

c. Analyze the impact of the Mexican War on growing sectionalism

Key Terms	Wilmot Proviso	Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo	Mexican War Mexican Cession
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why was sectionalism becoming more bitter in the US? 2. What was the main argument that caused the Mexican War? 3. How did Polk get Congress to declare war on Mexico? 4. What were the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo? 5. Why was the Wilmot-Proviso able to pass in the House but fail in the Senate? 			

The United States, under the leadership of President James K. Polk, took Texas into the Union in 1845. As a result, war broke out between the United States and Mexico over differing frontier claims in Texas. The war proved to be swift and decisive as Mexico lost not only their land claim in Texas, but also all of California and New Mexico to the United States. The victory in the Mexican War soon pitted the North and South against one another as the United States wrestled with the slavery issue in the newly acquired lands. Sectionalism became even more bitter and the United States was quickly headed down a path towards Civil War.

The **Mexican War** began after the United States annexed Texas and insisted that the new border with Mexico was the Rio Grande River. Mexico, however, insisted that the border was the Nueces River (150 miles north of the Rio Grande). In addition, Mexico believed that the United States had set its sights on the Mexican territories of New Mexico and California. The United States had twice attempted to purchase the territories from Mexico. When President Polk sent American soldiers under the command of General Zachary Taylor south of the Nueces River to the banks of the Rio Grande River, the Mexican Army attacked Taylor's cavalry patrols. The incident was portrayed differently in each country. The Mexican version emphasized Taylor as having invaded Mexican land south of the Nueces River. The American version emphasized Mexico's army as having invaded American land north of the Rio Grande River.

Polk used the incident to justify war in his message to Congress on May 11, 1846. The Declaration of War was overwhelmingly approved two days later. As the war developed, the United States attacked on two fronts. First, US forces occupied California. Second, a large American force invaded Mexico from Texas. Mexican forces were defeated and the United States occupied much of northern Mexico. As General Taylor's northern force advanced south, a second force landed at Vera Cruz led by General Winfield Scott. Scott's forces advanced overland from the coast, attacked, and ultimately captured Mexico City on August 7, 1846.

As the war was coming to a quick conclusion, Nicholas Trist was sent by President Polk to represent the United States in meetings with the Mexican government to end the war. Trist found the political situation in Mexico chaotic and worked out a peace treaty with members of the Mexican government other than the President Santa Anna. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was negotiated and signed in early 1848.

The provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo included:

1. The Rio Grande River would be the recognized border between the United States and Mexico.
2. Mexico ceded the territories of California and New Mexico (eventually becoming all or parts of seven states). The area became known as the Mexican Cession.
3. The United States paid \$15 million to the Mexican government and assumed the claims of American citizens against the Mexican government.

When the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was introduced in the United States for ratification, it was immediately caught up in the **sectional** tension between pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions. Pennsylvania Representative David Wilmot introduced legislation (Wilmot Proviso) in the House of Representatives that boldly declared "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist" in lands won in the Mexican War. Wilmot and other Northern representatives had grown tired of

President Polk and his allies' continual block of internal improvement bills in the House and were worried that the extension of slavery into California would harm free labor. The Wilmot Proviso passed through the House, where northern states held the majority. However, the Proviso failed in the Senate, where the division between free and slave states was equal. The issue of whether to allow or prohibit slavery in new states remained unresolved and sectionalism was growing more intense. The political differences between the northern and southern sections of the country over slavery in the territories were an introduction to the violent acts that would soon lead to full-scale war.