

CHAPTER
9

Summary

TELESCOPING THE TIMES *Expanding Markets and Moving West*

CHAPTER OVERVIEW *The economy of the United States grows, and so does the nation's territory, as settlers move west. Texas is annexed from Mexico, and vast lands in the west are obtained by war.*

1 The Market Revolution

MAIN IDEA *Technological changes created greater interaction and more economic diversity among the regions of the nation.*

The economy of the United States was changing. By 1850, rather than producing goods for themselves, more and more people were buying and selling goods. Fueling this change was capitalism, which gave private individuals and companies the right to own factories, machines, and land. Business owners invested their own money in the hopes of making a profit.

Farmers' lives changed, too. Growing urban populations needed more food to feed them. Farmers increasingly used machines to plant and harvest crops that they then sold. With their cash, they bought manufactured goods. As new technology lowered expenses, the prices of the goods dropped.

People bought many new conveniences, such as shoes and boots coated with rubber or the new sewing machine. The telegraph allowed instant communication. Steamboats made river travel quicker and cheaper. In areas that didn't have passable rivers, people dug canals, which cut shipping costs. Soon, though, railroads surpassed canals for shipping goods.

These new modes of transportation linked the nation's regions. While the Erie Canal linked East and West, steamboats on the Mississippi joined North and South. The Northeast became the nation's manufacturing center. The Midwest grew food. Farmers used a steel plow to break the soil and a new mechanical reaper to quickly harvest their grain. In the South, the plantation economy dominated. Southern landowners relied on slave labor to grow cotton, tobacco, and rice.

2 Manifest Destiny

MAIN IDEA *Americans moved west, energized by their belief in the rightful expansion of the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific.*

In the 1840s, many Americans came to believe that it was their right to expand the nation to the south and west. A writer gave voice to this view,

calling it the nation's "manifest destiny" to extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Many people began to pick up stakes and move west. Some were attracted by land in abundance. Business owners hoped to establish trade with Asian nations. Another factor was the financial chaos caused by the Panic of 1837, which convinced many people to try their luck out west.

White settlers confronted Native Americans living on the lands they desired. One such confrontation resulted in the Black Hawk War in the early 1830s. The Native Americans were forced to move west. In 1851, the government signed the Fort Laramie Treaty with many Native American groups. The Native Americans retained the right to live on and use the Great Plains. They agreed to let settlers cross their country and to allow the government to build forts and roads.

Settlers took many trails west. The Santa Fe Trail led from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Traders traveled to Santa Fe, where they sold cloth, guns, and knives and bought silver, gold, and furs. The Oregon Trail stretched from Independence to Portland, Oregon. By 1844, about 5,000 Americans had established farms in Oregon.

One group hoped to live apart from other settlers. Mormons were a religious group that had often been persecuted for their beliefs. Brigham Young, their leader, decided that the Mormons would be safest if they lived alone. In 1847, thousands of Mormons settled near Great Salt Lake. They shared water and timberland and built a thriving community around Salt Lake City.

The United States was not the only nation to claim ownership of Oregon—Britain did, too. The British were mainly interested in the area to provide beaver furs. When the demand for beaver declined, they yielded their claim in 1846.

3 Expansion in Texas

MAIN IDEA Mexico offered land grants to American settlers, but conflict developed over religion and other cultural differences, and the issue of slavery.

Texas, which was part of Mexico, had few settlers. Although the land was good for farming, people feared attacks by Native Americans. Hoping to improve its economy, Mexico loosened trade restrictions between its northernmost areas—present-day California, New Mexico, and Texas—and the United States. It also encouraged Americans to settle in Texas.

In the early 1820s, many Americans settled in Texas. Called *Anglos*, they soon outnumbered the *Tejanos*, or Mexican settlers. Stephen F. Austin was a leader of the Anglo community. As the number of Anglos grew and the community thrived, many in the United States considered making Texas part of their country.

Anglos had disagreements with the Mexican government. Mexico had banned slavery, but the Anglo settlers—many from the South—wanted to keep their slaves. In 1830, Mexico banned Anglo immigration to Texas. When Austin convinced Mexican leaders to drop the ban, large numbers of Americans again streamed in. While Austin tried to obtain greater self-government for Texas, the Mexican leader, Antonio López de Santa Anna, overthrew the Mexican constitution.

Austin returned to Texas and called for Texans to arm themselves. Santa Anna led an army north and defeated a small garrison of Texans at the Alamo. Meanwhile, Texans met and declared independence. After winning the Battle of San Jacinto, Texans forced Santa Anna to sign a treaty granting them independence.

Texans wanted to join the United States, but Northerners opposed the addition of another slave state to the Union. In 1845, Texas finally was annexed, or incorporated, into the United States. This infuriated the Mexican government.

4 The War with Mexico

MAIN IDEA Tensions over the U.S. annexation of Texas led to war with Mexico, resulting in huge territorial gains for the United States.

President James K. Polk was determined to end the Texas dispute and obtain even more land from Mexico. He offered to buy Texas, California,

and New Mexico, but Mexico did not accept. Polk decided to provoke a war. He ordered soldiers to march from Texas to block the Rio Grande—an area that Mexico claimed as its own.

The debate in Congress was fierce. Many Northerners disliked Polk's actions, seeing them as an excuse to extend slavery. Southerners who opposed obtaining more Mexican land became supporters of Polk once extending slavery became part of the debate. Meanwhile, the Mexicans attacked American soldiers in Texas. Polk asked Congress to declare war, which it did.

A United States force marched to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and seized the area without a shot. The troops then moved to California. American settlers there had already proclaimed their independence, declaring the Bear Flag Republic. When the U.S. troops and a naval force arrived, Mexican troops yielded.

The main fighting took place in Mexico. General Zachary Taylor captured Monterrey and won a victory against Santa Anna at Buena Vista. At the same time, General Winfield Scott captured the port of Veracruz and then took Mexico City, the capital.

Mexico lost almost four times as many soldiers as the United States. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war in 1848, also cost the country its northern provinces. By adding to Texas the territories of present-day California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming, and Texas, the United States grew by one-third.

The new territory quickly brought wealth to the United States. In January 1848, gold was discovered in California. Soon thousands of prospectors—called “forty-niners”—came to California in a great Gold Rush. San Francisco became a booming city, and the next year California applied for statehood as a state that banned slavery.

Review

1. How were the nation's regions linked in a market economy?
2. What factors contributed to the move west?
3. Why did the United States and Mexico come into conflict over Texas?
4. How did the United States manage to expand its territory across the continent?