Mexican American Heritage

Sample Instructional Material: Proclamation 2017

By Jaime Riddle and Valerie Angle
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Introduction

When Europeans first arrived in the Western hemisphere in 1492, it was a watershed moment for both them and the people they found. All of a sudden, two worlds collided. East met West, and two groups faced each other who had never known of the other’s existence before. The ideas, languages, and cultures of opposite hemispheres were forced to intermingle in what has been called the great “Columbian Exchange.” Neither side would be the same again.

The pre-Columbian world of North and South America has as rich a history as the premodern worlds of Europe and Asia, yet our knowledge about it remains limited. From excavation, fragments of oral history, and contact with indigenous tribes still in existence today, we know that Indian civilizations were growing alongside civilizations in Sumer, Egypt, and ancient Greece. While pharaohs were building the great pyramids in ancient Egypt, the first pyramids were being constructed in ancient Peru. While Homer was penning the legends of Achilles and Odysseus in ancient Greece, the Olmec Empire was establishing itself in the Valley of Mexico. While Roman Catholic popes were ascending to power in the Dark Ages, the Maya were rising to prominence in the Yucatan. For several thousand years, major Indian empires flourished in the region between Mexico and Peru, while nomadic tribes filled the expanse of the North and South American continents by hunting, gathering, mixing, and migrating.
What We Know and Don’t Know. The details of Indian history prior to Christopher Columbus are difficult to assemble because most of them were not written down. Nomadic Indian tribes did not have written languages and therefore relied on oral history. Only a few civilized tribes in Mexico and Peru wrote their history down on scrolls called codices, but not many of these scrolls remain. Some were burned by Spanish conquerors in the 1500s, and others were burned by the Aztecs. European monks and missionaries worked closely with Indian tribes to try and re-record some of their ancient history. While informative, this reconstruction cannot substitute for the primary sources that were lost, nor can it help us recover the past of the nomadic Indians, as their history has been largely lost to the jungles, prairies, mountains, and forests in which they lived. It is simply difficult to track the history of a migratory people over such vast expanses of time and space.

Due to incomplete data, one area where scholars disagree is the original population of Indians prior to Columbus’s arrival. Estimates have ranged from as low as 8 million to as high as 112 million. Another area of scholarly speculation

Nomadic
Moving from place to place frequently with no fixed or permanent home

civilized
A state of organized social interaction and behavior that is structured with rules or laws

codices
an ancient book containing written history, scriptures, or records
THE INDIGENOUS ERA

**TERMINOLOGY**: There is a great deal of conversation surrounding the appropriate terms to use when discussing Indian culture and history. While *los Indios* ("Indians") is commonly used in Latin America, including by Indians themselves, "Native Americans" has been the term of preference in North America for several decades. There have been alternate terms proposed over the years in various countries: "American Indians," "Amerindians," "First Nations," and "aboriginal" people. *Pueblos indígenas* ("indigenous peoples") is an umbrella term that many Latinos use today, and has been increasingly adopted in North America because it reflects the common usage of "the People" or "peoples" used by Indians themselves. It also can be used to include Hawaiian and Alaskan natives which were not commonly called "Indians" in the past. This book has adopted the most common terms of "Indian" and "indigenous people" to reflect Latin American usage, but as the history and culture of pre-Columbian people becomes better known and increasingly talked about in the 21st century, language and vocabulary will most likely continue to change. This is an important part of becoming a more multicultural society.

is the time and origin of the Indian population. In the twentieth century, it was commonly taught that Indians originated from ancient Mesopotamia and crossed the land bridge from Asia to Alaska several thousand years ago. Native Americans were seen as a relatively young population with a single Asiatic origin. Today, some theories are postulating an extremely old age for Native Americans and the possibility that societies were seeded independently of each other—parallel to ancient civilizations in Asia, not originating from them. As evidence, experts point to extremely old ruins found along the Peruvian coastline that date contemporaneously to the oldest civilizations in Europe and Asia. They also reference the extensive diversity found within the Indians’ size, language, and physical appearance.

![Peopling of America through Beringia](image)

*Peopling of America through Beringia*
Reconstructing Indian history is challenging but, as technology advances and the fields of archeology, anthropology, and humanitarian work expand, more evidence that resembles the life of indigenous America emerges. In Latin America, Indian culture is still alive and well. While only 1.7% of North Americans currently claim Indian ancestry, roughly 75% of Latin Americans claim this heritage. Almost half of Guatemalans and Peruvians identify as pure Indian today, and most other Latin American countries have a mestizo majority of mixed European-Indian ancestry. Some native villages remain completely undisturbed, while mestizo communities may practice traditional ways of living, speak their native languages, and honor indigenous religious festivals. There clearly remains a large amount of Indian history to collect. When we combine modern information with primary source accounts from explorers, conquerors, and missionaries who interacted with Indians in the past, we get an invaluable amount of information about what early America was like.

Nomadic Indian Diversity

Although contemporary racial categorizations encourage people to think of “Native Americans” as a single group, the wide variety of indigenous people in North and South America varies just as much as Europeans and Asians do. Among nomadic groups that did not settle in large urban areas, it is impossible to speak in absolutes about any particularly identifying characteristic. Natives differed in the way they dressed, hunted, traded, worshipped, and governed themselves. Some groups, like the Pueblo, lived in semi-permanent homes of adobe, while others, like the Plains Indians, lived in completely portable tipis. The Natchez of Mississippi and the Timucua in Florida had strong chiefdoms, while the Creeks and Cherokee moved as bands of decentralized villages. The Arawaks in the Caribbean islands were known to be friendly, while their neighbors, the Caribs, practiced cannibalism. The full spectrum of character and personality

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**mestizo**
A person of mixed ancestry.

**adobe**
A sun-dried brick made of earth and straw.

**tipis**
A home made of skins or cloth upon a frame of poles fixed in a cone shape.
traits were represented in tribes across the New World.

Just like Europeans or Asians, there were racial similarities between Indians, but there were also countless differences. Some Indians from tribes like the Waorani in Ecuador or the Yuki in California were typically very short, while the Arapaho and Iroquois Indians were known to be tall. The Inuit and Cheyenne had lighter skin, and many Amazon Indian-shad black skin. The Caddo pierced their noses, while the Tlingit inserted ear plugs that stretched their earlobes over time. Body markings were common across Indian society to mark coming of age, victory in battle, marital status, or social rank, but there was a wide range of expression through body painting, piercings, scars, and tattoos of various forms.

Because nomadic tribes ranged from the Arctic to the tip of South America, cultural diversity was often related to differences in climate and environment. As weather and topography changed dramatically from north to south, the best way to hunt and the best type of shelter also changed. The Inuit built igloos, hunted whales, and wore sealskin boots because they lived in the wilds of the Arctic. The Ona in Tierra del Fuego went almost naked and kept fires burning through the night because there was little light close the Antarctic Circle. Most North Americans today are familiar with the prairie-style living of the Lakota, or Sioux, who hunted buffalo across the plains. In contrast, the Yanomami of the Amazon blew poisonous darts to kill their prey, and still practice this method of hunting today. The wide variety of climate zones and ecological niches from north to south was responsible for much of the diversity among Indians throughout North and South America.

The Nomadic Lifestyle

Migration was a staple of nomadic tribal life. Sometimes a famine, flood, or other natural disaster would drive mass migration. Sometimes animal extinction or a population
increase would encourage a move. Nomadic tribes were competitive with one another partly because they were so dependent on the land. If something threatened their major food source, whether naturally or politically caused, they had to act quickly to avoid starvation.

Competition for limited resources meant that war was a normal aspect of nomadic Indian life, as evidenced by the high percentage of weapon artifacts found such as knives, bows, clubs, lances, and stone axes. Indians were loyal to their tribe. The Navajo, for example, had one word for themselves, *hak’ei*, or “family,” and one word for everyone else, *ana’i*, or “enemy.” It did not matter which tribe a foreigner was from, he or she was still considered an outsider. All throughout the indigenous age, Indian alliances formed, and battles took place as tribes spread out, seized better territory, were displaced, or sought revenge for past grievances. Some tribes were more warlike than others, but no tribe could afford to be victimized. Losing a war meant losing sustenance, facing enslavement, or death.

War could be fierce because oftentimes defeat meant complete

**SOURCES OF INDIAN HISTORY:** The modern age has greatly increased our knowledge of Indian history. At first, the world had to rely on diaries and journals published first-hand by explorers and settlers in order to understand the history. While they recorded a lot of useful data, these sources could be biased against the Indians they encountered. As interest in indigenous peoples increased, missionaries, anthropologists, and archaeologists went to study Indian cultures and civilizations from close proximity. For a long time, however, little recording technology was available, and even fewer tools existed to critically analyze data.

Today, technology has made it easy to analyze pottery and weapon fragments, soil and building materials, and human remains. Digital technology has also made it possible to record and share Indian testimonies, customs, and religious celebrations, with the world. Anyone can access videos that are uploaded to the Internet, history blogs written by Indians, and online genealogical records. Ancient codices and literature are also available online with extensive collections that the public can search. Travel and tourism has increased public awareness of Indian heritage, and more people are appreciating Indian art, history, and lifestyles. Exposure to Indian culture and history has helped our society to have respect for Indians, and has also encouraged more research, attention, and legislation which reflect this understanding.
TRIBAL LOCATIONS, ca. 1500: While we cannot retrace much of nomadic Indians’ migratory past, European explorers and settlers kept enough records to indicate where certain Indian tribes were located by the sixteenth century. These are some of the most prominent tribes that Spanish and Portuguese forces encountered. In the Caribbean: the Arawaks, Taïnos, and Caribs. In Mexico: Tarascans, Tlaxcalans, Tabascans, Aztecs, and Maya. In the California-Rio Grande area: the Apache, Navajo, Comanche, Kiowa, and Pueblos. In South America: the Inca, Guarani, and Araucanians, including the Mapuche.

Massacre, even of women and children. Massacre was an effective strategy because the victor gained complete possession of the vanquished tribe’s land. Sometimes there was ceremonial beheading, scalpning, or partial cannibalism. A common North American Indian practice was beating the dead, with the highest honor given to the warrior who struck the first blow. If massacre was not the objective, captives might be taken to be ransomed if the tribe had economic needs or taken as prisoners of war if the tribe was depopulated. It was common for wives to be kept as concubines and children to be kept as slaves and adoptees of the victorious tribe. Some tribes in the Pacific Northwest such as the Haida were even feared as habitual slave-raiders.

In almost all cases where a tribe was not completely destroyed, regular **tribute**, or taxes to the dominant tribe, was demanded to show subordination. Indians who moved into an area automatically knew who was in charge and what the social hierarchy was, based on the system of tribute set up. Property lines were always at stake when a people group was too far down the social ladder. Nomadic tribes did not have the kind of private property system that Europeans would bring, but every man in the tribe knew where their land began and another’s ended.

**Religion and Social Customs**

Nomadic Indians had a wide range of religious beliefs, but some generalizations can be made. Most Indians in North and South America were **pantheistic**, meaning they believed that plants, animals, and objects in nature have spirits that should be honored and sometimes feared. Colors and numbers

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**tribute**
Goods paid to a dominant tribe in order to show subordination

**pantheistic**
A belief that plants, animals, and objects in nature have spirits that should be honored and sometimes feared
have special meanings as well, such as the “red spirits”, whom the Cherokee believed lived in the east, and the “black spirits” who lived in the west. Most tribes had holy men, or **shamans**, who administered healing prayer, herbs, and other medicines. Dreams were generally respected as warnings from the gods. Inducing trances or dream-like states through intoxicating substances, participating in certain types of dances, or the sweat lodge, all facilitated a way to come into contact with the spiritual realm or correct one’s soul. Group dances, such as the Snake Dance practiced by the Hopi, were seen as ways to connect to the spirits of animals or ancestors, worship the gods, and influence the future.

Regarding death and the afterlife, one almost universal similarity among indigenous tribes was the avoidance of mentioning the name of the dead. Most tribes destroyed both the dead person’s body and their property so the spirit would not be in danger of coming back home. Burials and customs were different depending on the tribe, but most practiced **mourning**—a period of wailing, silence, and sometimes fasting—so that the deceased person’s spirit would know it was right to journey completely to the afterlife and stay there. A widow might even go further by lacerating her body, cutting her hair, or neglecting to take care of herself for a certain amount of time. It was common for Indians to provide food at the gravesite for the spirit’s journey. Sometimes they would leave shells, ornaments, or other desired currency that would aid the spirit’s travel. No one

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**The Hopi snake dance**

**shamans**
Holy men who administered healing prayer, herbs, and other medicine.

**mourning**
A period of wailing, silence, and sometimes fasting after the death of a loved one.
mentioned the name of the dead again, if possible, so as not to call
the spirit back to earth, which they thought would bring bad luck
to the tribe.

**Technological Limitations**

In recent years, historians such as Jared Diamond have emphasized
the disadvantage Indians had compared to the Europeans who con-
quered them, due to their lack of guns, steel, and immunity to dis-
ces like smallpox. Certainly these were setbacks. More than
wars with Europeans, Old World diseases decimated the Indian
population, up to 80–95% in some tribes. Guns gave European
conquerors an edge, as did tools and weapons made from iron and
steel, because Indians were limited to stone and wood.

Indians in North and South America also lacked the technological
advancements of the wheel and domesticated animals, which had
wide-ranging implications. In most areas, nomadic Indians had to
live on what they could hunt or gather instead of being able to herd,
ranch, or raise food sustainably on farms. In settled civilizations where Indians did
farm, agriculture was difficult without animals to pull loads or
provide manure for fertilizer. The lack of horses, oxen, and carts
meant that Indians could not carry heavy loads of goods or people.
This limited their ability to trade and migrate. Some Indians in
South America had llamas to help transport goods, but llamas could
only carry small loads, and slowly. In addition, without being able
to travel long distances by horse or wagon, communication was
limited to scouts or foot-runners. It was difficult to know what was
going on in distant locations.

Furthermore, since Indians had no exposure to common farm ani-
imals, they had no immunity to diseases carried by them. When Eu-
ropeans brought chickens and pigs to the New World, which carry
influenza and parasites, Indians were vulnerable because they had
never been around the animals to acquire any immunity to them. Oth-
er animals actually bestow immunity; for example, cows can provide
some natural immunity to smallpox. This meant that Indians, who
SMALLPOX: Old World diseases played a bigger part in destroying Indian dominance in the New World than European conquest. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, history records that smallpox swept through native communities after Indians had contact with Europeans. The disease may have weakened the Aztec and Inca empires enough in 1521 to permit Spanish conquest. The Aztecs and their neighbors suffered the first outbreak within two years of Hernán Cortés’ arrival in Tenochtitlán, and some say the Inca Emperor died of smallpox several years before Francisco Pizarro appeared in Peru.

Plagues, especially those from faraway lands, have often changed the course of history. The bubonic, or “black” plague, which killed a quarter of the population in Europe, originally came from Asia. Smallpox itself came from northeast Africa and was one of the most fatal diseases in Europe until Edward Jenner developed a vaccine for it in 1796. Syphilis was transported from indigenous America to Europe in 1499, causing an epidemic that killed one million people. Once the age of empires and slave-trading picked up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, diseases such as yellow fever, malaria, dengue fever, typhus, and cholera began to circulate the globe, ravaging entire civilizations. Had the course of events in regards to disease been different, the history of many people, including indigenous peoples, would have been very different as well.

had never been exposed to cows, had no resistance at all.

Lastly, Indians lacked a common language which limited cross-cultural communication with each other. The lack of communication combined with no formal education caused an information deficit in Indian society. Different people groups had no way to share or record knowledge with one another. Their societies came to be based on tradition rather than information. Their ability to join together was also limited, which would be disadvantageous during the colonial period.

Section Summary

We have little documented history of this time period, but artifacts and existing native communities today tell us a great deal about the rich Indian culture prior to European conquest in the 1500s. Contrary to popular belief, indigenous peoples varied greatly from region to region, largely because they adapted to differences in latitude and geography. Still, some important generalizations can be made about nomadic tribes’ lifestyles, religious worldviews, and lack of technology. In Latin America, where Indian heritage is still strong, much about indigenous peoples’ beliefs and lifestyles can still be observed and appreciated.
Early Latin American Civilizations

Introduction

While the majority of Indians throughout North and South America migrated continuously, some tribes chose to settle in Peru or an area in Mexico and Central America called Mesoamerica. These two regions were cradles of civilization for many early inhabitants who built cities, developed writing, traded with one another, and developed sophisticated art and agriculture. This led to a very different lifestyle than their nomadic counterparts. Great Indian empires rose and fell.

While the early Latin American civilizations differed from one another, they also had significant similarities. Each had urban cores with distinctive monuments and outlying farm areas. Pottery and religious objects, including burial and temple sites, were constructed in abundance. Early Latin American civilizations had kings with absolute power and connection to the gods, priestly religions with elaborate star-gazing and astrological interpretations, and polytheistic practices that honored many gods on earth in an effort to win their favor. It was common for early civilizations such as the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas to commit blood sacrifice, believing that blood would appease the gods and prevent disaster observed in the stars from coming to earth. Often, war went along with the sacrificial system, as human bodies were needed to make restitution in such a way that wouldn’t decrease the population of the empire.

Early Latin American civilizations shared commonalities
with their nomadic neighbors as well. Both nomadic and urbanized Indians built their societies based on an extended family or clan system, in which tribal loyalty was paramount. Chiefdoms arose in competition with one another, and systems of tribute were imposed where subjugated tribes paid taxes to ruling tribes in the form of goods, labor, or prisoners of war. More mingling of people and languages occurred in urbanized societies than in nomadic ones, but in both, borders were very important. Tribes always knew where their land ended as well as the desirable resources that were outside their own borders. Also, similar religious ideas predominated about sacred objects, the importance of shamans, and concern for the spirit in the afterlife. While Indians in Latin American civilizations built complex urban societies that defined their lives differently from their nomadic neighbors, there were still clear touchpoints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indian Empires’ Height of Influence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olmec 1500-400BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teotihuacan 100-650AD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maya 300-900AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toltecs 900-1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aztecs 1250-1521</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incas 1450-1532</td>
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**The Olmecs**

One of the earliest civilizations in what is now Mexico was comprised by the Olmecs, whose name meant “the rubber people.” The name came from the fact that Olmecs manufactured rubber from the sap of a tropical plant, and may have been the first to use rubber balls in the famous Mesoamerican ball-court game. In these games, heavy rubber balls were hit back and forth by two teams using only their hips. Games were played for sport, but also as part of human sacrifice ceremonies. More than 1,300 stone ball courts have been located throughout Mesoamerica.
There is still much to be discovered about Olmec society, but historians know that this civilization consisted of some of the earliest great stone workers. In 1938, a giant warrior stone head was unearthed in Tres Zapotes, Veracruz. Not long after this discovery, an excavation in La Venta, Mexico uncovered four more stone heads buried in the ground. Each stone head was over six feet tall, weighed ten tons, and was carved from a single block. These discoveries were likened to the Egyptian pyramids in craftsmanship, although their larger purpose is still unknown. The Olmecs are said to have inspired stone heads and warrior statues throughout Mesoamerica.

Historians also know that the Olmecs were a significant civilization between 2000 B.C.-400 B.C., and were neighbors to the Maya, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, and Toltecs. They were farmers, traders, and pyramid builders who specialized in the craft and trade of volcanic rock like obsidian and jade. They wore jade plugs in their nostrils, filed grooves into their teeth, and sometimes fashioned their newborns heads into a cone shape by fastening small pieces of wood around their skulls. Many Mesoamerican cultures considered these practices to be signs of beauty and wealth.

The Olmecs also practiced a temple religion that was very common throughout Mesoamerica, with priests, sacrifice, and jaguar and feathered serpent gods. They had a calendar, picture writing, and a counting system. No one knows exactly why the Olmec civilization died out, but because so much of their knowledge and skills are echoed in Mayan culture, many historians believe the Olmecs may have been a “mother” civilization to the Maya, who later rose to prominence.

Teotihuacan

Just west of the Olmecs, approximately 30 miles away from the capital of Mexico today, lies the valley of Teotihuacan, “the City of the Gods.” Although Mesoamerican legend
maintains that the Toltecs built the city, this has not yet been confirmed by archaeology. In fact, it is still a mystery who built Teotihuacan even though it has the longest history of excavation of any Mesoamerican civilization, starting in 1864. Historians have found offerings of shells, jade, and obsidian at temple sites, which are typical of many Mesoamerican burial grounds. They have also found human remains, some decapitated, which indicate Maya, Mixtecs, and Zapotecs all lived there. While exactly who built the city cannot be confirmed, evidence suggests that Mesoamericans of different origins lived in Teotihuacan, not just a single people group.

While excavation continues, historians know that Teotihuacan grew into an impressive city-state between 100 and 600 A.D. and influenced the art and urban layout of Mesoamerica in that time period. Teotihuacan started out as a loose confederation of peoples in the Valley of Mexico along the Gulf of Mexico’s coast but then grew into a large city of approximately 25,000 in the urban core and several thousand more in the outlying villages. It was a model city, planned according with astrological principles such as the Pyramid of the Sun, which was built in accordance to the sun’s path across the sky. The Avenue of the Dead was a 2.5-mile strip that connected all the temples in the urban complex together, including the Pyramid of the Moon with its Palace of the Jaguars, and the Temple of the Plumed Serpent. These monuments were known for their ornate and geometric style, as well as their size. They became known for the *talud-tablero*, which defined the external sides of many of their buildings and were replicated throughout Mesoamerica. The inhabitants of Teotihuacan were also able to accomplish a feat of modern engineering when they altered the path of the San Juan River to irrigate their city.

For unknown reasons, Teotihuacan was burned around 650 A.D. Some historians say it was pillaged by outside invaders, while others speculate that civil war destroyed the city.
It was subsequently abandoned, although many of its temple sites and excavation sites are open to the public today.

The Maya

Before recent excavations unearthed even older ruins in Mexico and Peru, the Maya were traditionally held to be the oldest Latin American civilization, dating back to at least 2000 B.C. They were also considered the most brilliant because they were the only ancient American civilization to have a fully developed system of writing, and they used it extensively. They also had the number zero, an extremely accurate calendar, advanced architecture, and an impressive trade network. The Maya were at their height of power between 300-900 A.D., and there are still several million people today who claim Mayan heritage. They are one of the most enduring cultures in Latin America.

Geography and Settlement. In the early days, the Maya settled in farming villages in the Yucatan peninsula, as well as Belize, Guatemala, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. There, they faced many challenges. The first was the salty groundwater of the marshlands they lived on. Salt water was not good for drinking or irrigating, so the Maya engineered reservoirs with limestone that would hold fresh water. They then harvested the salt for trade, which was very valuable.
Other Mayan villages were in the jungle where the land was difficult to manage. Jungles had poor soil and thick foliage that had to be cleared by hand with stone tools. This was not ideal, so the Maya developed a method of agriculture called slash-and-burn. They burned large areas of land to lie fallow, or unplanted, for several growing seasons, which allowed nutrients to return to the soil. Allowing acreage to lie fallow, however, increased the need for more slash-and-burn in order to have enough land to produce a good harvest every year. Especially as Maya populations grew, they found they had to clear a lot of jungle to support themselves.

One key to Mayan success was the domestication of maize and subsequent development of the milpa system. Originally, indigenous tribes had no wheat or grain crops. Maize grew wild and was not edible in its natural form. However, in a feat of complex bioengineering, Mesoamericans figured out how to cross-breed maize with a form of grass that produced domesticated corn. Corn could then be eaten as a vegetable, but, more importantly, it could be ground into flour. This produced the tortilla, the icon of Latin American food worldwide. On the tails of this came the discovery that a mixed garden, the milpa, of beans and corn would cause both plants to grow even better. The result was two hardy crops which sustained the Maya and their neighbors for centuries.
Rise to Power. Just like the Olmecs, the Maya were proficient stone workers. They constructed large pyramids and ziggurats as tombs and temples in their cities, often with elaborate stone-work and paintings on the sides. The great ruins at Mayapan, Tikal, and Palenque reflect the Mayan style which featured stone gargoyles of the feathered serpent god, long staircases leading to the sacrificial altar, and distinctively honey-comb shaped tops. The Temple of Kukulkan in Chichén Itzá was constructed so that twice a year, a snake pattern would zig zag down the stairs and reflect the sun. This was made to honor the feathered serpent god, Kukulkan, who was one of the most revered gods throughout Mesoamerica. Like other Indians, the Maya had to construct all of their buildings without the help of any iron tools, wheels, or load-bearing animals.

Between 300-900 A.D., the Maya flourished in the Yucatan and Central America. They traded obsidian and jade as well as manufactured stone items like tools, weapons, jewelry, and religious statues. They also traded salt, cacao, and jaguar pelts. Trade routes connected Mayan cities with each other as well as with outlying empires. This allowed them to grow wealthy and gain influence. The majority of the Maya population lived along a trade route, and new groups would come in and out to follow the flow of goods and supplies. Eventually, Maya settlements grew into large city-states, each with its own king and its own manufacturing and trade economy. A city-state could become
its own mini-empire if the king willed it, and some cities like Tikal grew very large, to include an estimated 500,000 people at its height.

Occasionally, kings of different city-states would rival each other for power or attempt to take over one another’s domain. Largely, however, the decentralized nature of Mayan settlements protected their civilization because if one city-state fell, there were others to move to. A city-state that was failing could choose to relocate somewhere else along the trade route. When the Spanish arrived in 1511, they found several abandoned Mayan cities in the Yucatan, each intact but overgrown by jungle, as if the settlers had just picked up and moved. The Spanish also discovered that it was difficult to fight such a decentralized people group. If they waged war on one city, the Maya as a whole were not conquered.

**Society and Religion.** Mayan culture radiated around large urban cores with outlying villagers who farmed, fished, and paid large portions of their produce as taxes. The lowest classes worked as slaves on nobles’ farms, and the military, who worked for the king of the city-state, was sent to keep order in the villages. The kings of city-states were also the high priests with a cast of priests underneath them. Large cities were built around a central pyramid where the national gods were worshipped, and local gods were worshipped in outlying temples in the villages.

One of the most important Mayan deities, whose worship was demanded by the king, was K’iche’, the maize god. At the temples, priests prayed to K’iche’ for a good harvest and offered sacrifices to prevent famine. They also recorded the stars’ movements from observatories to see if they could divine how the gods were faring, and therefore, how the year would go. The annual festival of the maize god included ceremonial corn-anointing by a shaman and is still practiced today in some Mexican and Guatemalan villages.
Rituals petitioned the gods for rain and a good harvest and included prayer, incense, and burnt offerings in sacred places along the countryside. Because maize was the symbol of life and rebirth, the Maya buried their dead with maize in their mouth.

More about Mayan religion is explained in the *Popol Vuh*, one of the most ancient Mayan pieces of literature. In it, there is a paradise and “a place of fright,” Xibalba, which was full of terrifying gods from which people could not escape. However, the spirits of one’s dead ancestors could intercede on the living’s behalf, so the Maya buried the deceased under their houses and marked the graves with shrines and offerings. It was believed that these spirits would continue to protect them if they paid homage regularly. If the family was experiencing trouble, a shaman could come and commune with the spirit of the ancestors to figure out what was needed to restore order.

**THE MAYAN CALENDAR:** One of the most famous legacies of the Maya is the Mayan calendar, one of the most advanced calendars of ancient times and still used today in traditional Mayan villages. The Mayan calendar was actually a system of calendars, which together controlled daily life. The Long Count calendar recorded the history of the Maya, tying all events back to a mythological creation date of 3114 B.C. The Short Count acknowledged a 260-day time period while the Calendar Round acknowledged the 365-day year and 52-year cycle, all of which had spiritual significance. The calendars were used together to divine the fate of the Maya, such as children’s destinies which were decided by the day they were born. The last five days of the year were said to be cursed by evil spirits which were let loose and caused misfortune. The Maya were supposed to offer many sacrifices at this time to prevent war, death, sickness, and accidents. The rest of the days on the calendar governed which religious festivals were performed when, and what lucky or unlucky things might occur. Holy men were responsible for reading calendars accurately, for observing the stars carefully, and for announcing which gods needed offerings. They then faithfully led the villagers in the appropriate rituals and festivals.
The Popol Vuh is the creation story of the Quiché Maya. This excerpt explains how the Plumed Serpent god, who had attempted to make humans out of various things, finally succeeds in making the “true humans” out of maize. It spotlights the Maya reliance upon maize and its importance in changing them from nomadic hunter-gatherers into a settled civilization.

And here now is the beginning of the creation of true humans, and of the search for the ingredients of the human body. The Bearer, Begetter, the Makers, Modelers named Sovereign Plumed Serpent:

“The dawn has approached, preparations have been made, and morning has come for the provider, nurturer, born in the light, begotten in the light. Morning has come for humankind, for the people of the face of the earth,” they said. It all came together as they went on thinking in the darkness, in the night, as they searched and sifted, they thought and they wondered.”

And here their thoughts came out in clear light. They sought and discovered what was needed for human flesh. It was only a short while before the sun, moon and stars were to appear above the Makers and Modelers. Broke Place, Bitter Water Place is the name: the yellow corn, white corn came from there.

And these are the names of the animals that brought food: fox, coyote, parrot, crow. There were four animals that brought the news of the ears of yellow corn, and white corn. They were coming from over there at Broken Place, they showed the way to the break. And this was when they found the staple foods.

And these were the ingredients for the flesh of the human work, the human design, and the water was for the blood. It became human blood, and corn was also by the Bearer, Begetter. And so they were happy over the provisions of the good mountain, filled with sweet things, thick with yellow corn, white corn, and thick with pataxte and cacao, countless zapotes up the citadel named broken Place, Bitter Water Place. All the edible fruits were there: small staples great staples, small plants great plants. The way was shown by the animals. And then the yellow corn and white corn were ground, and Xmucane did the grinding nine times. Corn was used, along with the water she rinsed her hands with for the creation of grease; it became human fat when it was worked by the Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent:

The making, the modeling of our first mother-father, with yellow corn, white corn alone for the flesh, food alone for the human legs and arms, for our first fathers, the four human works.

It was staples alone that made up their flesh. These are the names of the first people who were made and modeled: This is the first person, Jaguar Quitze, The Second, Jaguar Night, The third: Mahucutah, The Fourth: True Jaguar. And these are the names of our first mother-fathers. They were simply made and modeled, as we have said. They had no mother and no father. We have named the men by themselves. No woman gave birth to them, nor did the Builder, Sculptor, Bearer, and Begetter beget them. By sacrifice alone, by genius alone, they were made, they were modeled by the Maker, Modeler, Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent. And when they came to fruition, they were human…

And this is our root, who we are the Quiché people.

**THE INDIGENOUS ERA**

**CHICHÉN ITZÁ:** One of the most famous Mesoamerican cities available to tour today, Chichén Itzá, pulls together many facets of the Mayan religion. The Temple of the Bearded Man features a statue of a man with facial hair, which some historians say is Kukulkan or Quetzalcoatl, the messianic figure to come in Mesoamerican legends. The Great Ball Court has a mural that demonstrates how Mesoamerican ballgames, similar to Roman gladiator games, were a public spectacle meant to challenge a victim prior to sacrifice. The Skull Platform features human skulls put on display across a scaffolding of horizontal poles, while the Platform of Venus was dedicated to the astrological observation of Venus. The Platform of the Eagles and Jaguars show paintings of eagles and jaguars, symbolic of the gods, consuming human hearts. Many historians believe that Chichén Itzá, and therefore Mayan religion around 900 A.D., reflects Toltec and Aztec influences as well.

**Human Sacrifice.** The Popol Vuh also explains how many gods needed to be honored through ceremony and sacrifice. Warring city-states often provided prisoners for sacrifice in order to appease the gods and build the reputation of the victorious king. The highest honor in Mayan society was to capture enemy soldiers, particularly the highest in command, who would then be decapitated before the altar to mimic the decapitation of K’iche’ in Mayan mythology. While not as substantial as Aztec sacrifice would be, Mayan sacrifice was central to its societal functioning. Art, pottery, and writing depict victims in the throes of the worst kinds of torture which was seen as part of religious ceremony.

Sometimes, slaves or children were buried with Mayan leaders for help in the afterlife, similar to other ancient cultures around the world. Cannibalism was practiced at least occasionally. The Spanish recorded that in the year 1511, several survivors of a shipwreck were captured by Maya and sacrificed to eat at a public feast. Fortunately, two escaped and one of them, Friar Geronimo de Aguilar, lived as a Mayan slave until he encountered Hernán Cortés eight years later.

**The Toltecs**

Just west of the Maya, in the Valley of Mexico, were the Toltecs, the “mother” civilization of the Aztecs which rose to prominence around 900 A.D. but collapsed by 1200. The
Toltecs built their capital at Tula, which is famous for its 16-foot high stone warrior statues. One of the most important contributions from the Toltecs to the Mesoamerican world was the myth of Quetzalcoatl. According to Toltec legend, Quetzalcoatl was the semi-divine ruler who built the Toltec empire to its height and then, for unknown reasons, sailed away towards the East. Some accounts say that he was lighter-skinned, had a beard, and that he was exiled for trying to end the system of human sacrifice. The Toltecs and other Mesoamericans believed he would return at the end of one of the 52-year cycles on the Mayan calendar, sailing home to his people on the westward ocean. Believing this would mark the end of history, they looked forward to it with a mix of awe and dread.

The eschatological figure of Quetzalcoatl made his way through the cultures of Mexico, including the Olmecs, Maya, Aztecs, and others. He was often worshipped as the feathery serpent, and invoked by the image of a feathered dragon or serpent head which adorned temples and buildings in Mesoamerica. Mesoamerican rulers also invoked the authority of Quetzalcoatl by wearing beautiful feathers from the quetzal bird. These were considered as precious as jewels and could be traded as currency.

When the Spanish conquistadors arrived with their fancy clothing and lighter skin, sailing westward, it was debated whether or not they were messengers of Quetzalcoatl. They were alternatively feared and invited as harbingers of judgment. They were assumed divine, possibly immortal with their fearsome horses and armor. To the modern mind, this may sound far-fetched, but to the Mesoamericans whose religious worldview, like many ancients’, did not make vast distinctions between the natural and supernatural, it was considered very possible that the Spanish were divine figures who were going to bring apocalyptic blessing or curses on them. The prophecy of Quetzalcoatl as ancient and trusted legend was one important reason why the Spanish were
not immediately driven off by an Indian population that far outnumbered them.

**The Aztecs**

**Rise of the Aztecs.** The people commonly referred to as “Aztecs” were actually the Méxica, a tribe who migrated from northwestern to central Mexico, and their future allies. Around 1250 A.D., the Méxica settled in the Valley of Mexico as unwelcome vassals of the Tepanecs, the dominant tribe on the west side of Lake Texcoco. The Tepanec king made the Méxica pay tribute and gave them a dry, dusty area called Chapultepec, or “Grasshopper Hill,” to settle on. This area would not suffice, as the Méxica found it difficult to raise the proper crops in order to pay the tribute. Noticing that the Méxica were an aggressive and warlike people, the Tepanecs decided to use the Méxica’s aggression for their own purposes, to hire them to expand Tepanec domain. The working relationship ended, however, when the Méxica killed a neighboring tribe’s princess who had been given to them in an arranged marriage. They were expelled by force out of Tepanec territory.

According to Aztec legend, there was an ancient prophecy which told them they would become a great nation in the place where the eagle rested on a cactus. In 1325, as the Méxica were wandering in search of a homeland, they saw an eagle sitting on a prickly pear cactus in the middle of a swampy, uninhabited island in the middle of Lake Texcoco. Ignoring the scorn of their neighbors, they moved there and began to build causeways and raised floating gardens, called chinampas, across the water to connect to the island. It was there that they built their new capital, Tenochtitlán, so that it would be connected to the mainland but protected and easily defended from its vantage point on the water. The Aztec army simply had to guard the causeways if they were in danger, or they could send out soldiers on boats before an attack even occurred.
Over the next hundred years, the México grew stronger and involved themselves in the rivalries among their neighbors. In 1428, the México played an important role in a civil war among Tepanecs, and were finally rewarded with respect. A Triple Alliance between the city-states of Texcoco, Tlacopan, and Tenochtitlán became the governing force in the entire Mexican valley, and the Tepanec king lowered himself to be an equal among the other leaders, including the México king. The Aztec empire had begun.

**Aztec Supremacy.** In the beginning, the three city-states of Texcoco, Tlacopan, and Tenochtitlán were supposed to be equal, but the México soon usurped power and gave the Aztec empire its distinctive character. First, they burned the old history scrolls to write a new Aztec history with the
Méxica as the predestined leaders. Then they waged wars of conquest, quickly subjugating almost half of Mexico’s population, as well as parts of Central America. The new Méxica kings were strict, issuing decrees that gave the death penalty for adultery or for looking the emperor in the eye. When they conquered the Mixtecs, their neighbors, the Aztecs killed, enslaved, and publicly humiliated all of the rival leadership. Hostile subjects in their territory were executed, which kept the disgruntled in line. It was this kind of treatment that made many vassal tribes in the Aztec empire ally with Spanish forces when they arrived.

To build up the empire, the Aztecs installed a network of tax collectors and civil officials who kept order and collected tribute from conquered tribes. Tribute was paid in goods, labor, or sometimes through the selling of one’s children into slavery. In exchange for the incoming tribute, the Aztecs built up their civilization with great buildings, courts, a royal bureaucracy, and schools, which were mandatory in every village. The Az-

**AZTEC LEGACY IN MEXICO TODAY:**

Aztec legacy is memorialized today in many of Mexico’s national symbols. The name “Mexico” comes from the Méxica, the foundational Aztec tribe. The patron god of the Méxica was Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, the sun, and sacrifice. This particular god usually appeared symbolically as an eagle. The image of the eagle on the cactus—the prophecy of Huitzilopochtli—appears on the Mexican flag and currency. Mexico City, the capital, rests on the foundations of Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital. Also, the Archbishop of Mexico’s church, the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, sits upon the ruins of an Aztec temple. Since the days of the Méxica, Mexico has long been proud of its indigenous people and Aztec heritage.
tecs did not emphasize education in the modern sense, but paid for children to have appropriate military and religious training. There were even special private schools for nobles and artisans.

Aztec villagers may have lived simple lives, but the Aztec empire was the most advanced and powerful in the Western hemisphere. When the Spanish arrived in Tenochtitlán in 1519, the emperor Montezuma II had at least thirty vassal tribes serving him who were capable of producing over 100,000 warriors at his command. The Spanish soldiers were so impressed with the palaces, gardens, irrigation, and artwork of the capital city that one remarked, “We were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments they tell of in the legends…I stood looking at it [the royal garden] and thought that never in the world would there be discovered other lands such as these.”

Aztec Religion. The most striking feature of Aztec society was the elevation of human sacrifice to their central institution. Sacrifice was a feature of all Mesoamerican civilizations, but the Aztecs institutionalized it to an extent which far surpassed their neighbors. Borrowing cosmological concepts from the Mayan calendar and the Quetzalcoatl myth from the Toltecs, the Aztecs blended these into a theology which honored Quetzalcoatl as the supreme deity of many gods who had to be appeased through living human sacrifice. The Aztecs believed this would prevent the destruction of the world which was foretold by the Mayan calendar. By Montezuma II’s time, in the early 1500s, the Aztecs calculated that they were living in the last era of history—that the world had been destroyed four times already and would permanently end by the completion of the fifth cycle they were in. Quetzalcoatl would return, the sky would grow dark, the stars would fall, and evil spirits would consume the earth. The only thing that protected them, the Aztecs believed, was feeding the gods living spirits, beating in human hearts until the last moment of sacrifice.

This theology motivated the Aztecs to sacrifice more people than any other Indian civilization. In addition, the Aztecs believed that they were the “Children of the Sun,” the chosen people to save the
world from destruction. They were entitled to rule all of Mexico and subjugate whoever they could because they were the sons of Huitzilopochtli, the sun god, and the only ones strong enough to wage the kind of war and obtain the number of sacrifices the gods required. In other words, to the Aztecs, war was good, almost a religious duty because it prevented the destruction of the earth. Reflecting this logic, the Aztecs bathed and nurtured their slaves and prisoners of war, sometimes months before sacrifice. They believed it was an honor to be a sacrifice so that the world might live on, and that the bravest of warriors would go to a higher place in the afterlife.

Understandably, this religion struck fear into the hearts of all who were brought into the Aztec system. When the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlán was dedicated in 1487, tens of thousands of innocents were lined up for 3-4 miles, waiting to be sacrificed. It took four days to complete it. Such bloodlust required the Aztecs to wage what were called “Flower Wars” for more prisoners to sacrifice, and slave traders grew rich within the empire. Even worse was the public requirement to attend the mass sacrifices. It was punishable by death to decline the invitation or speak badly of the gods in any way. It was considered a great honor, on
"We [the Spanish] learnt a good deal about the great armies which were stationed in the conquered provinces, besides those on the boundaries themselves, and the provinces which bordered on them. He [Montezuma's messenger] spoke of the great and strong city of Mexico, how it lay in the midst of the waters, and that it was only by means of bridges and canoes that a person could go from one house to another: every house was provided with a balcony at the top, and was so completely isolated by means of moats, that they might separately be considered as so many castles, and, as such, capable of defense.

The town was approached by three roads, each of which was cut through in four or five several places, to admit the water; across these sections, wooden bridges were built: it was merely requisite to break down these bridges, and all access to Mexico was cut off. Lastly, the cacique [Indian chief] also mentioned the great quantity of silver and gold, the numerous precious stones and great riches of Motecusuma [Montezuma]; in fact, there was no end to the praises he bestowed upon his monarch.

