

Mexican War Perspective Summaries

Pro War:

- **President Polk** argued Mexico started the war by refusing to recognize Texas as an independent Republic that feely chose to associate itself with the United States. He claimed Mexico refused all diplomatic efforts to negotiate a fair purchase of the Texas land. He further argued Mexico started the war by attacking U.S. soldiers who were protecting settlers on U.S. soil.
- **Texas President Anson Jones** stepped down as the President of the republic of Texas once it is officially recognized as a state of the United States of America. He argued this was a peaceful transfer of power, unlike any other time in history. Democracy had prevailed and the will of the majority had been determined through representative government, rather than through conquest or bloodshed. He argued the Texas immigrants brought to Texas education, democratic government, an industrious work ethic, and labor saving tools that would increase the productivity of the land.
- **John O'Sullivan** wrote an editorial stating it was God's will that the United States spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean because it's citizens would bring education, democracy, technology, and Christianity to the western territories.

Anti-War:

- **Henry David Thoreau** believed that the government's war against Mexico was a greedy land grab and that it was not the will of the majority of Americans to fight this war. He felt that because the government had a standing army, it made it too easy for them to get us involved in a war before the people of the government had a chance to state their views. He felt if there was no standing army, and people had to volunteer for the war, it would not have been fought. He encourages people to protest the war by not paying their taxes and going to jail.
- **The Mexican Government** argued that Texas did not have the right to break away from their government's stronghold. The Mexican government gave that land to immigrants to settle in Mexico, now like spoiled children they want their independence. He refused to recognize the independence of Texas and therefore, the United States could make no legal claim to bring that area into statehood because the land belonged to Mexico. This is also why they refused to sell the land – they wanted to keep it. When the U.S. couldn't buy it, they decided to take it by faking a war. The Mexican government argues the U.S> troops were on Mexican soil, not U.S. soil, and were an invasion force that needed to be turned back.
- **Charles Sumner** was a member of the Free Soil political party which did not want to see slavery expand into the western territories. He argued against the war because he believed southerners wanted to expand their lands west in order to expand slavery and get more slave states to increase the votes in Congress.
- **Garrett Davis** was a member of the Whig political party and suspected President Polk of using the Mexican War as a way to increase the power of the Executive Branch over the Legislative Branch. He argued the U.S. army was antagonizing Mexico into a situation in which they would have to respond to protect their territory. He felt the President was acting against the Constitution which gave the power to declare war to the Congress, not the President and he feared the President's actions undermined one of the key principles of our democracy.