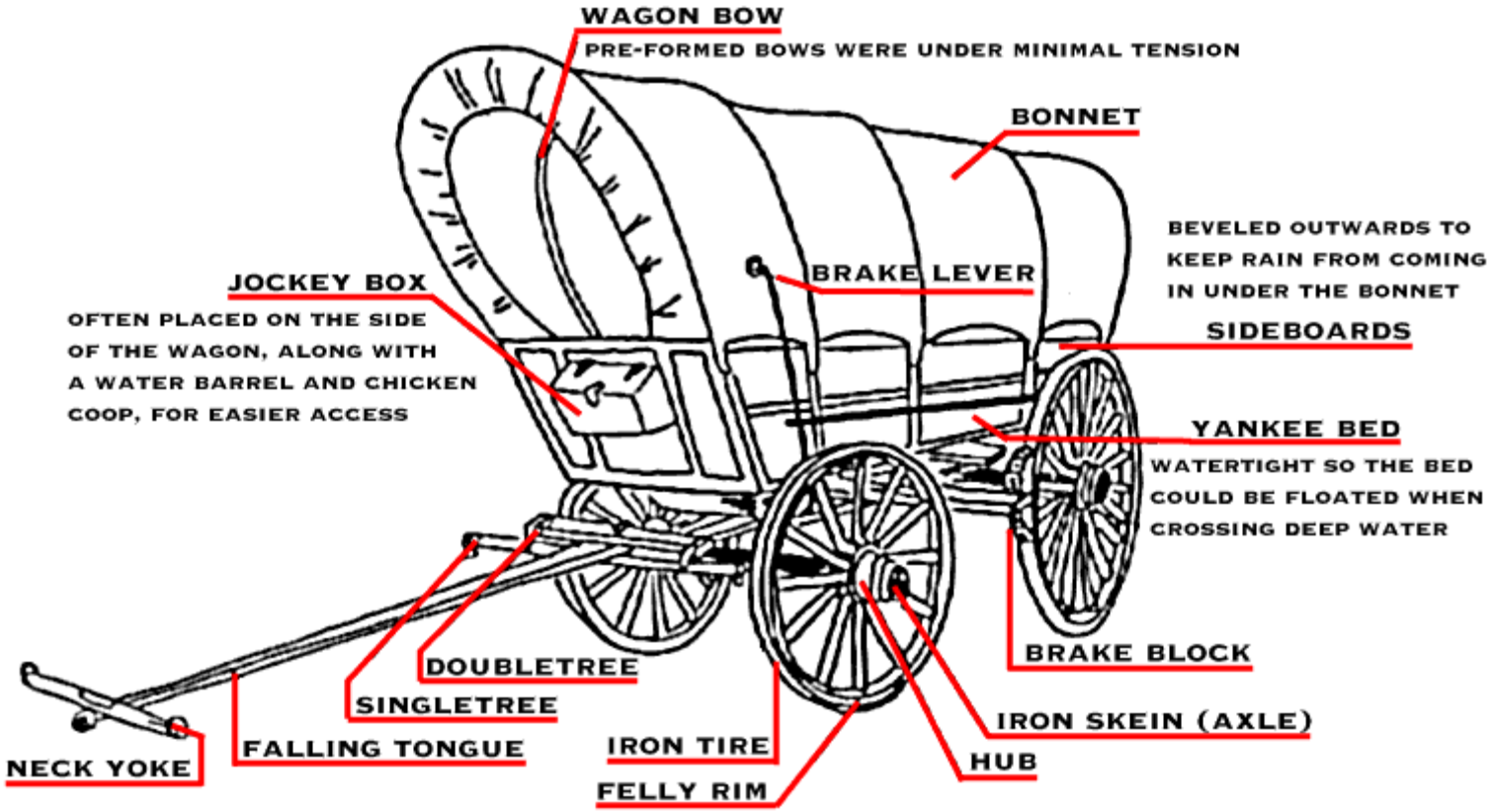
- ◆ 1841-42 - first sizable trains
- ◆ 1843 - start of a mass migration
 - nearly 1,000 overlanders followed trail west from MO
- ◆ By 1845 - nearly 5,000 settlers in the region
- ◆ At least 80,000 followed the trail west through the years - perhaps up to 200,000





The Trip

- ◆ Most traveled in family groups
- ◆ Usually left MO in late spring & covered the 2,000 mile trail in 6 months
- ◆ “Prairie Schooners” - ox-drawn covered wagons
- ◆ Bumpy, dusty, muddy - 15 miles per day
- ◆ Indian attacks & disease a constant threat
- ◆ Grinding physical labor took its toll
- ◆ Women also performed traditional duties