Cortés and all of us were vastly astonished at everything the man related of Motecusuma's power and greatness. However, instead of being thereby disheartened, we only the more earnestly desired to try our fortune against the fortresses and bridges, for such is the very spirit of a Spanish soldier; while the impossibility of which Olinteclé [the messenger] spoke seemed to us a mere nothing. Mexico was, indeed, strongly fortified, and even moreso than mentioned by the cacique: a person ought to have seen it himself to form an idea of it—a description can convey none...
the other hand, for war heroes to get to participate in the sacrifices themselves. No other civilization created, single-handedly, such a reign of terror.

**Looking Ahead.** By the time the Spanish conquerors arrived in Mexico City in 1519, the city-states of the Aztec empire had been strong and flourishing for almost a century. Under Montezuma’s headship, they were an advanced civilization with a palatial court, a well-trained army, an impressive economy, and an efficient social structure, even though underneath loomed the dark institutions of slavery and sacrifice. Hernán Cortés and his men could not help being impressed by Montezuma himself even while they abhorred the Aztec religion. Interestingly, after the first wave of Spanish conquerors did everything they could to extinguish Aztec religion, the next wave of Spanish settlers took an active role in trying to memorialize the history and culture of what was one of the most influential civilizations in early America.

**The Incas**

Outside Mesoamerica, contemporary with the Aztecs, were the Incas. Though they arrived on the scene as late as 1470, they built a great colonial empire stemming from Peru with a glorious capital in Cuzco. Its wealth of gold and silver would court Francisco Pizarro and become the stronghold of the Spanish in South America.
Early Peruvians. Peru is the site of several of the oldest civilizations so far discovered in Latin America. Pyramids from the Norte Chico civilization on the coast have been found to be contemporary with ancient Egypt, dating to approximately 3000 B.C. A more rural society, the Kotosh, were fishing with cotton nets and floating gourds around that time period. Later, during the Dark Ages of Europe, the Nazca built city-states in southern river valleys, while the Moche built the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon in the north. The very first South American empires were built at Tiwanaku and Huari in the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands between 500-800 A.D. Prior to the Incas, starting around 900 A.D., a great empire at Chimú was built in the Moche valley region. This empire lasted over 500 years and had a capital city made of adobe with large plazas and trading centers. In 1470, just sixty years before the Spanish arrived in South America, the Inca conquered the Chimú and became the dominant empire in the region.

Geography. The Incas were one of the largest empires in the world, conquering Indian tribes all the way down the Pacific spine of South America, the Andes Mountains. At their height, the Incas ruled over 2,500 miles of this coastline stretching from Peru, through Ecuador, Bolivia, parts of Colombia and Venezuela, and down the coast of Chile. It was a long stretch of land with settlements in the high mountains, on the low western coast, and in the forested interior in the east. In various places,
the Andes peaks separate into two, exposing a narrow sequence of high plains called the **altiplano**, where many tribes farmed as well.

For the duration of its empire, the Incas had to become masters of farming and trading in this diverse landscape. Each region was its own micro-climate where certain products were harvested well. Fish came from the coast, and llamas were raised for wool and meat in the **altiplano**. In the highlands, tribes perfected a method of freeze-drying potatoes by letting them freeze solid on the ground and then mashing them with their feet. The result was called **chuño**, which
could be stored for at least a year, and is still a staple food in the Andes today.

Farmers and traders concocted an uphill-downhill trade network to obtain different foods and supplies, called the **vertical archipelago**. The climate in the empire differed so much from region to region that tribes were unable to produce all they needed in one location. They had to scatter their settlements and intermingle so that different tribes were represented in each ecological niche, and therefore had access to the products that came from that region. They could then gather and trade more efficiently amongst one another. From coastal elevations of zero meters to mountain peak settlements at 8,000 meters, a whole range of resources and occupations flourished in the Inca Empire from the hands of dozens of tribal ethnicities that specialized in certain products.

**The Inca Rise to Power.** The Incas arose in the farming highlands of Cuzco, Peru. In the 1200s, Manco Cápac was the first to take the title of “Inka” which means “lord” in the Quechua language. He rallied several of the Quechua-speaking peoples together to conquer the Cuzco valley. His son named the kingdom of Cuzco, Tahuantinsuyu, which meant “Land of the Four Quarters.” The empire spread out in four cardinal directions from this point, and several emperors later, the Inca tribe began to expand their domain down from Peru through the Andes towards Argentina.

Expansion soared under Pachacuti, the great Inca emperor, or Sapa Inca, from 1438–1471. Pachacuti sent scouts out to regions he found desirable, and the scouts would report back about the land and people they found. Pachacuti then employed a two-prong conquest policy. First he would try to coax tribes in peacefully with gifts and promises of prosperity. If the chief accepted the offering, the chief’s children were brought to the capital at Cuzco for instruction in Inca ways and the Quechua language. When finished, the child-
ren would then return to the land as the new governors on Pachacuti’s behalf and sometimes marry into the royal family to secure Inca lineage. If the original offering was not accepted, Pachacuti would invade by force. The kingdom of Chimor put up a great fight against Pachacuti’s son, Tupac Yupanqui, but lost control of Peru’s valuable coastline. The warlike Mapuche in Chile, however, halted the Incas in the south, as did the Shuar people in the western Amazon. For the most part, however, the expansion that was begun by Pachacuti and continued by his son and grandson were successful. Vast amounts of territory were added, and the city of Machu Picchu—one of the most visited tourist attractions in all of Latin America—was built.

**Inca Colonialism.** The Incas did not adopt a multicultural attitude toward the people they conquered as did most Mesoamericans. The *Sapa Inca* did not want his empire fractured by different tribal languages and customs, which were plentiful in his north-south expanse. The Incas created a highly centralized government involved in all major affairs of the people. The emperor himself trained colonial governors, imposed Quechua instruction upon the entire empire, and mandated worship of the most important Inca god, Inti, the god of the sun. He used his ruling elite of 40,000 nobles to keep order and set the tone for all his territories, and created a policy of *mitimaq*, which relocated favorables throughout the empire and dispersed insurrectionists who threatened it. Entire communities could be displaced if the emperor willed it.

The centralized state manifested in other ways. The government built more than 14,000 miles of road to connect the territories of their empire. They built rope suspension bridges, stairs, and supports to scale the high Andes slopes. They created a Pony Express-style runner system to speed messages from Cuzco to the far outlying territories. They even employed some groups of people into full-time state service. The army was supported by the government, as
O Creator, root of all,
Wiracocha, end of all,
Lord in shining garments
who infuses life
and sets all things in order,
saying,
“Let there be man!
Let there be woman!”
Molder, maker,
to all things you have given life:
watch over them,
keep them living prosperously,
fortunately,
in safety and peace.
Where are you?
Outside? Inside?
Above this world in the clouds?
Below this world in the shades?
Hear me! Answer me.
Take my words to your heart!
For ages without end
let me live,
grasp me in your arms,
hold me in your hands,
receive this offering
wherever you are, my Lord,
my Wiracocha.

Emperor Pachacuti: “Sacred Hymn #1,” ca. 1440.
Available in John Curl, Ancient American Poets.
(Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 2005).
was a large array of laborers who did things like tend the royal llama herds. So were the Virgins of the Sun, an upper-class caste of priestesses dispersed as maidservants throughout the empire. They led religious rituals, supported the economy of the empire by weaving textiles and brewing maize-based alcohol, and sometimes married nobles to cement political alliances. Everything important was controlled by the Inca state.

**Inca Religion.** The Incas were traditionally sun worshippers. Priests started the day in song at sunrise, and ended the day at sunset the same way. There were poetry readings, dances, and hymns. The Temple of the Sun in Cuzco was calibrated to determine the equinox correctly, and every day the priests of the sun took careful observations of the shadows’ falling to celebrate the sun god at noon. The *Inti Raymi* or Sun Feast, honoring the sun god, was nine days long and the greatest of the religious festivals until later years when the Situa festival, which occurred at the beginning of the rainy season, became more important. The Situa was a healing festival celebrated by a group of four hundred soldiers standing in a square, one hundred facing each of the four cardinal directions, and crying out against sickness, disaster, misfortune, and evil. Elaborate rituals, including praying to idols, fasting, and sacrifice, were a part of most Inca festivals.

As in all early American civilizations, government and religion were seen as two sides of the same coin. While the Inca showed some tolerance by allowing conquered people to keep their gods, an increasingly centralized government sought to standardize Incan worship as well. Pachacuti tried to bring all the Andean tribes together by promoting the worship of Wiracocha, the creator god, over all the other gods in the Inca pantheon. If tribes insisted on the virtues of their local gods, Pachacuti had their distinctive attributes assimilated into the image of Wiracocha, even giving him multiple adoptive names. For the most part, the Inca seemed
to tolerate this “melting pot” god without a problem.

**Mit’a.** Standardized religion and public policy characterized the height of the Inca Empire under Pachacuti, but the most distinctive element of their central government was the system of *mit’a*, which rulers used to subdue their people in lieu of the traditional system of paying tribute. In *mit’a*, there was no private economy, trade, or occupation to produce goods that could be paid as taxes. There was instead a centralized economy where Indians paid their taxes through labor, or working for the collective. It mirrored, most closely, European *socialism*. Instead of paying tribute with currency, harvest, or goods, natives rotated their wage-less labor in the army, mines, and publicly owned fields. Any textiles, utensils, roads, or buildings the empire needed, the *mit’a* laborers worked to produce. Crews would be dispatched away from home for months, and the state used their storehouses of products to feed, clothe, and house them. Only two months of the year did Inca men work their own crops or households. Indians therefore paid their taxes through mandatory service, and what they produced filled Inca warehouses which were then bequeathed back out by the state.

To enforce this system, the emperor divided each part of the empire into even units of taxpayers, and assigned an overseer to each one who would collect the goods. The overseer, backed by a local general, would use his authority from the central government to maintain order, and if an insurrection arose, the message runners would quickly run to the capital on the central roads, relay-style, and call for imperial troops. Messages could also be sent to the capital using a kind of knot-and-string system called the *quipu*. This system ensured accuracy and privacy, and did not require a written language, which the Incas did not have.

The result of this centralized system was the *Sapa Inca*’s tight control of his people even though they were hundreds

**mit’a**
An Incan system of working for the collective, which rulers used to subdue their people in lieu of the traditional system of paying tribute. In *mit’a*, there was no private economy, trade, or occupation to produce goods that could be paid as taxes. There was instead a centralized economy where Indians paid their taxes through labor. It mirrored, most closely, European socialism. Instead of paying tribute with currency, harvest, or goods, natives rotated their wage-less labor in the army, mines, and publicly owned fields. Any textiles, utensils, roads, or buildings the empire needed, the *mit’a* laborers worked to produce.

**socialism**
A way of organizing society based on collective ownership of production, emphasizing equality over achievement, and causing individuals to become dependent on the state for all things from food to health care; eliminates the individual’s opportunity to provide for oneself.

**quipu**
A type of Incan communication using knot-and-string to ensure accuracy and privacy.
or sometimes thousands of miles away. It also resulted in a strict social hierarchy of state-supported upper and lower classes that was not easily changeable. While the privileged enjoyed high court life under the emperor and perhaps the luxurious city of gold and silver in Cuzco, the bulk of indigenous people had to accept the jobs and terms they were given.

Chapter Conclusion

The North and South American continents have a long, rich history that goes back at least as far in time as ancient Egypt. Much of it, however, has been lost to time and circumstance. While some indigenous people settled into civilizations that are still visible today, the vast majority lived and went unnoticed for thousands of years. Nomadic Indian tribes hunted, migrated, and moved, leaving little to no trace and no written history to track them. The fragments of oral history that we do have, in addition to colonial data and observation of native communities enduring today, have helped to fill in some of the gaps. We know a lot about the diversity of Indian tribes—how they looked, ate, and conducted their communities. We know tribal societies differed from location to location. We also know that there were broad commonalities across tribal lines, such as a similar worldview about life, death, and religious reality. There were also things like the wheel, horses, hard metals, and cross-cultural information which those tribes lacked.
Standing out among the holes in our knowledge about early Americans are the Mesoamerican civilizations of the Olmecs, Teotihuacan, Toltecs, Maya, and Aztecs, as well as the great Andean empire, the Incas. These civilizations left behind buildings, artifacts, and some pictorial history that gives us at least a small window back in time to what they were doing and believing. The Maya, Aztecs, and Incas were contemporaneous with the first Spanish colonists, who wrote down what they saw starting in the early 1500s. From their records, we know that these three civilizations had large urban centers with powerful kings, astrologer-priests, and systems of tribute. Religion, the calendar, and human sacrifice were central to their societal functioning, especially for the Aztecs. Sophisticated farming and trading were essential for survival. While the Maya and Aztecs were somewhat flexible in how they incorporated foreigners into their empires, down in the Andes where the Incas endeavored to subdue a long vertical chain of people, conquering differences in culture and geography was especially challenging. They created a colonial system to homogenize diverse tribes as much as they could and to make sure all were provided for in a way dependent on their central authority. All three of these Indian empires would fight to maintain their civilizations when the Spanish arrived, but would end up facing permanent change.
Discussion Questions

1. Select two Indian tribes from the chapter to research. Organize your discoveries in a way that allows you to present the findings to a chosen audience for understanding of similarities and differences in appearance, heritage, habits, and traditions.

2. From the indigenous tribes identified in the chapter, choose a custom for which you can relate and describe the relationship between it and your own beliefs or traditions.

3. Assess the value and importance of the Maya and suggest your opinion for why the Mayan culture is still enduring today.

4. Refer to the Popol Vuh original source; create an artistic rendering representing the creation story. Using the written word or fine arts, share your representation with an audience.

5. Describe a technological discovery or application from this chapter and examine its impact on modern technology.

6. What would be the cultural impact from the possibility that indigenous peoples may have been parallel to other ancient civilizations versus being descendants of them?
Chapter 2 Spanish Colonialism
SECTION 1
2-1: Exploration and Conquest

SECTION 2
2-2: The Spanish Colonial System
Exploration and Conquest

How Exploration and Colonialism Began

The Middles Ages was a time of great change in Western Europe, and a time that paved the way for European expansion. The Catholic Church, which Western Europe was built on, conducted a series of crusades against the spread of Islam between 1096 and 1456. The effect of the Crusades was to inspire the rulers of Western Europe to continue expanding the Catholic domain, by force if necessary. Popes and kings, although competitive with each other, agreed that a large, powerful Catholic empire was ideal. They did not want Moors, Mongols, Turks, or any other group to reach and rule the rest of the world.

While stalling the advance of Islam, medieval Western Europe developed economic problems during the Crusades. After centuries of war, many nations like Spain were financially impoverished. Since privately wealthy people were rare in the Middle Ages, if the king and queen were suffering financial hardship, so was the entire country. The easiest way to become wealthy again was to discover precious materials like gold or silver, or to find resources in mass quantity to trade. By the late 1400s, the powers of Western Europe needed to acquire more wealth in order to maintain power.

Compounding the financial problem was Europe’s increasing demand for imports. The Crusades opened up a world of goods including silks, spices, ivory, perfume, and other luxury items from the East. These goods, however, were imported from Asia and Africa by Muslim traders, and...
every time Europeans paid for a shipload of them, they were financially supporting their own enemy. When the city of Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the most important port linking Western Europe with the East fell into Muslim hands. Western Europeans began to consider whether there was another way to get the products they wanted.

Spain Looks West. In 1492, Spain was emerging victoriously from its own domestic Catholic-Muslim conflict. The Moors, Arab invaders from North Africa, settled in the southern half of Spain during the eighth century. While they contributed much to Spain’s culture, including great art and architecture, the occupation had been a source of contention for Spain and Western Europe at large. With the Ottoman Turks encroaching on them from the East, and the Arabs occupying Spanish lands in the West, Western Europe had no desire to be sandwiched between the two and lose its own civilization. In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella succeeded in driving the Moors out of Spain, a victory which they called the Reconquista, or “re-conquest” of Spain.

This is the context in which young conquistadors like Hernán Cortés were trained in, right before they set sail

conquistadors
“Conquerors”; leaders in the Spanish conquest of America in the 16th century, such as Hernán Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado, Cristóbal de Olid, Francisco Pizarro, Diego de Almagro, Sebastián de Benalcázar, and Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada.
SPANISH COLONIALISM

for the New World. At the turn of the 16th century, Spanish and Catholic pride was high, and armies had been trained in the toughest methods to defeat the Arabs. The creed that these warriors lived by was, “live by the sword, or die by the sword,” and when the last of Spain was reclaimed from the Moors, the Spanish were optimistic that at last their Golden Age had arrived.

Christopher Columbus

Ferdinand and Isabella led the way. In 1492, after years of postponing the voyage of a young Italian sailor, Christoforo Colombo, the monarchs were finally ready to invest in his grand idea. Christopher Columbus had spent the previous decade alternatively going from Spain to Portugal, trying to convince one of these countries that his plan to reach the East by sailing west was feasible. King John of Portugal denied Columbus twice, believing that Columbus underestimated how far it was to the Spice Islands, and that his own sailors would reach the Indies sooner by sailing around Africa. Portuguese explorer Bartholomeu Dias had already reached the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, and another Portuguese captain, Pêro da Covilhã, was exploring a route to the East via Ethiopia. An overland route had been dismissed in the 1200s when Marco Polo’s wild adventures on the Silk Road made it seem too difficult
to repeat. But Marco Polo inspired many Spanish and Portuguese explorers in the fifteenth century, including Christopher Columbus.

Having a friendly but competitive relationship with Portugal, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain considered whether or not establishing a trade route west across the Atlantic was the way to limit Portugal’s influence in the East. They did not know that two entire continents stood in the midst of this path. Queen Isabella, a devoted Catholic, wanted Christianity to penetrate the islands of East Asia as quickly as possible, while King Ferdinand’s focus was to prevent Portugal from controlling trade in the Spice Islands. The two monarchs agreed, and Columbus received his ships.

**New World Discovered.** On August 3, 1492, Columbus set off from Palos, Spain with three ships known as the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. He landed on San Salvador on October 12, 1492, much to the relief of his crew, who had expected a much shorter voyage. Columbus then explored parts of Cuba and Hispaniola. Believing he was in the East Indies, Columbus called the natives he found “Indians.” These people were actually Taínos, part of the Arawak tribes in the Caribbean. Their chief, Guacanagari, got along well with Columbus and permitted him to establish La Navidad, the first settlement in the New World, on Haiti’s north shore. Unfortunately, while Columbus was in Spain to spread the news of the settlement and to recruit for a second trip, the Taínos massacred the men he left behind at La Navidad.

Columbus made three other voyages for Spain, successfully colonizing Hispaniola on his third voyage in 1498. On this voyage, he brought his brother Diego and Pedro de Las Casas, the father of future Indian activist Bartolomé de Las Casas, to begin missionary efforts. He continued to explore the Caribbean Sea, thinking that he was in Asia, and that Venezuela which he saw from afar was the Chinese mainland. Columbus made his last voyage in 1503, by which

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**Spice Islands**
Now called the Moluc’ca Islands, the islands in eastern Indonesia became a center for a spice monopoly

**San Salvador**
also known as Watling Island; the location of Christopher Columbus’ landing in the central Bahamas

**Hispaniola**
the second largest island in the Caribbean, now shared between the Dominican Republic and Haiti
time another explorer, Amerigo Vespucci, had put forth the hypothesis that the Caribbean islands were not Asia at all but really a *Mundus Novus*, a New World. Eventually, Europe would realize Vespucci was right and refer to the Caribbean Islands that Columbus found as the “West Indies.”

Columbus’ four voyages not only opened up extraordinary knowledge about the globe, but set the tone for how Spain would continue their exploration of the western hemisphere. After not finding anything valuable worth trading in the Caribbean Islands, the Spanish decided to continue colonization. They brought along more Spaniards who then started settlements and married into the native communities. They incentivized Spanish sailors into journeying west by sharing tales of golden cities and rewards of land and treasure. The West Indies became a great outlet for adventurers, but these men started to acquire a bad reputation for Spain as they were cruel to the natives. They dug up the land for gold and silver, chopped down forests for wood to ship, and extorted information about other sources of wealth from the Arawaks. This legacy has haunted the age of Spanish colonialism even up to the present day.
The people of this island and of all the other islands which I have found and of which I have information, all go naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them, although some of the women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant or with a net of cotton which they make for the purpose. They have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them. This is not because they are not well built and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvelously timorous. They have no other arms than spears made of canes, cut in seeding time, to the ends of which they fix a small sharpened stick...

It is true that, after they have been reassured and have lost this fear, they are so guileless and so generous with all that they possess, that no one would believe it who has not seen it. They refuse nothing that they possess, if it be asked of them; on the contrary, they invite any one to share it and display as much love as if they would give their hearts. They are content with whatever trifle of whatever kind that may be given to them, whether it be of value or valueless. I forbade that they should be given things so worthless as fragments of broken crockery, scraps of broken and lace tips, although when they were able to get them, they fancied that they possessed the best jewel in the world. So it was found for a thong a sail or received gold to the weight of two and a half castellanos, and others received much more for other things which worth less. As for new blancas, for them they would give everything which they had, although it might be two or three castellanos' weight of gold or an arroba or two of spun cotton. They took even the pieces of the broken hoops of the wine barrels and, like savages, gave what they had, so that it seemed to me to be wrong and I forbade it. I gave them a thousand handsome good things, which I had brought, in order that they might conceive affection for us and, more than that, might become Christians and be inclined to the love and service of Your Highnesses and of the whole Castilian nation, and strive to collect and give us of the things which they have in abundance and which are necessary to us.

They do not hold any creed nor are they idolaters; but they all believe that power and good are in the heavens and were very firmly convinced that I, with these ships and men, came from the heavens, and in this belief they everywhere received me after they had mastered their fear. This belief is not the result of ignorance, for they are, on the contrary, of a very acute intelligence and they are men who navigate all those seas, so that it is amazing how good an account they give of everything. It is because they have never seen people clothed or ships of such a kind.

Spanish and Portuguese Colonization

Inspired by Columbus’ discovery, many explorers rode on his coattails to Central and South America, in order to claim land for Spain or Portugal. In 1494, Pope Alexander VI drew a **Line of Demarcation**, which divided the globe in half to designate which territories the Spanish could colonize and which ones were for Portugal. The Portuguese had been set on establishing a trade route east, having reached “the true Indies” in 1499 under Vasco da Gama. In 1500, however, Portugal sent Pedro Cabral and Bartholomeu Dias west to explore the boundary the Pope had given them in the New World.

Cabral sailed to Brazil and claimed it for Portugal before heading back to Africa and India. Subsequently, Portugal sent more explorers down the South American coastline, first to Rio de Janeiro and the Atlantic waterways, and then inland through Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, and the outer territories of the Inca empire. Many natives were friendly to Portuguese explorers. One tribe gave the explorers a silver axe to give to their king. A regiment of Guaraní Indians permitted and accompanied Portuguese explorers on the *Peabiru*, an extensive Indian trail network. Ultimately, the Portuguese were satisfied with Brazil as their main prize in the New World which left the Spanish with legal rights to all of the rest of Central and South America.
The king of Spain promised both land and spoils to anyone who would expand the Spanish Empire. Ponce de León was one of the first to take advantage of this offer, having come to Hispaniola on Columbus’ second voyage. De León explored Puerto Rico and made himself governor there in 1508. He too acquired a poor reputation with the Taínos by forcing them to work farms and mines before he left to hunt for gold in Florida in 1513. According to popular legend, Ponce de León searched for a stream of immortality, a Fountain of Youth, which he never found. Several decades later, the Spanish used information gathered by Ponce de León to found St. Augustine, Florida, the first colonial settlement in the United States.

In 1511, the first group of Spaniards in Mexico was shipwrecked among the Maya in the Yucatan. Two years later, Vasco Nunez de Balboa sailed across the Gulf of Mexico to explore Panama. He found no gold but did find the Pacific Ocean, the vast connection to the East. Six years later, in 1519, Ferdinand Magellan sailed down the eastern coast of South America and across the entire Pacific Ocean, claiming the Philippines for Spain along the way. Magellan himself died before he made it home to Spain, but his crew became the first men to circumnavigate the entire globe. They had grown the Spanish Empire from one side of the Pacific to the other and had also shown that a western trade route from Spain to the Spice Islands was not going to be easy. In 1565, however, the Manilla Galleon trade route was established, which shipped Asian goods from the Philippines to Mexico. The Spanish benefited enormously from this trade route until 1815.

**Manilla Galleon**
Ocean passage route providing trade across the Pacific Ocean between Manila in the Philippines and Acapulco in New Spain (Mexico) from 1565 to 1815; porcelain, silk, ivory, spices, and other exotic goods from China were traded for New World silver.
Cortés, the Conquistador

Hernán Cortés was born in Spain where he grew up in the army and, at the age of 19, decided to seek his fortune in the West Indies. In 1504, he received a land grant from Christopher Columbus’ son, who was then governor of Hispaniola. Cortés lived there until 1511, at which time he joined a team to claim Cuba for Spain. While serving as mayor in Cuba, news came about a great civilization in the Yucatan peninsula, and Cortés was given permission by King Charles I to lead an expedition there. On February 10, 1519, Cortés left with 500 men, ten cannons, and sixteen horses. With that force, just south of the Yucatan, he encountered the most powerful empire in the Western hemisphere.

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE AND KING CHARLES I: The Holy Roman Empire emerged as a continuation of the culture of ancient Rome. Rome fell in 476 AD, but because it had been such a great civilization, it was adopted by German and Central European monarchs who wanted to see a new Catholic Rome fill the world. King Charles I of Spain became one of the most powerful figures in European history when he also became Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, ruling as “Charles V.” Having been crowned emperor by the Pope himself, King Charles believed he had the authority to conquer the world on the Pope’s behalf, and had kingdoms in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Austria, in addition to the Spanish empire. In Europe, he fought both Muslim and Protestant nations which rivaled the Catholic empire. Conquistadors like Cortés and Pizarro grew up with Charles V as their king, believing like the Roman Emperor Constantine had, that in the sign of the Cross, they would conquer. They carried the torch not just for Spain but for the legacy of a great fallen civilization that embodied strength and glory through force.
Making Allies. Cortés had no way of knowing exactly what he would face on Mesoamerican soil. He saw himself and his people as Crusaders who had been sent to subdue large amounts of territory for the Holy Roman Empire and convert as many indigenous people as possible to the Catholic religion. Cortés’ first encounter with natives was at Cozumel, Mexico where he accidentally ran into a Spanish friar from the boat that had shipwrecked in Mayan territory eight years earlier. This friar, Geronimo Aguilar, had been a Mayan slave for all that time and was able to translate Cortés’ message to the natives in Cozumel, winning converts among them. The natives took down the statues of their gods and asked Cortés to leave a Spanish priest with them. Cortés had his first allies.

Cortés then moved into more hostile territory where he battled Tabascan Indians for several days, despite being greatly outnumbered. The Spanish soldiers, because they included armored horsemen, had the advantage. Cortés repeated the same procedure he had at Cozumel, asking the Tabascans to worship the Christian God and ally with him as subjects of Spain. The Tabascans accepted this offer and sealed the alliance with their traditional peace offering. Not long after that, an Indian chief from Totonac territory came to Cortés and asked him to liberate them from Aztec rule. Having just lost twenty sons and daughters to sacrifice, they were willing to accept Cortés’ demands
that they convert to Catholicism and swear allegiance to Spain. After their dragon and serpent gods were crushed, their temple cleansed from sacrifice, the Virgin Mary installed, the priests washed and adorned in white robes, and a number of them baptized, the alliance was finally settled.

Lastly, Cortés formed allegiances among the Tlaxcala, who were his toughest challengers but would eventually prove to be his staunchest allies. The Tlaxcalans had been actively resisting Aztec takeover for more than a century. Believing at first that Cortés was allied with the Aztec king, Montezuma, the Tlaxcala attacked Cortés with a force of 90,000 native warriors. For four days, Cortés held them off and insisted he would help them obtain liberation from Aztec rule. Finally deciding to trust Cortés, the Tlaxcala chief called off the assault and rallied his troops to march with Cortés into the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán.

Meeting Montezuma

Before meeting Montezuma, Cortés created a base at a place he named Veracruz, or “True Cross.” It was here that the first messengers of Montezuma arrived, bringing Cortés gifts with the polite request that he leave Mexico. In response, Cortés told them to petition the emperor again and he handed them a helmet, which he asked to be filled with gold. Eight days later, when the messengers returned with the helmet full of gold dust, a disc of gold as big as a wagon wheel, and a second rejection from Montezuma, Cortés decided to go to Tenochtitlán with or without an invitation. Before heading into more dangerous territory, DOÑA MARINA: As Cortés continued south through Mexico towards Aztec territory, he encountered a young Indian woman who understood the Tabascan language Aguilar spoke. She told them she was an Aztec princess who had been sold into slavery when her family ran out of money. She was tall, beautiful, and intelligent, so the Spaniards adopted her as “Doña Marina” and baptized her. She became Cortés’ interpreter, advisor, and eventually his mistress, bearing him his first son. She would be loyal to the Spaniards and Cortés her whole life while working on behalf of the conquered natives for their protection and rights. On more than one occasion, her strategies and inside information saved the lives of the entire Spanish regiment. Along with finding Aguilar, Cortés and his men considered the gift of Doña Marina as a sign that God was with them.
Cortés turned to make sure that no one wanted to desert him. When no one stepped forward, he burned all the Spanish ships docked at Veracruz. It was the point of no return.

When the Spanish arrived in Tenochtitlán on November 8, 1519, they were astounded at what they saw. Not only was the capital glorious, but Montezuma proved to be a very well-educated Indian. He was intelligent, handsome, richly dressed, and politically astute. He was also very concerned about whether or not Cortés was indeed Quetzalcoatl, coming to end his reign. Montezuma gave the Spaniards the royal tour of his city with its zoos, aviaries, royal buildings, and an overflowing marketplace which the Spanish said surpassed the glory of Constantinople. Montezuma gave the Spanish a place of their own to lodge and worship, but was deeply concerned about the religious message they were preaching. Cortés kept saying that he was the subject of a great emperor in the East, who had sent him to visit these lands and save all the people by bringing them into his kingdom. This sounded enough like the fulfillment of the Quetzalcoatl prophecy that Montezuma didn’t want to be rash; however, Montezuma was confused about how Quetzalcoatl could be telling him that the Aztec worship and sacrifice was wrong.

When Cortés blasphemed inside an Aztec temple by calling the Aztec gods evil, it was one step too far for Montezuma. Cortés and his men began to feel Aztec hostility mounting against them. When they learned that the Aztecs had attacked their settlement at Veracruz, they knew they would be next. In a daring move, Cortés met up with Montezuma and took him hostage. Placing him under house arrest in the Spanish lodging, Montezuma became a mouthpiece for whatever the Spaniards wanted to say. The puppet government lasted for several months and Montezuma, accepting his captivity as an omen of the gods, faded into a shadow of his former self. The Aztec people knew what had happened, and explosive conditions were set.
First War with the Aztecs

War with the Aztecs ensued when, in the spring of 1520, Cortés was suddenly called away to Veracruz. While he was gone, one of his officers murdered several priests and nobles who were conducting a harvest festival, and the Aztecs prepared for war. The night after Cortés returned to Tenochtitlán, Aztec leaders burned holes in the causeways across Lake Texcoco, to trap the Spanish in the capital and sacrifice them.

Montezuma’s Death. At daylight, after praying for favor from the sun god, the Aztecs thronged the Spaniards, chasing them through the city. There were approximately 1,000 Aztecs to every Spanish warrior. At one point, Cortés’ soldiers were backed into the tower of the sun god close to the sacrificial altar when they set the statues on fire and rolled them down the stairs toward their pursuers. Cortés made it back to the Spanish lodge where he pleaded with Montezuma to call off the rebellion. Montezuma obliged and stepped out on a rooftop to give the message for the battle to cease. Immediately following his message, a flurry of stones and arrows were flung up at the roof, and Montezuma was struck in the head. He died one day later.

La Noche Triste. On June 30, 1520, the chaos in Tenochtitlán culminated with the Spanish trying to flee in the middle of the night. Underestimating the difficulty of navigating the water around Tenochtitlán, they built a portable bridge to escape over the gaps in the causeway. The bridge became trapped in the mud, and the Spanish had to trek through dark, flooded marshland while the Aztecs bombarded them with every step. The Spanish would not have made it through if the Tlaxcalans had not supplied them with thousands of troops. Despite escaping, the Spanish lost hundreds of men in addition to all of their horses, cannons, guns, and spoils from Montezuma’s palace. They called that night La Noche Triste, or “The Night of Sorrow.”

Defeat and Recovery. The remnant of Spaniards and Tlaxcala who escaped La Noche Triste headed back to Tlaxcala territory
only to be ambushed in a valley by more Aztec warriors with copper-tripped arrows and lances. They would not have escaped if not for the Aztec captain being killed in action, leaving the remaining warriors, who could not concoct a strategy to bring the Spaniards back to Tenochtitlán alive for sacrifice. Cortés spent an entire year recovering in Tlaxcala territory, building boats, and marshalling his forces for a second attack on Tenochtitlán, this time by water. Tens of thousands of Indians allied with him. Fresh supplies came in from Cuba so that Cortés could rebuild his arsenal of cavalry, foot soldiers, crossbows, and muskets. When the first smallpox epidemic broke out among his Indian allies, Cortés realized he had to move quickly.

**Battle of Tenochtitlán**

On May 22, 1521, Cortés marched towards Tenochtitlán with the plan to surround the city and cut off its food and water supply. His small warships surrounded Tenochtitlán from all sides while land forces surrounded the edge of Lake Texcoco and advanced down the causeways. The strategy worked. Overall, the Aztecs couldn’t withstand three months without access to food and water on the mainland. There were many battles, one in which Cortés himself was almost captured. The Aztecs even performed open-heart sacrifices right in front of Spanish soldiers in order to terrify them. But Cortés received continuous reinforcements from Indian tribes whom he had assisted in their own battles against the Aztecs. Before the end of the war, Cortés gave the Aztecs several chances to surrender. The new emperor wanted to accept the offer, but his priests, knowing what the Spanish wanted from them, refused. In the end, Cortés forced surrender by burning the city. On August 13, 1521, with Tenochtitlán going up in flames, the Aztec emperor rode out to Cortés in a royal canoe and surrendered.

**Cortés Inherits the Empire**

Now Cortés had an empire to manage. He took charge of cleaning up Tenochtitlán which had been devastated by months of famine, war, plague, and fire. The city had to be evacuated and cleaned
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of all the dead and wounded. Cortés brought the remaining Aztecs back under his command to build a new capital, Mexico City, atop the old one. The system was reassembled without Aztec religion or sacrifice. In 1524, Cortés invited the Twelve Apostles of Mexico, a group of Franciscan friars, to come evangelize the Aztecs. This was an especially challenging task, but it made for a more stable Spanish colony. Some friars, like Father Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, baptized thousands of Indians and became advocates for them in Mexico City.

Mexico, or “New Spain” as it was called, was governed by Cortés, but not for long. King Charles sent other co-governors to keep tabs on him, and as a result, political rivalries began. In 1524, Cortés conducted a disappointing campaign to Honduras to subdue Maya territory there, but when he returned to Mexico City, he found himself on trial. In 1528, Cortés went to Spain to plead his case before the king, but returned to Mexico without his governorship. Highly decorated but dismissed as a threat to Spanish authority, Cortés retired to the sea. He then discovered Baja California and tried to establish the first Spanish mission there. In the same year, 1535, governorship of New Spain transitioned to Antonio de Mendoza, who established cities, introduced European products, and developed Mexico’s first industries. Spain’s presence and authority in its first large colony had been established.

Pizarro Conquers the Inca Empire

Francisco Pizarro copied some of Cortés’ methods in conquering the great South American empire, the Incas. Pizarro had grown up a poor swineherd in Spain. Like Cortés, he was looking for adventure and ran away on a ship that was bound for the West Indies. There, he met Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and went with him on his journey to the Pacific Ocean in 1513. On that voyage, Pizarro heard about El Dorado, a land to the south that was rich with gold and silver. He
settled in Panama, serving as mayor for several years, but returned to exploring in 1524 to try to find the fabled city of treasure.

Pizarro had trouble sailing down the western coast of South America. On his third expedition in 1528, he finally got far enough to see Indians along the coastline. They were wearing gold ornaments. He landed, marched inland, and immediately ran into thousands of Inca warriors. A fight ensued but the Incas were frightened by the Spanish guns and armored horsemen. It appeared to the Incas, as it first had to the Aztecs, that the Spanish conquistadors were some form of otherworldly beings with divine horse-gods.

Soon Pizarro returned to Spain to request more supplies and troops. The king answered affirmatively, adding that Pizarro could be the governor of any land he conquered and could keep half of any gold he found. Pizarro then returned to Peru, waited a year until he had built up a base, and in 1532 took 168 men to march on Cuzco, the Inca capital.

Confrontation. Pizarro met Atahualpa, the great-grandson of Pachacuti, at Cajamarca, far away from the capital at Cuzco. Atahualpa brought 6,000 soldiers with him, as well as gifts of gold, silver, and jewels to placate the Spaniards. Perhaps intending to keep the peace, Atahualpa welcomed Pizarro’s men and gave them a settlement of their own in the city. Not long after, however, a Spanish priest tried to evangelize the emperor into Catholicism and subservience to King Charles, as Cortés’ men had done. Atahualpa tossed the priest’s book aside saying, “I will be no man’s tributary.” The Spanish interpreted this as an attack signal and fired, seizing Atahualpa on his royal mat as his attendants fled from the guns and smoke.

Pizarro took Atahualpa prisoner, just as Cortés had taken Montezuma, and held him in the temple of Cajamarca. Atahualpa bargained for his life, offering Pizarro gold, silver, jewels—anything he wanted. For months, Pizarro let the desperate king continue to fill the temple with wagonloads of treasure. Believing he would escape once enough ransom was paid, Atahualpa sent word to
Cuzco that he was coming soon. In the end, Pizarro refused to let Atahualpa return, even when the emperor promised to be his subject. Pizarro brought him to trial and had him executed on July 26, 1533. The conquistadors then marched to Cuzco, took control of Peru, and began the long quest to conquer Inca territory down the Andes Mountains. This took approximately forty years.

El Dorado? Of all the Spanish conquistadors who went to the New World searching for El Dorado, the City of Gold, Francisco Pizarro was the man who came closest to it. Cuzco really did hold a treasure chest that was the envy of the world. Pizarro had his men melt down enormous amounts of gold and silver into bars to ship back to Spain. By the time the Spanish completed Inca conquest, Peru was one of the main sources of Spanish wealth with its seemingly inexhaustible supply of silver. This influx of raw wealth fueled Spanish colonialism for the next 250 years, as well as Spain’s belief that the source of its economic growth lay in the Americas.
Further Spanish Exploration

After Cortés and Pizarro conquered the Aztecs and Incas, Spain was motivated to keep exploring and colonizing. Their most central opposition was gone, and they had made alliances with important tribes in the area. It is not clear whether or not the natives in the lands that Spain claimed comprehended the larger context of the Spanish conquistadors. Especially as the Spanish went into future United States territory, the Indian tribes they met routinely treated the explorers as insignificant, ruffian invaders—not as the tribe that would one day dominate them all.

Ponce de León was the first European to penetrate North American territory when he went to Florida in 1513. In 1527, Panfilo de Narvaez, the co-conqueror of Cuba and rival of Cortés, led an expedition to Florida with permission to settle and rule any lands he subdued. Tragedy struck, however, while returning to Cuba, and 82 of his 86 men were killed by Texas Indians after being shipwrecked on Galveston Island. Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca was one of the four survivors, and he published the journal of his eight-year journey through the southwestern United States back to Mexico City. That same year, 1535, Cortés discovered Santa Cruz Bay in Baja California. In 1542, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo explored the upper coast of California, and an explorer after him, Sebastian Vizcaino, named San Diego, Monterey, and other Californian cities on the coast.

de Vaca’s route
More Spanish explorers came to North American territory in search of their fortunes. In 1540, Cabeza de Vaca’s memoirs inspired then-Mexican governor Francisco de Coronado to search for the **Seven Cities of Cibola**, hoping to find a new Cuzco. He wandered through Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado River territory, making it as far as Kansas. On the way, he quarreled with various Indian tribes including the Zuni, Hopi, and Apache. In 1541, Hernando de Soto, who had been with Pizarro in Peru, trekked from Florida through the Mississippi Valley while also hoping to find a new empire of riches. Routed by Indians in Alabama, only a remnant survived and pressed on, making it as far as Texas before they realized they were not going to find any El Dorado. In 1598, Juan de Oñate established peaceful relations with the Pueblo Indians and successfully colonized the Santa Fe area, incorporating that area into Spanish Mexico.

Explorations occurred elsewhere as veteran explorers branched out. In South America in 1542, an explorer who had been with Pizarro, Francisco de Orellana, accidentally became the first European to navigate the entire Amazon River. Also at that time, Cabeza de Vaca explored the Rio de la Plata region and established himself as governor in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Incidentally, Cabeza de Vaca outlawed Indian slavery there out of debt to the Indians who were kind to him during his eight-year wandering in the wilderness.

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**Seven Cities of Cibola**

A mythical land said to hold seven cities of gold in the Sonora Desert.
At sunset the Indians, thinking we had not left, came to bring us food, but when they saw us in such a different attire from before and so strange looking, they were so frightened as to turn back. I went to call them, and in great fear they came. I then gave them to understand by signs how we had lost a barge and three of our men had been drowned, while before them lay two of our men dead, with the others about to go the same way. Upon seeing the disaster we had suffered, our misery and distress, the Indians sat down with us and all began to weep out of compassion for our misfortune, and for more than half an hour they wept so loud and so sincerely that it could be heard far away...

