

Formal Outline



Levels 4-11

Introduction: James K. Polk's Administration

I. Financial Matters

A. Tariff Reduction

1. first tariff drafted by the executive branch
 - a. drafted by Robt. J. Walker, Sec'y of Treasury
 - b. received very little support from congress, but passed in 1846
2. Polk wanted foreign products to be able to compete with American ones.
3. Generally lowered rate
 - a. reduced import duties on coal and steel
 - b. tea and coffee were duty-free
4. Tariffs were based on the value of individual items, rather than # of items

B. Independent Treasury

1. Independent Treasury Act of 1846 formed basis of nation's fiscal system
 - a. held and disbursed federal funds
 - b. all debts to federal gov't had to be paid in gold, silver coin or federal treasury notes
 - c. Established basis for current banking system
 - d. subtreasuries were established in several major cities
2. Largely because of the unpopularity of the Mexican War, this idea received little support from Congress

II. Manifest Destiny

A. Oregon Territory

1. British claimed entire territory
2. Polk did not want to share management of Oregon Trail with Great Britain
 - a. Polk believed the Monroe Doctrine supported his view of obtaining the territory
 - b. He said territory was "clear and unquestionable"
 - c. Polk not substantially supported by Congress
3. Had fertile soil, tall pines, fish, game
4. Forts were built to protect travelling citizens
5. Compromise at 49th parallel

B. Mexican Territory: Texas became 28th State on December 29, 1845

C. Gold Rush: Polk set it off with glowing accounts of gold in CA

D. Polk Doctrine

1. Polk reaffirmed and extended the Monroe Doctrine
2. Also covered European interference in relation to American countries.

III. Mexican War

A. Border issue

1. Polk offered to buy CA from Mexico
2. Mexico did not agree to boundary for new state of Texas: we wanted Rio Grande and Mexico wanted Rio Nueces
 - a. Polk ordered American troops to occupy territory south of Nueces River
 - b. Mexico called it an "act of pure aggression"

B. War

1. May 13, 1846: America declared war on Mexico
2. Unsanitary camp conditions contributed to dysentery, yellow fever, malaria



C. Results

1. Texas became 28th state on December 29, 1845
 - a. Rio Grande became the permanent boundary
 - b. Mexicans living in the area were offered citizenship
 - c. Largest territorial gain since Louisiana Purchase (more than half a million square miles).
2. US paid \$15 million for new land
3. US paid off all claims against Mexico by US citizens

Conclusion