WAGON DESIGN COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON



California

- ◆ Part of Mexico - thinly populated by mission friars & rancheros
- ◆ By 1820s, American fur trappers began appearing
- ◆ U.S. ships came for cowhide (shoes) & beef tallow (candles) trade
- ◆ By mid-1830s - trade agents resided in region - purchased and stored goods until ships arrived
 - One famous agent - John Sutter
 - Established Sutter's Fort



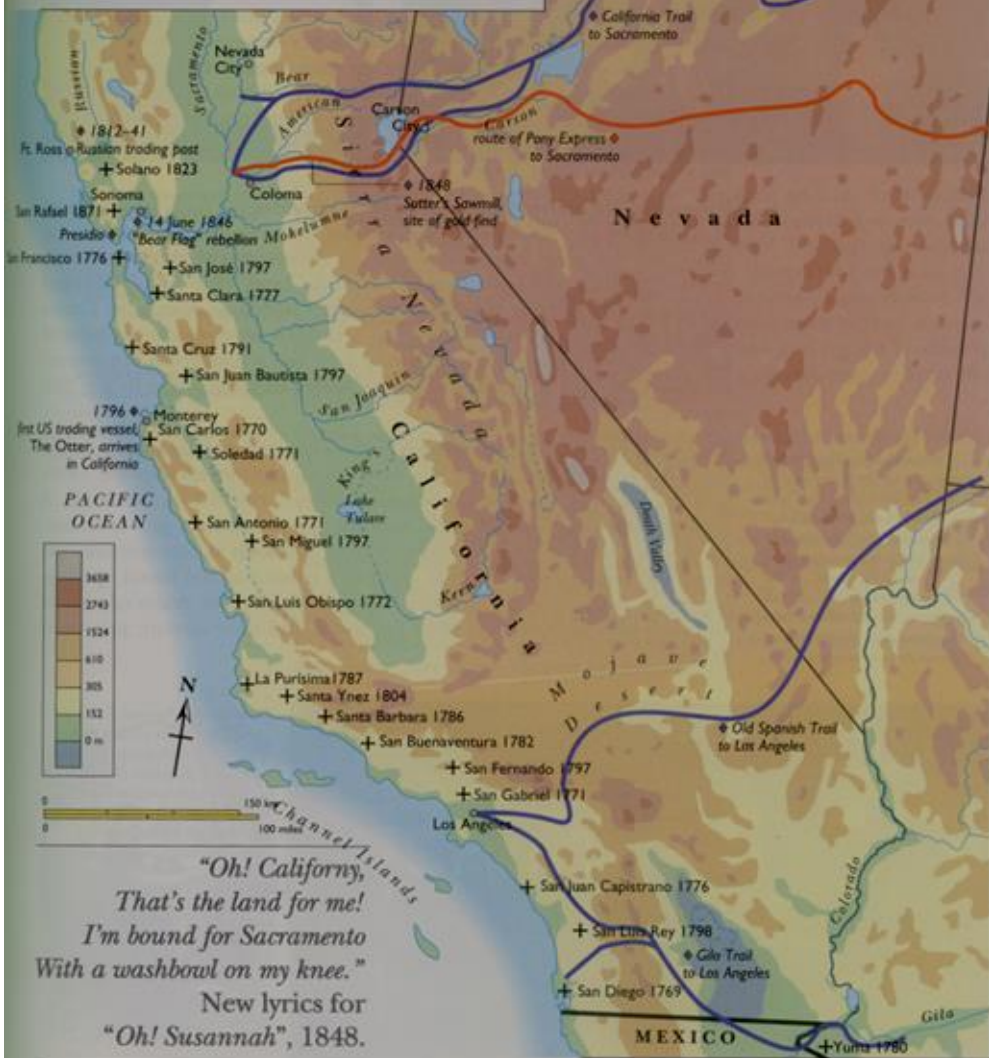
The California Trail

- ◆ Sutters Fort the site of present day Sacramento
- ◆ Completed 1843 - a mecca for westward travelers
- ◆ At the end of California Trail - most traveled route through Sierras
- ◆ Forked off Oregon Trail - passed near Lake Tahoe
- ◆ By 1846 - 800 Americans & 12,000 Californians



California 1770-1848

- state boundary
- established trail
- route of Pony Express
- + Mission established between 1769 and 1823



*"Oh! Califormy,
 That's the land for me!
 I'm bound for Sacramento
 With a washbowl on my knee."
 New lyrics for
 "Oh! Susannah", 1848.*