When the lament was over, I spoke to the Christians and asked them if they would like me to beg the Indians to take us to their homes. Some of the men who had been to New Spain answered that it would be unwise, as, once at their abode, they might sacrifice us to their idols. Still, seeing there was no remedy and that in any other way death was surer and nearer, I did not mind what they said, but begged the Indians to take us to their dwellings, at which they showed great pleasure, telling us to tarry yet a little, but that they would do what we wished. Soon thirty of them loaded themselves with firewood and went to their lodges, which were far away, while we stayed with the others until it was almost dark. Then they took hold of us and carried us along hurriedly to where they lived.

Against the cold, and lest on the way some one of us might faint or die, they had provided four or five big fires on the road, at each one of which they warmed us. As soon as they saw we had regained a little warmth and strength, they would carry us to the next fire with such haste that our feet barely touched the ground. So we got to their dwellings, where we saw they had built a hut for us with many fires in it. About one hour after our arrival, they began to dance and to make a great celebration (which lasted the whole night), although there was neither pleasure, feast, nor sleep in it for us since we expected to be sacrificed. In the morning, they again gave us fish and roots, and treated us so well that we became reassured, losing somewhat our apprehension of being butchered.
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ESTEVANICO: The very first black slave in United States territory is historically known as Esteban de Dorantes, or “Estevanico.” Estevanico was one of four miraculous people, along with Cabeza de Vaca, who survived Panfilo de Narvaez’s shipwreck on Galveston Island. Having been brought along as the personal slave of Narvaez, he and the others were enslaved by Texas Indians. Eventually they escaped and made the journey together back to Mexico City. Esteban was then given to Antonio de Mendoza, the second Vice-roy of New Spain, who, in 1539, made him the lead scout in a gold-hunting expedition to find the Seven Cities of Cibola—one year before Francisco de Coronado went on the same search. Unfortunately, Estevanico and the Mexican Indians he was traveling with were killed by Pueblo Indians when they entered New Mexico territory. Today, Estevanico is memorialized as an adventurer, hero, and discoverer of New Mexico.

French, English, and Dutch Settlements

The Spanish had been established in the American continents for almost one hundred years before other colonial powers began to participate. The earliest British colony, Roanoke, Virginia, was founded in 1585 but failed when its inhabitants mysteriously disappeared three years later. The British did not attempt another American settlement until 1607, over a century after Columbus. By that time, Henry Hudson was preparing to sail to New York on behalf of the Dutch. The Pilgrims independently came to Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620, closely followed by Massachusetts Bay colonists in 1628. The first French came to Quebec with Jacques Cartier in 1535, but no French settlement lasted until Samuel de Champlain labored to establish Quebec City in 1608. The Dutch joined in around that time by successfully incorporating New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1625.

By the time these European powers entered the picture, things were very different than when Columbus set sail over a century prior. The Protestant Reformation significantly changed Europe so that, newly freed from Popes and absolutist kings, settlers were looking for religious freedom and business ventures. The Massachusetts Bay Company that sent settlers to New England was governed not by royalty, but

The Protestant Reformation
A time of political, intellectual, and cultural upheaval challenging the Catholic Church’s ability to define Christian practice and promoting religious and political redistribution of power.

absolutist
A person who adheres to the belief that a ruler should have complete power, without the checks and balances of other branches of government or authorities.
by a small group of Puritan leaders. The Dutch East India Company, which Henry Hudson sailed for, was a chartered company with a lot of its own power. British colonists were either private individuals seeking opportunity, or aristocrats who were loyal to the king but had significant freedoms. The Protestant Reformation decentralized politics, economics, and religion, which encouraged a new kind of colonialism in the New World. The goal was to settle, trade, and produce goods for sale, not to find gold and silver nor to turn the natives into loyal subjects of the king.

Even the French, who eventually rejected Protestantism, were affected by the new ethos. French fur traders in Canada made business partnerships with Indians so they could obtain large numbers of furs. Traders gave Indians guns or cloth in exchange for beaver or otter pelts. When the French sent Catholic missionaries to convert Indians, it was for better trade relationships, not to make them into citizens or servants of the French empire. St. Isaac Jogues, for example, was a French Jesuit who lived among the Huron Indians and made many converts among them between 1636 and 1642. After he was publicly and brutally tortured by the Mohawks in 1644, even his murderer was converted because he showed no resistance. Large numbers of Mohawk and Iroquois Indians accepted the Catholic faith after the first French missionaries were martyred, including Kateri Tekakwitha, who became one of the first Indian saints in the Catholic Church.

Dutch and British missionaries avoided trying to turn Indians into their vassals as well. Not being part of the Holy Roman Empire or the medieval crusade tradition, Mennonites, Anabaptists, Pilgrims, and Quakers refused to use violence against Indians. The New England Puritans used some violence, but this was for protection, not subjugation. Protestant belief in separating church and state authority meant that there was no Crusade to be fought and no political and religious kingdom to bring Indians into. Protestantism also
SPANISH COLONIALISM

CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONS: Many religious groups in early North America denounced ill-treatment of the Indians. In Massachusetts, “the praying tribes” were humanely converted by Pilgrim missionaries. Rhode Island’s founder, Roger Williams, bought his land fairly from the Wampanoags and was on very good terms with the Narragansets, who in turn accepted him. The Quakers might have had the best Indian relationships of all. Indians were welcome in Quaker meeting houses, inns, and towns. William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, signed a peace treaty with the leader of the Lenape Indians as early as 1681, and kept it. In 1755, twenty years before the American nation was officially established, Quakers were already lobbying on behalf of Indians. They established the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with Indians by Pacific Measures—a charity which spent its funds on food, housing, and tools for Indians. These measures of goodwill extended through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when, in 1869, U.S. President Grant removed the U.S. Army from Indian reservations and turned many of them over to Quakers, in hopes that they would diffuse hostilities.

changed the style of Dutch and British evangelism. Instead of emphasizing missions, baptism, and the Catholic Mass, Protestant missionaries focused more on education, doctrine, and inward conversion.

While Indian relations with the French, British, or Dutch were not always harmonious, they were better with business as an intermediary and a non-coercive approach to religious conversion. Aiding these European powers was also the fact that they did not have to deal with large, advanced Indian empires like the Spanish did in Mexico. With the exception of the Iroquois Confederacy, which was the largest coalition of Indians in North America, the French, British, and Dutch dealt mainly with nomadic tribes limited in manpower and force.

Summary

The colonization of Latin America began as an extension of the medieval Catholic worldview to Christianize the world and bring it under religious dominion. The kings who sent out ex-
plorers did not know that they were going to find the New World, but when they found it, the kings fit it into their larger vision. Changing the plan from establishing trade posts to colonization and settlement, the Spanish government claimed large amounts of land and began to subdue the Indian tribes on it.

Cortés’ defeat of the Aztecs, and Pizarro’s defeat of the Incas, disposed of the two most powerful Indian empires that would have blocked Spanish colonization. Spain continued to explore and subdue as much of the American continents as possible before the British, French, and Dutch came along in the early 1600s. This meant a major culture clash for Indians, who battled smallpox and European influences during the entire colonial age. In some places, the clashes were minimized, and partnerships or assimilation occurred more easily.
After Cortés and Pizarro defeated the Aztecs and Incas, the Spanish began to wonder how big North and South America actually were, and if there were more cities of gold like Cuzco. They sent out other explorers and conquistadors to see. What they discovered was a vast wilderness of nomadic Indians spanning two continents. Many were hostile to the presence of Europeans, but none of them were part of an empire like the Aztecs in Mexico.

Spain continued to explore, subdue, and incorporate new lands. At first, all territories claimed by Spain became part of either New Spain or Peru. Eventually, Spain created four viceroyalties, or royal governorships: New Spain, Peru, Rio de la Plata, and New Grenada—in addition to the Viceroyalty of Brazil created by Portugal. Since Spain imposed Spanish, a Latin language, and Catholicism, a Latin religion, in all the areas they claimed, the territory from Mexico through Central and South America became known as “Latin America.” Spanish colonialism actively shaped Latin America from 1521 until Mexican independence in 1821. By that point, three centuries of cultural imperialism with little economic benefit caused an uprising and widespread demand for change.
The Structure of Spanish Colonial Government

The Spanish government in Latin America was very hierarchical. It was controlled from the top-down by the Spanish king, followed by the Viceroy or royal governor, and then an upper class of Spanish-born citizens, the peninsulares. Peninsulares were bishops, generals, or local governors—people who held the highest positions in the government, church, and military—and were rewarded for their loyalty to the king. Criollos were an upper-middle class, born in the New World to Spanish parents, and often owned land or held administrative-level jobs. Mestizos, Indians, and black slaves were at the bottom of the social order, having few to no rights at all.

There were also several governing bodies involved in Spanish colonialism. The most important was the Council of the Indies, which was the king’s mouthpiece to his governors in the New World. Situated in Spain, the Council of the Indies decided all matters of colonial policy—taxes, trade, war, social issues—and therefore limited the power of the Viceroy, who had to obey what was handed down to him. There was also an Audiencia, or high court, which handled justice on a local level in the colonies. Theoretically, citizens could appeal directly through the Audiencia to the king in cases of abuse. In reality, however, the Audiencia mostly policed the Viceroy and the kings’ appointed leaders to make sure they were not getting too popular or ignoring royal orders. The Spanish monarchy wanted to be in control of its colonies at all times, and would not hesitate to remove someone who was threatening their authority.

Encomienda

Spanish colonial policy reflected authority and control. At the heart of it was the system of encomienda, or labor grants which permitted a Spanish landowner to control and receive regular income from farms, ranches, or mines for as long...
SPANISH COLONIALISM

as the encomienda was held. The holders of such grants, *encomenderos*, were given authority to round up Indians in small groups and force them to work in exchange for menial pay, housing, and care. Encomenderos could not own laborers outright, but the encomienda system quickly created slave-like conditions. It also created and then protected a permanent class of Spanish landowners who prospered the more they exploited their workers.

This was especially apparent in the gold and silver mines, the first of which were discovered during Columbus’ colonization of the Caribbean. The Taino Indians were ruthlessly exploited and rose up in rebellion in 1510. For twenty years, they rebelled against their masters for the long, difficult hours they were forced to work underground. This kind of abusive situation occurred again and again in New Spain and Peru, although sometimes, as in the case of Cortés, Indian nobles were given encomiendas as well. Between 1500 and 1730, encomienda was the bedrock of Spanish colonial policy and the main source of oppression.

**Repartimiento**

In the mines, the policy of *repartimiento* dovetailed with encomienda. Repartimiento was the Spanish version of the Inca *mit’a*, where Indians paid tribute through mandatory labor rather than goods or currency. The Spanish simply replaced Inca masters with themselves, and focused on rotating Indian labor through gold and silver mines at the expense of any other occupation. Nearby Indian tribes were forced to choose laborers among themselves to work three-month shifts in the mines, which grew more and more difficult as the Spanish king raised taxes on the mine-holders. Many Indians did not survive their term of indenture, or were relocated far away from their families. The only way a tribe could refuse to provide laborers was to move away.

Repartimiento was first employed in the gold mines of Peru
and the Caribbean, and was used later when silver was discovered in the Mexican states of Guanajuato and Zacatecas, and in the Potosí mines of Bolivia. Indians were enslaved in exhausting conditions, some of them being branded until the practice was stopped by legal edict. As Spain expanded its empire and fought more wars, it pushed Indians to produce more. The Spanish monarchy received one-fifth, el quinto, of all gold and silver produced, plus even more through taxes. At its height in the sixteenth century, Spain harvested approximately $1.5 trillion dollars of gold and silver.

First Calls to Reform

Friar Montesinos and the Dominicans. Starting as early as the late 1490s, reports of slavery in the Spanish colonies began to disturb some back home in Spain. Queen Isabella was shocked at the stories of abuse in Columbus’ colonies, and she insisted that there be no slavery—that natives remain “free vassals of the Crown.” After 1500, the Archbishop of Seville heard about Indian slavery in Hispaniola and dispatched a group of Dominican friars to stop it. Friar Antonio de Montesinos told the Spanish encomenderos that they were sinning by forcing Indians to work and that if they didn’t stop, their land would be taken away. This angered settlers enough that they searched for a different friar to plead their case before King Ferdinand. When the friar they chose reported the same Indian abuse back to the king, the king tasked the Church with fixing the problem. In 1508, the Dominicans formed the first lobbying group on behalf of the Spanish encomenderos to protest the mistreatment of Indians.

**POTOSÍ MINES:** The first mines Spain discovered were gold, but in 1545, a windfall of silver was discovered in the mines of Potosí, Bolivia. It became the main source of Spanish silver in the colonial era, yielding approximately 500 billion dollars’ worth over three centuries. As Spain spent much of this silver on imported goods, the influx of such large amounts of silver into the worldwide market caused massive price inflation. The value of silver dropped tremendously, and prices of goods throughout Europe rose. As a result, the average laborer found themselves poorer, unable to buy the same goods they always had, because of new price tags. This phenomenon is sometimes called the great “price revolution” in European history.
of Indian rights and presented 35 rules for governing Indian freedoms. These rules were called the Laws of Burgos, which King Ferdinand signed in 1512. The rules upheld the Christianization of Indians, but began the process of limiting encomienda.

**Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga.** There was a large gap between the discussions that were going on in Europe and what was actually happening across the sea in the New World. Even with friars lobbying on their behalf, the Indians experienced little relief. In 1528, a great conflict arose between the Archbishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, and the Audiencia chairman, Nuño de Guzmán. King Charles appointed Zumárraga to solve the slavery issues still plaguing New Spain. The Archbishop became known as the “Protector of the Indians” because he listened to Indian complaints about labor, relocation, and taxes. Guzmán, however, was a slave trader who thought abolition would ruin the Spanish empire. He increased slave trading and decreed the death penalty for Indians who sought out the Archbishop’s help. As Indians began to be arrested for speaking out, the Archbishop sent a secret letter to King Charles about Guzmán’s tyranny by sneaking it into a cake of wax that was shipped to Spain in a barrel. When King Charles received it in 1530, he prohibited further enslavement of Indians and ordered a new Audiencia to replace Guzmán’s.

Under Archbishop Zumárraga, New Spain began to take steps in the right direction and over 9 million Indians converted peacefully to Catholicism between 1531 and 1548. For his part, Pope Paul III issued a papal bull in 1537 which officially declared that, “Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ.” While subsequent generations of Spanish colonials ignored this proclamation, the most faithful among them took it to heart.

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Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos delivered this sermon to Caribbean encomenderos to exhort them to treat the Indians better. It was witnessed by Bartolome de las Casas, who recorded and published it in his memoirs.

“I have gotten up here to make you aware. I am the voice of Christ in the desert of this island. Therefore it would be wise of you to pay attention, more than that, to listen with your whole heart, listen with every pore. That voice will be one you have never heard before, the harshest, hardest, most fearful, menacing you ever thought to hear…”

“You are all in mortal sin. You live in it, you die in it, because of the cruel tyranny you work on these innocent peoples. Tell me, by what right, with what justice, do you hold these Indians in such cruel and horrible servitude? By what authority have you made such hideous wars on these peoples? They were living on their own lands in peace and quiet. By what right have you wasted them, so many, many of them, with unspeakable death and destruction? By what right do you keep them so oppressed and exhausted? You give them no food, you give them no medicine for the illnesses they incur from the excessive work you put them to every day. And they die on you. Or, to put it better, you kill them. Just to get at gold, to acquire gold, day after day.

And what steps do you take to have someone teach them? So they know their God and Creator, so they are baptized, so they hear Mass, so they keep feast days and Sundays? The Indians, are they not human beings? Do they not have rational souls? Are you not required to love them as you love yourselves? Do you not know this? Not understand this? How can you be so asleep, so deep in such a torpid dream? Take this, for certain, in the state you are in, you can no more save your souls than Moors or Turks who neither have the Christian faith nor want it!”

Bishop Vasco de Quiroga. Vasco de Quiroga was part of the second Audiencia that sent Nuño de Guzmán home in chains in 1531. He served for several years before being appointed Bishop of Michoacán, where the notoriously hostile Chichimec Indians adopted him as “Father Vasco.” In Michoacán, Bishop Quiroga pioneered a type of mission settlement that encouraged Indian self-government, a six-hour workday, and artisanal skills such as pottery, textiles, and instrument-making. When King Charles I backpedaled on his stance towards Indian slavery in 1534, Bishop Quiroga wrote him a now-famous letter in which he condemned Spanish encomenderos. Eventually, he was sainted by the Catholic Church, and some native villages in Michoacán still demonstrate advanced craftsmanship that stems from his influence.

Bartolomé de las Casas. Bartolomé de las Casas, whose father accompanied Columbus on his second voyage to Hispaniola, became Spain’s most vehement moral crusader against encomienda and repartimiento. Originally a lawyer, Las Casas became a clergyman after witnessing the Arawaks’ suffering from smallpox and slave-like conditions.
Therefore, for these reasons and for many others that could be adduced, it was agreed that for the improvement and remedy of all the aforesaid, the said chiefs and Indians should forthwith be brought to dwell near the villages and communities of the Spaniards who inhabit that Island, so that they may be treated and taught and looked after as is right and as we have always desired; and so I command that henceforth that which is contained below be obeyed and observed, as follows:

I. First, since it is our determination to remove the said Indians and have them dwell near the Spaniards, we order and command that the persons to whom the said Indians are given, or shall be given, in encomienda, shall at once and forthwith build, for every fifty Indians, four lodges of thirty by fifteen feet, and have the Indians plant 5,000 hillocks (3,000 in cassava and 2,000 in yams), 250 pepper plants, and 50 cotton plants, and so on in like manner, increasing or decreasing the amount according to the number of Indians they have in encomienda; and these shall be settled next to the estates of the Spaniards who have them in encomienda, well situated and housed, and under the eyes of you, our said Admiral [Diego Columbus, son of Christopher Columbus]...

And the persons who have the said Indians in their charge [in encomienda] shall have them sow, in season, half a fanega of maize, and shall also give them a dozen hens and a cock to raise and enjoy the fruit thereof, the chickens as well as the eggs; and as soon as the Indians are brought to the estates they shall be given all the aforesaid as their own property. The person whom you send for this purpose shall tell them it is for their own use and that it is given them in exchange for what they are leaving behind, to enjoy as their own property. And we command that the persons to whom they are given in encomienda shall keep it for them so that they may enjoy it as their own; and we command that this property shall not be sold or taken from them by any person to whom they may be given in encomienda, or by anyone else, but that it shall belong to the said Indians to whom it is assigned and to their descendants...

II. After the aforesaid has been done, we order and command that all the chiefs and Indians dwelling on the Island of Española [Hispaniola], now or in the future, shall be brought from their present dwelling places to the villages and communities of the Spaniards who reside, now or in the future, on the said Island; and in order that they be brought of their own volition and suffer no harm from the removal, we hereby command Don Diego Columbus, our Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor of the said Island, and our appellate judges and officers of it, to have them brought in the manner that seems best, with the least possible harm to the said chiefs and Indians, to this end encouraging them and urging them with praise; and we charge and command them most earnestly to do this with much care, fidelity, and diligence, with greater regard for the good treatment and conservation of the said Indians than for any other respect, desire, or interest, particular or general.

Online by Peter Bakewell, Southern Methodist University, http://faculty.smu.edu/bakewell/BAKEWELL/texts/burgoslaws.html
He first proposed that all Caribbean Indians be relocated to Venezuela to escape their harsh conditions, but this experiment failed. He then served as an intermediary between natives and the Spanish government between 1520 and 1540, arguing that the Spanish should simply Christianize Indians, not force them to labor for the empire. Near the end of his career, Las Casas advocated that the entire colonial project be abandoned except for the missionary component. While he gained a reputation for being strident and impractical, the Spanish government funded him, published his treatises, and considered his criticisms in matters of policy.

For his life’s work on behalf of Indian rights, Bartolomé de las Casas was given the title, “Apostle to the Indians.” However, in recent years, Las Casas has been criticized for taking up the plight of the indigenous peoples while approving of black slavery as a substitute option. Las Casas himself had seven slaves, and early on recommended the importation of several hundred Africans to the Caribbean Islands to relieve natives there. In 1505, there were already more than 1,500 black slaves in the Caribbean, and Spanish law protected black slavery. In time, Las Casas saw the logical inconsistency of his desire to free one group yet enslave another, but by then he could not redo the emphasis of his life’s work.

FRIARS WITH A CONSCIENCE: There were also many charity workers and advocates for Indians outside Mexico. The Archbishop of Lima, Turibius of Mogrovejo, acted as a political mediator between Peru and Spain, trying to end Indian slavery. He was well-loved by Indians for encouraging the Viceroy of Peru to be harder on encomenderos. A Jesuit missionary in Brazil, José de Anchieta, acted as a peacemaker between warring, even cannibalistic, Indian tribes. For almost forty years, he built villages and schools in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, founding them on the principle of non-violence. Francis Solano worked with Andes Indians and then turned to ministering and pacifying Spanish settlers in Peru. Saint Peter Claver, a Jesuit in Colombia, spent most of his life tending the sick and dressing the wounds of African slaves coming off the slave ships at Cartagena. He signed his commission as “Peter Claver, servant of the Ethiopians forever,” and followed in the footsteps of his mentor, Father Alonso de Sandoval, who served African slaves for forty years before him.
Las Casas came as a simple friar and arrived at the city of Tlaxcala with 27 or 37 Indian carriers, called tamemes. At that time, certain bishops and prelates were examining a bull of Pope Paul III which concerned marriage and baptism, and they silenced us, saying that we should not baptize adult Indians. And an Indian had come three or four days’ journey to be baptized, and had asked for baptism many times and was very well prepared, catechized, and taught. Then I, with many friars, begged Las Casas to baptize that Indian who had come from afar, and after we had beseeched him many times to do so, he made many conditions for the baptism, as if he alone knew more than all, and truly the Indian was well-prepared. And since he said that he would baptize him, he put on his surplice and stole, and three or four of us religious went with him to the door of the church, where the Indian was kneeling, and I know not what vagary struck him, but he refused to baptize the Indian and left us and went away.

I then said to Las Casas: “So, Father, all the zeal and love which you say you have for the Indians ends with using them as carriers, and with going about writing of the Spaniards and abusing the Indians! Why, you alone use more Indian carriers than twenty friars; and since you will not baptize or teach a single Indian, it would be well if you paid all those tired carriers of yours!”

…I say all this with the desire of serving your Majesty and informing you of what I think this country and what I have seen in the thirty years since we came here by command of your Majesty…and of the twelve of us Franciscans who came at the beginning of the conversion of this people there are but two living... There have been friars in New Spain who have walked from Mexico City to Nicaragua, four hundred leagues, and there are not two towns in the whole distance in which they did not preach and say Mass, and teach and baptize the children and adults, few or many. And the friars here have seen and learned a little more than Las Casas about the good treatment of the slaves. The officers of the government, as well as the preaching friars and confessors—for from the beginning there have been Franciscans, and afterward came those of other orders—always took as their special care to see that the Indians, the slaves above all, were well-treated and taught in all doctrine and in Christianity and God, who is the principal doer of all good.

Government Response

The New Laws of 1542. The result of early outcry on behalf of Indians was the New Laws of 1542, which said that encomenderos could only hold their labor grants for two generations, not in perpetuity as was originally promised. The New Laws also reiterated the right of natives to appeal directly to the Audiencia if they were being mistreated. These two reforms might have corrected a lot of the abuse in the system, except that when the Viceroy of Peru tried to implement the policy, the encomenderos in his jurisdiction assassinated him. Fearing the same would happen in Mexico, the Viceroy of New Spain followed suit and chose not to obey the king’s order. Thus, indentured labor continued and the Spanish found themselves fighting continuous insurrections.

Some efforts at reform and developing New Spain as a whole were successful. Viceroy Mendoza set aside one day per week to hear Indian grievances. He also commissioned Aztec history to be re-recorded, a project which friars and Mexicans collaborated on. Mendoza’s successor, Viceroy Luis de Velasco, ordered thousands of Indians released from the mines against militant opposition from the mine owners. Velasco built the first cathedral and the first university in Mexico City to develop the culture of New Spain. Unfortunately, subsequent viceroys were not as progressive. In 1571, the Spanish Inquisition was introduced to Mexico, and some priests abused Indians for minor infractions of the faith. Viceroys in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seemed inept at solving New Spain’s most basic problems such as pirates, robbers, and the flooding of Texcoco, which plagued the capital for 200 years. New Spain developed very little education and acquired very few advancements in technology. Visitors from the United States in the 1800s were shocked to see Spanish mines still using mining techniques from the 1500s.

Spanish Inquisition
A campaign started by Pope Sixtus IV in 1478 and carried out by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to punish those who were accused of secretly practicing the Jewish faith. The accused were presented before crowds and burned at the stake. Later, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the expulsion or conversion (to Catholicism) of remaining Jews.
The period between 1500 and 1550 saw the most action on behalf of oppressed Indians, but afterwards, New Spain settled into a status quo system that saw less activism. Periodically, voices on behalf of the oppressed would rise up, but little was done about the problem on a political level. In Europe, Spain largely turned a blind eye as long as proceeds came in. Spain had no police force abroad that could enforce any reforms they passed. There were so few Spanish settlers in the New World that they themselves couldn’t work all the land they’d claimed. Recruiting new settlers was difficult because the journey was long, dangerous, and expensive. Spanish kings were mostly preoccupied with what was happening in their home country and had little time for New World problems, so reformers were constrained to work within their own small sphere of influence.

**Trade Monopoly**

Underlying Spain’s exploitative policies was the economic philosophy of **mercantilism**, reliance upon raw materials like gold and silver to sustain the national economy, in addition to policies that prevent free trade. Instead of supporting themselves by working their own lands or creating their own businesses, the Spanish depended on the gold and

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**mercantilism**

reliance upon the control of raw materials like gold and silver to sustain the national economy
SPANISH COLONIALISM

silver that their laborers mined. This created an exhausting and abusive method for prosperity that could not sustain itself long term. Gold and silver could not always be found or extracted cheaply enough, thus the entire Spanish empire experienced economic depression. Indian laborers would die, relocate, or rebel, and then encomenderos would have to scramble to cover up the problem, often by making the laborers they had work even harder.

Spain also kept her colonies poor by preventing them from trading with each other or with foreign countries. Anything the colonies wanted to buy had to be shipped first to Spain, and then back to the New World at new Spanish prices. They were forbidden from producing goods themselves, instead using the goods that Spain used to “pay” her colonies for the gold and silver they hauled away—i.e. cloth, paper, farm tools, guns. Spain delivered these using the *flota system*. Twice a year, trading ships from Spain arrived at Veracruz and unloaded basic supplies the colonies needed. The Spanish then picked up raw materials the colonies produced as well as Asian goods that had come on Manila-Galleon ships. Lastly, the Spanish stopped in the Caribbean to pick up all the gold and silver that had been mined before heading back to Spain. One of these ships might carry $250,000,000 in silver, in addition to pearls, spices, and Chinese porcelain. These trading ships were so valuable that they had to be escorted by Spanish warships in order to protect them from pirates. In later years, the British were known to intercept both galleon and Caribbean ships, as well as smuggle cheap goods into the poor Spanish colonies.

These protective policies prevented Latin American colonies from becoming wealthy, self-sufficient, or allied with one another. They constituted a *trade monopoly* because other foreign nations were not supposed to enter the special trade relationship Spain had with her colonies. Meanwhile, Spain spent most of the gold and silver they took home on imports and foreign wars. They did not reinvest the riches

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**flota system**

A convoy system for shipping cargo fleets across the ocean.

**trade monopoly**

A situation in which one entity controls the exchange of goods, preventing other entities or countries from participating in trade openly.
in their own economy or that of their colonies. They did not start businesses with the money, or let common people own land or sell at a profit, or do anything that would move their citizens up the social ladder. From 1500 to 1800, both the Spanish and Latin American economies grew weaker and weaker, yet policies were slow to change. This kind of control and dependency encouraged major revolution in the nineteenth century.

**Haciendas**

Granting encomiendas to Spanish-born peninsulares seemed like a good way to keep Latin America under Spanish control. It created a semi-permanent landholding class that was loyal to the king who granted the land. The encomienda system officially ended in 1730, but most upper-class Spaniards kept their haciendas, or landed estates, which they had been given to farm or to ranch on cheap labor. Some haciendas were simply large farms, but others held mines, mills, or small factories. As gold and silver started to become exhausted, Spain looked more and more to their landholding elite to produce crops for export: bananas, coffee, sugarcane, etc. This created a heavy export economy where the wealth of the colonies became dependent on Spain buying and selling these products. When Spain experienced economic depression and could not buy or sell large loads of colonial crops, the colonies suffered. They were not supposed to trade with any other nation, or among themselves, to keep themselves afloat.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the importance of haciendas and exports grew. This meant that the need for cheap labor grew as well. A triangle trade arose where cheap raw goods were shipped from New World colonies to Europe, textiles or manufactured goods were shipped to Africa, and black slaves were shipped back to the New World for more cheap production. Since, under Spanish policy, very few people were permitted to own land, the haciendas

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**haciendas**  
an estate that often incorporated a plantation, mine, or factory

**export economy**  
a term applied when a large percent of the nation’s economy is based on outgoing trade

**triangle trade**  
a system that balances trade when export commodities are not required in the region from which its major imports come
of those who already did own land grew larger and larger, and the number of blacks in slavery grew more and more.

Black Slavery in the New World

Black slavery had already been common in Spain and southern European countries since the Middle Ages. Arab communities in Spain had African slaves and, from the 8th century on, Arabs sold black Africans across the Mediterranean Sea to Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France. It was normal for rich southern European households to have black servants. When the Spanish expelled the Moors from their country in 1492, many of them kept Moors as personal servants and so had a mix of Arab and black slaves. While the Spanish generally did not practice chattel slavery, this mentality formed a backdrop to future exploitation.

Brutal chattel slavery arose during the late 1400s when Portuguese sailors who were exploring the coast of Africa purchased slaves at African slave markets as expendable property. The very first black slaves in the New World came with Europeans who brought them over as personal servants, but institutionalized slavery began as early as 1510, when King Ferdinand of Spain permitted the first shipment of 50 African slaves to Hispaniola. King Charles of Spain allowed 4,000 slaves to be shipped in 1518, and from that point forward, hundreds were sent per year to the Caribbean. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Spain’s economic base shifted from mines to cash crops, the Transatlantic Slave Trade brought 12 million black African slaves to the New World, mostly to work on large plantations. At its height, the central slave market in the Caribbean, Cartagena, saw approximately 10,000 slaves shipped annually. Eventually, every Latin American country had black slaves, and abolition would become a key issue during the Mexican War of Independence in 1810.

chattel slavery
A practice in which people are treated as property to be bought, sold, traded, and inherited for generations.

Transatlantic Slave Trade
The forced migration of millions of men, women, and children from Africa to the Western Hemisphere over four centuries in order to victimize them as slaves.
ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE: An expanding market for sugar and cotton fueled the slave trade in the western hemisphere. Up to 70% of New World slaves worked on sugar plantations, with the harvested sugarcane often being made into rum or other kinds of alcohol. Of the 12–13 million African slaves shipped across the Atlantic, 40% went to Brazil, where slaves were treated as expendable and were worked to death quickly. Another 30% went to the Caribbean Islands, bought by French, British, and Spanish colonists. 6–7% went to large southern plantations in the United States. The path to slavery for African individuals often began with his or her kidnapping, or capture during war. Certain African kingdoms such as Dahomey became rich and powerful as they waged war for prisoners and then sold them to European slave traders on the African coast.

The Quakers and William Wilberforce began working towards abolition in England in the 1770s, while Quakers and some of the Founding Fathers established antislavery societies in the United States around the same time. Britain became the first to outlaw slave trading in 1807, using Royal Navy ships to patrol African waters and attack or send back other nations’ slave ships. Importing slaves became illegal in the United States in 1808, but domestic slavery did not end until 1863, under the Emancipation Proclamation. Most western countries legally enforced abolition at this time, with Brazil being the last to outlaw slavery in 1888. Today, Brazil has the highest African population outside of the continent of Africa itself, and different African ethnicities have mingled with European and Indian communities throughout Latin America. Although it took many years for blacks across North and South America to buy land and participate in society as fully-respected citizens, today most nations are proud of their people of color and the wide range of ancestry they represent.
SPANISH COLONIALISM

Spanish Missions

The Spanish mission was a different arm of colonial policy run by Catholic monastic orders—Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits—who reported to the Pope and to the King. The goal of missions was to Catholicize and settle nomadic Indians on the frontier using monks and friars rather than colonists and soldiers. Where population was sparse, Catholic missionaries would start a mini-colony out of the native Indian population, teach them Christian doctrine, and help them to farm, produce, and trade. In time, the mission outpost was supposed to become a self-sustaining community practicing a semi-modern lifestyle for the benefit of both itself and Spain.

Each mission taught Indians to read, farm, ranch, or do trade work. Some missionaries practiced itinerant preaching and went to Indian settlements to teach them. The majority, however, set up permanent settlements that housed Indians off their home sites in manufactured villages called reducciones. It was thought that congregating Indians on mission settlements would aid Christian conversion and protect them from both warlike tribes and enslavement by Spanish colonists. Although mission buildings figure prominently in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, the Spanish built missions throughout their empire. The French and Portuguese did as well, in their New World colonies.

Life in a Mission. Each Spanish mission was led by a head father, the Padre, and a small missionary staff of friars. Life for the community of natives, anywhere from 100 to 3,000 of them, was ordered around a strict daily routine. Early every morning, the community came together and prayed at the chapel. Following prayer came breakfast and several hours of work. Lunch was eaten together, followed by a short break called siesta, and then more work until dinner. Work consisted of 6–7 hours of labor per day on the farm, in the workshops, storerooms, or other areas of the compound.
Like many Catholic monasteries today, mission outposts tried to manufacture everything they needed. This meant that Indians could learn a wide variety of trades, including masonry, carpentry, blacksmithing, wagon-making, and other domestic arts. This was in addition to farming and ranching, which were the heart of many missions. Friars fed, clothed, and cared for sick Indians, but life in a monastic order was strict. Marriageable girls over the age of twelve had to sleep in separate quarters called the *monjerio*, or nunnery, where they were watched by a matron. Polygamy, Indian religion, and smoking were strictly prohibited. Whipping was a common punishment, as was fasting. Friars conducted weddings and funerals, buried the dead, baptized, led prayer, and conducted the Mass. While some natives resisted mission life on principle, others who grew up in them never wanted to leave. Between 1750 and 1767, when Jesuit priests were ordered to leave the missions, Spain and Portugal had to send soldiers to drive Indian converts off the settlements.

**California Missions**

Cortés was the first European to set foot in California, in 1535. In those days, “California” referred mainly to the Baja California peninsula, not the upper territory as we currently define it. With an estimated population of less than 3,000, missions were the colonial policy of choice. After one year and a $300,000 investment at La Paz, the Franciscan friars Cortés brought didn’t have enough harvest to sustain their colony, and it closed. Missionaries tried again in 1596 but faced repeated Indian attacks and crop failure. They called on the *Jesuits* in Europe to help, who agreed to fund and establish the first California missions in 1697. Two years later, the first in a series of sixteen missions up the Baja California coast was established under Father Juan Maria Salvatierra.

The code of conduct at any given mission varied widely
depending on who was in charge. Some were cruel. When French visitors came to the mission at San Carlos Borromeo in 1786, they lamented that what they saw reminded them of a Caribbean slave colony. One naval officer remarked,

“The men and women are assembled by the sound of the bell, one of the religious conducts them to their work, to church, and to all other exercises. We mention it with pain, the resemblance to a slave colony is so perfect, that we saw men and women loaded with irons, others in the stocks; and at length the noise of the strokes of a whip struck our ears.”

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After having spoken of the trees, plants, and animals, I must give a short account of the Indians, their nature, manners, and belief. The greater number of the said Indians, who are not under the domination of the Spaniards, adore the moon as their Deity, and when they desire to perform their ceremonies, they assemble, great and small, in the middle of their villages, and place themselves in a circle; those who have anything to eat, bring it, and they put all the provisions together in the midst of them and make the best cheer possible. After they are well satisfied, they all take each other by the hand, and begin dancing with loud and strange cries, their song having no order or connection. After they have well sung and danced, they place themselves with their faces to the earth, and all at once, they altogether begin to cry out and weep, saying, “Oh! powerful and bright moon, grant that we may conquer our enemies, and may eat them, that we may not fall into their hands; and that, dying, we may go and rejoice with our relatives.” After having made this prayer, they rise and set about dancing in a round; and their feasts last thus, dancing, singing, and praying, about six hours. This is what I have learned about the ceremonies and belief of these poor people, deprived of reason, whom I have here figured.

As for the other Indians who are under the dominion of the king of Spain, if he did not take some order about them, they would be as barbarous in their belief as the others. At the commencement of his conquests, he had established the Inquisition among them, and made slaves of or caused them to die cruelly in such great numbers, that the sole recital would cause pity. This evil treatment was the reason that the poor Indians, for very apprehension, fled to the mountains in desperation, and as many Spaniards as they caught, they ate them; and on that account the said Spaniards were constrained to take away the Inquisition, and allow them personal liberty, granting them a more mild and tolerable rule of life, to bring them to the knowledge of God and the belief of the holy church; for if they had continued still to chastise them according to the rigor of the said Inquisition, they would have caused them all to die by fire. The system that is now used is, that in every estancia, which are like our villages, there is a priest who regularly instructs them, the said priest having a list of the names and surnames of all the Indians who inhabit the village under his charge.

Clearly, some monks and friars abused their authority. Others were known for being very considerate, such as Father Eusebio Kino, who was asked by natives in Sonora, Mexico to come and build a mission for them in 1681. Kino was a Jesuit circuit priest, adopted as the “Padre on Horseback” because he would travel hours by horse to visit Indians in their settlements and accompany them on hunting treks. From his own private herd of cows, Kino grew an entire ranching industry with tens of thousands of cattle. He taught Indians all over northern Mexico how to sustain life on a ranch, introducing saddlery, leather-making, and the cowboy lifestyle. This made him widely respected, even by the Apache Indians who generally distrusted Europeans.

In 1768, the Spanish recalled the Jesuits from colonial missions and replaced them with Dominican monks. The Dominicans took over the Baja missions and ran them until the Mexican Revolution in 1834. Spain then commissioned Franciscan friars to settle “Alta California,” the upper region. Russian fur traders were making their way down the Pacific coast from Alaska, and the Spanish were anxious to prevent other foreign powers from colonizing the area and interfering with their Pacific trade. Father Junipero Serra was given authority to found the first missions between San Diego and Sonoma, a 600-mile stretch, with the goal of establishing settlements and at least one presidio, or military fort, should those settlements be challenged by the Russians. This led to the founding of the presidio at Monterey in 1770, and the discovery of the San Francisco Bay which became the crown jewel of the California territory.

Altogether, twenty-one missions were established between 1769 and 1823 along the coast of Alta California. In 75 years, Indian communities brought thousands of acres of land under cultivation which had before been barren. From 1770 to 1831, they harvested several million bushels of wheat, barley, and corn, in addition to large quantities of beans, peas, olives, and nuts. Missionaries also introduced

**presidio**

military fort
From the North, some messengers or couriers of the Sobaipuris [Sobas] of San Xavier del Bac, more than forty leagues' journey, and from San Cayetano del Tumagacori, came to meet us with some crosses, which they gave us, kneeling with great veneration, and asking us on behalf of all their people to go to their rancherías [ranching missions] also. The Father visitor [Salvatierra] said to me that those crosses which they carried were tongues that spoke volumes and with great force, and that we could not fail to go where by means of them they called us.

Whereupon we ascended to the Valley of Guebavi, a journey of about fifteen leagues, and arrived at the ranchería of San Cayetano del Tumagacori, where there were some of the Sobaipuris headmen, who had come 20 and 25 leagues from the north. In San Cayetano they had prepared for us three arbors, one in which to say Mass, another in which to sleep, and the third for a kitchen. There were more than 40 houses close together. Some infants were baptized and the Father visitor gave good hopes to all that they should obtain the Fathers, the holy baptism, and the boon of their eternal salvation which they requested.

When his Reverence had seen so many people, so docile and so affable, with such beautiful, fertile, and pleasant valleys, inhabited by industrious Indians, he said to me these words: “My Father Rector, not only shall the removal from this Pimería of any of the four Fathers assigned to it not be considered, but four more shall come, and by the divine grace I shall try to be one of them.”

the orange and grape crops that would eventually make California famous. California missions produced so much that they were also able to sell their surplus and make a profit—something no one else in New Spain was doing at that time. When the Mexican government withdrew all financial support from Catholic institutions in 1811, California missions were able to support themselves as well as the secular government and militia on the coast. They did this until 1834 when they were forcibly dissolved.

Evaluating the System

The mission system of colonization has been widely criticized in the last century for its cultural imperialism over indigenous peoples. Approximately 300 friars labored over a period of 150 years to convert and modernize some 100,000 Indians in the New Spain frontier. Some aspects of this were negative. Inside the mission settlement, Indians had no choice about whether or not to except Catholicism. Their nomadic way of living was taken from them by a foreign authority who insisted they settle and change their beliefs. Land they considered sacred was sequestered. The Indian hunt gave way to agricultural settlement, and Indian religion was judged inferior by Christian doctrine. Some Indians were victims of corporal punishment, or worse, persecution by the Spanish Inquisition. As a result, one perspective today blames Catholicism for the suppression of native culture and the abuse of Indian ancestors.

On the other hand, many Catholic missionaries worked alongside Indians and risked their lives on the frontier to help them. Monks and friars did not profit from Indian labor, nor get paid a salary while they served. Most faced epidemics, wars, famines, and violent attacks alongside of the Indians they housed, and many died in the field. As a result of all the outside knowledge Spanish missionaries brought with them, Indians became some of the best farmers, ranchers, and craftsmen in all of Mexico. Also, friars worked to communicate with Indians by learning their languages, creating written alphabets, and teaching them
Spanish so that they could communicate with outside society and one another. Some even imported books by mule to begin the process of modern education. While some Indians resented European-style learning, others pushed through and became the forerunners of the first Native American politicians in the nineteenth century. In the end, for various reasons, millions of Indians chose to convert to Catholicism and ally with it.

To be sure, it was difficult for indigenous peoples to be subsumed by a new culture with completely different ideas and values. They had to face the reality of a modern world that they had previously known nothing about. This culture clash was the root of much pain, in addition to the general oppression and inadequacies of Spanish rule.

**Chapter Summary**

Following the conquests of Cortés and Pizarro, Spain quickly colonized the rest of Latin America. By 1700, their empire extended all the way from California down to Argentina, administered by governors, bishops, and generals who emigrated directly from Spain. Encomienda and Catholic missions were the foundation of Spanish colonial policy, in contrast to large-scale immigration and working of one’s own land. The latter was employed by other colonial powers, but not favored by the Spanish government. Focus was instead put on Christianizing the Indians and mobilizing them for profitable work. Much of Spanish rule was hierarchical and resisted change.

The devout raised the issue of Indian abuse in the colonies in the early 1500s, and there was a fifty-year period where it seemed like abolition and encomienda reform would change the nature of Spanish colonialism. Ultimately, however, reform efforts failed because there was no way to enforce substantial change across the Atlantic Ocean. As the Spanish government became increasingly dependent on the gold, silver, and cash crops that cheap Indian or African labor produced, activism was ignored or put down, with some places faring worse than others.
In the end, Spanish colonial policy failed to create a healthy Latin America. By the 1800s, the majority of Indians had converted and wanted the Catholic Church to remain in their lives, but almost everyone was exhausted from three hundred years of political repression and economic stagnation. The large bulk of the population needed more rights and privileges such as the ability to own land, trade freely, and better themselves. Thus, between 1500 and 1800, the Spanish system freed Latin Americans from the tyranny of Aztec and Mesoamerican rule, but did little to progress their own people. The next period of Latin American history, the age of independence, would surface almost three centuries of this built-up angst.
Discussion Questions

1. How is Spanish colonization related to the fall of Constantinople?

2. Would you have been willing to join the Conquistadores in setting sail for the New World? Why or why not?

3. Explain how Christopher Columbus was feeling when he wrote his 1493 letter to King Ferdinand.

4. Which explorer do you believe to be most successful in creating alliances and/or settlements in the New World?

5. Considering California Missions, examine and discuss the variation in the treatment of Indians. How did the treatment impact long-term relationships and perceptions of the Catholic Church by Indians? What were some possible benefits of the Mission colonization? What were some of the negative consequences?
CHAPTER 3  AGE OF INDEPENDENCE
SECTION 1
3-1: Latin America Gains Independence

SECTION 2
3-2: American Response
Latin American Independence

Background to Independence

**Spanish Decline in the 1700s.** During the 1500s, Spain was powerful. The country had been dubbed by Pope Alexander VI as the nation meant to carry the torch of Catholicism to the entire western hemisphere. The Spanish were to subdue and convert the people of the New World and then move on to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. With that commission, Spain’s empire grew for two centuries through exploration and conquest. They became the wealthiest nation in Europe and the principal architect of the New World.

During the eighteenth century, however, Spain declined in power. Their mismanagement of colonial wealth caused them to lose hold of their empire. The Spanish were spending too much, making too little, and exploiting their colonies. Signs of Spanish demise had been heralded as early as 1588, when an upstart British navy defeated the formidable **Spanish Armada.** In the 1600s, Britain, France, and the Netherlands built their own colonial empires, slowly chipping away at Spain’s dominance in the New World. The French acquired Haiti, and the Dutch, Suriname. The British acquired Jamaica, Honduras, and Nicaragua. France and England then blocked Spanish growth in North America by planting themselves throughout Canada and the United States.

In the 1700s, a series of European wars nearly ended the Spanish Empire completely. The War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714) almost abdicated the Spanish throne to France.
This was followed by the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) which established Britain as the dominant colonial power in all of Western Europe. Between 1730 and 1760, Britain engaged in a series of trade wars with Spain, pirating ships in the Gulf of Mexico and smuggling goods to Latin America. By 1763, it was clear that the future United States was going to become English and that Spain was no longer a competitive world power. Spain was becoming poorer, and Latin Americans were feeling more motivated to seek freedom from Spain altogether.

Charles III’s Reforms

Realizing the tenuous position Spain was in, King Charles III of Spain enacted a series of reforms in the 1770s. Loosening the flota system that had held Spain’s trade monopoly in place since 1566, Charles III opened more ports and permitted Spain’s colonies to trade with one another. He also
sent Spanish merchants to control the opening markets, and Spanish tax collectors to ensure that customs duties came to Spain swiftly. In addition, mining inspectors and regulators called intendants were sent to suggest new ways of conducting business. This influx of Spanish administrators greatly angered Latin American criollos, who already resented the Spanish-born in the colonies. With Spanish merchants now at the ports and customs houses, criollos worried that the new profits they were making would increasingly end up in Spanish hands rather than Latin American hands.

Increased Spanish presence in the colonies did not go over well in many places. Some areas, such as Rio de la Plata, had been almost ignored by Spain throughout the centuries. In 1776, however, Charles III suddenly created a new vice-royalty there in order to keep British and Portuguese competitors from seizing it. Suddenly, Spanish-born leaders were arriving overnight, automatically entitled to the highest positions in the army, church, and government. Criollos had long been barred from these positions and felt that, as landowners and managers, they were due a voice in Latin American governance. They wanted more freedom in trade, the right to keep their profit, and greater managerial control. Criollos did not all agree about the rights of mestizos, Indians, and black slaves, but they did agree that Spanish-born leadership should leave so that Latin Americans could rule themselves.

From 1770–1810, revolutionary sentiment increased throughout Latin America. Spain had enacted heavy-handed control over her colonies for almost three hundred years. Taxes were high, profit was being diverted, and common people were staying poor from abusive policies. Instead of developing their colonies through business and industry, Spain was squandering money on imports and wars. Their heavy losses to France and England caused them to raise taxes and put even more pressure on the colonies to provide. The situation would not be tolerable for much longer.
Reading the *Philosophes*

The cry of the criollos was not unique in history by that point. In the late 1700s, it was part of a worldwide call for liberty in Western civilization. For several decades, a period called the **Enlightenment** had been growing in influence as European intellectuals called **philosophes** were pondering a new era free from monarchy and established religion. The French in particular had been spearheading the idea that a free society demanded the abolition of both the king and the Catholic Church. French revolutionaries believed that people needed to be free from state and religious authority always telling them what to do. One philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, espoused this sentiment when he said, “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains.”

Change was desired, but what should be the alternative? Enlightenment thinkers did not all agree. Rousseau thought that a **social contract** was ideal, where people would agree on goals and work collectively toward them without having private property, titles, or privileges above one another. John Locke, working from the Puritan tradition in England, thought that the appropriate model was a **representative government**, where rulers were elected and given authority by the consent of the governed. A political philosopher from France, Baron de Montesquieu, argued that government powers should be divided into three branches so they would be evenly balanced and could keep one another accountable. The conversation about liberty began to escalate and, while there was much disagreement among philosophes, they all agreed that in place of kings and popes, people should have some form of decentralized government. It was time to end the era of dictatorial control that led armies to expand empires and keep their people unrepresented. It was time to abolish the system that only allowed few to enjoy property and luxury, while the majority of society had no rights or opportunities at all.
The Great Law of Pennsylvania

December 7, 1682

Although old-fashioned in writing style, the Great Law of Pennsylvania was enacted by William Penn and the Quaker colony to uphold basic civil rights including: freedom of worship, representative government, non-fraudulent elections, private property, and public education of laws and government.

Chapter I ...no Person now or at Any time hereafter Living in this Province who Shall Confess and acknowledge one Almighty God to be the Creatour Upholder and Ruler of the World and that professeth him or herself Obliged in Conscience to Live Peaceably and Justly under the Civill Government shall in any case be Molested or Prejudiced for his or her Conscientious Perswasion or Practice nor shall he or she at any time be Compelled to frequent or Maintain any Religious Worship place or Ministry whatever Contrary to his or her mind but shall freely and fully Enjoy his or her Christian Liberty without any Interuption or reflection and if any Person shall abuse or deride any Other for his or her Diferant Perswasion and Practice in Matters of Religion Such shall be Lookt upon as a disturber of the Peace and be punished accordingly But to the End that Looseness Irreligion & Atheism may not creep in under pretence of Conscience in this Province...

Chapter 2 And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that all Officers & Persons Commissionated and Imployed in the Service of the Government of this Province and all Members and Deputies Elected to Serve in Assembly thereof and all that have Right to Elect such deputies shall be Such as profess and Declare they Believe in Jesus Christ to be the Son of God the Savior of the World and that are not Convicted of ill fame or Unsober and Dishonest Conversation and that are of One and Twenty Years of age at Least.

Chapter 68 And that Elections may not be Corruptly managed upon which the present and future good of the province so much depends be it Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that all Elections of Members as Representatives of the People and freemen of the Province of Pennsilvania and Territories Annexed to Serve in the Assembly thereof shall be free and Voluntary and that the Elector that shall Receive any reward or Guift in meate drinke monys or Otherways shall forfeit his Right to Elect and Such Person as Shall give promise or Bestow any Such Reward as aforesaid to be elected shall forfeit his Election and be thereby Incapable to Serve as aforesaid and the Assembly Shall be Sole Judges of the Regularity or Irregularity of the Elections of the Members thereof.

Chapter 69 And that the People may be fully Secured in the Injoyment of there [their] Property be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that no Mony or goods shall be raised upon or paid by any of the People of this Province and Territories annexed by way of a Publike Tax Custom or Contribution but by a Law for that purpose made by the Government and Freemen of the Shaid Province & Territories thereof and whosoever Shall Levie Collect Receive or pay any mony or Go[o]ds Contrary thereunto Shall be held and Punished as a Publick Enemy to the Province and a Betrayer of the Liberty of the people and that no tax at any time shall Continue Longer then [than] for the Space of one Whole Year.

Chapter 70 And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that the Laws of this Province from time to time shall be publisht & Printed that Every Person may have the Knowlege thereof and they shall be one of the books taught in the Schooles of this Province and Territories thereof.

In addition to progressive political philosophy, the work of Isaac Newton, Galileo, and others created a **scientific revolution** in seventeenth-century Western Europe. This revolution morphed into the agricultural and industrial revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As inventions like the steam engine and cotton gin were patented in the late 1700s, modern thinkers publicized the potential of societies to progress as they became more secular and scientific. The French intellectual Denis Diderot began to compile the *Encyclopédie*, a volume of knowledge free from religious foundations, while his colleague Voltaire insisted that a new religion of secularism should replace Christianity all together. Across Western Europe, there was widespread demand for change. The educated upper and middle classes of Latin America, while far away, were not immune to this desire.

**All Eyes on America**

In 1775, the “shot heard round the world” was fired at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. That shot marked the beginning of the American Revolution, the first revolution to secure freedom for a European colony. Latin Americans soon learned what had happened with their northern neighbor. The United States had become the first colony to throw off their colonial parent, and a very strong one at that. Britain had the strongest army and navy in the world, yet was unable to quell the rebellion of large numbers of American militia and criollo-led troops. Latin Americans began to be inspired that they too could be torch-bearers for liberty. It was time to put principles into action.

*Battle of Lexington*
Spain Falls to Napoleon

Latin America soon thereafter found a window of opportunity for action. In Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte was on a quest for power as he liberated Europe from its kings. Having given up on the idea of a French empire in United States’ territory, in 1803 Napoleon sold President Thomas Jefferson his holdings, the Louisiana Purchase, and used the money to attack the British. A few years later in 1807, Napoleon was still battling the British for control of Europe, and moved into Spain and Portugal to consolidate power. The monarchs of Spain and Portugal fled, allowing Napoleon to occupy their countries. The Portuguese king and queen fled to their colony of Brazil and governed from there, while the Spanish king and queen tried to hide in northern Spain and govern in exile. This did not fare well and, in 1808, Napoleon captured them and placed his own brother, Joseph Bonaparte, on the throne of Spain. For five years from 1808 to 1814, Spain was an occupied nation that was embroiled in
bloody, insurgent battles against French troops. It was almost impossible for the exiled monarchs to govern their own nation, let alone their Latin colonies.

This was just the opportunity that Mexican revolutionaries were waiting for. The people of New Spain were thrown into turmoil at the loss of authority in Spain. Some, the royalists, wanted to form a junta, a provisional government, on behalf of the king. Others wanted to fight for complete independence. Spanish peninsulares mainly wanted the former, while local leaders and criollos generally wanted the latter, yet the Viceroy of New Spain, José de Iturrigaray, sided with criollos. Iturrigaray had furthered free trade, Mexican industry, and cultural development during his reign, and was just about to resign to aid the criollos when the Spanish army arrested him in his own palace. The army, backed by Spanish merchants, the Archbishop of Mexico, and the Spanish Inquisition, deposed Iturrigaray and replaced him with their top general as leader of New Spain. Not long afterwards, the Spanish general was deposed and replaced with the Archbishop of Mexico. A year after that, Spain replaced the Archbishop of Mexico with a Napoleonic War hero.
CONSPIRACY OF THE MACHETES. One of the earliest Mexican independence plots was forged in 1799. A small number of New Spain vigilantes planned to free local prisoners, storm the Viceroy’s office, take officials captive, and steal their weapons—including dozens of machetes. They then intended to proclaim independence, declare war on Spain, and execute all the peninsulares in Mexico. An informant foiled the plan, however, before any revolutionary action could be taken. The New Spain government quietly arrested the insurgents so that the Mexican population would not get wind of the conspiracy. The revolutionaries were convicted, and most of them did not live to see the day of Mexican independence.

French Revolution
The violent and universally significant overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in France by the people, resulting in a temporary republic

This revolving door of leadership between 1808 and 1810 proved to Mexicans that deposing leaders was easier than they thought. They had also heard that in France, mere commoners had deposed the king all by themselves. Revolutionaries in Paris had stormed the royal prison in 1789 and started the French Revolution. It was New Spain’s turn to rid themselves of their oppressive rulers.

Mexican War of Independence, 1810-1821
As soon as Spain deposed Viceroy Iturrigaray in 1808, underground meetings about Mexican independence began. Secret cell groups were held even at the governor of Querétaro’s house, and it was at one of these meetings that the first leaders of the Mexican War of Independence were introduced to each other. A criollo priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, met Juan Aldama and Ignacio Allende, two Spanish army captains whose sympathies were with Mexico. These three men led the first phase of the Mexican revolt.

The Father of the Nation Cries Out
Father Miguel Hidalgo began to preach subversive ideas in his parish of mostly mestizos and Indians. Having once appeared before the Spanish Inquisition for disobeying his vows, Hidalgo was personally acquainted with the absolute authority with which the Church and the Spanish Crown ruled. Studying French Enlightenment philosophy caused him to further question the political and religious system he was in. Hidalgo began planning revolutionary action with

Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla
Aldama and Allende when he witnessed the persistence of Spain’s abuse despite the reforms King Charles III enacted. The poor in his parish were hungry but not allowed to grow their own olives and grapes, since these crops were imported into the colonies from Spain. A major drought in 1807 caused his parishioners to need emergency grain released from the storehouses, but the Spanish government forbade it to protect its own interests. These sorts of abuses as well as slavery and high taxes on peasants plagued innumerable villages like Hidalgo’s.

Early in the morning on September 16, 1810, Father Hidalgo preached his famous Grito de Dolores, the “Cry of Dolores.” This sermon was the rallying call to revolutionary action against Spain. Within hours, a group of 600 Indians and peasants had assembled, some armed only with sticks and rocks. Crying “Independencia!” they began to march with Hidalgo, Aldama, and Allende toward the town of Guanajuato. On the way, thousands of men joined the march, including Allende’s regiment of Spanish cavalry. When they arrived in Guanajuato on September 28, they found several hundred Spaniards and royalists hiding in the public granary. A terrible siege ensued with Hidalgo’s army massacring those who had been hiding, then pillaging the town. Insisting that the era of Spanish oppression was over, Hidalgo was hailed “the Father of the Nation.”

THE GRITO: While the essential message of the Grito de Dolores is well-understood in Mexico, there is no text of the original Grito. There are many different versions considered to be authentic, and every year on September 15, 1810, the President of Mexico appears on the balcony of the National Palace of Mexico, rings the bell, and reads aloud a paraphrase to celebrate Mexican Independence Day. At the end of his speech comes the cry, “Viva México!” which is shouted three times with the crowd below in the plaza. This ceremonial act is followed by the singing of the Mexican national anthem, flag waving, and parades all the next day. The Grito is celebrated similarly in Mexican towns and their consulates across the world, and is occasionally re-enacted in Dolores, Hidalgo.
Supporters from many spheres joined the long march to Mexico City for a climactic confrontation. On the way, Hidalgo’s army won a great victory over the Spanish at the Battle of Monte de las Cruces on October 30, 1810. When his army finally reached Mexico City, however, Hidalgo waited for two months before attacking in January 1811. This gave Spanish forces the time to rally defensive forces, and Hidalgo’s men were badly beaten at the Battle of Calderón Bridge. Trying to regroup, Mexican revolutionaries replaced Hidalgo with Allende as head of the army and began to march towards the United States to request troops, guns, and support. Near the U.S. border, however, at the Wells of Bajan, Coahuila, the revolutionaries found out they had been betrayed by one of their own men and were ambushed by the Spanish army. The revolutionary leaders were tried and executed, with the heads of Hidalgo, Allende, and Aldama hung from the granary in Guanajuato where they had mounted the original insurrection. The message, of course, was that the Spanish were not going to tolerate rebellion.

**Second Phase of War**

Following Hidalgo’s execution, leadership passed to Father José María Morelos, a mestizo priest. Morelos preached even more radically than did Hidalgo, by adding abolition and redistribution of land to mestizos and slaves to the original goal of Mexican independence. In 1813, Morelos convened the Congress of Chilpancingo where Mexican representatives officially declared independence from Spain. War against Spanish forces ensued and, in 1815, Morelos was captured and executed as a traitor to Spain. He became the second hero of Mexican independence after Father Hidalgo, and was extolled by Napoleon who is known to have said, “With three such men as José Morelos, I could conquer the world.”

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1 Quoted online by Charles R. Drew University, [http://www.cdrewu.edu/CDUNewsletters/activenews_view.asp?articleID=355](http://www.cdrewu.edu/CDUNewsletters/activenews_view.asp?articleID=355)
José María Morelos
October 13, 1811

Addressing the civil war among Mexicans after the Grito, especially rich against poor and criollo against native, Father Morelos orders peace and reconciliation between different feuding groups. Of particular interest is his demand that no-one “take the voice of the Nation” or start a riot in the name of liberty.

Albeit that a grave error has been incurred, and what we have suffered on this coast could bring upon all of us the inhabitants the worst of anarchy, or better stated a lamentable desolation. This came in part from the damage done because officials have gone beyond their boundaries and faculties. Now the inferior has proceeded with charges against the superior, their revolution has experienced difficulty in great part with little progress. Our weapons are cut off at the root, uprisings and disorders which have come about, and I am come to declare by degree this day the following points...

from hereon no distinction shall be made in categories of qualities, being that generally all of us call ourselves Americans, and looking each to the other as brothers, we ought to live in the Holy Peace that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ has left us when he made a triumphant ascension into the heavens, and it follows that all should know him, that there be no motive for those groupings that are called castes, which only want to destroy each one the other, the whites against the blacks, and these against the native Americans. For it would be the worst crime of all that man would commit, which deed would not have any equal example in all of the centuries and nations, much less we ought not to permit this in our time, because it would be the cause of our total destruction, both spiritual and moral.

Since the whites were the first representatives in the kingdom, and they were the first ones to take up arms in defense of the native peoples, and the other castes with them, we then owe to the whites the object of our merit and gratitude and not our hate, which easily could be formed against them.

That the officials of the troops, judges and commissioned officers ought not to show excess in their duty rights, but that they concede in their tasks, unless charged by an inferior against the superior, and then only with special allowance of the Suprema Junta, in written form, not verbally, manifesting the grievance against the person they wish to charge.

That no official acting as judge or commissioned officer, neither deputized agents without authority bring charges, the inferior against the superior until receiving special orders from me, or His Majesty the Suprema Junta, and that be done by bonafide persons.

That no individual be that who it may, take the voice of the Nation to proceed in other kinds of riots, now that we have a legitimate superior entity should bring to them their most difficult cases of betrayal of the nation and so that no one bring charges in his own authority.

Being now that it is our system, we will not bring charges against the rich, for whatever reasons, and much less against the rich criollos. No one dare to lay hands on their goods, no matter how rich that person may be, it will be against all rights of our neighbors to take this action, principally against the Divine Law, which prohibits us from robbing and stealing other’s things against the will of their rightful owner, and even the thought of coveting things that belong to another. Even though they may be guilty as rich Europeans or criollos none shall lay hold of their goods without express orders from a superior. This order or rules needs to be effective also against kidnapping or confiscating so that everything be done in due process.

Be it that anyone dares to commit a crime against this decree, he shall be punished with all rigor of the laws and the same punishment shall have anyone who has ideas of rioting, overthrowing the government, and in all accounts not expressly mentioned here for lack of definition, those given to evil spirits, and are against the law of God, tranquility of the inhabitants of the kingdom and progress of our arms.

And so that this notice can reach everyone and no one be ignorant of the same, I order that this publication be posted in the city, on the entrance and everywhere people can read and comprehend my orders, posting it upon the pathways as is the customs.

Between 1815 and 1821, the Mexican revolution continued mainly through **guerrilla warfare**—looting, burning, and the sacking of cities. The two new revolutionary leaders, General Guadalupe Victoria and General Vicente Guerrero, led their men well, but alienated criollos and intellectuals who had supported independence at first. These men, who had been the most excited about revolution, grew distressed about the less-than-glorious reality of toppling Spain. Indian and mestizo mobs looting and burning cities was not what they had envisioned. The war was also dragging out. The new Viceroy of New Spain began offering full pardon to every rebel who laid down arms, and some were capitulating. The war for independence might have failed completely if there had not been a completely unexpected turn of events.

**Liberalism in Spain.** In 1820, a new King of Spain, Ferdinand VII, was forced to implement a constitution that would have enforced a lot of social reforms both at home and abroad—a **constitutional monarchy** where all men would be allowed to vote, have freedom of the press, participate in the free market, and own land. Royalists in Mexico were suddenly very upset because obeying the Spanish king would mean instituting these reforms and losing the special status they were fighting for. They reasoned that the only way to prevent such radical transformation from taking place...
place was to immediately declare Mexico independence. If Mexico were independent, they would not have to implement the new Spanish constitution and lose their power and privileges.

Almost overnight, royalist forces that had been fighting Mexican rebels suddenly allied with the rebels. The commander of the royalist army, General Agustín de Iturbide, sought out the commander of the revolutionaries, General Guerrero, and signed a conspiratorial agreement to join forces on February 24, 1821. The agreement, the Plan of Iguala, stated that when Mexico was finally liberated from Spanish rule, there would be a new Mexican monarchy with an established Catholic Church and equality for all social and ethnic groups, including Europeans, criollos, Africans, Indians, etc. In this way, all of New Spain united for independence whether they were a radical insurrectionist or royalist clergyman. Everyone agreed that Mexico’s first step was freedom and that the details could be sorted out afterwards.

The War Ends

Volunteers from all over Mexico joined Iturbide’s army, which ensured Mexican victory in the capital. Six months later, on August 24, 1821, General Iturbide and the captain of the Spanish army signed the Treaty of Córdoba that established Mexican independence. The treaty offered the Spanish royal family the chance to send someone to rule Mexico as the first Mexican emperor. In response, Spain not only refused the position, but rejected the entire treaty. They would not formally recognize Mexican freedom until fifteen years later, in 1836.

Iturbide therefore became “Agustín I of Mexico,” the first Mexican emperor. He marched into Mexico City on September 27, 1821, where the viceroy had already resigned. Iturbide and 34 others then formally signed the Declaration
of Independence of the Mexican Empire, which established Mexico as an independent, centrally controlled nation. Not all the delegates at the convention signed the document. Notably, the two revolutionary generals who had led years of insurgency, General Victoria and General Guerrero, did not sign. Mexico was not united, but at last it was free.

The First Mexican Empire of 1821

The Plan of Iguala, which brokered the alliance between Iturbide and Guerrero, had been so broadly worded that unity could be obtained between the most conservative and most liberal factions of the Mexican population. As soon as independence was achieved, however, quarreling broke out among the factions. Conservatives wanted to keep the power of the monarchy, the Catholic Church, and the army. Liberals wanted land reform, abolition, and freedom from Catholicism. Many Mexicans were in the middle, and wanted a blend of these two positions. Many Indians, for example, wanted the broadest tax, land, and labor reforms possible, but generally supported the Catholic Church. Some even wanted a monarchy and thought negatively of Hidalgo-type revolutionaries.

A complicating factor was that Mexico had no constitution, or document of laws, that spelled out specifically how the new nation would govern itself or what laws all new leaders would have to obey. Some accused Iturbide of ascending to power through a loophole which he himself had constructed. The Mexican Congress declared Iturbide emperor in the first place, but several months later, Iturbide dismissed the Congress and surrounded himself with supporters. He then began imprisoning those who disagreed with him. This behavior was no different from how the Spanish king had ruled. Revolutionaries who fought for freedom were upset that the new Mexican government was the same as the old Spanish government, just with new faces. Internal conflicts raged, and two years later, the separation of Central America spelled the end of the First Mexican Empire.
The Mexican Nation, which for three hundred years had neither had its own will, nor free use of its voice, leaves today the oppression in which it has lived.

The heroic efforts of its sons have been crowned today, and consummated is an eternal and memorable enterprise, which a spirit superior to all admiration and praise, out of love and for the glory of its Country started in Iguala, continued, and brought to fruition, overcoming almost insurmountable obstacles.

Restored then this part of the North to the exercise of all the rights given by the Author of Nature and recognized as unalienable and sacred by the civilized nations of the Earth, in liberty to constitute itself in the manner which best suits its happiness and through representatives who can manifest its will and plans, it begins to make use of such precious gifts and solemnly declares by means of the Supreme Junta of the Empire that it is a Sovereign nation and independent of old Spain with which henceforth it will maintain no other union besides a close friendship in the terms prescribed by the treaties; that it will establish friendly relationships with other powers, executing regarding them whatever declarations the other sovereign nations can execute; that it will constitute itself in accordance to the bases which in the Plan of Iguala and the Treaty of Cordoba the First Chief of the Imperial Army of the Three Guarantees wisely established and which it will uphold at all costs and with all sacrifice of the means and lives of its members (if necessary); this solemn declaration, is made in the capital of the Empire on the twenty-eighth of September of the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one, first of Mexican Independence.

The Mexican Declaration of Independence was signed by Agustin Iturbide and 33 Congressmen, declaring Mexico’s independence from Spain and its reconstitution as the First Mexican Empire.

Online by Declaration Project, [http://www.declarationproject.org/?p=1378](http://www.declarationproject.org/?p=1378)
Central America Breaks Away

The Central American provinces of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and El Salvador had joined Mexico in its fight for independence because they had been unable to throw off the Spanish on their own. In 1811, a Salvadorian priest named José Matías Delgado had tried to free Central America from Spain, but royalists in Guatemala—the seat of Spanish government in Central America—forcefully put down the rebellion. When Iturbide was declared Emperor of Mexico in 1821, Mexico naturally assumed control over Central America and incorporated its five provinces into the First Mexican Empire.

But Central Americans had different plans. Even though Central Americans joined the fight for Mexican independence, Central Americans were a different people group than the Méxica and Spanish of Mexico City. They were largely Maya by heritage, not Aztec, and many rejected their Hispanic heritage entirely. Guatemala, for example, possessed a strong royalist component in its capital, but the majority of its population was indigenous Maya. Nicaragua had a culturally distinct population as well; due to extensive slavery, over 80% of the population by 1820 had some African descent. Consequently, the majority of Central Americans desired freedom from Spain but had no desire to be part of the new Mexican Empire.

JOSÉ MATÍAS DELGADO: In 1811, the Father of El Salvador, José Matías Delgado, led the first Salvadorian insurrection against Spanish intendents. This was put down by royalists in Guatemala, but El Salvador revolted again in 1814. When Guatemalan governors led Central Americans to join the Mexican Empire in 1821, Delgado opposed it and supported El Salvador’s secession from Central America in order to remain free. When Guatemalan troops occupied El Salvador to pressure them into surrender, a Salvadorian delegation went to the United States to discuss becoming an American state. Guatemalan royalists forced El Salvador’s surrender before annexation could go through, but after the Mexican Empire fell in 1823, El Salvador achieved some freedom under the Federal Republic of Central America. Delgado served as a delegate and was honored as a national hero for his fight for liberation.
Central America leaves the Empire. In 1823, Central Americans broke away from the First Mexican Empire to form the Federal Republic of Central America. The Central Americans intended to create a confederation of states united by a federal government similar to the United States of America. After independence, however, criollos and Indians in Central America began to fight amongst themselves. Like Mexicans, they could not resolve the differences between conservatives who wanted fewer social reforms and liberals who wanted more of them. Guatemala, the largest and wealthiest state, favored a centralized, monarchial form of government. The others did not. There was concern that Guatemalans would dominate Central American government and economy if they all stayed united, so in 1838, with civil wars breaking out all over the region, the five Central American states separated and became independent countries. As a result, the First Mexican Empire lost one-third of its territory.

Each Central American nation subsequently experienced a series of presidents who acted as dictators. Many indigenous peoples rebelled against their new criollo leadership. Armies overthrew one president to replace him with someone else who promised them the right kind of reforms. The democratic process eluded the populace as complaints became a pretext for military action. This revolutionary trend plagued Mexico and all Latin American colonies for the rest of the 1800s.

Casa Mata

Central Americans were not the only ones who wanted to secede from the First Mexican Empire. By 1823, when they left, entire portions of Mexico were unhappy with imperial rule. Several Mexican states actively resisted Iturbide’s reign but were put down by the Imperial Army. It was not until a royalist commander in Veracruz, Antonio López de Santa Anna, persuaded one of Iturbide’s generals to work
with him that he and General Victoria hatched a plan to unseat the emperor. In December 1822, Santa Anna and Victoria wrote the Plan of Casa Mata to abolish the Mexican Empire and replace it with a republic. The plan received almost universal support from the Mexican states. Generals, governors, and other high-ranking officials from all over Mexico secretly signed the plan.

On February 1, 1823, Mexican states effectively seceded from the Empire. They demanded a new congressional delegation be appointed under the Plan of Casa Mata, and withdrew their support from the imperial government. Emperor Iturbide had no choice but to abdicate his throne and flee the country. Those who signed Casa Mata then attempted to create a constitution for the First Federal Republic of Mexico, which was officially declared in 1824.

The First Federal Republic of Mexico

Under the 1824 Constitution of Mexico, the new republic abolished its monarchy and established federalism, a coalition of assorted Mexican states with their own local governments and direct representation in the national government. The first order of business was to re-empower the Mexican Congress, which Iturbide had dismissed. States sent their delegates and lively arguments ensued about how much power the central government should have versus how much power the state governments should have. Some Mexican states such as Zacatecas, Las Californias (upper and lower “California”), Coahuila y Tejas (“Texas”), and the Yucatan, were radical states’ rights champions. Others argued that the national government should create and enforce laws for the states.

In the end, national and state governments officially decided to share sovereignty, but the 1824 Constitution explicitly favored states’ rights. States were permitted to set their own tax rates as well as decide how much tax money they would
send to the federal government. Since states had this special permission, they could also withhold funds if they had a grudge, and ultimately the amount of money in the Mexican treasury dropped to approximately half of what it had been receiving under the viceroys. Poverty plagued the Mexican national government for decades and was one of the key reasons why future presidents would return to centralism. They wanted more economic control which, in 1824, was given to the states.

Mexican states could also structure their own local governments and write their own charters. The state of Querétaro tried to outlaw peninsulares under this system, and the state of Puebla tried to declare independence from Mexico completely. In both cases, the Mexican federal government had to step in and stop these actions. The 1824 Constitution established Catholicism as the national religion, so states could not dispute that, but Mexican states retained the freedom to decide key matters of political concern: who was considered a citizen, who could vote, and whether or not there were property or population size requirements, among other things.

In 1824, General Guadalupe Victoria, a hero in the days of Mexican independence, served as first President of the Mexican Republic. He was succeeded by the other founding father of the revolution, Vicente Guerrero, in 1829. These leaders decreed the end of slavery to please their constituents but generally had limited authority so that power could be retained by the Mexican states. Many Mexicans were tired of heavy-handed leadership, so the Mexican Congress voted to limit the power of the executive branch of government. The Mexican president had a vice president and was supposed to serve for four years, similarly to the president of the United States, but unlike the U.S. president, the Mexican president had to defer to the Congress, the legislative branch of government. He did not have power equal to theirs, nor could he veto their laws. This subordinate relationship
would prove to be a sticking point for future Mexican leaders.

**Liberating the Rest of Latin America**

**Peruvian Revolts, 1740–1800.** Mexico was not the first Latin American nation to seek independence from Spain. For many years, there had been uprisings to try to throw off Spanish power, especially in Peru. In 1742, an Indian from Cuzco named Juan Santos took up the surname of “Atahualpa” and claimed royal ancestry from the last Sapa Inca. With the goal of reviving the Inca Empire and pleasing the Inca gods, he drove out non-indigenous inhabitants from the lowland jungles of Quisopango. Successfully thwarting the Spanish twice, his indigenous army terrorized the Peruvian provinces of Tarma and Jauja for almost forty years.

After he died, a wealthy mestizo named José Gabriel Túpac Amaru II organized the next series of Indian revolts in Peru. In 1780, protesting the forced labor still occurring in Peruvian farms, mines, and textile mills, Túpac Amaru tricked local Spanish leaders into attending a meeting, then surrounded them with natives and had the governor hanged by his slave in the middle of the public square. Afterwards, he gathered a diverse army of Indians, mestizos, mulattoes, and indentured whites and blacks to join him on his march to Cuzco. They terrorized Spanish households on the way with great violence.

Just one year later, an Aymara native named Túpac Katari took up Túpac Amaru’s mantle and laid siege to La Paz, Bolivia. Túpac Amaru and Túpac Katari were both ultimately defeated by Peruvian royalists, but the amount of havoc their armies created intimidated middle- and upper-class revolutionaries throughout Latin America. These revolutionaries knew that if they gained independence for their countries but did not please mestizos, Indians, and slaves, they too would face the rancor of the oppressed. This was

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Mulattoes: a historical term for persons of mixed white and black ancestry.
a problem because many criollos were fighting to increase their social status and privileges, not do away with them. Yet, the exceedingly brutal executions of Túpac Amaru and Túpac Katari inspired native and mestizo revolts throughout the Andes. The citizens in the Viceroyalty of Peru were therefore polarized as the most radical revolutionaries and inspired the most conservative criollos.

**Haiti Breaks Free**

Slave revolts also broke out in Haiti, or Saint-Domingue, as it was called in the colonial era. The French had established themselves in Haiti as early as 1625 and turned it into a great sugarcane colony that was worked by black slaves. By 1789, the year that the French Revolution broke out in Paris, the country had almost one billion francs invested in Haiti’s sugar and coffee plantations, as well as the rum factories and other workshops. Two years later, a voodoo priest named Dutty Boukman organized slaves to join together and burn down their masters’ plantations. When smoke was seen in the sky, all slaves would know it was time to rise up, kill their masters, and take back their country. Three weeks of mass bloodshed followed where slaves slaughtered their masters, and masters retaliated by executing them and hanging their heads in public places. Eventually the movement died out, but Haiti’s attempt to throw off French colonialism had begun.

**First Fruits of Revolution.** In 1804, Haiti became the first Latin American nation to achieve complete independence from Europe. A black general, Toussaint L’Ouverture, with another French revolutionary general, Jean Jacques Dessalines, led a revolt of oppressed Indians and Africans against their French overlords with more organization and strategy than their radical forbearers. First they built alliances with the French Republican government. Then they declared independence, abolished slavery, and wrote a new constitution for Haiti. Between 1799 and 1804, against enormous
odds, L’Ouverture and Dessalines martialed slaves against French, Spanish, and British royalist troops. Because of their victories and the scourge of yellow fever that decimated the French army, Haitians were able to achieve independence. When Napoleon sold the United States the 530,000,000-acre territory of Louisiana, he also let Haiti go, figuring it was not worth the time and effort to govern a small Caribbean island when he had all of Europe in his sights. The first Latin American nation was free, and slave revolts had played an important role in this new independence.

**Liberation in New Granada**

The Viceroyalty of New Granada was also deeply involved in the sugar business. The major port for Caribbean slave trading was located in Cartagena, Colombia, and a large number of Spanish plantation owners grew sugar in adjoining territory. In 1795, a free *zambo* farmer, José Leonardo Chirino, was inspired by the French radicals in Haiti and led an African slave uprising in eastern Venezuela. In French revolutionary style, black slaves destroyed sugar plantations and massacred their colonial masters. In 1796, the Spanish army executed Chirino like they had Túpac Amaru and Túpac Katari.

The first organized attempt to free New Granada occurred concurrently to Mexican independence, between the years 1810 and 1830. Simón Bolívar was a Venezuelan criollo who envisioned a republican government in Latin America similar to that of the United States. In 1810, Bolívar organized a junta of like-minded citizens in Venezuela and together they fought Spanish royalists until 1814. In the midst of the war, Bolívar declared Venezuela a republic, but when the King of Spain returned to the throne after the Napoleonic Wars, he put a stop to Bolívar’s liberation movement. Ferdinand VII recaptured Venezuela, and Bolívar had to flee.
In 1816, with a coalition of Venezuelan slaves and ranchers, Haitians, and British troops, Bolívar sought to capture Bogotá, the capital of New Granada. Using it as a base, he launched a second attack on Venezuela, capturing the capital of Caracas at the Battle of Carabobo, and then the surrounding regions. In 1819, Bolívar renamed New Granada, “Gran Colombia,” and Colombian delegates appointed him President. He served as their leader until 1830, during which time he freed and led Ecuador, Peru, and the new nation named after him, Bolivia.

Viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata

Meanwhile, in Rio de la Plata, Simón Bolívar had a counterpart liberationist. José de San Martín was a criollo from Argentina who moved to Spain and became an officer in the Spanish army before returning to Argentina in 1812 to fight for freedom. Two years prior to his arrival, the citizens of Buenos Aires attempted to gain independence from Spain and won a small victory. Their junta was ultimately defeated, but the capital of Buenos Aires and their neighbors in Paraguay won substantial freedoms. The attack seriously damaged Spain’s ability to control the viceroyalty, which was the last one formed in 1776. In combination with the native uprisings inspired by Túpac Amaru, the region was already unstable.

In 1814, San Martín martialed the existing army of Rio de la Plata against the Viceroyalty of Peru, Spain’s greatest stronghold on the South American continent. He led them over the Andes Mountains, captured Chile, and installed new leadership there in 1817. He then built a formidable navy and drove the Spanish out of the capital at Lima. There, San Martín assumed the title, “Protector of Peru,” and planned to meet with Bolívar to discuss unifying New Granada with Rio de la Plata.

The Meeting of Guayaquil. In the now-famous meeting of
Guayaquil, Ecuador, the delegation of Simón Bolívar quarreled with that of San Martín. They could not agree whether the new South American republics should be united by a monarch or remain decentralized. San Martín, having grown up in Spain, argued that a monarchy was necessary to keep order in the diverse nations of South America, as well as to stave off a Spanish counter-attack, which he saw as imminent. Bolívar, however, insisted that the nations of South America desired independence from central control. He remained stalwart that there should be no monarchy, and the meeting in Ecuador ended in failure, with San Martín returning to Europe.

Bolívar then attempted to convene a congress, and requested delegates be sent to represent every freed nation in Latin America. When only five nations sent delegates, Bolívar realized that uniting Latin American nations was not going to work. In the middle of revising his plan, the Spanish, as if fulfilling San Martín’s prophecy, suddenly reappeared with an army in Peru. Bolívar immediately rallied his troops and fought the Battle of Ayacucho, permanently freeing Peru from the Spanish in 1824. He then returned to Gran Colombia, discouraged about republican government and reigning instead with dictatorial control. For this, he was almost assassinated. Eventually, Gran Colombia split into the nations of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, at which point Bolívar resigned and left Colombia. At only 47 years old, the greatest liberator of South America died unable to unite South Americans in the kind of government he dreamt they should have.

**Brazil**

Brazil was the only Latin American nation to obtain independence without war. In the early 1800s, when Napoleon invaded Spain and Portugal, the Portuguese monarchs fled to their only Latin American colony, Brazil. Even though Brazil experienced similar oppressive circumstances as Spanish Latin America and had much more extensive slavery, Brazil welcomed their colonial parents. Finding Brazil to be underdeveloped,
the king and queen of Portugal built it up, especially the capital city at Rio de Janeiro because they wanted the city to be fit for European royalty. Eventually the monarchs found it so beautiful in Brazil that when the Napoleonic wars were over in 1815, and the nation of Portugal called their king and queen home, they did not want to return. Reluctantly, the monarchs left, but kept their son Pedro on the throne in Brazil. He ruled there until 1822 when he decided to give Brazilians independence on his own initiative.