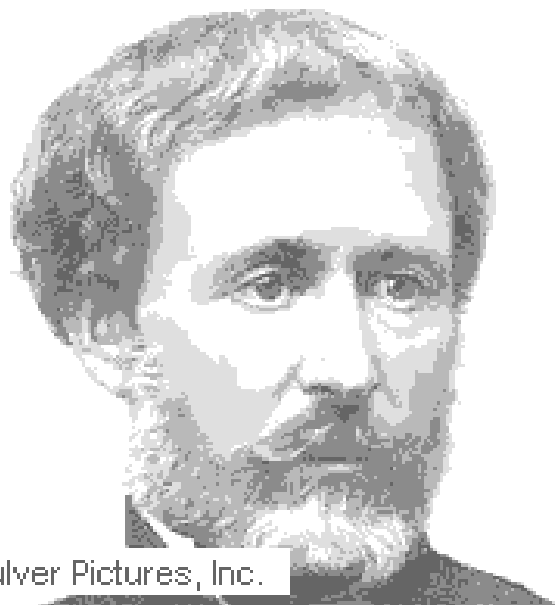
The Tragedy of the Donner Party

- ◆ 1846-47 - two families (Donners and Reeds) left Illinois led by George Donner
- ◆ Delayed in Utah - arrived late to Sierras
- ◆ Had followed the Hastings Cutoff - a misleading shortcut
- ◆ Snowbound in Sierras - 48 of 87 survive by cannibalism
- ◆ Survivors rescued & brought through “Donner Pass” to Sutter’s Fort



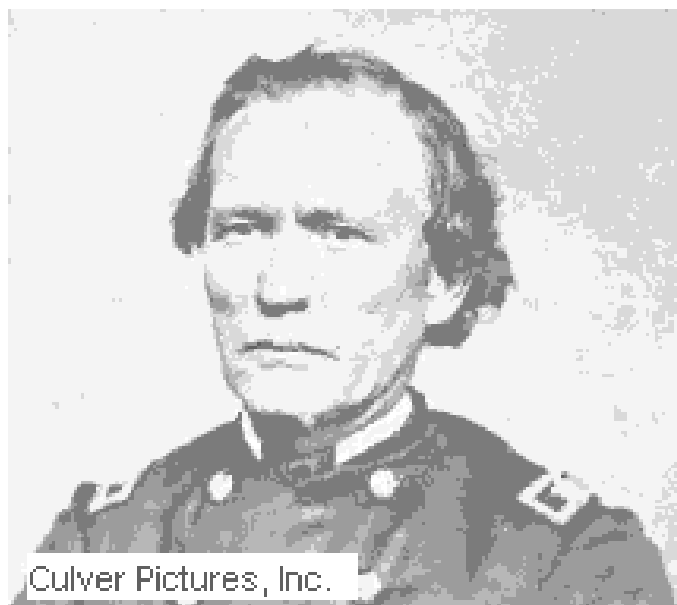
“The Pathfinder”

- ◆ John C. Fremont - explorer & adventurer
- ◆ Recklessly courageous - an outdoorsman
- ◆ Officer for U.S. Topographical Corps (1838)
- ◆ 1842 - mapped Oregon Trail beyond South Pass (Rocky Mountains)
- ◆ Kit Carson - mountain man/hunter who was a guide for Fremont
 - Legend of Kit Carson born out of dime novels



Culver Pictures, Inc.

John Charles Frémont



Culver Pictures, Inc.

Christopher "Kit" Carson



Frémont Blazes the Trails

- ◆ 1843-44 - completed survey of Oregon Trail to mouth of Columbia River on Pacific
- ◆ Next, led by Carson, Frémont made a heroic midwinter crossing of the Sierra Nevada into California
- ◆ Frémont's journals of his expeditions were published - led many to follow his trails



California

- ◆ Rumors of British or French plans to take California unfounded but widespread
- ◆ Mexican govt. too far away to effectively run it.
- ◆ Many Californians believed that they would be better off without Mexico
- ◆ Some favored independence, others annexation by the U.S.
- ◆ When war with Mexico erupted (1846), California was ready to break away

Mexican War 1846-1848

- Polk anxious to obtain California
- Provoked war w/ Mexico by sending troops into disputed border area of TX
 - » Mex claimed Nueces – US claimed Rio Grande as border of TX
 - » Mexico considered troops as invaders
- At same time, Fremont takes troops to CA
- Mexican attack on “US Soil” prompts Congress to declare war

Mexican War

- The war was short – a year and a half
- U.S. quickly took control of New Mexico and California
- Polk sent U.S. army all the way to Mex. City
 - » Captured it in Sept. 1847
- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) set Rio Grande as TX border + NM & CA for \$15 Million
 - » Gadsden Purchase (1853) added what is now southern AZ & NM

California Gold Rush - 1848

- Discovered at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento
- "Gold Fever" spread quickly
- California's population skyrocketed
 - » 14,000 in 1848
 - » 100,000 in 1849
- Forty-Niners = gold seekers who flocked to CA in that year
 - » 95% were men (from U.S. & abroad)
 - » San Francisco a major city overnight

California

- Hispanic and Native American population of CA overwhelmed by massive invasion of whites
- California gold country was a destination for people from around the world
 - » Came from Europe, Latin America, Asia
- Chinese quickly make their mark, despite rampant racism
- California's rapid growth led to quick statehood
 - » Basis for Compromise of 1850