By the 1830s, all Spanish colonies had been liberated except for Puerto Rico and Cuba, which was Spain’s main naval base in the western hemisphere. Spain, however, did not officially recognize Latin American freedom, and there were occasional reprisals of Spanish re-conquest until 1836. Cuban colonialism would continue almost into the twentieth century, eventually drawing Spain into a war with the United States to free it. Elsewhere, the Dominican Republic split from Haiti in 1844, and Panama split from Colombia in 1903. England owned Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados, and Belize until the twentieth century. The Dutch owned Suriname until 1975, and some Caribbean islands maintained their status as foreign-owned commonwealths into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
Section Summary

The road to Latin American independence began in the late 1700s when Spain declined in power on the worldwide stage and then was conquered by Napoleon in 1807. Having been unable to significantly advance its own people or reform its governing structure, Latin Americans were poor and suffering. Signs of monarchical control were ever increasing, which was especially insulting to criollos. By the time the United States earned its freedom, and the cry for representative government was being heard across Western civilization, Latin Americans were ready for change.

While periodic revolts had put the Spanish viceroys on edge, the Mexican War for Independence dealt the decisive blow to Spanish control of Latin America. For eleven years, between 1810 and 1821, Mexicans fought for liberty. At first, revolutionaries consisted of radicals who wanted liberal land, tax, and church reforms, and some wanted abolition for slaves and Indians as well. But the war for independence did not prevail until conservative royalists also decided they wanted self-governance. When this occurred, all Mexican parties joined together to form a united front and oust Spain. The result was a Mexican Empire where conservative forces got the chance to run the country first. When this angered many, including Central Americans who broke away from Mexico in 1823, Mexico attempted self-government under the Federal Republic of Mexico. The 1824 Constitution permitted each Mexican state many freedoms, while the national government, especially the office of the President, was left without such power.

Elsewhere in Latin America, independence from Spain was achieved, but with mixed results. The Federal Republic of Central America failed as its nations dissolved into civil war. The provinces of Rio de la Plata failed to unite, as did Gran Colombia, which Simón Bolívar labored to create. The Viceroyalty of Peru similarly dissolved into many
independent nations, each with warring factions. All across Latin America, newly freed nations experienced stand-offs between a new Hispanic aristocracy trying to govern its subjects, and indigenous or indentured peoples who resented still being subjected. Peace eluded most of them.
American Response

Cautious Optimism

The United States was cautiously optimistic about Mexican independence from Spain. They were the first, in 1822, to recognize Mexican independence, calling Mexico “our sister republic”\(^2\) in formal speeches. That year, the first Mexican envoy was brought to the White House by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and introduced to President James Monroe. Just a few years after that, the first U.S. ambassador was sent to Mexico. During this era, a number of the Founding Fathers of the United States made statements about the Mexican revolution and Latin American independence. They had a great desire to see Mexico free and prosperous, but were doubtful as to whether or not it would actually become so. Americans, after all, had had over 150 years of self-rule prior to the American Revolution, from the Mayflower to the Declaration of Independence. The Spanish colonies had had none.

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and President of the United States the year before the Mexican War of Independence broke out, expressed concern for Mexico because of their lack of precedent in decentralized wealth, religion, and government. In his view, he could not see how a Catholic nation that had lived for three hundred years under the control of kings and popes—whose rulers made laws but did not subject themselves to them—

could suddenly become free and prosperous. Looking at an institution like the Spanish Inquisition, which was a shadow of its former terror but which still executed Miguel Hidalgo in 1811, Jefferson expressed his opinion that a Catholic populace would have trouble accepting the kind of individual freedoms that Protestant America so heavily relied upon. In 1811, as the Mexican War for Independence got under way, Jefferson stated:

“Spanish America is all in revolt. The insurgents are triumphant in many of the States, and will be so in all. But there the danger is that the cruel arts of their oppressors have enchained their minds, have kept them in the ignorance of children, and as incapable of self-governance as children. If the obstacles of bigotry and priest craft can be surmounted, we may hope that common sense will suffice to do everything else. God send them a safe deliverance.”

This statement exemplified the cautious hope for Mexico that was commonly felt in the United States at that time. Several years later, in his exchanges with President Monroe, Jefferson reiterated that Latin Americans had a “right to be free,” and that the United States had a moral duty to help them “as a strong man has a right to assist a weak one assailed by a robber or murderer.” These were strong words of condemnation against Spain, who at that point was bribing Mexican revolutionaries to lay down arms. The American Founding Fathers were against the Spanish Empire because their ancestors had fled Catholic persecution in the Old World. The Pilgrims and Puritans had run from it in England; the Anglicans and Dutch had fought it as well. All the Protestant denominations in the original thirteen colonies had at one point separated from Catholic dominance in Western Europe and had come to America to live and worship in freedom. Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, and John Quincy Adams were operating from this context when they showed sympathy towards Latin America during their presidencies.

4 Ibid, 8067:826.
They had reason to be hopeful. U.S. leadership knew that Latin Americans desired freedom. In the 1780s, Cubans aided the American Revolution by stockpiling clothes and gunpowder for American troops. Governor Bernardo de Gálvez greatly supported George Washington by providing a steady stream of guns and ammunition up the Mississippi River. In the 1820s, the Founding Fathers noticed Mexico reaching out to trade with Britain, France, and the United States, as if they were eager to establish modern business relationships with them. While concerned, U.S. officials were encouraged to see what Latin Americans would do with their freedom.

**BERNARDO DE GÁLVEZ Y MADRID:** During Bernardo de Gálvez’s service as governor of Louisiana, he aided the American colonies’ efforts to throw off the British in the Revolutionary War. When the British were blockading all the ports on the Atlantic coast, Gálvez established a steady supply line to American troops from the Gulf of Mexico by smuggling guns, powder, uniforms, and medicine up the Mississippi River from Havana, Cuba. He did not demand repayment for his generosity. Gálvez also played a major role in defeating the British in Florida and the Mississippi Valley, driving them out of Baton Rouge, Natchez, New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola. These territories he reclaimed for Spain, and almost ousted the British entirely from their base in Jamaica. As a result, the British had no safe havens on the Gulf Coast and could not encircle American troops from the South or cut off their supply lines.

After the Revolutionary War, Spain received East and West Florida in the Treaty of Paris, and Galveston, Texas was named after him. Americans honored Gálvez for his role in the war, and he rode on the right side of George Washington in the national parade of July 4th. Spain also honored him by appointing him governor of Cuba and Viceroy of New Spain from 1785–1787. He is now memorialized as a hero among the Statues of the Liberators in Washington D.C.
The U.S. Founding Fathers expressed doubt about Mexican independence because they believed European systems were fundamentally different than American ones. America had evolved into a nation of self-governance held together by common beliefs that were eventually penned into their founding documents—concepts such as life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, freedom of religion, fair taxes, and limited government. These principles were what the American Revolution had been about. When American aristocrats and militia locked arms to rebel against King George III of England, and stated that there be “no taxation without representation,” they had an entire tradition of Parliamentary government and freedoms to which they could appeal. They were holding the King of England to a standard that the British already believed in, at least idealistically.

This line of argumentation would not have made any sense if the U.S. colonial parent had been Spain. Within the Papal system of monarchs and popes, there was no parliamentary government where commoners had any say in the legislative process. There was no discussion or debate at all. The Founding
Fathers were very concerned about how Mexico and other Latin American nations would self-govern with no tradition of freedom or debate. Most Mexicans weren’t literate, they could not own land, and had been given the message that they should be subdued rather than lifted up. How would they invent a system from nothing that depended on participating in political and economic life?

**Roots in English Tradition**

The roots of American freedom, on the other hand, stemmed from deep within English tradition. Centuries earlier, in 1215, nobles in Runnymede, England held King John accountable for their desires by making him sign the Magna Carta. The “Great Charter” limited the king’s powers by capping what he could tax, making sure nobles had fair trials, and separating his power from the church’s power. It also put the king under law—a radical new idea—and set up a Parliament of people under him who checked his power—also a radical idea. For many years, British kings had the power to dismiss Parliament, but most did not do so because they realized the importance of having the support of their subordinates. This was a big departure from the divine right of kings that was common in France and Spain. There, kings made the laws or even boasted that they were the law. This was known as the Rex Lex, or “The King is Law,” as was evidenced when King Louis XIV of France famously asserted, “L’état c’est moi,” or “I am the state.” In contrast, the king under law became English tradition. This became known as Lex Rex, or “the Law is King.” This belief set the structure of governance for the United States.

**Puritans and Representative Government**

In 1620, the Pilgrims invoked English common law tradition when they signed the Mayflower Compact aboard their ship. They were fleeing King James I of England because they believed he was getting too powerful, especially in his
In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereigne Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britaine, France and Ireland king, defender of the faith, etc. having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honour of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northerne parts of Virginia do by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant, & combine our selves together into a civill body politick; for ye our better ordering, & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof, to enacte, constitute, and frame shuch just & equall lawes, ordinanc- es, Acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for ye generall good of ye colonie: unto which we promise all due sub- mission and obedience. In witness wherof we have here under subscribed our names at Cape Codd ye ·11· of November, in ye year of ye reigne of our soveraigne Lord king James of England, France, & Ireland ye eighteenth and of Scotland ye fifty fourth. Anno: Dom ·1620·.
control over the church. Like the nobles at Runnymede, the Pilgrims believed that the king should not have the ability to direct people’s worship, especially under threat of arrest. They signed a charter on their way to America that said they all, leaders included, were submitting themselves to the laws of God and the “general good of the Colony.” The Pilgrims could do this partly because they shared the same faith, so they believed in essentially the same rules for society. They also shared a similar worldview, a belief that all men were sinful so it was dangerous to promote one sinful man to rule over another. Pilgrims preferred to make rules through discussion and then collectively pledge to obey them. They and like-minded Protestant sects formed the first representative governments in America.

As different groups populated the thirteen colonies, it became even more important that representative government prevail. States created their own charters that enshrined the laws for that state. People could either stay in that state or leave if they did not agree with those laws. They could even start a new state, as the Anabaptists did in Rhode Island when they disagreed with the Puritan direction of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Not one state declared war on another state for forming its own laws or being different.
Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the Heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The Heathens paid divine honours to their deceased kings, and the Christian world hath improved on the plan, by doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the title of sacred majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust!

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offenses of Britain, and, still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, “Come, Come, we shall be friends again, for all this.” But examine the passions and feelings of mankind. Bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me, whether you can hereafter love, honor, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then you are deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity. Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honor, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse more wretched than the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and still can shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy of the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics, England consults the good of this country, no farther than it answers her own purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of ours in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it. A pretty state we should soon be in under such a secondhand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name: And in order to shew that reconciliation now is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, that it would be policy in the king at this time, to repeal the Acts for the sake of reinstating Himself in the Government of the Provinces; in order that He may accomplish by craft and subtlety, in the long run what he cannot do by force and violence in the short one. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

But the most powerful of all arguments, is, that nothing but independence, i.e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable, that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.

All states recognized the importance of decentralized power based on the consent of those they governed, as well as a **free market** and private property rights to undergird their freedoms. Most states had a commitment to Christian morality as well, either unspoken but culturally shared, or established in the state laws directly. Connecticut, for example, passed “the Blue Laws” which reflected Congregationalist morality such as not working on the Sabbath, penalties for adultery, and displaying modest behavior. States like Massachusetts even required literacy and Christian education of their children so that they would be equipped to participate in religious and political life.

**The American Revolution**

Next came the Declaration of Independence which stated outright all the unspoken reasons why people had come to America for 150 years, and how King George III of England was chipping away at the religious and economic freedoms the Americans had been enjoying. At that point in time, America was a land of immigrants who were all different from one another, but who all wanted the same freedoms—even British citizens loyal to the King of England wanted these same freedoms. The signing of the Declaration of Independence was the same story of Englishmen holding the English king accountable for the rights they believed they were due. Except this time, the story went an extra step further. Americans practiced self-government for so long, and they wanted to try and govern themselves without a king at all. Instead, they would create a system that had the power to unite them without sacrificing the liberties of the states and people.

This grew into the U.S. Constitution, a document of **enumerated powers**, meaning the government was limited to the exact powers specified within the document. It broke government into three levels—national, state, and local—and divided each level into three branches—executive,
U.S. Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776

In 1776, the Continental Congress signed a document penned by Thomas Jefferson which declared to King George III of England that the thirteen original colonies of America were no longer part of the British monarchy. The document refers to natural and legal rights, including the right to rebel against a ruler that stifles freedom.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.---That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.---That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

U.S. Constitution
June 21, 1788

In 1788, the first American states ratified the U.S. Constitution which specified the exact powers of the federal government and described how it would be structured. The Preamble declares that the authority of the new nation is to be based on the sovereignty of “we, the people” rather than governmental authority, and specifies the purpose of union is to “secure the blessings of liberty” for generations to come.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God  
A foundational premise prescribing that nature encompasses certain laws, obligations, and reasoning that align with Biblical laws and rules by which humans should maintain a certain respect and reverence, first referenced by Lord Bolingbrook and then his former student Thomas Jefferson.

ratify  
To make an agreement official by signing, consenting, or voting in favor

Bill of Rights  
Ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution establishing certain fundamental rights and privileges of individuals.

After the American Revolution was won, it took a long time for states to agree to this experiment. All of them wanted freedom from England, but not all of them wanted to ratify the Constitution. It wasn’t until the Bill of Rights was added, which clarified freedoms reserved for the states and the people who were exempt from control by Congress, that the more hesitant states decided to replace their first governing document, the Articles of Confederation, with the Constitution. The tradition of decentralized government had been so strong that reluctant states wanted extra limitations on the power of the national government. They especially wanted the powers of free speech, free religion, and free assembly to be written down and upheld.

The early U.S. republic was not perfect. There were major issues such as slavery which had to be dealt with. The Constitution aimed to provide a balance of traditionalism and forward thinking by providing a system that could only be amended slowly. It was a system based on the will of the people rather than that of rulers, a system based on slow legal processes rather than revolutionary whims, and a system based on the rule of law that was legislatively enacted, rather than coerced through the force of the military, a single executive, or a few justices.

Comparison of the U.S. and Mexican Systems  
The United States’ republic was essentially different from legislative, and judicial. This tripartite federalism reflected principles already at work in the colonies, and put them in writing so that future generations of leaders could not suddenly revoke them. It also anchored the moral philosophy of the nation in “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,” and the equality of man, acknowledging the Judeo-Christian principles espoused within British common law—the legal philosophy underlying much of the political framework of American government.
the Mexican Republic of 1824. The long process of debate and ratification that occurred between the U.S. Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the final signing of the Constitution in 1789 ensured that a majority of the populace was on board with exactly how the principles in the founding documents would govern. Delegates took thirteen years to work out exactly how much sovereignty states should have versus the federal government, and exactly how strong the executive, judicial, and legislative branches should be.

Mexico did not go through the same process. They tabled the discussion of empire or republic in order to win their war against Spain. Mexico declared independence after their revolution was won, and allowed the monarchical faction of winners to make its founding document one of an empire. When Mexican delegates were suddenly sent to create a federalist system in 1823, not only did they have to use force to topple their existing government—setting a dangerous precedent—they did not exactly specify the limits of state and national powers. Their states were widely divided on the issue and lived in détente with their national government rather than trusting and participating in it.

Lastly, Mexico created a republic whose executive branch was too weak to lead and protect the country. This led to instability and stagnation that encouraged dictators to oust the president, causing more instability and stagnation. It was a vicious cycle of Mexican leaders living above the law with the backing of an army. In contrast, the United States government officials pledged to uphold the Constitution before they entered office, and they were essentially recapitulating the same agreement King John made to his nobles back in the time of the Magna Carta. They promised to submit themselves to the laws and the people they ruled, rather than to live above them. It was not permissible to form an army and stage a coup to accomplish a personal agenda. Even noble goals like abolition had to go through the specified constitutional process.
Moreover, common Americans expressed themselves in avenues outside government—businesses, churches, and voluntary associations. Americans voted with their feet and their money, going to new places or creating new options if they did not like the ones they had; they did not raise an army. Mexicans, in contrast, did not have any of these options, so revolutionary action became the standard way to voice an opinion. The average Mexican had no freedom of religion, no right to own land, no education, and very little industry or free market to give them opportunity. These were some of the major obstacles the young Mexican republic had to conquer if they were going to break free from the colonial shackles they inherited.

Europeans Looking to Intervene

By the time Mexico achieved independence in 1821 and the rest of Latin America soon after, the United States was feeling very wary of European ambitions in both North and South America. They felt protective of the new republics establishing themselves in the western hemisphere and were not convinced that the British, French, and Spanish were done seeking colonization within their borders or those of Latin America. Americans had reason to be suspicious. Throughout the nineteenth century, European powers were not content to stay out of New World territory.

France. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 ceded France’s territory west of the Mississippi River to the United States, but France was not out of the western hemisphere by any means. With colonial holdings on various Caribbean islands, a significant presence in Canada, and investors and traders in Mexico, the French intended to stay involved long-term. For a brief period in 1823, the French monarchy even considered helping Spain retrieve her Latin American colonies. Once Spain formally recognized Mexican independence in 1836, however, France settled into trade relations with Latin America. To keep cheap goods flowing into her markets, the French monarchy got involved with Texas in the 1830s, and invaded Mexico twice, in
1838 and 1863, just to show how serious they were.

**Great Britain.** The British had even more interest in the western hemisphere than the French did. Although they lost their thirteen colonies in the American Revolution, the British were almost as involved in the Gulf of Mexico as the Spanish were at the time of Mexican independence. During the Napoleonic Wars (1800–1815), when the British desperately resisted takeover by the French, the British were also fighting the War of 1812 in the United States to defend their holdings in the Midwest. They lost this war and had to withdraw from New Orleans and the Mississippi Valley. Britain had no intention, however, of allowing the United States to possess the entire North American continent. The British defeated Napoleon, establishing themselves as the most powerful naval force in the world, and then solidified their holdings in Canada, Oregon, Jamaica, Belize, and Honduras, to bind American expansion and protect their trade interests. They even considered purchasing Cuba from Spain to solidify their dominion in the Caribbean as Spain began to fall from power. In the 1830s and 40s, they would consider claiming California and Texas as well, to limit American growth and get a foothold back on the continent.
Spain. In the 1820s, a goodwill relationship existed between Mexico and the United States because they were united in resisting Spanish re-conquest of Latin America. Although Mexicans had gotten the Viceroy of New Spain to resign in 1821 through the Treaty of Córdoba, King Ferdinand VII of Spain refused to recognize the treaty. In 1822, orders from the king demanded that anyone supporting Mexican independence be put in prison. Spain then occupied the port and garrison of San Juan de Ulúa in order to maintain access to Mexico, and flooded it with troops. The United States and Britain both agreed to give Mexico its first warships, creating the seed of the Mexican navy. Spain replied by bombing Veracruz. War raged for two years before the Spanish were finally expelled from San Juan de Ulúa in 1825. The next four years saw intermittent battles between Spanish and Mexican forces for control of Cuba, which had been Spain’s base in the Caribbean since Columbus and Cortés. Mexico was adamant that Cuba not become a staging ground for future Spanish re-conquest, and the United States agreed. During 1826–1829, the Mexican navy was even led by U.S. Commodore David Porter. The year 1829 saw the final defeat of Spanish forces, and Spain freed Mexico permanently in the 1836 Treaty of Santa María-Calatrava.

All this political maneuvering made the United States very nervous about European intentions during 1810–1836. The U.S. viewed Spain as a hostile threat to liberty, the French as an opportunistic royal force, and the British as a scheming country looking for new
angles to prevent American growth. There were other foreign powers involved in the western hemisphere as well, such as the Russians who were expanding their fur trade down into Oregon and California. All the circling of powerful European empires around the relatively new nations of the United States and Latin America prompted the American government to take a hard line towards foreign powers in the 1820s.

The Monroe Doctrine

In 1823, President James Monroe proclaimed that, “The American continents...are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.” This monumental statement was said in the specific context of Mexico and the emerging Latin republics of the 1810–1830s. In what became known as the Monroe Doctrine, American foreign policy was to be governed around the following principles:

1. European colonies in North or South America would not be tolerated.

2. The United States would keep out of the affairs of European nations, wars, and colonies.

These two principles were meant to establish reciprocity where the United States would not interfere with the policies of the Old World, and the European powers would no longer impose their systems in the New World. If they did, President Monroe went on to say, the United States would act to defend their “peace and safety.” In effect, a new Line of Demarcation was being drawn to divide the New World from the Old, except that now the New World was supposed to be the more modern and progressive of the two. The Founding Fathers all believed that the political, economic, and religious systems of America were different and better than those in Europe; Monroe was formalizing that. He was saying that America had no intention of proactively interfering with European matters, but would do so if Europe threatened liberty on their half of the globe.

6 ibid
AGE OF INDEPENDENCE

It was a tricky thing to argue. How could the United States confront European imperialism while “keeping out” of European colonial affairs? Can one country threaten war, in order to keep the peace? Does this make them imperialistic too? These questions were opened by the first American presidents living in the age of independence, and would continue to be debated through history. In 1823, the Monroe Doctrine was seen as a necessary proclamation to keep Europe on its half of the globe. Wanting to give their “sister republic” an advantage in particular, America’s leaders assumed a protective role over Mexico from 1810 to 1830. Unfortunately for them, Mexico neither asked for nor trusted this protection.

Latin America’s Perception of the Monroe Doctrine

The Monroe Doctrine was well articulated by James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams, but it was not a treaty or a formal document. The doctrine was merely a principle, invisible but powerful, that guided United States policy and debate until the twentieth century. This did not encourage Mexico, who could not use it to rely on American economic or military support for its problems. Neither was Mexico sure whether it wanted such support. Spanish colonies had been raised to distrust their so-called protectors. On one hand, Mexicans admired the United States for its success as a constitutional republic. On the other hand, they feared the United States’ expansion since 1776, which had at times been backed by war. While Americans thought of themselves as powerful yet restrained, Mexicans worried that America was just another expansionist country that might easily set her eye on Cuba or Mexico, like the Spanish, British, and French had done. They had no guarantee, Monroe Doctrine notwithstanding, that the United States would not become its own empire and want to run the western hemisphere.
The general aspect of the affairs of our neighboring American nations of the south has been rather of approaching than of settled tranquillity. Internal disturbances have been more frequent among them than their common friends would have desired. Our intercourse with all has continued to be that of friendship and of mutual good will. Treaties of commerce and of boundaries with the United Mexican States have been negotiated, but, from various successive obstacles, not yet brought to a final conclusion.

The civil war which unfortunately still prevails in the Republics of Central America has been unpropitious to the cultivation of our commercial relations with them, and the dissensions and revolutionary changes in the Republics of Colombia and of Peru have been seen with cordial regret by us, who would gladly contribute to the happiness of both. It is with great satisfaction, however, that we have witnessed the recent conclusion of a peace between the Governments of Buenos Ayres and of Brazil, and it is equally gratifying to observe that indemnity has been obtained for some of the injuries which our fellow citizens had sustained in the latter of those countries. The rest are in a train of negotiation, which we hope may terminate to mutual satisfaction, and that it may be succeeded by a treaty of commerce and navigation, upon liberal principles, propitious to a great and growing commerce, already important to the interests of our country.

The southern Republics of our own hemisphere have not yet realized all the advantages for which they have been so long struggling. We trust, however, that the day is not distant when the restoration of peace and internal quiet, under permanent systems of government, securing the liberty and promoting the happiness of the citizens, will crown with complete success their long and arduous efforts in the cause of self-government, and enable us to salute them as friendly rivals in all that is truly great and glorious.

The recent invasion of Mexico, and the effect thereby produced upon her domestic policy, must have a controlling influence upon the great question of South American emancipation. We have seen the fell spirit of civil disension rebuked, and perhaps forever stilled, in that Republic by the love of independence. If it be true, as appearances strongly indicate, the spirit of independence is the master spirit, and if a corresponding sentiment prevails in the other States, this devotion to liberty cannot be without a proper effect upon the counsels of the mother country. The adoption by Spain of a pacific policy toward her former colonies -- an event consoling to humanity, and a blessing to the world, in which she herself cannot fail largely to participate -- may be most reasonably expected.

The claims of our citizens upon the South American Governments generally are in a train of settlement, while the principal part of those upon Brazil have been adjusted, and a decree in council ordering bonds to be issued by the minister of the treasury for their amount has received the sanction of His Imperial Majesty. This event, together with the exchange of the ratifications of the treaty negotiated and concluded in 1828, happily terminates all serious causes of difference with that power.

Measures have been taken to place our commercial relations with Peru upon a better footing than that upon which they have hitherto rested, and if met by a proper disposition on the part of that Government important benefits may be secured to both countries.

Deeply interested as we are in the prosperity of our sister Republics, and more particularly in that of our immediate neighbor, it would be most gratifying to me were I permitted to say that the treatment which we have received at her hands has been as universally friendly as the early and constant solicitude manifested by the United States for her success gave us a right to expect. But it becomes my duty to inform you that prejudices long indulged by a portion of the inhabitants of Mexico against the envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States have had an unfortunate influence upon the affairs of the two countries, and have diminished that usefulness to his own which was justly to be expected from his talents and zeal. To this cause, in a great degree, is to be imputed the failure of several measures equally interesting to both parties, but particularly that of the Mexican Government to ratify a treaty negotiated and concluded in its own capital and under its own eye. Under these circumstances it appeared expedient to give to Mr. Poinsett the option either to return or not, as in his judgment the interest of his country might require, and instructions to that end were prepared; but before they could be dispatched a communication was received from the Government of Mexico, through its charge d'affaires here, requesting the recall of our minister. This was promptly complied with, and a representative of a rank corresponding with that of the Mexican diplomatic agent near this Government was appointed. Our conduct toward that Republic has been uniformly of the most friendly character, and having thus removed the only alleged obstacle to harmonious intercourse, I cannot but hope that an advantageous change will occur in our affairs.

There were instances of overreach already, from the Mexican viewpoint. The U.S. had seeded the Mexican navy, offered repeatedly to buy the Mexican state of Texas, considered annexing El Salvador, and generally thought of themselves as leader and spokesperson for the New World. Yet Americans had shown restraint as well. Mexicans had invited American involvement into their war against Spanish re-conquest, not the other way around. The United States had refused to involve themselves in Mexico’s war of independence, the Mexican Empire, the Constitution of 1824, or their trade relations with foreign countries. Both Cuba and El Salvador had requested American troops to come fight their wars of liberation, and Americans had declined. The prime concern of the early U.S. republic was to stay on its feet, not to get involved with Latin American politics. U.S. leaders were willing to go to war on their behalf if necessary but did not want to overreach financially or militarily in order to do so. The words “friendly” and “happy” pervaded the annual presidential States of the Union between 1820 and 1846 because American presidents were hoping to be a beacon of light to the world. They wanted to prove that modern trade and decentralized government was the new model of the future rather than empires, colonies, competition, and control.

Still, on the balance, Mexicans worried about the United States. What if Americans wanted to prevent Europeans from moving into the western hemisphere just so they could own it all? What if their protecting liberty in the New World meant their running it? In ad-
dition to these pressing questions, Mexico was very unstable and disunited. They had had an empire, a federal republic, civil rebellions, and four different rulers in just a few years, between 1821 and 1824. They were poor and wracked by political factions, as were all the new Latin American nations. This set the stage for Mexico to be both suspicious and aggressive when, just a few years after being free from Spanish threat, the struggle for Texas exploded onto the scene.

Chapter Summary

The age of independence saw Mexico emerge from three centuries of authoritarian leadership under Spain. American leaders expressed both hope and skepticism that Mexico would discover true representative government and freedom. The United States was relatively young itself but had experienced a century and a half of liberty before its development culminated in independence from Britain. American philosophical and cultural underpinnings were based on a long tradition of British common law, representation, and limited government, which were enumerated in documents that were ratified and honored. The Founding Fathers worried that Mexico was attempting to mirror this process in outward form without the culture or infrastructure necessary to sustain it.

When the United States noticed how much trouble Mexico and new Latin republics were having getting on their feet, they were concerned that European powers would move in and take advantage. In the period between 1820 and 1846, France, Britain, and Spain were all knocking at the doors of North and South America in various ways. The United States took a protective stance and leadership role in the western hemisphere through the Monroe Doctrine, beginning in 1823. This looked suspicious to many in Mexico and throughout Latin America, who worried that their strong and prosperous neighbor to the north would take advantage of them just like other foreign powers had.
Discussion Questions

1. How did King Charles III of Spain impact the future of Spanish expansion and colonization? How would Spain have been affected had he not acted in the way that he did at the time?

2. Discuss the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence to both settlers and the world at the time of its composition.

3. Discuss the intent, meaning, and importance of the U.S. Constitution to Americans at the time of its composition. What challenges wrought the authors and thinkers of the time?

4. Discuss the intent, meaning, and importance of the Bill of Rights. Explain the necessity for each article at the time of its composition.

5. Explain the appeal of the Declaration of Independence to U.S. Immigrants. What hope, encouragement, or optimism can one find within the intent of the document?

6. Select a passage from the Declaration of Independence or the US Constitution. Discuss how the actions of U.S. citizens and the local, state, and federal governments have either met or failed to meet the ideals espoused in the founding documents. Further your argument by citing current newspaper articles or local, state, or federal legislation to reinforce your claim.

7. In 1823, Central America broke away from the First Mexican Empire. What problems prevented Central America from solving their differences and establishing a federal government similar to the United States? What actions could have changed their course? What advantages would they have seen had they succeeded?

8. Explain the delicate nature of government in Mexico and Central America due to loyalty to tribal heritage and cultural differences among people. What role did their similarities and differences take as they struggled for freedom or power?
SECTION 1
4-1: Prelude to War

SECTION 2
4-2: The Mexican-American War (1846–1848)
Prelude to War

Background to Conflict

The Mexican-American War in 1846 arose because two developing republics who lived side by side viewed the world very differently. Americans, having created a stable, free nation after their independence, were swept into a self-image of hope and glory. They wanted to see representative government fill the western hemisphere and have the American way of thinking spread everywhere. These goals culminated in a fierce battle for Texas, which had become a predominantly American development, and the spoils of California and New Mexico.

Mexicans, on the other hand, inherited a world of chaos and conflict after their war for independence, and the country was swept into a season of financial hardship, military coups, and confusion over how best to govern their still poor populace of Indians and laborers. The U.S. quest for Texas, California, and New Mexico was a serious affront to Mexican honor and made it seem like the U.S. was the next colonial superpower Mexico needed to fight. Mexico’s fight against Texan independence in 1835 and American aggression in the Mexican-American War that followed was Mexico’s attempt to make sure that the United States did not encroach on its sovereignty. Mexico lost both of these wars, largely due to political and financial mismanagement by the key political figure of their time, Antonio López de Santa Anna. Mexico’s relationship with the U.S. became strained from that point on.
Sparse Settlement in Northern Mexico

Between 1500 and 1800, colonial Spain did not settle their northern frontier well, and the states of Las Californias, Coahuila y Tejas, and Nuevo México went largely undeveloped, unprotected, and unmonitored. The Spanish army did not defend the border. It was wild territory and difficult to populate. Transportation, communication, and supply wagons were inadequate. After three hundred years, the long history of sparse settlement triggered both American and foreign interest in this area.

Texas

Texas was difficult to farm, far from Mexico City, and surrounded by hostile Indians, so it struggled for many years. Under Spanish rule, it took over six months for wagonloads of goods to reach Texas via the Camino Real. Once or twice a year, Tejanos would receive shipments of supplies and have their own harvest and goods hauled away. By law, they were prevented from making their own goods or using the Gulf of Mexico to get shipments faster. This was not an ideal situation, so by the time of the Mexican independence in 1821, there were only about 2500 Tejano citizens. Most of them lived close to the Rio Grande border, and most of them had been sent involuntarily by the government.

Hoping that more settlers would boost the national economy, as well as prevent Comanche Indians from penetrating Mexico, Mexico passed the General Colonization Laws, which invited Americans to immigrate and become Mexican citizens in El Norte. In January 1821, before Mexico had completed their independence from Spain, a man from Missouri, Moses Austin, had obtained the first charter to start an American colony in Texas. After his death, his son Stephen Austin obtained legal rights to the charter from the new Mexican government. With it, Austin started the largest colony in Texas with 300 American families. Soon, hundreds more families joined

Camino Real
A mule trail, connecting Mexico City with access across Texas that became an important route for evangelization, trade, development, and immigration, therefore being dubbed a ‘royal’ road by the Spanish.

Tejanos
People of Mexican descent living in Texas, from as early as the Spanish occupation.

Río Grande
The fourth longest river in the U.S., flowing from Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico, has marked the boundary between Mexico and the United States since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

El Norte
“The North”; a term used to refer to the United States, illustrating the hope for a promised land and a new life there.

Stephen Austin
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

APACHES AND COMANCHES IN TEXAS: Apaches and Comanches in Texas. Texas was a “crossroads” of many Indian tribes, including the Kiowa, Karankawa, Apache, Navajo, and Comanche. Many tribes passed through Shoshone territory in the upper northwest and converged in Texas, causing displacement and inter-tribal warfare. In the 1700s, the Comanche descended and drove the Apaches living in the Great Plains down into south Texas. Many Apaches settled around San Antonio, causing almost constant war with the Spanish between the years 1730 and 1740. Major missionary efforts began, and the governor of Texas outlawed the provoking of the Apache people in order to stem the tide of revenge killing. By 1749, the Catholicization of Apaches had advanced to such a degree that Apaches buried a hatchet in a public peace ceremony, giving rise to the popular expression today. There might have been permanent peace except that Comanches descending deeper into Texas massacred Apaches and burned down the Spanish missions. The Comanche then incurred a bad reputation among Texans for stealing cattle and horses, kidnapping women and children to sell in markets, and burning or looting entire settlements. In the 1820s, Texans still sought to subdue Comanchería and were upset that the Mexican government could not help them.

New Mexico

Early New Mexico experienced poverty like Texas, in addition to hostile Indian raids. In 1598, Spain founded New Mexico and established Santa Fe soon after to Catholicize the Pueblo Indians who lived there. The Pueblos, however, revolted in 1680 and burned down the missions and haciendas to drive the Spanish out. The Spanish resettled Santa Fe a decade later, but found that Apaches had invaded and conquered the Pueblos. Apache raids continued into the 1700s.
and abated only when Comanches arrived and drove them into Texas. The Comanche then took over the role of terrorizing the Spanish and Puebloan peoples.

New Mexico remained undeveloped due to infrequent supply loads, which came by ox-cart from Mexico City through such treacherous desert that sometimes supplies arrived only once every few years. The population by 1750 was a meager 4500. In 1792, New Mexico was linked to Missouri through the new Santa Fe Trail created by the French. After France sold this territory to the United States, Americans further developed the trail to carry manufactured goods to pioneers and fur traders in the Great Plains. They supplied El Norte with goods they couldn’t otherwise get—wheat, cloth, buttons, and thread—and made it safer and easier to settle there. After 1823, Mexico’s General Colonization Laws allowed American citizens to freely trade in New Mexico, and a burgeoning population became dependent on American development and defense rather than Mexico City’s. By 1850, Santa Fe had become a commercial hub for western trade, mostly due to American pioneering and manufacturing.

California

As late as 1845, the upper and lower regions of Las Californias were still extremely undeveloped with fewer than 3,000 Mexican citizens up the Pacific coastline and no interior settlement at all. In 1833, the Mexican government forcibly secularized the California missions, and priests and missionaries were driven off the land. With the church’s property now confiscated, the government permitted Californios, or secular farmers and ranchers, to move in and occupy the vacant land. Californios assumed large tracts, sometimes up to 200,000 acres, in order to try and hold the area for Mexico. Governing the area was difficult because the Mexican government did not provide much support. Soldiers stopped receiving their pay and began to sack...
old missions for supplies. Ships and caravans from Mexico City no longer came to supply or pick up goods. Mexican law stated that states should pay the salaries of their governors, but very few northern territories made enough money to support one. Crime then increased, which was compounded by undesirables that Mexico City occasionally shipped north.

Between 1821 and 1846, Californios began to sell their products illegally to the United States in order to support themselves. Americans traded them basic goods for Mexican cattle, horses, hides, and tallow. It was then that Americans noticed the beautiful orchards of Yerba Buena as well as San Francisco, with its safe harbor along the Pacific. They also noted how little Mexico was governing and developing the region. There were constant murders, executions, and revolutions, in addition to rumors that both the British in Oregon and the Russian fur-traders on the coast wanted to colonize California. In 1841, an enterprising adventurer from New England remarked, “In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be!”

Conflict in Texas Begins

The state of Texas was the powder keg for the trouble that Mexico and the United States found themselves in by 1846. After the Colonization Laws in 1823 brought a huge influx of Americans into El Norte, those states started to become more culturally American and more economically dependent on American trade. When Mexican governance and support fell through, as it often did, the northern states turned to business with the United States to keep afloat. During the years of the Mexican Republic, this was not a problem; however, in the 1830s, the national government of Mexico began to get cold feet and consolidate power. When this occurred, Texas rebelled and set off a chain of events that led directly to the Mexican-American War.

Texas under the 1824 Constitution. In 1824, the Mexican Constitution permitted each state to make its own charter, and the charter

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of Coahuila y Tejas pleased both its American and Tejano settlers by addressing common concerns: developing the economy, protecting themselves from Indian raids, and resisting incursion from the Mexican central government. For the most part, Tejanos and Americans lived in partnership with each other, working to deal with hostile Indians and better each other’s businesses. As Americans began to pour in, Tejanos accepted American settlers because they were the gateway to selling their products and supporting themselves—there was no market for their goods in Mexico. Farmers from Southern and Appalachian states brought advanced farming and irrigation techniques, so in addition to ranching, Texas became a cotton state, which was highly profitable. Cotton crops were supported by slavery, which President Guerrero had outlawed in 1829, but the Mexican government decided not to enforce abolition in Texas or the areas it had opened to foreign settlement under the Colonization Laws. American immigrants brought slaves, paid homage to the Catholic Church, which was required by Mexican law, and became Mexican citizens. Some married Tejano women and learned Spanish. In the early years, Stephen Austin was especially respected as a Mexican citizen because he spoke Spanish fluently and interacted appropriately with the Mexican government. All Texans, whether Tejano or American, agreed that they were happy being isolated from the growing turmoil and factionalism in Mexico City.

Cracking Down on Texas

But by 1830, there were over 20,000 Americans living in Texas, with thousands more coming every year. American Texans had grown from outnumbering Tejanos 2:1, to almost 10:1. They were now developing the state, running it according to their own rules, and, at times, deriding Mexican governance. In 1826, Comanche Indians burned an entire Texan colony to the ground and, when no attention or support was offered by Mexico City, Texans raised the prospect of independence, stating that if Mexican authority was inadequate to govern their state, then settlers would have to do it themselves. Many Tejanos shared this sentiment, which greatly disturbed Mexico City; from their perspective, American Texas
needed to be brought back under Mexican control.

The Reforms of 1830 attempted to do just that. President Anastasio Bustamante passed laws that outlawed further American immigration. He also instituted a high property tax, which Texans had never been required to pay before, raised taxes on goods shipped from America, and ordered Texans to abolish slavery under threat of military intervention. Mexico City started to build garrisons in Texas and station soldiers in customs houses, military forts, and other public places to keep closer tabs on commoners. Texans knew they were being monitored for compliance and deeply resented this power grab.

The first revolt broke out in 1832 at the Battle of Velasco, when Mexicans trying to enforce the 1830 Reforms in east Texas also tried to prevent an American uprising. In the end, American Texans drove all Mexicans out of east Texas and convened to lodge complaints against the Mexican government. Stephen Austin was elected to go to Mexico City as a Texan delegate and petition the federal government to restore the old immigration and tax laws. He achieved temporary success but, only six months later, was arrested for treason and imprisoned in Mexico City. From prison, he penned a treatise about the need for Texans to regain their 1824 constitutional rights.

### President Santa Anna

Antonio López de Santa Anna was the President of Mexico who heard Stephen Austin’s case and had him arrested in Mexico City. Santa Anna had just been elected in 1833 as a defender of republican government. In 1835, however, he changed his mind and retracted the Mexican Constitution of 1824. All Mexican states lost their sovereignty overnight.

Renaming the country, “The Centralist Republic of Mexico,” Santa Anna consolidated power and wrote a new constitution that revoked all state charters and replaced them with the Sete Leyes, or “Seven Laws.” One of these laws eradicated...
They commence by entering the territory they covet, upon pretense of carrying on commerce, or of the establishment of settlements, with or without the consent of the government to which it belongs. The settlers grow, multiply, become the predominant party in the population, and as soon as foundation is laid in this manner, they begin to set up rights which it is impossible to support in a serious discussion, and to bring forward ridiculous pretensions, founded upon historical facts which are admitted by nobody...These pioneers excite, by degrees, movements which disturb the political state of the country in dispute. When things have come to this pass, the diplomatic management commences; the unrest they have excited in the territory in dispute, the interests of the settlers there, the incursions of adventurers and savages instigated by them, and the persistence with which the opinion is set up as to their right of possession, become the subjects of notes, full of expressions of justice and moderation, until, with the aid of other incidents, which are never wanting in the course of diplomatic relations, the desired end is attained of concluding an arrangement as hard on one party as it is advantageous to the other.


Lucas Alamán ca. 1830

*Lucas Alamán met with Joel Roberts Poinsett, President Jackson’s envoy to Mexico. After the meeting and negotiation to purchase Texas, which failed, Alamán described America’s approach to annexation as aggressive.*
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

SANTA ANNA: Santa Anna rotated political philosophies throughout his lifetime. He was born into a wealthy family from Veracruz, trained in the Spanish colonial army, and served as a royalist under Emperor Iturbide where he executed Mexican rebels and Indian revolutionaries. In 1822, however, Santa Anna converted to republicanism and helped General Victoria overthrow Iturbide in the Plan de Casa Mata. In the early years of the Mexican Republic, he helped govern the Yucatan Republic, joined a commission that was planning Cuban independence, and led a coup that helped to establish Guerrero as president in 1828. For his crushing victory over the Spanish at Tampico in 1829, he gave himself the title, “Napoleon of the West.” He helped depose the centralist President Bustamante in 1830 which led to his election as President in 1833. For one year, he attempted liberal government which included such measures as secularizing the Catholic missions and confiscating church property.

Between 1834 and 1835, Santa Anna repealed his earlier reforms, ended Mexican federalism, and enacted the Si-ete Leyes which established the reign of the caudillo—the authoritarian military governor—in Mexico. Santa Anna began operating as a dictator, jailing intellectuals and those who spoke against him, quelling revolts, and rotating in and out of the presidency as the public alternately requested him, then exiled him. Santa Anna ruled eleven times between 1833 and 1855, always with dictatorial and military power whenever he came into office. He was so influential that sometimes this era is referred to as, “The Age of Santa Anna.” He is known to have said,

“It is very true that I threw up my cap for liberty with great ardor, and perfect sincerity, but very soon found the folly of it. A hundred years to come my people will not be fit for liberty. They do not know what it is, unenlightened as they are, and under the influence of a Catholic clergy, a despotism is the proper government for them, but there is no reason why it should not be a wise and virtuous one.”

Mexican states altogether and replaced them with “departments” whose governors and lawmakers were appointed by the president rather than elected by their citizens. For causing trouble, Texas was divided into three departments and sent new Mexican governors who would stop conventions and other forms of subversive activity. Other states were similarly redesigned and sent governors who would be faithful to Santa Anna. Representative government was now over.

Civil Revolt

As soon as Santa Anna retracted the Mexican Constitution of 1824 and replaced it with the 1835 Constitution, rebellion broke out all over Mexico. Santa Anna made it his personal quest to subdue all uprisings, which in addition to Coahuila and Texas, occurred in San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Durango, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Yucatan, Nuevo León, Jalisco, Tamaulipas, Oaxaca, and Zacatecas. Indian nationalists led many of these liberation movements, and some were semi-successful.

The Maya. In the Yucatan, criollo governor Lorenzo de Zavala had martialed the indigenous Maya against Emperor Agustín Iturbide and declared the Yucatan Republic in 1822. In those days, Santa Anna had been a royalist general on Iturbide’s side, and Zavala had opposed him. When Santa Anna became President of Mexico in 1833, the Yucatan was not any more willing to submit to him than they had been before. They continued to oppose Santa Anna throughout his reign, causing him much trouble.

Tabascans. In Zacatecas, the Tabascans similarly rebelled against Santa Anna. In 1835, the first Zacatecan army led by Francisco García obtained a large number of British muskets and rifles to confront Santa Anna’s troops. Santa Anna defeated them, took 3,000 prisoners of war, and looted their villages to force their surrender. This solidified Tabascan resistance against Santa Anna’s regime, and made them determined to fight him as long as he was in power.

The Pueblos. In New Mexico, Pueblo Indians beheaded the new governor that Santa Anna sent them and installed their own gover-
nor to protest both Mexican and American leadership. They threatened to create the República Mexicana del Norte, the “Mexican Republic of the North,” out of Pueblo territory across California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. Santa Anna quickly put down that rebellion.

Coahuila. The people of Coahuila who had been joined to Texas for many years, had a history of self-reliance, and resisted Santa Anna’s centralism as well. While Stephen Austin was imprisoned in Mexico City, the governor of Coahuila, Agustín Viesca, attempted his own insurgency. Federal soldiers were sent to arrest him, and they disbanded his rebel government.

In the end, the only state that successfully broke away from Mexican control was Texas. Some revolutionaries from El Norte fled to Texas once their own movements had been thwarted. Others stayed where they were, continuing to revolt alongside Texas, hoping that protracted resistance would eventually triumph.

The Texas Revolution

In the summer of 1835, skirmishes between Texans and Mexican authorities provoked Santa Anna into desiring to rid Texas of Americans once and for all. Newly released from prison, Stephen Austin began to organize a resistance army. The opening shots of the Texas Revolution were fired on October 2, 1835 in the small town of Gonzales. When the Mexican army commander in Texas demanded the citizens of Gonzales surrender their cannon, Texan rebels flew a flag that read, “Come and Take It,” before attacking the Mexican base camp. The conflict lasted only a few hours, but the Mexican army withdrew and Texans kept their cannon. It was a moral victory, and the start of Texan secession from Mexico.

Santa Anna’s Siege of San Antonio. One month later, Texans formed their first provisional government. Convention
The Texan View of Independence

By 1835, Texan views of independence were crystallizing and expressing themselves through the mouths of popular Texan and Tejano leaders.

"The fundamental compact having been dissolved, and all the guarantees of the civil and political rights of citizens having been destroyed, it is inevitable that all the states of the confederation are left at liberty to act for themselves, and require Coahuila and Texas to provide for their security and preservation as circumstances may require. Coahuila and Texas formed a state of the [Mexican] republic, and as one part of this is occupied by an invading force, the free part of it should proceed to organize a power which would restore harmony, and establish order and uniformity in all branches of the public administration, which would be a rallying point for the citizens, whose hearts now tremble for liberty! But as this power can be organized only by means of a convention, which would represent the free will of the citizens of Texas, it is my opinion that this step should be taken, and I suggest the 15th day of October as a time sufficient to allow all the departments to send their representatives."

(Lorenzo de Zavala, 1835).

"Our proclamations to the other states of the Mexican Confederation, asking them to support us in our struggle for the restoration of our former rights, and for the protection of the Constitution of 1824, have, as you well know, been without results. Even many of the Mexicans who live between the Sabine and the Rio Grande have disdainfully forsaken the cause of freedom, and have not only denied us their support but united themselves with the troops of Santa Anna and as enemies waged was against the land"

(Sam Houston, to the soldiers at Goliad, 1835)
members flew the flag of the First Mexican Republic over the meetinghouse, signifying that they wanted their 1824 freedoms back. This caused Santa Anna to order his brother-in-law, General Martín Perfecto de Cos, to march into San Antonio and seize the garrison there. In December, the Texan army defeated Cos and forced him to sign a statement stating that he would leave Texas and stop fighting the Constitution of 1824. General Cos returned to Mexico humiliated, which roused Santa Anna to vengeful action. He legally declared American Texans to be “pirates,” which guaranteed that in future wars, they would be executed immediately rather than given quarter as prisoners of war. This was the same thing Spain had done to Mexicans during the War of Independence. Santa Anna had been trained in that system and was similarly determined to subdue the rebels.

Independence Declared. On March 2, 1836, Texas convention members declared independence at Washington-on-the-Brazos and flew the flag of the Lone Star Republic. Sam Houston was named the new President and head of the revolutionary army. Meanwhile, Stephen Austin left military command to recruit in the United States where “Texas Committees” raised funds and supplied volunteers. Austin offered large land grants to American soldiers who came to fight, promising that once Texans won their independence, they would distribute land freely. This caused many frontiersmen, especially from Kentucky and Tennessee, to join the cause.

The Alamo & Goliad. Four days after independence, on March 6, 1836, Santa Anna’s army crossed the Rio Grande and attacked an old Spanish mission in San Antonio called the Alamo. Santa Anna had selected this target because it held weapons and had been the site of General Cos’ defeat. Approximately two hundred American soldiers were executed that day, including the famous woodsman Davy Crockett. Texans sent messengers to warn fellow Americans who were stationed at Goliad, another armored
Today at five in the morning, the assault was made by four columns under the command of General Cos and Colonels Duque, Romero, and Morales. His Excellency the President [Santa Anna] commanded the reserves. The firing lasted half an hour. Our jefes [commanders], officers, and troops, at the same time as if by magic, reached the top of the wall, jumped within, and continued fighting with side arms. By six thirty there was not an enemy left. I saw actions of heroic valor I envied. I was horrified by some cruelties, among others, the death of an old man named Cochran and of a boy about fourteen. The women and children were saved. Travis, the commandant of the Alamo died like a hero; Buy [Bowie], the braggart son-in-law of Beramendi [died] like a coward. The troops were permitted to pillage. The enemy has suffered a heavy loss: twenty-one field pieces of different caliber, many arms and munitions. Two hundred fifty-seven of their men were killed; I have seen and counted their bodies. But I cannot be glad because we lost eleven officers with nineteen wounded, including the valiant Duque and González, and two hundred forty-seven of our troops were wounded and one hundred ten killed. It can truly be said that with another such victory as this we’ll go to the devil.

(José Juan Sánchez)


The following is a first-hand account of the Battle of the Alamo, written by José Juan Sánchez Navarro, an Adjutant Inspector in northern Mexico. It expresses his disillusionment with the attack.
The following is the “victory or death” letter written by the Texas Commander, William Barret Travis, as the Alamo was being besieged by Santa Anna and his soldiers. Travis died a week later, on March 6, at the hands of Mexican troops.

Commandancy of the Alamo,
Bejar, Feby. 24, 1836
To the People of Texas & All Americans in the World

Fellow citizens & compatriots,

I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country VICTORY OR DEATH.

William Barret Travis,
Lt. Col. Comdt.

P.S. The Lord is on our side. When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels... Travis

mission a few miles away, that the Mexican army was coming. Santa Anna arrived first, however, and massacred the Texans at Goliad, desecrating their corpses afterwards. The death of over 500 innocents that week solidified Texan resistance. They knew now that there was no place for them inside Mexico, and became determined to avenge the deaths of their brethren.

San Jacinto. Seven weeks later, on April 21, 1836, Santa Anna led the Mexican army back to Texas to deal a final blow. He expected an easy win, but 900 Texans led by Sam Houston launched a surprise attack on him at San Jacinto. Texans crying, “Remember the Alamo!” and, “Remember Goliad!” routed Santa Anna’s army. Following the battle, a Texan scout stumbled upon Santa Anna in the woods and brought him to face Sam Houston. Expecting execution, Santa Anna bargained for his life by agreeing to make the Mexican Congress recognize Texan independence. Sam Houston recorded this in the terms of armistice in the Treaty of Velasco, which recognized an independent Republic of Texas at the Rio Grande border, and stated that Mexican troops would stay behind that border.
Mexico Dismisses the Treaty. When Santa Anna returned to Mexico City, however, the government had installed a new president who dismissed the Treaty of Velasco and refused to recognize Texan independence. In addition, they had officially deposed Santa Anna in order to argue that he was not the acting president at the moment he signed, that he had signed without authority under duress, and therefore Texas to the Nueces River, not the Rio Grande, was still part of Mexican territory.

Post-Revolution

The failure of the Mexican government to recognize Texan independence in 1836 directly led to the Mexican-American War. For the next ten years, Mexico City continued to view Texas as a rebellious province that still needed to be put down like all the other states it had conquered—not as an autonomous nation that had freedom to ally with foreign powers—or worse, join one. The Mexican government still clung to the border agreements of Adams-Onís in 1819 and the Treaty of Limits in 1828, insisting that Texas and the United States honor these. Texans, on the other hand, believed that the Treaty of Velasco redefined the borders, and that they were recapitulating the same struggle for liberty that Mexico fought with Spain. They believed they had won their independence fairly, and that their treaty of independence was being unjustly dismissed. The United States tended to agree, feeling kinship with Texas because its volunteers had joined the fight and because the majority of Texans had at one point been American citizens. Sam Houston, for example, had previously been the governor of Tennessee. Most Americans saw the Texan Revolution as a fight for representative government in the same trajectory as their own revolution in 1776. They believed Texas and the U.S. had the right to negotiate as they desired, free from any obligations to Mexico.

The Lone Star Republic. The Lone Star flag flew over Texas for nine years between 1836 and 1845. Sam Houston served as President and Lorenzo de Zavala, the Mexican hero of the Yucatan Republic, served as Vice President. During this time, Santa
Anna left soldiers at the border to monitor Texans. This both encouraged more Americans to migrate to Texas to help defend it and increased Texan suspicion that they had not heard the last of the Mexican government.

Internally, the Lone Star Republic faced some challenges. Sam Houston had offered land to Texas Indians to keep them from aiding the Mexican army during the revolution. Once the revolution was over, however, he faced trouble keeping the promises he had made. His constituents did not want him to turn over large portions of land to Indians because some had aided Santa Anna while others had caused trouble during the revolution. Houston also had difficulty preventing discrimination towards Tejanos after it was discovered that a group of Tejano spies had aided Santa Anna’s attack on the Alamo. Although other Tejanos had urged rebellion against Santa Anna and fought for freedom side by side with Americans, it became difficult for them to avoid racist treatment. Sam Houston’s right hand man, Juan Seguín, was a Tejano patriot who had to leave Texas for several years because he did not feel safe living there. He returned, but social injustice towards Tejanos and Indians plagued Texas for many years.

In other ways, the fledgling republic governed and supported itself well. Texans were used to living independently and now had a sizeable population and army. Between 1836 and 1845, Texas was officially recognized by the United States government, as well as by the governments of France, Britain, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Texas traded with these nations as an equal and received token assurance of their protection if they were attacked again by Mexico. Texas also applied for annexation to the United States in 1837, but when the U.S. tabled the offer, they decided to simply enjoy the independence they had fought for. Until 1842, there was no further talk of joining the United States or any other nation.

**annexation**

To become incorporated within another country or territory.
1836-1845 Interim

Political and Economic Instability in Mexico. There was a nine-year period between Texan independence in 1836 and its annexation by the United States in 1845. This was a difficult time for Mexico. Santa Anna intended to conquer Texas quickly, but other pressing matters delayed him. To begin with, the Mexican government was in turmoil. In the 27 years between Mexican independence in 1821

LORENZO DE ZAVALA: Lorenzo de Zavala began his long defense of republican government starting in the Yucatan where he was born in 1788. He went to seminary there, became the editor of several newspapers that espoused democratic ideals, and eventually served as a city councilman. He was imprisoned for his ideas at San Juan de Ulúa during the Mexican War of Independence, but after his release, was an active Congressman during the early years of the First Mexican Republic. During the Reforms of 1830, however, as the centralization of Mexico began, Zavala was ousted and sent into exile. He resided in New York City for two years where he managed to stir up interest for a new Texan colony and sell large tracts of land to support it through the Galveston Bay Company. Zavala was then permitted to return to Mexico, where, for a brief time, he served as Santa Anna’s ambassador to France. He resigned when Santa Anna assumed dictatorial power in 1833 and retracted Mexico’s state charters. Zavala returned to New York City for a short while, then moved to Texas where he became deeply involved in republican politics. While at first he advocated for Mexican federalism in Texas, he soon became an ardent supporter of complete independence. He served in the conventions of the 1830s, helped draft the Constitution of the Republic of Texas, and served as Vice President of the republic for one year. Santa Anna pursued him as a traitor to Mexico during the Texan Revolution, but Zavala escaped and was eventually elected to accompany Santa Anna home and oversee his arbitration with Mexico City to establish Texan independence. This delegation failed, but Lorenzo de Zavala earned his place as a foremost Tejano patriot and statesman of Texan independence.
and the Mexican-American War in 1846, there were 40 changes in government. About every eight months, the Presidency and associated offices changed, making it almost impossible to achieve any kind of political or economic stability. The Mexican people stayed oppressed and poor, and most of Mexico’s income therefore came from international sources. France, Britain, and the United States bought Mexican goods, started businesses in Mexico, and loaned Mexico money for civil matters. This led to loan repayment problems that instigated war first with France and then with the United States.

**The Pastry War.** In 1838, a French pastry chef living in Mexico City reported to France that Mexican revolutionaries vandalized his shop ten years prior, and that he had yet to receive reimbursement from the Mexican government for the damages. France used this excuse to suddenly demand that Mexico pay back millions of dollars of debt that the country owed to French citizens, under threat of military intervention. Mexico City did not have the money, so the French blockaded their ports on the Gulf of Mexico, occupied the garrison at San Juan de Ulúa, and captured the Mexican navy at Veracruz. As Mexicans began to smuggle the goods they needed through Texas, **Texas Rangers** and the United States aided France by stopping these Mexican smugglers. The effect of this short “Pastry War” was to bring Santa Anna back into office again to fight off the French. Santa Anna drove French forces out of Veracruz, then used his war wound—a shot he received in the leg, which then had to be amputated—to rally Mexico behind his leadership.

**Defaults on U.S. Loans.** Like the French, Americans in the 1830s were also trading with Mexico and had citizens conducting business in Mexico City. They too were suffering under the general chaos and dictatorship of the government. Claims for damages were piling up as armies looted stores and revolutions were fought in the streets. In addition, Tex-
ans filed claims for property that was destroyed during Santa Anna’s invasion in 1836. Mexico was changing presidents so often, however, that there was no real government with which to address the claims. Washington D.C. and Mexico City attempted to work out a payment plan between 1838 and 1843, but only three payments were submitted. After several more years of defaulting, President James Polk would use this nonpayment as a pretext for war, insisting that he had waited longer than the French did before they invaded Veracruz in 1838. In his State of the Union Address of 1845, Polk made the argument that Mexico did not have any intention of paying these claims, and that American honor would be damaged if they let Mexico continue to abuse their good faith. Tensions were mounting.

**Domestic Revolt**

The Mexican government not only had to deal with political and economic instability, but with ongoing civil revolts as well. Santa Anna fought most of these domestic rebellions, putting down independence movements whenever they arose to prevent other Mexican states from allying with Texas. The concern was that if one state successfully broke free, others would follow.

**Republic of the Yucatan.** In 1841, the Yucatan declared independence from Mexico again, wrote its own Constitution with freedom of religion for its Maya citizens, and flew the flag of the Yucatan Republic. In 1843, 11,000 Maya warriors fought Santa Anna and won temporary independence like Texas had. However, the Maya continued to fight their local governors as well and, in 1847, after years of trying to pacify them, Yucatan officials appealed to the United States for annexation. Their hope was that the United States, by bringing the Yucatan into its domain, would establish order again. The annexation bill did not pass the U.S. Congress, however, because the United States was in the middle of the Mexican-American War by that point. Eventually, the Yucatan
governors submitted to Mexico City again in exchange for the federal government’s help in quashing the Indian revolts.

**Republic of the Rio Grande.** Coahuilans tried for independence during the Texan Revolution, but failed. They tried again in 1840, laboring to create the Republic of the Rio Grande under Jesús de Cárdenas. This new republic intended to unite Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas, as well as annex another large piece of Mexican territory for further growth. Revolutionaries fought two quick battles, but the Rio Grande Republic failed when the general of its army was bribed back into the Mexican army. The movement for independence was crushed, and many of its leaders fled to Texas.

**Civil Unrest.** Meanwhile, Mexico as a whole was plagued by independent guerilla warfare throughout the country. Bandits roamed haciendas, creating havoc by burning and looting. Workers in the Mexican mines revolted. The new Centralist Republic of Mexico did not have the support of the Indians and lower classes that they needed. Santa Anna

**bandits**

Criminals, often belonging to a gang, who attack, steal, and disrupt.
himself went into hiding and was almost assassinated in his own home state of Veracruz in 1845. Every domestic revolt cost money, and in combination with the Pastry War and debt payments to France, Mexico was barely remaining afloat.

Reprisal in Texas

Occasionally, Santa Anna’s troops would cause trouble on the Rio Grande border to remind Texans that they were rebels destined for re-conquest. Hostilities heightened in 1842 when General Rafael Vásquez led 500 Mexicans into San Antonio and occupied it for two days. Tejano commander Juan Seguín drove him out, but not before blood was spilled. Six months later, 1,400 Mexican soldiers invaded San Antonio, and Texas Rangers had to fight them off. Several days after that, a small band of Mexican soldiers and Cherokee Indians crossed the Rio Grande late at night to attack Texas militia. Despite the Texans’ surrender, the war party executed them and crossed back over the river before daylight in order to keep from being caught.

Other abuses were occurring over and around the border including piracy on the seas, hijacking supplies, and smuggling goods. A group of Texans who traveled to the end of the Santa Fe Trail to discuss trading policy were arrested by the Mexican governors of New Mexico, forcibly marched to Mexico City, and promptly imprisoned. These petty crimes in combination with the border invasions of 1842, prompted Texans to reconsider joining the United States. While sympathetic to Texas’ plight, most American politicians assumed that annexing Texas, a slave state, would cause a civil war over slavery, a war with Mexico, or both. In 1844, however, a young lawyer named James K. Polk decided to run for president and base his election campaign on taking that very risk.

The Manifest Destiny Election, 1844

In 1844, the United States pitted two very different candidates against one another in their general election. Running for the
**Whig Party** was Henry Clay, a man who had worked to keep Texas during the Adams-Onís negotiations, but was now against annexing Texas because it was a slave state. Running for the **Democrat Party** was James K. Polk, who ran on a platform of **expansionism**. Polk wanted Oregon, California, New Mexico, and Texas, and insisted that the United States had a right to these territories.

**Manifest Destiny**

Polk was a believer in the notion of “Manifest Destiny,” which captured the hearts of the American public in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1839, *Democratic Review* columnist John O’Sullivan wrote,

“America [has] been chosen; and her high example shall smite unto death the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs, and carry the glad tidings of peace and good will where myriads now endure an existence scarcely more enviable than that of beasts of the field. Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?”

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Many Americans, like O’Sullivan, believed that the United States had a moral duty to spread freedom far and wide—that it was God’s will that the American system of representative government and free trade prevail in the western hemisphere rather than the European system of kings, empires, and colonies. In 1823, when the Monroe Doctrine articulated that Europe needed to stay out of North and Latin America, it had implied Manifest Destiny. It implied that Americans would fight for their system’s predominance, as opposed to that of Europe.

Manifest Destiny appealed to many Americans, but not for the same reasons or through the same avenues. Polk talked about “extending the dominions of peace,” but many wondered what that really meant. For some it simply meant that decentralized government should prevail wherever the United States was already established or grew naturally, and that Americans should wage only defensive war, if threatened by European invasion. Others went further and said that it meant the United States should support others’ liberation movements away from empires, like those of the Yucatan or El Salvador. The next question was whether “supporting” liberation meant supporting it intellectually, financially, militarily, or a combination of those things. Many wondered how much the United States should get involved in order to “extend peace.” Americans did not agree.

In 1844, Polk’s brand of Manifest Destiny was especially controversial. He did not simply value freedom, he wanted to acquire more territory under the auspices of creating more freedom. He ran on a platform to obtain the West, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, and then to carve that land into more states. Many in both political parties saw value in this agenda. Whigs liked the idea of gaining land because it would aid federalism, or the quest to keep central government weak. If more states were created, more state governments would also be created, which would check the power of the central government. Gaining more land would also help America’s record-breaking population growth. Four million pioneers moved west between 1820 and 1850, and America’s total population climbed from 5 million in 1800 to more than 23 million by the

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As the desire to annex Texas and Oregon grew, journalist John L. O’Sullivan stirred up more support by writing about the political and economic success that would spread if the American system did. Controversially, he linked this expansion with Providence and moral duty.

The expansive future is our arena, and for our history. We are entering on its untrodden space, with the truths of God in our minds, beneficent objects in our hearts, and with a clear conscience unsullied by the past. We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? Providence is with us, and no earthly power can. We point to the everlasting truth on the first page of our national declaration, and we proclaim to the millions of other lands, that “the gates of hell” -- the powers of aristocracy and monarchy -- “shall not prevail against it.”

The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High -- the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere -- its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation an Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood -- of “peace and good will amongst men.” . . .

Yes, we are the nation of progress, of individual freedom, of universal enfranchisement. Equality of rights is the cynosure of our union of States, the grand exemplar of the correlative equality of individuals; and while truth sheds its effulgence, we cannot retrograde, without dissolving the one and subverting the other. We must onward to the fulfilment of our mission -- to the entire development of the principle of our organization -- freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality. This is our high destiny, and in nature's eternal, inevitable decree of cause and effect we must accomplish it. All this will be our future history, to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man -- the immutable truth and beneficence of God. For this blessed mission to the nations of the world, which are shut out from the life-giving light of truth, has America been chosen; and her high example shall smite unto death the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs, and carry the glad tidings of peace and good will where myriads now endure an existence scarcely more enviable than that of beasts of the field. Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?

mid-century. Some experts who lauded expansionism insisted that acquiring the West was necessary—that America would have as much as 250 million people by the twentieth century. They would eventually be proven right.

Others said that acquiring the West would simply be helpful. Author Jackson Turner wrote that the frontier was a “safety valve” for diffusing American conflicts as cities got more crowded and different people groups encountered one another. Many pointed out the trade benefits that would be gained. Accessing the Pacific was important to the United States’ trade interests in Asia, and businessmen insisted that acquiring Santa Fe would be an asset to the American economy. America already had two small steam engines transporting goods across Ohio and Virginia. Some speculated that owning territory all the way to the Pacific coast would one day lead to a railroad across the whole country. The economic benefits seemed limitless.

These benefits aside, slave-owners in the Democratic Party also saw a great advantage to acquiring the West, and that became the great sticking point for many who would have otherwise not supported Polk’s expansionist agenda. Slavery supporters saw that new slave states could be carved out of Texas and California territory that would preserve, or perhaps tip, the balance of power between free and slave states in the American Congress. Some even speculated that annexing the West might lead to annexing other parts of Latin America as well, which could then be incorporated into the slave-owning South. While there were many benefits to expansionism, slavery became the deciding factor of whether or not Americans voted for Polk. Whigs and anti-slavery Democrats worried that the American system of slavery would accompany the spread of American culture, as it had already in Texas. As the popular vote in 1844 showed, almost half of all Americans did not believe this was a good idea.

In the end, however, James Polk beat Henry Clay. Believing that the public had spoken, he immediately embarked on his plan for western expansion. He started with Oregon country, which at the time, was owned by Britain and included a large portion
of western Canada in addition to Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming. Polk, who was a good bargainer, asked the British for half of the territory. The British, glad to keep Canada and avoid war with the United States, signed the Oregon Treaty that settled the border at the 49th parallel.

U.S. SLAVERY AND SECTIONAL STRIFE: In the early years of the United States republic, unity was a fragile thing. Many states had been hesitant to ratify the Constitution in 1787, and only did so when they felt assured that states would retain more rights than the federal government. Southern slave states were the most concerned that the Northern states would force them, through Congressional legislation, to abolish slavery, which upheld their economies. Various measures were taken by the U.S. Congress to table the issue of slavery, with the hope that it would die out over time without splitting the union.

The gag rule was one of those measures. The gag rule was a resolution passed in the House of Representatives in 1836 that prohibited Congress from outlawing or even interfering with slavery. This meant that Congress was not allowed to discuss or debate anti-slavery legislation, nor was it allowed to read anti-slavery petitions of any kind on the Congressional floor. John Quincy Adams, a Whig Representative from Massachusetts, fervently opposed the gag rule as a breach of the First Amendment right to free speech and free petition. After years of fighting it, Adams finally assembled enough of a Whig coalition in 1844 to defeat the resolution. This act blew the question of slavery wide open, after being officially silenced in Congress for sixty years, and led directly to the American Civil War in 1861. In the 1840s, some states’ rights advocates (not just slave-holders) were already considering seceding from the United States, and the increasing strength of Whigs like Adams and Henry Clay made them uncomfortable. Both Adams and Clay completely disagreed with President Polk about annexing Texas, voted against it as well as the Mexican-American War in 1846, and correctly predicted that acquiring new slave territory would lead to disunion. Later, Adams would team up with a young Abraham Lincoln to cast aspersions on Polk’s motives for war and prevent him from seeking re-election.

John Quincy Adams
Then, President Polk turned to Texas, New Mexico, and California, eager to negotiate with Mexico. Thinking that Mexico would be foolish to war for states they had barely settled, and knowing they desperately needed money, Polk planned to purchase them. He had the upper hand on one point: Mexico still owed the United States $3 million⁶ in outstanding debt, and France had invaded Mexico over a similar debt. If Mexico could not pay back her debt to the United States in cash, Polk believed that the debt could be paid in land.

Section Summary

The years leading up to the Mexican-American War saw two republics develop, but one relapsed back towards monarchy due to different values and experiences. The Mexican Republic of 1824 gave power to Mexican states and invited American settlers to settle in El Norte, permitting them to trade, own land, and develop businesses. Their hope was that Americans would stop Indian raids, help populate their outposts, and contribute wealth to the Mexican economy. When this agenda began to backfire, the federal government revoked state sovereignty and tried to stem the tide of Americanism that they had created. This took place in the larger context of the Mexican government more broadly consolidating power and crushing any states that resisted. Santa Anna loomed large as the main centralizing figure between 1833 and 1853, who at times was given as much power and authority as the old Mexican Emperor or Spanish viceroys. Many Mexican states resisted Santa Anna’s centralism, but only Texas had both the infrastructure and distance from Mexico City to remain independent.

Between 1836 and 1845, Texans enjoyed independence and ran their own government, staffed their own army, traded with other nations, and made foreign treaties. When it was clear that Mexico was going to continue trying to reconquer them, Texans asked that they be annexed to the United States. The United States, after initially declining the request, changed its mind as

⁶ $96.7 million in today’s currency
Texans became more desperate and as the belief in Manifest Destiny—that American systems and culture should fill the western hemisphere—grew in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1844, James Polk espoused an expansionist platform that resonated with many Americans but concerned others. His election decided whether or not Texas should be added to the United States, and led to the war with Mexico, who refused to let Texas go on principle.
The Mexican-American War (1846–1848)

Escalation to War

Polk Builds His Case for War. President Polk believed that with the right offer, he could bring Mexico to the negotiating table concerning Texas and California. In the case that he could not do so, Polk laid out the reasons why Americans should be prepared to go to war in his State of the Union Address of 1845. The first reason was that Mexico still owed the U.S. government $3 million, which, after eight years, the country had not been able to demonstrate the ability to pay back. Polk argued that it was dishonorable to the United States for Mexico to believe it could continue benefitting from U.S. trade and investment while not paying back what it owed. Polk emphasized other reasons for war in keeping with the theme of American honor, to include the “wanton destruction” of American lives and property, both in Mexico City and in Texas, and the “insults” upon “the officers and flag of the United States.”

These referred mainly to the smuggling and abuses occurring in and around the Texas border.

When it came to Texas specifically, Polk’s argument was that it made sense for Texas to come under the protection of a more benevolent power, and that Mexico would benefit from not having to deal with the state anymore. They would receive needed money for it and would no longer have to handle the mostly-American population that was causing them so much trouble.

Lastly, Polk appealed to the Monroe Doctrine and the need to compete with emerging foreign interest in El Norte and the Pacific. He insisted that if the United States did not annex California and Texas, then another foreign power would, which would mean more U.S. wars against European colonialism. For years, the British had been considering purchasing California as a base for their Pacific trade. British ships were already stationed in the Gulf, monopolizing trade and benefitting from cheap goods, especially Texas cotton. They had been driven out of the American Midwest after the War of 1812, but in 1845, Polk learned that Britain was hoping to sponsor more cotton plantations in Texas and get the goods duty-free. There was even a rumor that the British wanted to start a black slave revolt in Texas, to enflame sectional rivalries in the United States and break up the union. Then the British could get back on the continent, connect to its territory in Canada, and enlarge their dominion all the way from the Gulf to the Pacific.

Polk suspected France’s ambitions as well. Wanting to rival Britain’s trade monopoly in the Caribbean, the French considered that obtaining Texas could be their key to gaining power. They would then receive the cheap goods circulating the Gulf of Mexico, as well as gain a foothold to re-establishing Catholic European dominance in the western hemisphere. After Napoleon was defeated in 1815, the French...
banded together with other European monarchs to discuss how to reassert their hegemony in the Americas. Acquiring Texas, and Mexico in general, was France’s winning strategy. The old monarchs had no qualms about invading the western hemisphere and returning it to European control. France had already showed its willingness to invade in the Pastry War of 1838. In 1860, France would plan a second invasion, this time with Britain and Spain. In 1861, Napoleon III would orchestrate the re-colonization of Mexico and install a puppet king there.

While Polk did not know the details of European plans in 1845, and certainly could not know the future, the sentiment that the Mexican outposts were almost ready to be seized by someone spurred him to take aggressive action. In his first months in office, Polk submitted an offer to purchase northern Mexico, moved to accept Texas’ bid for annexation, and positioned U.S. troops in disputed Rio Grande territory when Mexico refused to negotiate a price.

Mexico’s Ultimatum to Texas

As it grew more likely that the United States would accept Texas’ offer of annexation, Mexico began to warn the United States that it would consider the annexation of Texas an act of war. The Mexican government was not willing to declare war on Texas or America proactively, but said they would “impede the United States from appropriating Texas using all means necessary.” In March 1845, the Texan Republic was officially invited to join the United States. In May, Mexico suddenly promised Texas that they would recognize Texan independence—the one thing they had insisted they would never do—if Texas refused the United States’ offer. Despite this counteroffer from Mexico, in June 1845, Texas accepted the United States’ invitation. The Mexican government immediately recalled their ambassador from Washington D.C., considering the negotiation to be an act of war. Texas was added to the United States officially in December 1845.

The following statement was issued to Congress by President Polk in May 1846, after the battle at Matamoros and retaliation by Mexican forces. In it, Polk defends Texas as “American soil” when he proclaims that blood spilled in the disputed territory constitutes grounds for official war.

In my message at the commencement of the present session I informed you that upon the earnest appeal both of the Congress and convention of Texas I had ordered an efficient military force to take a position “between the Nueces and the Del Norte” [Rio Grande]. This had become necessary to meet a threatened invasion of Texas by the Mexican forces, for which extensive military preparations had been made. The invasion was threatened solely because Texas had determined, in accordance with a solemn resolution of the Congress of the United States, to annex herself to our Union, and under these circumstances it was plainly our duty to extend our protection over her citizens and soil. This force was concentrated at Corpus Christi, and remained there until after I had received such information from Mexico as rendered it probable, if not certain, that the Mexican Government would refuse to receive our envoy.

Meantime Texas, by the final action of our Congress, had become an integral part of our Union. The Congress of Texas, by its act of December 19, 1836, had declared the Rio del Norte to be the boundary of that Republic. Its jurisdiction had been extended and exercised beyond the Nueces. The country between that river and the Del Norte had been represented in the Congress and in the convention of Texas, had thus taken part in the act of annexation itself, and is now included within one of our Congressional districts. Our own Congress had, moreover, with great unanimity, by the act approved December 31, 1845, recognized the country beyond the Nueces as a part of our territory by including it within our own revenue system, and a revenue officer to reside within that district has been appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. It became, therefore, of urgent necessity to provide for the defense of that portion of our country. Accordingly, on the 13th of January last instructions were issued to the general in command of these troops to occupy the left bank of the Del Norte. This river, which is the southwestern boundary of the State of Texas, is an exposed frontier.

The movement of the troops to the Del Norte was made by the commanding general under positive instructions to abstain from all aggressive acts toward Mexico or Mexican citizens and to regard the relations between that Republic and the United States as peaceful unless she should declare war or commit acts of hostility indicative of a state of war. The Mexican forces at Matamoros assumed a belligerent attitude, and on the 12th of April General Ampudia, then in command, notified General Taylor to break up his camp within twenty-four hours and to retire beyond the Nueces River, and in the event of his failure to comply with these demands announced that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question. But no open act of hostility was committed until the 24th of April. On that day General Arista, who had succeeded to the command of the Mexican forces, communicated to General Taylor that “he considered hostilities commenced and should prosecute them.” A party of dragoons of 63 men and officers were on the same day dispatched from the American camp up the Rio del Norte, on its left bank, to ascertain whether the Mexican troops had crossed or were preparing to cross the river, “became engaged with a large body of these troops, and after a short affair, in which some 16 were killed and wounded, appear to have been surrounded and compelled to surrender.”

The cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But now, after reiterated menaces, Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war. As war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country.

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

THE COMPLICATED HISTORY OF TEXAS: Before 1848, the state of Texas did not have the familiar shape it does today. The borders and definition of “Texas” changed many times over its history. Prior to 1803, Texas was considered undefined and was split somewhere in the middle between France and Spain, connected by the Santa Fe Trail. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson assumed that Texas was part of the Louisiana Purchase, and the first Americans settled in east Texas, close to the Louisiana border, where there was no Spanish presence. In 1819, in the Adams-Onís Treaty, Spain exchanged Florida for the state of Texas, which was still partially undefined and arguably included the East Texas area where Americans were settled. Knowing this, John Quincy Adams regretted the sale and tried to purchase Texas back for $1 million, but Mexican President Guadalupe Victoria refused. In 1821, after Mexican independence, a new treaty had to be made between the U.S. and Mexico to replace Adams-Onís, but Spain insisted that Mexico could not make treaties until 1836, by which time the Texas Revolution was already over. Disregarding Spain’s wishes, Mexico signed the Treaty of Limits with the U.S. in 1828, which included Texas as part of Mexico, but again with debatable borders and joined with Coahuila. Diplomats tried to specify exact borders in the amendments of 1831 and 1832, but the Texas Revolution in 1835 shook things up just a few years later. During the Revolution, independents in the Texas, Coahuila, and El Norte claimed large amounts of the West for their own republics. During the Mexican-American War, the conflict began over a disputed strip between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. By that time, President Polk had already attempted to purchase Texas multiple times, following in the footsteps of Jefferson, Adams, and Andrew Jackson, who offered $3.5 million in 1829 but was refused by Mexican President Guerrero.

First Troops Sent

As soon as Texas accepted the U.S. offer of annexation, in July 1845, President Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to move his troops to the Nueces River and organize an army at Corpus Christi, Texas. General Taylor, known as “Old Rough and Ready” by his troops, was a colonel from Kentucky who established himself in the War of 1812 and the Indian wars in Florida. Many young officers under his command would go on to serve in the American Civil War of the 1860s, including Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Stonewall Jackson, and William Tecumseh Sherman. The most experienced of them were also seasoned Indian fighters. At Polk’s command, General Taylor waited at the Nueces River for seven months to see if the Mexican government would reciprocate Texas’ annexation and accept the United States’ bid to purchase.
The Indian wars in Florida were just a part of a larger U.S. campaign in the 1830s to rid the South and Appalachia of its indigenous population. Government policy had previously been to encourage Indians to sell their land for goods, annuities, or other compensation, but when not enough Indians took the opportunity, more forcible methods and underhandedness were employed. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, organized under the U.S. Army in 1824, offered Indians 160 acres per household to move west of the Mississippi River. Land speculators soon followed, however, who cheated Indians out of their “permanent” acreage. Even whisky peddlers were able to swindle Indians’ deeds and land titles for alcohol, mostly because the average Native American did not understand the meaning behind these legal documents. The height of U.S. oppression came in 1838 when U.S. troops forced the Five Civilized Nations in Georgia, out of their homes at gunpoint. Thousands of Cherokees, as well as Creeks, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminoles, died on the “Trail of Tears” as soldiers burned or pillaged their belongings so they would not return.

Slidell in Mexico

Meanwhile, in November 1845, special agent John Slidell was sent to Mexico City to offer $25 million⁹ for Texas, California, and New Mexico. The U.S. government was also willing to forgive the $3 million in debt that Mexico owed. The Mexican President, José Herrera, initiated the negotiation, asking the United States to send an ambassador “to settle the current dispute in a peaceful, reasonable and respectable way.”¹⁰ Herrera did not want to lose Texas to the United States, but neither did he want to fight or fund a war against them. Mexico needed money and the government did not seem stable enough to administrate a war.

The Mexican public, on the other hand, agreed that this negotiation was a breach of Mexican honor. A popular newspaper in April 1846 declared that, “The conduct of the American government is

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⁹ $781 million in today’s currency
similar to that of the bandit with the traveler.” According to Mexicans, Americans could not simply come and offer large amounts of money for land that was not theirs. If Mexico let the U.S. purchase land, they would eventually want to purchase more. Mexicans had fought hard for their land from Spain—it was everything they had, and was what mattered most to them. Most Mexicans therefore believed that war was necessary to show the United States that they could not own Latin America, and that President Herrera demonstrated weakness, even betrayal, by considering an offer. Quickly, before Herrera and Slidell could meet, newspaper editors and military opponents of Herrera mobilized to have him deposed. Herrera was overthrown and replaced by General Mariano Paredes, who assumed the hardline stance about Texas belonging to Mexico. The turnover was so abrupt that when Slidell finally arrived in Mexico City, there was no government to formally negotiate with, and he was told to wait.

War Commences, 1846

Brinksmanship. While Slidell was delayed in Mexico City, President Polk ordered American troops to advance to the Rio Grande border into disputed territory, and wait there until he heard whether Slidell’s negotiation was successful or not. General Taylor began to march 500 U.S. officers and 4,000 Regulars towards the Rio Grande to face General Pedro de Ampudia’s forces of 30,000 Mexican troops on the other side. Taylor reached the river in March 1846 just as Slidell was returning, rejected, to the United States.

Things began to heat up quickly. On April 23, 1846, Mexican President Paredes proclaimed that Mexico was officially prepared to fight a “defensive war” against northern aggression. General Taylor constructed Fort Texas and set up camp across from the Mexican city of Matamoros.

Perceiving this as provocation, on April 25, 1846, Mexican cavalry crossed the Rio Grande and attacked a company of American soldiers, killing 16 of them. Taylor dispatched to Polk that “hostilities have commenced,”13 and the Mexican-American War officially began.

Taylor at Palo Alto

Mexican General Mariano Arista joined General Ampudia’s forces in disputed territory and formed a double line outside Palo Alto, blocking Taylor’s access road back to Fort Texas. There, on May 8, 1846, Americans and Mexicans faced each other at 800 yards apart, ready to shoot. While Mexican soldiers were numerous, well-trained, and supported by 1,500 Mounted Lancers on horseback with brilliant green, blue, and brass uniforms, the Americans had two 18-pound cannons, multiple 6-pound cannons with a one-mile range, and “flying artillery” that could quickly and easily be maneuvered to fire from multiple directions. Superior weaponry gave the victory to Americans as they dodged the slow Mexican cannonballs and held off the Lancers’ mounted charge with grapeshot. At the end of the day, Mexican troops fell back from the intense fighting.

One day later, as American troops returned to the Rio Grande border, Arista launched a surprise attack on them at Resaca de la Palma. The flying artillery made the difference again. Mexican troops fled to Matamoros, leaving their muskets and cannons behind as Taylor’s troops pursued them. The escape was so sudden that 300 Mexican soldiers drowned trying to cross back over the Rio Grande to Mexico. Taylor seized the Mexican fort at Matamoros and camped there, waiting for supplies and reinforcements. Disease was starting to become a problem. In the two days’ of fighting on the Texas-Mexico border, more American troops died of typhus, dysentery, and yellow fever than from combat.

Two days after Palo Alto, Polk asked Congress to declare

war, stating that American blood had been shed on American soil. On May 13, 1846, Congress obliged. Despite the chaos in the presidency, treasury, and war ministry, the Mexican Congress declared war in response on July 7, 1846. While the U.S. Congress passed bills for money, firearms, and volunteers, Mexico similarly mobilized thousands on their side.

Kearny and Frémont

As Taylor secured Texas for the United States, Polk considered how to obtain California and New Mexico. He had already dispatched Captain John C. Frémont to California and Stephen Kearny, a military guard of the Oregon Trail, to New Mexico. The plan was to seize these frontier areas of Mexico and hold them ransom while Taylor advanced to the capital and forced surrender. Since New Mexico and California did not show strong resistance to American occupation, the plan turned out to be easier than expected.

New Mexico. Stephen Kearny marched his troops, “the Army of the West,” 1,000 miles from Kansas to Santa Fe, in the midst of mosquitos, rattlesnakes, and desert heat. Animals died, food perished, and American soldiers left bloody footprints in the sand. When Americans finally arrived at Santa Fe, the capital surrendered without a shot. They surrendered partly out of hope. Settlements had so long been decimated by Comanche and Apache raids that haciendas and ranches were abandoned and many citizens were holed up in small towns. They had been living in poverty and fear for so long that while a few returned to Mexico, most accepted Kearny’s new leadership.

Several weeks later, Kearny left to help the campaign in California while a portion of his troops faced another treacherous walk, this time to El Paso in Chihuahua, Mexico. On the way, Kearny’s troops faced Mounted Lancers and Indians, engaged in a battle of bayonets, and succumbed to even

A remnant of troops survived, entered Chihuahua, and occupied El Paso. They were ordered to treat Mexican citizens well so as not to bring reproach or vengeful action upon them, and they ended up establishing surprisingly good relations with Mexican citizens during the occupation.

**California, the Bear Flag Republic.** While some Californios resisted U.S. forces, when John Frémont’s men invaded the home of Californio governor and commander, General Mariano Vallejo, the governor did not even protest. Having depended on American trade for clothing and basic supplies for many years, Vallejo considered that annexation to the
United States might be best for California and signed the Articles of Capitulation. This document made California an independent republic, and Frémont’s men flew the flag of “the Bear Flag Republic” over the fort city of Monterey. On July 9, 1846, the U.S. Navy under Commodore John D. Sloat came in from the Pacific and raised the American flag above the city, signifying that the war for California was all but over. In December 1846, Stephen Kearny arrived and fought Californios at San Pasqual, near San Diego. He then helped subdue Los Angeles. On January 13, 1847, Mexican governors signed the Treaty of Cahuenga, which ended hostilities and initiated U.S. rule of California.

The stunning seizures of California and New Mexico prompted much emotional reaction from Americans, who were reading daily updates about the war in the newspaper. The Mexican-American War was the first war to be widely publicized, each article complete with photographs. In June 1846, as the Bear Flag was waving over California, the poet Walt Whitman rejoiced that Mexico was being “chastised” and that America knew “how to crush, as well as how to expand.”  

Meanwhile, philosopher and activist Henry David Thoreau went to jail for refusing to pay his poll tax in protest of the war. Americans were as divided as ever about whether “Mr. Polk’s War” was a good thing or not. Even more concern arose when Representative David Wilmot’s proviso requiring that all newly acquired territory be admitted as free states rather than slave states, was defeated in Congress. The ugly division was brewing between the North and South which would culminate in the U.S. Civil War.

Santa Anna’s Trick

In August 1846, Santa Anna tricked Polk into getting home from exile in Cuba, which greatly influenced the rest of the Mexican-American War. Although Santa Anna had lost the Texan Revolution, his national pride and charismatic

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The more we reflect on the matter of annexation as involving a part of Mexico, or even the main bulk of that republic, the more do doubts and obstacles resolve themselves away. The scope of our government is such that it can readily fit itself and extend itself to almost any extent, and to interests and circumstances the most widely different.

It is affirmed, and with great probability, that in several of the departments of Mexico—the large, fertile, and beautiful one of Yucatan, in particular—there is a wide popular disposition to come under the wings of our eagle... Rumor states that a mission has been, or is to be, dispatched to the United States, with the probably [sic] object of treating for annexation or something like it. Then there is California, in the way to which lovely tract lies Santa Fe; how long a time will elapse before they shine as two new stars in our mighty firmament?

Speculations of this sort may seem idle to some folks. So do they not, we are assured, to many who look deep into the future. Nor is it the much condemned lust of power and territory that makes the popular heart respond to the idea of these new acquisitions. Such greediness might very properly be the motive of widening a less liberal form of government, but such greediness is not ours. We pant to see our country and its rule far-reaching, only inasmuch as it will take off the shackles that prevent men the even chance of being happy and good—as most governments are now so constituted that the tendency is very much the other way. We have no ambition for the mere physical grandeur of this Republic. Such grandeur is idle and deceptive enough. Or at least it is only desirable as an aid to reach the truer good, the good of the whole body of the people.

On July 6, 1846, Mexican President Mariano Paredes declared defensive war against the United States in the Mexican Congress. In this excerpt, he asserts Mexico’s need to defend its territory and repel U.S. forces which had already seized Matamoros.

Article 1 - The government, in the natural defense of the nation, will repel the aggression initiated and sustained by the United States of America against the Republic of Mexico, having invaded and committed hostilities in a number of the departments making up Mexican territory.

Article 3 - The government will communicate to friendly nations and to the entire republic the justifiable causes which obliged it to defend its rights, left with no other choice but to repel force with force, in response to the violent aggression committed by the United States.

The following is an excerpt from Senator Corwin’s excoriation of the Manifest Destiny motives behind “Mr. Polk’s War.”

The President involves you in war without your consent. Being in such a war, it is demanded as a duty that we grant men and money to carry it on...What is the territory, Mr. President, which you propose to wrest from Mexico? It is consecrated to the heart of the Mexican by many a well-fought battle, with his old Castilian master...

Sir, had one come and demanded Bunker Hill of the people of Massachusetts, had England’s lion ever showed himself there, is there over 13 and under 90 who would not have been ready to meet him—is there a river on this continent that would not have run red with blood—is there a field but would have been piled high with the unburied bones of slaughtered Americans before these consecrated battle-fields of liberty should have been wrested from us? But this same American goes into a sister republic and says to poor, weak Mexico “Give up your territory—you are unworthy to possess it—I have got one half already—all I ask of you is to give up the other!”

The Senator from Michigan [Lewis Cass] says he must have this. Why, my worthy Christian brother, on what principle of justice? “I want room!” Sir, look at this pretense of want of room. With twenty millions of people, you have about one thousand millions of acres of land, inviting settlement by every conceivable argument—bringing them down to a quarter of a dollar an acre, and allowing every man to squat where he pleases. But the Senator from Michigan says we will be two hundred millions in a few years, and we want room. If I were a Mexican, I would tell you, “Have you not room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come into mine, we will greet you with bloody hands, and welcome you to hospitable graves...But you still say you want room for your people. This has been the plea of every robber-chief from Nimrod to the present hour. I dare say, when Tamerlane descended from his throne built of seventy thousand human skulls, and marched his ferocious battalions to further slaughter, I dare say he said, “I want room.”

Senator Thomas Corwin
February 11, 1847

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personality convinced many Mexicans that he could once again save their country. Santa Anna promised Polk that he would negotiate the sale of Texas once he was given passage through the American blockade in the Gulf of Mexico. Yet, upon his arrival in Veracruz, Santa Anna was given almost absolute power as defender of Mexico. Some of his opponents suspected his deal with Polk was subversive, and accused him after the war was over of giving Polk exactly what he wanted. At the time, however, most Mexicans, no matter what their political affiliation was, saw Santa Anna as their chance to throw off American oppression once and for all.

Monterrey and Saltillo

As the summer of 1846 ended, General Zachary Taylor left Matamoros to penetrate the Mexican heartland. Losing 1,500 soldiers to heat stroke and disease on the march, Taylor prepared to face General Ampudia’s forces entrenched in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León. When they got there, urban warfare commenced. Mexican snipers on rooftops fired down upon American soldiers, and cannons went off in the streets. Fighting occurred door to door and through “mouse holes” cut in adobe walls. There were many casualties on both sides. After four days of constant shelling, U.S. troops finally succeeded in sacking the Bishop’s palace. Ampudia then asked Taylor for an 8-week armistice, which Taylor agreed to, even while Polk pressured Taylor to break the armistice and sack Saltillo, the city where Ampudia’s troops were recovering.

News of Taylor’s success was reported across the America, and volunteers poured in to join the war effort. Taylor was credited for conquering northern Mexico, and the Whig Party began to talk about him running for president in 1848. Threatened by this good press and concerned about the leniency Taylor showed Ampudia in the armistice, Polk decided to cap Taylor’s career. He promoted General Winfield Scott, “Old Fuss and Feathers,” above Taylor to command the rest of the war.
Buena Vista

Taylor’s last battle was at Buena Vista, Saltillo, where Santa Anna marched 20,000 troops up from San Luis Potosí to personally confront him. Americans were in the middle of transitioning troops from Taylor’s command to General Scott’s, and Taylor was left with less than 5,000 of the lesser-experienced soldiers. Sensing an opportunity, on February 23, 1847, Santa Anna demanded that Taylor surrender. Taylor refused. A battle then ensued in a mountain pass with Santa Anna almost destroying Taylor’s regiment. Americans were barely holding ground when Santa Anna suddenly abandoned the fight to put down a coup in Mexico City that threatened his leadership. While Mexico declared victory in the battle, Taylor was able to get in a last strike, sealing his reputation as a war hero and future presidential material.

Veracruz and Cerro Gordo

General Winfield Scott had taken Taylor’s veteran troops to perform a complicated marine attack on Veracruz. Since
the days of Cortés, Veracruz was strategically important to conquering the Mexican capital because of its port access to the Gulf of Mexico. It was needed as a base for supplies arriving by ship and provided access to Mexico’s weaponry at San Juan de Ulúa. But Veracruz was also thickly walled. On March 7, 1847, 10,000 American troops moved into the city while warships under Commodore Matthew Perry bombarded the walls and provided air cover. Scott commanded Mexican General Juan Morales to surrender. Morales refused. Shelling then commenced, forcing Mexicans to surrender the city on March 29, 1847. American troops occupied the city and gained access to Mexico’s key fortress.

Despite entrenched fighting, both Polk and Santa Anna were having trouble funding the war by this point. The U.S. Congress was reluctant to go into debt on Polk’s insistence that the war continue, and the Mexican government had almost no money since the very beginning. Most of their funding had come from Europeans—France, Britain, even Spain—who expected
Mexicans to win and block the United States’ growth permanently. But as Mexican victory started to look less likely, they provided less financing. The Catholic Church helped Santa Anna as much as possible, but did not have enough money to fund the amount of weapons, food, and supplies that were needed. The Mexican army had to continue the rest of the war with great deficits.

When Scott and Santa Anna finally met, it was in April 1847 in the field of Cerro Gordo, a mountain pass on the way to Mexico City. An arduous battle ensued where the Mexican army dug in to keep Americans from passing through. Robert E. Lee devised a plan to disassemble the American artillery and quietly sneak around Santa Anna’s flank. Several thousand American soldiers worked their way around while a smaller number stayed out front as a distraction. In the midst of the action, a U.S. deserter informed Santa Anna of the plan, but enough Americans had already moved through to capture Santa Anna’s camp with its supplies—including Santa Anna’s wooden leg. Fearing encirclement, Mexican troops fled. Americans
continued along the same path that Cortés had taken to the capital hundreds of years earlier.

**Final Battles**

Santa Anna rallied as much defensive action has he could to prevent Mexico City from falling into American hands, but ultimately he failed. First, Santa Anna tried to mobilize citizens of Puebla, but the Puebians had been resisting Santa Anna’s leadership for some time and instead surrendered to Scott’s army when it moved through in May 1847. The U.S. Army then pressed on towards the Valley of Mexico. In August, Mexican forces tried to hold off American advance at Contreras and Churubusco, but Americans dealt with the frontal attacks, urban warfare, and long flank lines better than they had previously. Near the end of August, Polk sent an envoy, Nicholas P. Trist, with $3 million to Mexico City to negotiate an end to the war. Mexicans were insulted at the offer, and Santa Anna did not counteroffer anything suitable to the United States. On principle, the Mexican Congress renewed Santa Anna’s absolute power, but the outcome of the final battles seemed grim.

**Outside Mexico City.** As U.S. forces gathered outside Mexico City, Santa Anna prepared for their arrival by fortifying the outlying towns, rallying 25,000 men for the final assault, and acquiring every piece of heavy artillery he could. At the Battle of Molina del Rey, Mexicans succeeded in stalling the American advance. A regiment of American soldiers were massacred and it took two separate attempts for Americans to seize a line of fortified stone buildings protecting the capital. By September 13, 1847, U.S. troops were ready to attack the last line of defense, two miles from Mexico City. They fought at Chapultepec, an impregnable castle and military school that was being guarded by a hero of Mexican independence, General Nicolás Bravo. Young Mexican military cadets gathered on the high hill of Chapultepec, ready to defend it to the
death when Americans rushed up the hill. There was a great slaughter on both sides, and U.S. soldiers had to disarm land mines on their way up, but eventually the American flag was raised on the imposing castle top.

Mexico lost 3,000 troops in the final battles, and Americans lost about 800. By the time U.S. forces were ready to enter Mexico City, the Mexican government had decided to surrender the city to avoid civilian casualties. On September 14, 1847, at 7:00 in the morning, the American flag was raised on the national palace of Mexico City. It had been one year and nine months since the first shots were fired in Texas. General Scott’s army marched into the capital with intent to occupy until a peace treaty was signed. After U.S. troops hoisted the flag in Mexico City, they occupied the city as respectfully as possible to avoid violent reprisal. Santa Anna was given safe passage to Jamaica, angering Texans as they watched him lay down arms and leave peacefully by carriage.
Whereas the President of the United States, in his message of May 11, 1846, has declared that “the Mexican Government not only refused to receive him, [the envoy of the United States,] or listen to his propositions, but, after a long-continued series of menaces, has at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on our own soil.” And again, in his message of December 8, 1846, that “we had ample cause of war against Mexico long before the breaking out of hostilities; but even then we forbore to take redress into our own hands until Mexico herself became the aggressor, by invading our soil in hostile array, and shedding the blood of our citizens.” And yet again, in his message of December 7, 1847, that “the Mexican Government refused even to hear the terms of adjustment which he [our minister of peace] was authorized to propose, and finally, under wholly unjustifiable pretexts, involved the two countries in war, by invading the territory of the State of Texas, striking the first blow, and shedding the blood of our citizens.” And whereas this House is desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all the facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was shed was or was not at that time our own soil: Therefore, Resolved By the House of Representatives, That the President of the United States be respectfully requested to inform this House:

1st. Whether the spot on which the blood of our citizens was shed, as in his messages declared, was or was not within the territory of Spain, at least after the treaty of 1819, until the Mexican revolution.

2d. Whether that spot is or is not within the territory which was wrested from Spain by the revolutionary Government of Mexico.

3d. Whether that spot is or is not within a settlement of people, which settlement has existed ever since long before the Texas revolution, and until its inhabitants fled before the approach of the United States army.

4th. Whether that settlement is or is not isolated from any and all other settlements by the Gulf and the Rio Grande on the south and west, and by wide uninhabited regions on the north and east.

5th. Whether the people of that settlement, or a majority of them, or any of them, have ever submitted themselves to the government or laws of Texas or the United States, by consent or compulsion, either by accepting office, or voting at elections, or paying tax, or serving on juries, or having process served upon them, or in any other way.

6th. Whether the people of that settlement did or did not flee from the approach of the United States army, leaving unprotected their homes and their growing crops, before the blood was shed, as in the messages stated; and whether the first blood, so shed, was or was not shed within the enclosure of one of the people who had thus fled from it.

7th. Whether our citizens, whose blood was shed, as in his message declared, were or were not, at that time, armed officers and soldiers, sent into that settlement by the military order of the President, through the Secretary of War.

8th. Whether the military force of the United States was or was not sent into that settlement after General Taylor had more than once intimated to the War Department that, in his opinion, no such movement was necessary to the defence or protection of Texas.

War’s End, 1848

**Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.** Americans debated about appropriate terms for the end of the war. There were many different proposals. Some Americans wanted to annex all of Mexico, or even more of Latin America. They were thinking about El Salvador, the Yucatan, and other countries that applied for American help or annexation over the years. If America owned Latin America, it could impose the form of decentralized government and economics it believed was right. Other Americans who had not wanted war in the first place, nor had any wish to see slave states added to the nation, argued that the United States should retain a minimum of territory. Texans at the time of the revolution, however, wanted at least the Great Plains and the Rio Grande border as their own, and most Americans wanted San Francisco. Santa Fe had surrendered without a shot and was already a hub on the Santa Fe Trail. These were territories that many Americans could agree on.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed by Nicolas Trist and Mexican commissioners, surrendered the **Mexican Cession** of Upper California, New Mexico, and Texas including states currently know as Colorado, Arizona, California, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and New Mexico.
to the United States for the price of $15 million plus the forgiveness of $3.25 million in debt that Mexico owed. At first, the U.S. offered $20 million for those territories in addition to Baja California, but that was rejected. Mexico agreed to the Rio Grande boundary in Texas, with the boundary extending west to San Diego, and expected the United States to assume all Indian problems in the ceded territory, including any that spilled over on the Mexican side of the border. The United States agreed and also assented to give citizenship to Mexicans now transferring to U.S. possession. Both parties signed the treaty on February 2, 1848 in Villa Hidalgo, a small town outside Mexico City near the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Afterwards, the signers attended Mass at the Basilica of Guadalupe, and Americans withdrew from Mexico.

**Gadsden Purchase**

In 1853, Santa Anna returned from exile to rule Mexico again and sold yet another piece of Mexican land to the United States for an additional $10 million. The Gadsden Purchase was a small but important tract of land in the Sonora desert. Seven years after the war was over, Americans were policing, but failing to control Comanche and Apache aggression in this area. Three-quarters of the army’s reserve soldiers were stationed there, the U.S. government had spent $12 million in border control expenses, with Mexico demanding another $25 million in damages. At first, U.S. negotiators proposed $50 million to simply purchase the rest of El Norte, including Baja California, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. Both Mexicans and anti-slavery U.S. Congressmen disapproved of such an offer. In the end, only 29,000 square miles were purchased to settle the damages claim and permit Americans to build a Pacific railroad in a more strategic location. The majority of Mexicans felt very dishonored by this additional loss of territory, but Santa Anna insisted that the government needed the money.

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16 $454.5 million
17 $606.1 million
18 $312.5 million
19 $1.56 billion
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Effects of the War on Mexico

The Mexican-American War permanently soured Mexico’s relationship with the United States. Mexicans were not able to get past the idea that the United States had broken the Treaty of Limits of 1828 and declared an unjust war for land. Any belief they had in American goodwill was shattered, no matter what proclamations American leaders made or what investment and financial aid were given in the future. In fact, such aid and investment came under suspicion by many Mexicans who believed that the war had proven that the United States was an imperial power. Just like Spain, the U.S. would invade if it wanted to, seize assets for its own interests, and enact trade policies to keep themselves rich and Mexicans poor, so that the U.S. could maintain the upper hand.

Consequently, Mexicans were divided over how to respond in the wake of their defeat. Some wanted to keep fighting the United States and opposed signing the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Some, like the future leader of Mexico, Benito Juárez, wanted to strengthen the nation so that Mexico could never be the victim of U.S. aggression again. Others who thought similarly planned for Reconquista, in the tra-
dition of Santa Anna. They sought to improve Mexico’s armies and generals, and wait for the right moment to launch a counter-attack—perhaps with an ally, a fellow enemy of the United States.

Other Mexicans simply picked up the pieces of their lives and started over. They fixed their homes, farms, and villages. Some, who lived in cities that the United States military had occupied, were inspired to start businesses or new lines of work. Others immigrated to the United States to see if there was more opportunity on the other side of the border. Mexicans who were already over the border, who were living in territory that suddenly become American, had the best chance at a better life. Although some faced discrimination, many now had freedom and could begin to benefit themselves economically.

**Effects of the War on the United States**

As for the United States, the Mexican-American War confirmed that they were an emerging world power. Their military technology and administration had won them almost every battle in only a year and a half. By 1853, the U.S. had added over 1 million square miles with the intent to fill and develop all they acquired, in addition to building a Pacific trade and naval force. Europeans, who still had interests in the western hemisphere as late as 1860, were put on notice.

Domestically, the large amount of territory the U.S. acquired opened up new avenues for growth and expansion. There were millions of acres to develop, which ushered in an intense phase of invention, freedom, and expansion. Pacific ports were developed, pioneers increasingly headed west, new towns boomed overnight, and trains and industrial technology started a new modern phase of American life. Just one month after the signing of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the first gold was discovered in California, which brought adventurers and immigrants, including Latin Americans, and permitted them to form the base of a new American culture in the Pacific.

Through its mistakes, the nation learned how to legislate more fairly as time went on, and how to deal more carefully with Mexico
in the future. Mexico even became the benefactor of American prosperity because the United States became Mexico’s biggest investor and trading partner after 1850. Every year, millions of dollars went to support Mexico’s economy in hopes of creating a more stable partnership. While the Mexican-American War of 1846 therefore ended the era of good feelings that had existed between the United States and Mexico after Mexican independence, the flow of goods, labor, and hope for a better future continued.

Chapter Summary

The precursor to the Mexican-American War of 1846 was a controversy over Texas. Due to sparse settlement of its northern frontier, Mexico invited Americans to settle and develop Texas, which they did surprisingly quickly, and in very large numbers. Most Texans were happy under the Mexican Republic and enjoyed many liberties, but when Santa Anna revoked Mexican state charters, Texas, among others, revolted. At first, Texans simply demanded their 1824 Constitution back, but when it was clear that this was not going to happen and the Mexican government was set on lapsing back towards monarchy, Texans rallied for independence. In 1835, Texas began their war for independence, and in 1836, with the aid of American volunteers, they had won that war. The Treaty of Velasco signed between Santa Anna and Sam Houston in 1836 agreed to a Texan Republic at the Rio Grande border. Mexicans were suspicious of Texas’ move for independence because they suspected Americans, rightly, of larger ambitions to annex more of El Norte. In the broader context, Mexico had only recently solidified its own independence from Spain and was on a crusade to keep all of its rebellious states in order. They were concerned that others would ally with Texas or even the United States to gain their independence as well. Santa Anna’s government therefore made it a personal quest to reconquer Texas and hold the United States to the previous border agreements made in 1819 and 1828 prior to Texan revolt. Their refusal to recognize Texan independence, in addition to Santa Anna’s brutal incursions in the 1840s, set the stage for further conflict.
Ultimately, Mexico’s fears came upon them when Texas applied for U.S. annexation and the U.S. accepted in 1845. Wanting to force the sale of California and New Mexico as well, President Polk provoked war with Mexico to acquire unhindered access to the Pacific before other European powers could, and he did so by moving U.S. troops into a disputed part of Texas. When Mexico declared war in response, the Mexican-American War commenced, and the United States rather quickly defeated Santa Anna’s forces throughout Mexico. Having occupied northern Mexico and the capital, U.S. forces withdrew after envoys negotiated the sale of the Mexican Cession in 1848. The goodwill relationship Mexico and the United States had started to build suddenly soured, and many debated the wisdom of the endeavor, even as Americans and Mexican-Americans in the new land began to prosper.


Discussion Questions

1. Can you explain how the location and geography of Texas affected Mexico’s ability to govern and defend it?

2. How would you compare the United States journey to Independence with the Mexican War of Independence? What are the key differences that contributed to the alternate outcomes?

3. What impact did the General Colonization Laws have on the future of Texas?

4. How were the Republic of the Yucatan and Texas alike? Different?

5. Considering the Mexican View and the Texan View of the Alamo, how would you summarize their differing perspectives?

6. What can you say about the role of Indian inter-tribal warfare and the consequences of that on the governance and settlement of Texas and New Mexico?

7. Summarize the main idea behind Manifest Destiny. What is your opinion? How do you think the public response to the idea of Manifest Destiny impacted the United States’ success in expansion across the western territories?

8. What was President Polk’s strongest argument for war with Mexico?

9. How might the outcome in California have been different if General Mariano Vallejo had not been submissive to U.S. forces? Would it have ultimately made a difference in the outcome of the Mexican-American War?

10. Did the Gadsden Purchase have any long-term benefit to the United States? Explain.
11. What were the immediate benefits of the outcome of the Mexican-American War to those of Mexican heritage who were already living in the newly acquired U.S. territories? What were some of the downfalls?
SECTION 1
5-1: U.S Expansion and Development

SECTION 2
5-2: Mexico’s Path to Modernization
Background to Conflict

Between 1850 and 1910, the United States expanded and developed like never before: filling its acreage, educating its people, and confronting moral errors like slavery. Individuals and families, from whatever station they began, tried to better their situation and carve out a place for themselves. By 1910, this energy could be seen in America’s thriving business and industrial economy, in the thousands of patents granted to individual developers, in cities that sprung up all over the West, and in the 50 million people who were farming. There were costs associated with this rapid development and expansion, especially for disadvantaged people groups, but by World War I (1914-1918), the United States had rocketed into the spotlight and was poised to become a key player in worldwide affairs. Within this context, the first several hundred thousand Latinos found a challenging but protective haven from tumultuous conditions at home.

The Gold Rush

Eureka! On January 24, 1848, nine days before the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed, a Swiss immigrant named John Sutter found a few nuggets of pure gold on his sawmill in the Sacramento Valley. Though he tried to keep the discovery quiet, news quickly leaked out. Californios, Indians, and Mexicans moved in first to dig for gold along the Sierra Nevada. Some made a fortune in just a few days. Then the news spread to Oregon, Hawaii, Peru, Chile, and China. Since there was no restriction on immigration at that
time, hundreds of opportunity-seekers traveled to America with servants and stowaways to try their hand at placer mining. In December 1848, Americans in the East finally heard the news when President Polk boasted about “the abundance of gold” in his annual State of the Union. In 1849, thousands more “forty-niners” headed out in covered wagons to seek their fortune.

Roughing It in the West

“Gold Fever” was contagious and, in one year, the population of California swelled from 15,000 to 100,000; then to 250,000 by 1852. Immigrants from across the world risked everything in order to strike it rich, sailing across the Pacific Ocean, around South America, or through Panama. The sudden influx of settlers created a hostile, competitive climate, and the United States had not owned the West long enough to have reliable police or government presence. Robberies were common, violence broke out, and grassroots organizations had to form to stop banditry and revenge killings. Much abuse was directed towards immigrants, who were seen as getting rich off of American property. In April 1850, California passed the Foreign Miner’s Tax, which charged

placer mining
A mining method using water to recover heavy minerals from sand and gravel, such as in panning for gold. Using a technique known as panning, miners used pans to swirl gold deposits with water. The high density of gold caused it to sink more rapidly than moving water, therefore washing lighter materials over the side of the pan and leaving the gold behind. Placer mining is still used today for mineral extraction in the form of washing, dredging, and hydraulic mining.
It was in this Sacramento Valley, just referred to, that a deal of the most lucrative of the early gold mining was done… It was a driving, vigorous, restless population in those days. It was a curious population. It was the only population of the kind that the world has ever seen gathered together, and it is not likely that the world will ever see its like again. For observe, it was an assemblage of two hundred thousand young men—not simpering, dainty, kid-gloved weaklings, but stalwart, muscular, dauntless young braves, brimful of push and energy, and royally endowed with every attribute that goes to make up a peerless and magnificent manhood—the very pick and choice of the world’s glorious ones. No women, no children, no gray and stooping veterans,—none but erect, bright-eyed, quick-moving, strong-handed young giants—the strangest population, the finest population, the most gallant host that ever trooped down the startled solitudes of an unpeopled land…

But they were rough in those times! They fairly revelled in gold, whisky, fights, and fandangoes, and were unspeakably happy. The honest miner raked from a hundred to a thousand dollars out of his claim a day, and what with the gambling dens and the other entertainments, he hadn’t a cent the next morning, if he had any sort of luck. They cooked their own bacon and beans, sewed on their own buttons, washed their own shirts—blue woollen ones; and if a man wanted a fight on his hands without any annoying delay, all he had to do was to appear in public in a white shirt or a stovepipe hat, and he would be accommodated. For those people hated aristocrats. They had a particular and malignant animosity toward what they called a “biled shirt.” It was a wild, free, disorderly, grotesque society! Men—only swarming hosts of stalwart men—nothing juvenile, nothing feminine, visible anywhere!

non-Americans $20 per month to mine.\footnote{\$606.06 in today’s currency} After just a year, thousands of Mexicans, Chileans, and above all, Chinese, left California. Torrid conditions of living in the wilderness made things difficult for those who stayed. Many camped out with little more than alcohol and overpriced biscuits to sustain them. Furthermore, placer mining was very hard work, and quite dangerous. Many died as a result of accidents in addition to disease and malnutrition. Others simply found nothing and went home.

Even with these disadvantages, mining sites multiplied as gold and silver were found throughout the American West. \textbf{Boomtowns} sprung up to support the influx of settlers, with many travelers deciding to make money through shop-keeping rather than digging. Kitchens, taverns, brothels, gambling houses, and other businesses grew up to serve miners. These provided jobs for those who were unwelcome at mining sites, especially Indians, who served as porters, the Chinese, who became cooks and laundymen, and Irish and Germans, who produced cheese, bread, and alcohol. As time went on, many disappointed miners decided to stay out west and settle into more stable jobs. Some bought farms or got involved in business or government. Others went to work for mining companies who moved in after the surface layer of gold had been mined away. In 1872, the Mining Act codified proper protocol for developing mines and legalized \textbf{squatters’} claims to land they were excavating. This helped stabilize mining communities and settle the thousands of migrants who had come.

Within this great rush, the first Latinos were Mexicans who became American citizens after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed. Californios were shocked to find their gigantic haciendas being squatted on by tens of thousands of new residents. Many of their fledgling cities, which had been small, diverse communities run by military governors and visited frequently by Indians, suddenly found themselves burgeoning with international miners and shopkeepers. Los

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{boomtowns}\hfill Communities that arise rapidly due to sudden population and economic growth.
\item \textbf{squatters}\hfill A settler living on an area of empty land with no legal permission.
\end{itemize}
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, and other California outposts became bustling marketplaces almost overnight. Proper law enforcement and government bureaucracy had to form quickly to keep up with the pressing new needs of such activity, and Mexican citizens were permitted to fill these positions. For example, three Mexican-Americans were elected as mayors of Los Angeles in the 1850s and 1860s. Dozens of others served as councilmen and deputies. Similar things were occurring in Texas where Tejanos had resided for many years as ranchers or farmers, and more than 70% of the Mexican-American community lived. Spanish-speaking newspapers began to develop, and Tejanos served as city officials in areas that had high concentrations of Mexican-Americans. Despite racial tensions at the mining sites, the fact that Mexican-Americans were elected to high public office in Texas and California so soon after the Mexican-American War demonstrates that many Americans had a different attitude toward Latinos.

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Effects of the Gold Rush

A Melting Pot of Opportunity. The Gold Rush was the first big impetus to settle the West, and it created a subsection of American society that grew up with almost complete freedom. People of all nations and backgrounds found themselves digging side by side,
The United States of America have only been emancipated for half a century from the state of colonial dependence in which they stood to Great Britain; the number of large fortunes there is small, and capital is still scarce. Yet no people in the world has made such rapid progress in trade and manufactures as the Americans: they constitute at the present day the second maritime nation in the world; and although their manufactures have to struggle with almost insurmountable natural impediments, they are not prevented from making great and daily advances.

In the United States the greatest undertakings and speculations are executed without difficulty, because the whole population is engaged in productive industry, and because the poorest as well as the most opulent members of the commonwealth are ready to combine their efforts for these purposes. The consequence is, that a stranger is constantly amazed by the immense public works executed by a nation which contains, so to speak, no rich men. The Americans arrived but as yesterday on the territory which they inhabit, and they have already changed the whole order of nature for their own advantage. They have joined the Hudson to the Mississippi, and made the Atlantic Ocean communicate with the Gulf of Mexico, across a continent of more than five hundred leagues in extent which separates the two seas. The longest railroads which have been constructed up to the present time are in America.

But what most astonishes me in the United States, is not so much the marvelous grandeur of some undertakings, as the innumerable multitude of small ones. Almost all the farmers of the United States combine some trade with agriculture; most of them make agriculture itself a trade. It seldom happens that an American farmer settles for good upon the land which he occupies: especially in the districts of the Far West he brings land into tillage in order to sell it again, and not to farm it: he builds a farmhouse on the speculation that, as the state of the country will soon be changed by the increase of population, a good price will be gotten for it. Every year a swarm of the inhabitants of the North arrive in the Southern States, and settle in the parts where the cotton plant and the sugar-cane grow. These men cultivate the soil in order to make it produce in a few years enough to enrich them; and they already look forward to the time when they may return home to enjoy the competency thus acquired. Thus the Americans carry their business-like qualities into agriculture; and their trading passions are displayed in that as in their other pursuits.

**TWO PATHS DIVERGE**

**TWO LATINO EXPERIENCES IN THE GOLD RUSH:**

Antonio Coronel was born in Mexico City but moved to Los Angeles and served in the Californio government prior to the Mexican-American War. After participating in the war and resisting American occupation, Coronel was one of the first on the scene after gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill. He brought a team that included Indian servants to help him dig. At that time, California’s population was mostly Mexican and Indian, so he considered the few Anglo-Americans there to be foreigners. Later on, California would become filled with so many American settlers that the Mexicans and Indians became the foreigners. Coronel was critical of this change and remarked that Mexicans were better miners and that Anglo miners restricted Mexicans because they were jealous. After discovering gold and trading with local Indians for more, Coronel had his fill of gold mining and returned to Los Angeles. He resumed public office and served as mayor from 1853–1854.

Another Latin American, Vicente Perez Rosales, had a different experience in the California Gold Rush. Rosales was a Chilean intellectual whose family suffered financially in the 1830s. Having attempted gold-mining in Chile, Rosales’ hopes rose when three ships bearing California gold arrived in Chile in 1848. He bought passports for himself and his brothers, and was soon retrieving 10–20 ounces of gold per day outside Sacramento. It was there that he witnessed ethnic hostility between Americans and Chileans, and his brothers were violently robbed. They decided to give up mining and try their hand at business, so they set up a French restaurant in San Francisco. After an accidental fire ruined their restaurant, Rosales and his family went home to Chile to start over. By then, Simón Bolívar had earned independence for much of South America, and Rosales became a senator in his homeland, hopeful about the prospects for liberty.

hoping to earn their fortune. The West was diverse, wild, and unmonitored, but immigrants, including many with Mexican heritage, got to take advantage of Manifest Destiny and forge their own future. This was difficult and not free from discrimination. Yet with no tradition of English law or Puritan morality, nor Southern slavery and aristocracy, the
West offered the chance for Latinos, Indians, black Americans, indentured servants, and immigrants from all over the world to create a culture for themselves without any pre-existing mold. All were in the quest for self-betterment together, and the U.S. government aided this quest by creating laws that encouraged individuals to mine land themselves, purchase it, and keep the profits. This was unique in the history of the world and undergirded many people’s decisions to come.

**Worldwide Prosperity.** The Gold Rush also produced an almost incomprehensible amount of wealth that boosted worldwide markets and made them more reliable. Between 1848 and 1858, about $600,000,000 worth of gold\(^2\) was produced with the United States producing 45% of the world’s total gold between 1851 and 1858.\(^3\) Since this wealth went into the hands of private citizens who then spent it or invested it in the market, California gold first stabilized the American economy and then the entire global economy. Americans became reliable buyers of foreign goods, which stimulated investment around the world and created significant economic stability.

**The New Movement West**

**Early Pioneers & Old Land Acts.** In the 1600s and 1700s, the New England model of settling America was through large numbers of individuals owning their own land. In Europe, land was traditionally held by the King, Church, and a few nobles. Early Americans, however, believed the essence of freedom, law, and order was to be found in many citizens owning land. For this reason, even before the U.S. Constitution was adopted, the Founding Fathers passed the Northwest Ordinances of 1784–1787. These land acts turned the New England ideal of common citizens owning land into official national policy. They provided for future land to be surveyed and sold cheaply to individuals, for public schools and government buildings to be erected, and for local government and civil liberties to be protected in all new territories. They even prohibited slavery, showing the Founding Fathers’ commitment to abolition.

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\(^2\) $17.5 billion today
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

The Northwest Ordinances encouraged pioneers to venture west, first to the Appalachians, then over them to the Mississippi River, then over the Santa Fe Trail, and westward into Oregon. In 1841, the Preemption Act let pioneers and squatters purchase their lands, up to 160 acres at $1.25 per acre. After the United States acquired the Mexican Cession and the Gold Rush drew large amounts of settlers into it, the government realized it needed to make it even easier to distribute land cheaply. Great potential lay locked in the agricultural and industrial development of all of that acreage, and the Jeffersonian ideal was that it should be the domain of settlers and families to unlock it.

The Civil War Interrupts Settlement

The American Civil War, which broke out between free and slave states in 1861, temporarily halted western migration. Controversies over new territory, especially the Mexican Cession, fueled the fire in the first place. In 1820, the Missouri Compromise had mandated that free and slave states be admitted evenly to preserve the balance of power in the U.S. Congress. The Compromise of 1850 attempted to settle the debate over slavery in the Mexican Cession by admitting California, Utah, and New Mexico as free states while admitting Texas as a slave state and strengthening the **Fugitive Slave Act**. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 repolarized the nation by nullifying the Missouri Compromise and inflaming sectional strife within Kansas and then throughout the nation.

As support for slavery waned in the U.S. in the 1840s and 1850s, various legislators attempted to abolish slavery peacefully and democratically through popular vote in each state. Ultimately, however, the effort to forestall war and **secession** over slavery and **states’ rights** failed. The Southern **Confederacy** seceded under the leadership of Mississippi Congressman and Mexican-American War veteran, Jefferson Davis. He argued that the U.S. national government had

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**Fugitive Slave Act**

A law requiring that escaped slaves be tried in a federal court without a jury and returned to their masters with the additional intent that persons who helped them to escape and flee would be treated as criminals and penalized with fines.

**secession**

becoming independent from the United States

**states’ rights**

the rights and powers retained by individual states and protected in the Constitution from interference by the federal government

**Confederacy**

the eleven southern American states that separated themselves from the U.S. during the American Civil War

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Jefferson Davis

4 $34.72 per acre in today’s currency
grown too strong, as exemplified in its demands for abolition. Opposing the South’s secession, President Abraham Lincoln headed the Northern Union and rallied troops to force the South into reunification.

War raged as General Ulysses S. Grant and General Robert E. Lee—also Mexican-American War veterans—fought one another. After four years of bloody battle, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, sealing the Union’s victory over the slaveholding Confederacy. By then, President Abraham Lincoln had already proclaimed freedom for all slaves in the Emancipation Proclamation, and this had to be extended into the South. Three days after Lee’s surrender, President Lincoln was assassinated while watching a play at Ford’s Theater, and the reconciliation of the North and South had to occur under his less-able successor, President Andrew Johnson. Slavery had been abolished, but the root issue of how strong the national government should be, compared to state governments, would remain unresolved for many years. At the same time, Mexico was facing its own version of this quarrel between centralists and liberals, who had been alternating control since Mexican independence in 1821. They had only just recently ended the reign of Santa Anna and were attempting liberal reforms under a new president.
In this proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln, all American slaves were freed, and the full power of the American government and military were sworn to uphold that freedom.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom…

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[]), and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforth shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.
And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

TWO PATHS DIVERGE

New Land Acts

In the midst of the Civil War, an unopposed Republican Party led by Abraham Lincoln passed the Homestead Act of 1862 with an eye towards the future. The Homestead Act expanded the ability of pioneers and farmers to settle the West by selling cheap tracts of land to anyone who agreed to farm or develop the land for at least five years. This included immigrants, women, indentured servants, and freed slaves who would become citizens with the passing of the 14th Amendment in 1868. All the claimant had to do was submit an application with payment, settle and work the land for the allotted time, and then receive the deed. Almost 300 million acres of federal land was settled in this manner between 1862 and 1934, giving homes to over 1.5 million westerners.

Over time, more land acts were passed to incentivize settlement in areas less suited to farming. The Timber Culture Act allowed a homesteader in the Great Plains to claim an extra 160 acres of land for $2.50 per acre if they planted trees on at least one-fourth of it. The Kinkaid Act and the Desert Land Act permitted homesteaders in dry areas to claim up 640 extra acres if the settler agreed to irrigate. The Stock-Raising Act enabled ranchers to claim up to 640 acres as well, for their cattle. Using the proceeds from land sales,
the government then became involved, improving roads, bridges, and waterways to incentivize more settlement.

The result of this massive land auction was that by 1880, approximately half of the American population was settled on farms. By 1900, 75% of rural Americans owned their own land—the highest percentage of land ownership in the world. Additionally, wage rates for farm workers were between $10.00 and $18.00 per month,5 which gave even the poorest a chance to rise from poverty. One Irish immigrant recorded, “You can, as soon as you get into regular employment, save the price of an acre and a half of the finest land in the world every week! And in less than a year, you will have enough money to start to the West and take up an 80-acre farm which will be your own forever.”6 Land ownership was a unique opportunity, arising from the U.S. acquisition of territory as well as its desire to sell it off. For the second half of the nineteenth century, the U.S. government aided hundreds of thousands of immigrants fleeing war, famine, and persecution, to come and settle. Lured by opportunity, approximately 20% of migrant Mexicans attempted to settle down in America, usually in Texas where there were Spanish-speaking communities and the border was nearby; but for many reasons, most Mexicans chose not to settle permanently. Alternatively, they came as migratory workers who crossed the border to work seasonally in U.S. fields or construction and then crossed back to bring money home to their families. The work was not easy, but wages were often 5 to 10 times what they were in Mexico, and did not require any English or educational background.

The Railroad Revolution

Corporations could also take advantage of the U.S. government’s offer of cheap land. Throughout the nineteenth century lumber, stone, mineral, coal, gas, and oil companies sought to buy large amounts of land, knowing they were

5 $285.71-$514.29/month in today’s currency
THE DAWES ACT: In 1887, the U.S. government tried to include Indians in the homesteading program through the Dawes Act. The Dawes Act divided up Indian tribal lands into individual lots and sold them first to individual Indian households, and then to the rest of the public. The legislation was originally conceived by a Massachusetts senator, Henry Laurens Dawes, who was concerned about the poverty of Indians on reservations and was looking for ways to help them. He believed that reservationist policy would keep Indians poor, and reasoned that if each Indian household owned their own land and was given full citizenship rights, that they could take part in the American climb up the social ladder. Under the Dawes Act, each Indian household who made a claim would receive 160 acres of land that they could receive the title for after 25 years, to continue to reside on or sell, as long as they abided by the laws of the state they were living in. They would also receive full citizenship. Dawes’ intentions were good, but many Indians resented the political maneuver to get them to assimilate into American society. Tribal lands were broken up, as was their way of life, which entailed a spiritual and collective reverence for the land on which they lived. Most natives were not ready to adopt a modern agricultural lifestyle based on the nuclear family, and tried to cling to some semblance of tribal life even while their reservation lands were being subdivided and sold. In the 1930s, the philosophy underlying the Dawes Act lost support, and the U.S. government tried to figure out a way to reassemble and honor the tribal collectives they had broken up.

reservations
An area of land set aside as a place for a Native American community.

transcontinental railroad
The first railroad to connect the east coast of the United States with the west coast.

permitted to profit off of anything they built or discovered.

While some companies gained a reputation for exploiting resources and workers, the fact that money went into private hands instead of the government’s was another American distinctive. Additionally, there were assets that only companies with great industrial power could develop, such as the railroad.

In 1862, Abraham Lincoln’s Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Act. This landmark piece of legislation initially served war purposes, but in the end, changed the entire American landscape and way of life. Under the Railroad Act, thousands of square miles of federal land were granted to companies for the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. On January 8, 1863, just days after the Emancipation Proclamation, a great railway race began between the Central Pacific Railroad Company, which started laying track eastward from the San Francisco Bay, and the Union Pacific Railroad Company, which started laying track
westward from Council Bluffs, Iowa. The race required an immense amount of money, labor, and administration, not to mention enormous quantities of iron spikes, rails, nuts, bolts, tools, wire, wood, and coal. An efficient railroad that crossed thousands of miles of terrain required many experts to work together and produce standardized equipment. The project launched America into the modern world of industrialism and capitalist economy.

Six years later, on May 10, 1869, the two railroad companies finally met in the middle, at Promontory Summit, Utah. The final golden spike was hammered into place by railroad financier, Leland Stanford. The government, investors, and engineers rejoiced that millions of acres from the Mississippi to the Pacific were now accessible by rail line. The trip from New York to San Francisco had gone from six months by ship to just six days by rail. East and West were at last united, and marketing campaigns began to court settlers from America and all over Europe. At first, passenger fees were very high, but prices stabilized as more railroads entered the competition. In 1883, the Northern Pacific
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

RAILROAD LABORERS: Building the first transcontinental railroad was a massive effort that required a lot of manual labor. Track was laid by hand, very slowly. Between 1863 and 1865, the Central Pacific Railroad laid only 50 miles of line because they only had 600 workers. To scale the Sierra Nevada, they needed thousands more, so 2,500 Chinese and several hundred Mexicans were hired at the price of $28 per month ($528.30 in today’s currency). Several thousand Mormons were hired by the Union Pacific, to build much of the trail through Utah. Irish, black Americans, Civil War veterans, and anyone willing to work in the harsh, dangerous conditions were also hired. Tunnels had to be blasted, cliffs had to be scaled, rivers had to be forded, and bridges built, all while the workers slept outside, made their own meals, and faced inclement weather, animals, and Indian attacks. In order to ease some of the discomfort, laborers created a mobile railcar they could sleep in, that moved with them down the line as they laid the track. Many immigrant groups also had “bosses” who translated English and maintained control of their groups, sometimes leading strikes if workers were taken advantage of or went unpaid. It was tremendously difficult work, but some diaries kept by laborers reveal they considered it more exciting than simple fieldwork and more likely to lead to skilled jobs later on.

was completed, connecting Chicago with Seattle. The Southern-Pacific was also completed, linking New Orleans to Los Angeles through the Gadsden Purchase. As more cities were built along the train routes and as goods rolled in and out to support them, the notion of the “frontier” began to disappear. By the 1890s, it was officially gone.

Transportation Revolution. Eventually, enough track had been laid to form the great arteries of American business, trade, and settlement. The ability to move large amounts of passengers and goods revolutionized American life. For pioneers, moving westward became easier and safer. They could eat and sleep on a train without worrying about rivers, Indian attacks, or other hazards. Railroads also made it unnecessary for the average family or even an entire city, to produce everything it needed. Instead, people produced their own regional products and imported everything else. Lumbering that was done in the Pacific Northwest provided wood for the whole nation. Fruit and vegetables grown in California were shipped eastward, while manufactured goods from New England and New York City went westward. For the first time in history it became possible to settle away from rivers and water sources, and people were free to travel for work, school, or just for pleasure. Quality of goods and life improved as the country
became interdependent.

Indian Wars

The price of Americans moving west was the devastation of the American Indian and the virtual extinction of nomadic life. Indians in Latin America had faced culture clash when Cortés and the conquistadors arrived in the 1500s, but their settled lifestyle, often agricultural, permitted them to retain some semblance of their indigenous life. In contrast, many North American Indian tribes roamed vast areas of the continent, relying on large areas to hunt and gather. The Comanche and Apache prevailed in the southwest, crossing on horseback, and the Cheyenne and Lakota (Sioux) tracked large herds of migratory buffalo across the Great Plains. When faced with robust Manifest Destiny and the modern industrial might of nineteenth-century America, there was little chance that their lifestyle could coexist.

Railroads proved to be one of the greatest challenges to Indian survival. The great “Iron Horse” carved up the Great Plains into subsections, and crossed right through collectively owned tribal land. At first, Indians tried to make treaties with the U.S. government to negotiate boundaries and property rights. With the exception of the Fort Laramie Treaty, however, most treaties were broken or replaced with less generous agreements. Indians then began to attack railway speculators and construction workers who were camping in the area. Several times they derailed trains, killing the crews. As Indian attacks grew more aggressive, the U.S. government sent soldiers to escort railroad surveyors and laborers. Indian war parties continued, more and more shots were fired, and the cycle of vengeance seemed like it would never stop.

In the end, U.S. sharpshooters decimating the large herds of buffalo brought the Plains Indians into submission. Soldiers and independent contractors were hired to shoot the
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

Buffalo herd

wild animals for their hides, or to prevent trains from being derailed and delayed by the herds. By the 1880s, Plains Indian territory had been split up, leaving only about 1,000 buffalo—not enough to support multiple tribes. Starvation forced many Plains Indians to submit to the U.S. government’s order that they move onto reservations. Through targeted warfare, Indians were similarly forced onto reservations in the Pacific and the Southwest. While some charitable efforts were extended through the Bureau of Indian Affairs—for example, selling Indians food and supplies at reduced prices, or trading them guns for buffalo hides—such measures ended up enabling Indian-U.S. hostility and were unable to lift Indians out of poverty.

Industrial and Agricultural Revolution

**Industrial Technology.** Post-Civil War America saw an explosion in engineering and industrial technology which led to breakthroughs in transportation, architecture, medicine, energy, and agriculture. The Gold Rush launched mining technology, which contributed the raw resources for industrial revolution: iron, coal, gas, and oil. The transcontinental railroad workers then utilized these resources to spur further engineering and technology: air brakes, steel wheels, the coal-burning engine—everything had to be developed, patented, and factory-made, often with machines that were developed precisely for each part. New fields of science were even invented. Electricity began to be generated in mass quantity, and machines began to replace manual labor. Chemical engineering and pasteurization increased the safety of food and beverages. In the 1900s, engineers
discovered the processes for making stainless steel, glass, and gasoline, which gave rise to bridges, skyscrapers, powerful construction equipment, the automobile, and the airplane. Industrial and commercial inventions were off and running.

**Cowboys and the Cattle Industry**

Ranching was originally brought to the American West by the Spanish and Mexicans, so many Mexican-Americans in the 1800s were experienced ranchers, leather-makers, or cattle-traders. On this foundation, Americans turned cattle ranching into a full-fledged industry by constructing railroads close to ranches. Cowboys would round up cattle, drive them to “cattle towns” like Dodge City or Abilene, and have them packed onto cattle cars that went to meat-packing cities like Chicago and Cincinnati. When refrigerated cars were invented, fresh beef products could be shipped cheaply all over America, even to remote parts of the nation.
MULTICULTURAL COWBOYS: The heyday of American cowboys was 1860–1890—a time when the frontier line was quickly moving west, following the railroad, and cowboys were driving cattle thousands of miles to cattle towns. While most people picture western broncos as white Americans, a substantial number of these cowboys were black, Indian, Mexican, or biracial. Nat Love, for example, was born a Tennessee slave but eventually drove cattle and horses all over the American west. He wrote down his memoirs in Life and Adventures of Nat Love (1907) and retired to work for a railroad company. Other black Americans entered the ranching industry and became horse and cattle trainers after the Civil War. Several even became famous gunfighters and rodeo performers.

While American Indians never became “cowboys” in the classic sense, many Indians in the West tried their hand at ranching. The American government even encouraged ranching experiments among the Cherokee and Seminole, believing that the lifestyle was a better fit for them than farming and that it would lead them to prosperity. At one point, some Seminole ranchers owned herds with up to 20,000 cattle. By 1890, a Choctaw “Trail of Tears” survivor, Wilson Jones, was one of the richest in Indian territory and had a flourishing ranching business. Ranching also had some success among the Comanche and Arapaho, with retiring ranchers often releasing their last herds of cattle on Indian land, where they knew tribes would use them.

The invention of commercially produced barbed wire in 1867 also changed ranchers’ experience for the better. Suddenly, ranchers could contain their cattle cheaply in whatever configuration they desired, even in the middle of the dry Texas prairie. Barbed wire was a fraction of the cost of wood fencing and required much less labor to install. Quick, mobile fencing also prevented herds from trampling crops or mingling with neighboring herds. Some said that in Texas, nothing contributed to greater civility and fewer shoot-outs than barbed wire.
Mechanization of Agriculture

Millions of new farmers led to a flurry of inventions which revolutionized farming. Cyrus McCormick, a Virginia farmer who believed he had a religious calling to help feed the world, invented the self-propelled reaper to replace hand sickles and scythes. He then moved to Chicago in 1849 to manufacture these reapers in mass quantity, which led directly to small farmers’ success in the West. An Illinois blacksmith, John Deere, invented the steel plow in 1837 to replace iron and wood plows. He started a company at a railroad stop in Moline, Illinois to manufacture and ship farm equipment all over the West. Soon, wagons, corn planters, reaper-binders, and all kinds of agricultural innovations were increasing farmers’ productivity and saving them time, money, and back labor.

Between 1860 and 1880, U.S. agricultural production almost doubled because of the time and effort saved by modern equipment. Farmers could plant and harvest crops more quickly, get food to market before it spoiled, and save their farm animals from overwork. Consequently, food prices dropped while food quality rose. By 1900, almost every American had access to basic beef, milk, fruit, and grain products, which was a historical landmark. Health and life
expectancy increased, and so did quality of life because Americans were spending less money on food and less time in the field, all while retaining more money and time for discretionary purposes. This opened up a space in American society for hobbies, entertainment, and specialized knowledge, including advanced education.

By the time rubber, insecticides, and gasoline-powered equipment were invented in the 1920s, Americans were well on their way to advanced agribusiness. Famine was becoming a thing of the past, and tens of thousands of new patents were being issued, often to common farmers or shopkeepers. The stock market grew in importance and gave rise to powerful companies, individuals, and banks. As one invention led to another, wealth was produced, and the news of and marketing for inventions increased. As knowledge was recorded and mass reproduced by modern publishing equipment, specialized schooling became available in science, medicine, and business. Education around the country became accessible as public schools proliferated and were outfitted with better desks, books, laboratories, and resources needed to perpetuate innovation. By 1915, the father of public education, John Dewey, was instructing teachers about how to raise children for a modern, working lifestyle.

stock market
An exchange (market) of shares (stocks) of publicly held companies in a free market economy, providing companies with access to capital funding in exchange for giving investors part of company ownership.
Irrigation Transformation

One of the most underestimated breakthroughs on the American road to modernity was the invention of irrigation and plumbing. At the time the Mexican Cession was acquired, the large majority of land in the western half of the United States was known as “the Great American Desert” because it was so dry; it was assumed to be non-farmable. In the late 1800s, scientists and surveyors began to re-examine this assumption. California led the way in discovering how to divert water from the Colorado River to irrigate great portions of the state, which increased the number of fruits and
vegetables exponentially—and therefore farms for immigrants to work.

Government funding in California then led to hydroelectric dams which collected water to create electricity. California became the first state to power electric streetcars, modern house appliances, sprinkler systems, and even the first movie industry, Hollywood.

In 1902, the Reclamation Act aimed to extend this irrigation technology all over the West. In time, more than 600 dams in 20 different states made deserts bloom. The Great Plains then became known as “the breadbasket of the world” because they produced such an enormous wheat surplus. Additionally, a substantial benefit from better irrigation was the elimination of diseases including yellow fever, malaria, dysentery, typhus, and cholera. Draining and leveling land where water lay stagnant, and the invention of plumbing and sewer systems made these scourges a thing of the past, which boosted both the American population and its interest in health and hygiene.
Population and Immigration Explode

In the 1840s, Manifest Destiny expansionists had claimed to need territory for future generations of Americans; the assumptions about this need prevailed. The population of post-Civil War America began multiplying faster than any nation in Europe—faster, even, than any country in European history. Between 1860 and 1910, the U.S. population grew approximately 25% per decade. Life expectancy rose from 39 years old in 1850 to 60 years old in 1920. At the same time, infant mortality decreased approximately 50%. By 1890, the U.S. had a higher population than any other European country except Russia, and was expanding at an incredible rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861 31.4 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870 39.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880 Approximately 50 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890 62.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900 75 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914 Over 100 million</td>
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Besides the increase from biological factors, the U.S. population exploded due to immigration. From its earliest days, America had been founded by immigrants, primarily from northern and western Europe. This trend continued until 1848, with most European immigrants assimilating into the predominantly Anglo culture that the Founding Fathers constructed. Beginning with the Gold Rush in 1848, however, a second wave of immigration began, this time with more diversity. By 1860, approximately 1 in 7 American citizens were foreign-born, many of whom found cultural solidarity in big cities like New York, Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco. Between 1848 and 1890, approximately 10 million immigrants fled their homes due to famine, war, or religious persecution. Catholics, Jews, Orthodox, and secular revolutionaries began to come. The Irish came when famine and religious persecution gripped their land. Germans and Italians came
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

Two paths diverge after revolutions in 1848 were followed by continuing war. The Chinese came, fleeing the Taiping Rebellion. Latinos immigrated for similar reasons. Many fled their home countries as conservative and liberal factions feuded and their economies stagnated. The land of free speech, free religion, and free markets attracted many who needed opportunity and a safe haven.

In the beginning, the U.S. had little need of an immigration system. States regulated their own immigration and had simple processes for naturalization. Castle Garden Immigration Depot in New York City was the first immigration station built in the U.S., and saw between 8 and 12 million immigrants pass through its doors between 1855 and 1890. As immigration began to peak around the turn of the century, Ellis Island was built to cope with the increase, and the federal government began to officially regulate immigration. Immigrants were asked a series of questions including their names and occupations, and could be turned away for reasons of disease, mental illness, criminality, or extreme poverty. The Immigration Act of 1882 imposed a “head tax” of 50 cents per immigrant in order to pay inspectors, doctors, and government officials who were now staffing the ports. Overall, it was generally easy to enter the country, and only about 2% of newcomers were denied entrance.
The Statue of Liberty’s welcome message, penned by Emma Lazarus in 1886, was attached to the pedestal and welcomed the world’s poor and “tired, huddled masses.” Once in the country, however, immigrants soon found that there was a discrepancy between the openness Americans proclaimed and the hostilities many expressed towards minorities. Harsh reality sunk in for some who tried to climb the ladder of success but were discriminated against. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, some of whom had been naturalized in 1848, faced challenges. To begin with, the substantial land grants given to Californios by the Mexican government were not upheld by U.S. courts after 1848. In fact, an 1854 court decision in California denied Mexicans, blacks, and Indians equal testimony in court, so they could not legally protest their land being forcibly distributed. Their titles were ignored, and their cases or claims could be tabled or thrown out. As new settlers flooded California between 1850 and 1900, they were permitted to buy Californio land under the Homestead Act and other related land acts. Even though the 14th Amendment defended citizenship rights for Californios, blacks, and Indians, they did not receive equal rights in many ways. Minorities could experience different tax rates, denial of voting rights or court rights, and racist treatment in general.

Another factor working against Mexicans in America was the fact that they usually crossed the border in the undeveloped West rather than migrating through a city of opportunity like New York. This meant that most arrived with no possessions, lived alone, and then had to find work as unskilled, non-English speaking miners, construction workers, or farmhands. At first, there were many jobs available, but as machines replaced manual labor, the number of available jobs dwindled. Jobs in strawberry fields or orange orchards were also dependent on many external factors such as the weather, the national economy, and the number of unskilled workers competing for the same job. When there was a dry
spell, a pestilence, an economic depression, or too many workers available, employment opportunities for migrant Latinos decreased. Compared to the Northeast, there were also fewer schools and pathways to becoming a self-sustaining citizen in the agricultural West. Some Mexican-Americans such as Francis Coronel made it, but others remained impoverished. For many, it seemed as though while some Americans zoomed ahead in the race to commercial and industrial success, the disenfranchised had an even wider gap to cross.

**Section Summary**

Coinciding with the end of the Mexican-American War and the purchase of the Mexican Cession was the Gold Rush, which began in California in 1848 and grew into a mining movement that lasted well into the 1870s. The Gold Rush inaugurated a mass migration of American pioneers to the West, in addition to opportunity-seekers from all over the world. In response, the United States government made it as easy as possible for almost anyone to own land, settle, and become an American citizen.
Railroads facilitated the settlement of the West, bringing goods and supplies from urban to remote areas, and making it possible for cities to support themselves through a modern shipping economy. The transcontinental railroads spawned a larger industrial revolution that began to take place by bringing together advanced engineers, wealthy businessmen, and government interest. The intersection of these three forces helped to transform the United States from a fledgling republic into a superpower in just a few decades. Agricultural machinery made famine and slave labor a thing of the past. Massive irrigation projects watered the West and supplied it with huge amounts of hydroelectricity. The amassing of power, oil, coal, and gas fueled a revolution that was just commencing by the twentieth century.

The price of industrial and economic modernization was the loss of the American Indian, as the typical Indian lifestyle was eclipsed by one that had no room for collective lands, sacred rites, and premodern ideals. It was not yet the time when indigenous identity could be properly honored, although some in the late nineteenth century tried. Racial and ethnic discrimination also became an issue as black slaves were freed, European indentured servants arrived, Chinese laborers flooded California shores, and Latin Americans crossed the southwestern border. While America was the most open country in the world, it still had to close the gap between its rhetoric of freedom and the reality it presented. In the midst of mighty societal forces stood the cowboy, the pioneer, the industrialist, and the gold miner—rugged individuals working in their own way for progress and prosperity.
While the time period from 1850 to 1910 was a huge step forward for the United States, for Mexico it was more complicated. The United States fought the Civil War and ultimately emerged stronger, more industrial, more powerful, and more self-sufficient. Mexico, on the other hand, descended deeper into civil war until sectional strife culminated in the Mexican Revolution of 1910, the largest domestic conflict in their history. While the nineteenth century was not without seasons of honor and victory for Mexico, the inability for the country to stabilize itself and economically modernize on its own brought them difficulty. The years from 1853 to 1872 saw almost continual warfare and attempted recolonization by Europe. The next 35 years, 1873–1908, featured dictatorship and repression. Mexico gained economic standing during these years, but for many citizens, it cost them a price they were not willing to pay.

**Benito Juárez Leads Liberal Reform**

**Ousting Santa Anna.** In 1853, when Santa Anna returned from exile to rule Mexico for the eleventh time, liberals in Mexico began to plot his demise. They were tired of two decades of heavy-handedness, and wanted to see decentralized government prevail in Mexico with a return to constitutional rule. Benito Juárez, a Zapotec judge and governor from Oaxaca, began to spearhead this campaign. He was immediately exiled to the United States by Santa Anna’s government, along with other revolutionaries. For two years, he supported himself by working in a cigar factory in New Orleans, Louisiana, all while plotting the overthrow of
Santa Anna’s centralist faction in Mexico City.

There were conspiracies to dethrone him circulating Mexico, and in 1854, revolutionaries under the command of General Juan Álvarez proclaimed the Plan de Ayutla, a plan to overthrow the centralist government. They stormed Mexico City, which caused Benito Juárez to leave New Orleans and join the liberation force. The revolutionaries were victorious, and Juárez was appointed as a judge in the Álvarez government. While serving in this post, he passed the “Juárez Law” which revoked the protective privileges that Catholic clergymen had in court. From his background working for Indian rights in Oaxaca, rolling back clerical power was a prime focus for Juárez and would remain so as long as he was in power.

**Civil War Begins**

Benito Juárez was serving as the chief justice of the Mexican Supreme Court when a new constitution of Mexico was drafted and ratified. The new Constitution of 1857 restricted Catholicism significantly more than previous constitutions had. The measures were strong enough to provoke a harsh conservative backlash, and a coup defending the Church overthrew the Álvarez government. Many were arrested, including Juárez. Eventually, Juárez was pardoned and escaped to Querétaro, where he proclaimed himself the true President of Mexico in exile. The Constitution of 1857 gave him, as chief justice, the right to assume the presidency in the case of the acting president’s death or unlawful removal, so Juárez assumed the office and began to fight back against the conservative takeover of the capital.

**Reform War**

As Juárez was trying to govern in exile, conservatives tried to maintain control in Mexico City. For three years, from 1858–1861, La Guerra de Reforma, or “The Reform War,” was waged between those who supported a liberal,
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

ANTI-CLERICALISM IN THE 1857 CONSTITUTION:
For many reasons, part of liberal reformation in Mexico entailed destruction of Catholic influence. The 1857 Constitution articulated specific “Reform Laws” that pushed secularism forward. Such measures included:

• No open air Mass services
• No religious processions or festivals of any kind
• The abolition of religious orders; nuns and monks’ religious vows were declared illegal
• No wearing religious attire in public
• Marriage and funerals being made a secular ritual, taken over by the government
• The Church could not hold property anymore, including Indian lands in trust for them
• No collecting tithes (money given regularly to the Church)
• No running schools or charities; no religious education at all
• Relationship with the Pope forbidden; no Jesuits or vassals of the Pope permitted in Mexico
• No bishops could hold political office; many, including the Archbishop, were exiled.

These anti-clerical laws encouraged conservatives, clerics, and even some Indian villages to support the French occupation in 1862. Anti-clericalism continued under Juárez and his successor, then was ignored for a time, but was resurrected in full force in 1917.

anti-Catholic republic and those who favored centralism and the Church. It was a long, bloody series of battles where Juárez himself was captured and almost executed. In 1858, when Juárez was forced to flee Mexico City, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln wrote to Juárez stating that he supported Juárez’s quest for “the happiness, prosperity, and liberty of yourself, your government, and its people.” Lincoln, who had been one of the only Congressmen to vote against the Mexican-American War in 1846,
showed compassion to Benito Juárez by ignoring Mexico’s debts to the U.S. that were beginning to pile up again in 1860. Outstanding debts had been one of the triggers of war in the past, and Lincoln was determined not to let it happen again.

**Europeans Test the Monroe Doctrine**

Europeans, however, were not as forgiving as Lincoln. In 1861, Juárez cancelled debt payments to all foreign nations—the United States, France, Britain, and Spain—because he needed money for the Reform War. Juárez was heavily dependent on Veracruz, the seat of customs duties, to subsidize his army at the same time that France, Britain, and Spain were planning to blockade the city and force Mexico to restart its debt payments. France had already done this once, in the Pastry War of 1838, so they had no qualms about doing it again. Britain and Spain withdrew from the conflict, however, when they realized France had larger ambitions. The French monarchy never completely accepted Latin America’s rebellion from Spain, and they now believed this was a prime opportunity to reassert themselves in the western hemisphere. With the backing of conservative forces in Mexico City, Louis Napoleon III, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte and ruler of France, prepared to install a *puppet government* in the capital in order to return Mexico to European Catholic dominion. In 1863, the French captured Mexico City and coronated Maximillian I, an Austrian ally from the *Hapsburg royal family*, as ruler of the Second Mexican Empire.

Benito Juárez, who had already been fighting centralists in Mexico for five years, now found himself fighting a second war of independence against the French. He rallied troops in northern Mexico and sent a delegation to California to enlist American and Mexican-American support. The United States was embroiled in the Civil War at that point, however, and could spare no troops. Still, President Lincoln made
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

CINCO DE MAYO: Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican-American holiday in honor of Mexican victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. In the battle, a Texan-born General, Ignacio Zaragoza, led a mostly indigenous and mestizo militia to defend a small town besieged by 6,000 French soldiers. While resistance battles against the French continued until 1867, the victory was a symbol of the depth of Mexican commitment to liberty. In Mexico, this holiday is mainly celebrated in the state of Puebla where the battle occurred, but in the United States, large celebrations with parades and Mexican food, music, and dancing are popular in cities like New York and Los Angeles.

Flag of the Second Mexican Empire

sure that spare weapons found their way south to help Juárez’s army; 30,000 muskets were sent from Louisiana alone. President Andrew Johnson continued this policy after the Civil War ended, facilitating more military aid to Juárez. As U.S. troops laid down arms, the same stockpile of weapons which had been used to purchase black slaves’ freedom was used by Mexicans to win their freedom back from France. In 1867, Juárez successfully defeated Maximilian’s troops in Mexico City and had the emperor executed. The emperor’s last words were, “Viva Mexico!”

Juárez’s Last Term

In spite of the gains he made, Juárez’s last presidential term was problematic because he was unable to return Mexico back to an operating republic. In fact, because Mexico was bankrupt, Juárez had to centralize power and make peace with some of his political enemies. No longer receiving European funds, he confiscated Church property and sold it to large landowners who could afford to pay high prices for them. This angered many in his party who wanted Church lands to be distributed to Indians and peasants. Juárez also weakened the Mexican Congress, strengthened the presidential veto, and permitted the
army to pursue Indians and soldiers who staged revolts. He fought Maya insurgents in the Yucatan, and Apache who massacred thousands of Mexicans in the north. Juárez died in office in 1872 after working hard to form a republican government that he was ultimately unable to achieve.

**JUAREZ & THE PICKETT AFFAIR.** During the French occupation of Mexico, Juárez was committed to preventing a Mexican conservative alliance with the French, and Abraham Lincoln was equally committed to preventing a France-Mexico alliance with Jefferson Davis’ Confederacy. In 1861, Jefferson Davis sent an emissary, John Pickett, to try and gain Juárez’ support of the U.S. Confederacy. To Lincoln’s relief, Juárez sensed Pickett’s imperial motives and threw Pickett into prison for thirty days then expelled him from the country. Lincoln knew that French forces in Mexico sympathized with the Confederacy and were prepared to recognize Davis’ government officially, perhaps even so much as to offer him military and economic support. The Confederacy, in turn, might have supported the French and allied with Mexican aristocrats to turn Mexico back into a colonial empire again. Juárez’s dismissal of the Confederate delegation prevented this from occurring and aided the Union’s victory. When Lincoln’s troops finally won the Civil War, the French began pulling out of Mexico, in part because they believed the U.S. would now align with Juárez and oust them. This weakening allowed Juárez to gain the upper hand in Mexico City. While Lincoln and Juarez were never friends, they worked together to achieve similar goals and, in doing so, helped one another win the wars which threatened to tear their countries apart.

For resisting a second wave of European colonialism, Juárez saved Mexico. He became a national hero, and Ciudad Juárez, the city in Chihuahua where he governed in exile, was named after him. For aiding liberty in both continents, Juárez is today commemorated among the Statue of Liberators in Washington D.C.
After the French-Austrian emperor, Maximilian I, had been defeated, President Benito Juárez returned to Mexico City to resume leadership of the Mexican Republic. In one of his opening speeches, he proclaimed the following:

Mexicans: let us now pledge all our efforts to obtain and consolidate the benefits of peace. Under its auspices, the protection of the laws and of the authorities will be sufficient for all the inhabitants of the Republic. May the people and the government respect the rights of all. Between individuals, as between nations, peace means respect for the rights of others.

Let us hope that after the lesson learned through the prolonged and painful experience undergone by our communities during the war, that we Mexicans will cooperate with the welfare and prosperity of the Nation, which may only be obtained through unfailing respect for the law, and with complete obedience to the authorities elected by the people.

The Porfiriato

Porfirio Díaz was a mestizo lawyer and soldier from Oaxaca, the same state that Juárez was from, who ended up rivaling Juárez for rulership of Mexico. In 1853, Díaz was also exiled for his liberal views by Santa Anna’s government; he returned to Mexico in 1854 to take part in the Plan de Ayutla. He distinguished himself in the Reform War and the war against French occupation, allied with Juárez, then ran for president twice against him and lost. In 1871, Díaz staged a coup against Juárez and, after it was unsuccessful, went into hiding in Brownsville, Texas, where he planned another revolt. In 1876, Díaz tried again, this time against Juárez’s successor, and prevailed. Díaz’s initial plans for Mexico called for more representation in the lower levels of government and no re-election of incumbent Presidents. Once in office, however, he backtracked and broke both principles. His thirty-five year term as president—the Porfiriato—became about centrally controlled law and order.

“Pan o Palo”

Díaz’s domestic policy became known as pan o palo, the “bread or the stick.” The expression encapsulated his belief that progress required stability, and stability would be achieved by repression if incentives did not work. He ruled Mexico strictly, imprisoning bandits and revolutionaries. He censored free speech and opposition. Then he set about fixing Mexico’s financial problems by courting foreign investors back to Mexico. Since Díaz offered tax breaks to companies that opened in Mexico, both the U.S. and Britain began investing millions of dollars in Mexican mining, railroad, gas, and oil development. Specifically in northern Mexico, silver and copper production boomed, minerals were smelted, oil was refined, and petroleum began to be produced in mass amounts. Americans developed oil fields in Veracruz and Tampico, and laid the very first railroad tracks in Mexico. The latter grew to be more than 8,500
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

miles of track which connected Mexican states to the ports and to one another, increasing their productivity. Mexico’s profits and market value increased worldwide, and Mexico became a prime producer of cotton, wool, and paper in addition to a direct source of gas, minerals, and oil.

The Price of Wealth

For the first time in Mexican history, Mexico was gaining a stable economy, but not everyone was happy with the ramifications. To begin with, Mexico had to court the United States, Britain, France, Spain, and others they had fought so hard against in order to obtain business from them. Foreigners were now living and working in Mexico while they laid track and constructed companies. If foreigners were given higher wages, or paid less in taxes—as most were—there was resentment towards their presence, on top of ethnic bias each group already had towards the other.

The United States had a vested interest in stabilizing the Mexican economy so that Mexico would not fall victim to European invasion again, as it had with France. The U.S.

ETHNIC HOSTILITY: As foreigners came to develop Mexico on-site, tensions grew between them and the Mexican population. Industrialists preferred to bring their own workers instead of using Mexican laborers. This was partly due to the language gap; managers did not know Spanish and needed to be able to communicate easily with their workers. It was also partly due to the general lack of literacy and education among the Mexican populace. In textile mills, this was not much of an issue, but in mining and oil sites, which demanded more technological know-how, it was. Stereotypically, Mexicans were viewed as lazy compared to European or American workers. Industrialists were very driven, competitive men who were always on the clock and continually concerned about efficiency. They were used to their workers putting in a full day’s work, quietly and obediently, and respecting rules, authority, and property. In contrast, Mexican laborers were not reared to put in a full day’s work so vigorously. There was a cultural attitude of “mañana,” or “tomorrow,” when it came to high-gear production. It was also traditional to skip work on Mondays, and drinking on the job could be a problem. The result was that Mexican laborers were seen as inferior and kept in low-paying, unskilled jobs that did not provide a pathway upward. Ethnic tensions grew and led to the first Mexican oil and mining strikes in the late 1800s, when laborers began to forcefully protest foreign business.

strikes

times during which workers stop labor in an attempt to force employers to agree to their demands
also wanted to heal the wounds of the Mexican-American War and stabilize the relationship for the future. In 1878, former president Ulysses S. Grant visited Díaz in Mexico, whereupon Díaz arranged to pay the United States $300,000 in claims in return for official recognition by the U.S. government. Díaz, who had seized power illegitimately, wanted to make sure he could count on the United States to do business, make treaties, and give aid to Mexico. The United States agreed, but many Mexicans resented this relationship and the price Díaz was paying for economic modernization.

The underbelly of this resentment surfaced in 1909 when President William H. Taft became the first sitting U.S. president to meet with the Mexican president. He and Díaz arranged a dignified procession to take place between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, where they would meet and shake hands. Just before the procession, U.S. security caught an armed assassin waiting for the two presidents to pass by. It was not clear whether the assassin was aiming for Taft, Díaz, or both, but it was clear that the new alliance between the two was not appreciated by some parts of Mexican society. This sector was preparing to rise up in the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

The End of the Porfiriato

For thirty-five years, Díaz managed to keep Mexico together long enough to get its economy started and image reworked. However, he disregarded the liberal principles that initially put him in power, reversing them once he got into office as others before him had. He had no constitutional republic or representative government. He campaigned on one-term presidencies yet controlled multiple elections to maintain power. He permitted no freedoms of speech, press, or assembly. While Díaz did not reinstate the Catholic Church’s privileges, he chose not to enforce the anti-clerical laws of the 1857 Constitution and grew increasingly tolerant towards the Church as time went on. This was very upsetting to secular reformers of his day.

In addition, Indian and mestizo peasants—the majority of the
Mexican population—remained poor and disenfranchised. The millions of foreign investment dollars Díaz courted were being directed into the government, military, and upper class. Tax policies benefitted those in control at the top of society, and did not provide an avenue for regular citizens to accumulate wealth. International business created new wealthy businessmen who were allied with Mexican landowners and the government, and most industrial profit was taken out of the country because the work was done by foreigners. Consequently, the majority of Mexicans remained poor, indentured, and uneducated. In his last years, Díaz broke up indigenous tribal lands into private lots and sold them, which greatly angered the Indian population. By 1900, the bulk of Mexican society was as landless and disenfranchised as they had been since the days of the conquistadors. Conditions were set for another radical revolution.

**Latin-U.S. Relations Prior to WWI**

Between 1850 and 1920, the United States became increasingly involved in Latin American affairs, trying to keep Latin America under the sphere of American influence rather than that of European influence. This was difficult to do considering the British were still the most powerful force in the Gulf of Mexico, and 1880–1914 saw a huge expansion in European colonial interests worldwide. France, Britain, and others raced to carve up Africa and assert imperial control over lesser developed areas. Since the Caribbean was poor and suffering from almost continual civil war, this area was vulnerable to takeover. Caribbean nations were also the gateway to trading in the Pacific, so multiple nations quarreled over waterway and land rights, and sought to construct a Central American canal linking the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Monroe Doctrine, which aimed to stop European colonization in the western hemisphere, was increasingly invoked by American statesmen as the twentieth century neared. Over time, the extent to which the United States was willing to get politically, economically, and militarily involved in order to maintain influence in Latin American affairs increased.
The Spanish-American War

As the twentieth century approached, Cuba was one of the only colonies that had still not been freed by the Spanish Empire; Puerto Rico and the Philippines were the others. Cuba had long been coveted by Britain and France as the key to Caribbean dominance because of its large central location and the bustling port of Havana. In response, multiple U.S. leaders including Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams had considered purchasing Cuba. As the American political system became increasingly fractured over the issue of slavery, however, annexing Cuba was continually dismissed by Whigs to prevent the extension of slavery into Latin territory. Many Cuban criollos actually desired U.S. annexation, but Congress would not consent. In 1853, U.S. President Franklin Pierce sent an envoy to Spain to purchase Cuba outright for $130 million. The negotiation failed, and Spain tightened their control on Cuba.

The Ten Years War. Cuban calls for help heightened from 1868–1878 as revolutionaries conducted guerilla warfare against the Spanish. Americans, trying to adhere to their side of the Monroe Doctrine to not get involved in wars between Europe and their colonies, refused to militarily aid Cuba even though, politically, they supported them. Cubans were disappointed at the lack of U.S. support because they knew Americans got involved in Mexico’s war against the French just a few years earlier. From the United States’ perspective, however, France had invaded a free nation and aggressively provoked war. Forcibly divesting Spain of its last important
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

colony, on the other hand, was likely to start a war with all royalty in Europe, which the United States had no desire to do. Consequently, the U.S. decided to keep applying moral pressure on Spain to liberate Cuba along with Puerto Rico. By 1873, Spain loosened their hold on Cuba and Puerto Rico somewhat, but did not free them entirely.

Over the next few years, American investments in Cuba grew exponentially. In 1877, Americans were purchasing up to 83% of all Cuban exports as well as buying cheap property in the country in order to develop it. A much larger segment of the U.S. population therefore had something at stake when Cubans attempted independence again in 1895. Democrats campaigning under William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 election cried, “Free silver and free Cuba!” In New York City where Cuban immigrants assimilated and ran the cigar business, there was loud, public support for Cuban freedom. When the Republican candidate, Civil War veteran William McKinley, was elected instead of William Jennings Bryan, McKinley was exhorted to take up the mantle to free Cuba. The U.S. and Spain began diplomatic talks in 1897, but Spain made it clear that they had no intentions of letting Cuba go entirely.

In January 1898, the U.S.S. Maine exploded in the Havana harbor, killing 266 Americans. The cause of the explosion was debated, but Americans at the time assumed the explosion was a Spanish act of war. After the explosion, Senator Redfield Proctor visited Cuba and came back with a disturbing description of Cubans who were being held in internment camps under General Valeriano Weyler. McKinley was still holding out for peace talks, but deferred action to Congress, which unanimously voted for war on April 20, 1898. The Spanish-American War had begun.

“The Splendid Little War.” The Spanish-American War, which was only thirteen weeks long, aimed to strike the final blow at the Spanish Empire. The United States quickly con-

William McKinley

internment camps
a prison camp for forced re-location and incarceration of political prisoners
The speech of Senator Redfield Proctor delivered on March 17, 1898, was responsible for a unanimous decision to go to war among U.S. Congressmen. While President McKinley still opposed war, Senator Proctor visited Cuba after the Maine explosion and reported grim conditions that convinced both political parties.

"Outside Havana all is changed. It is not peace, nor is it war. It is desolation and distress, misery and starvation. Every town and village is surrounded by a *trocha* [trench], a sort of rifle-pit, but constructed on a plan new to me, the dirt being thrown upon the inside and a barb wire fence on the outer side of the trench. These *trochas* have at every corner and at frequent intervals along the sides what are there called forts, but which are really small block-houses, many of them more like a large sentry-box, loop-holed for musketry, and with a guard of from two to ten soldiers in each.

The purpose of these *trochas* is to keep the reconcentrados in as well as to keep the insurgents out. From all the surrounding country the people have been driven into these fortified towns, and held there to subsist as they can. They are virtually prison-yards and not unlike one in general appearance, except the walls are not so high and strong, but they suffice, where every point is in range of a soldier’s rifle, to keep in the poor reconcentrado women and children. Every railroad station is within one of these *trochas* and has an armed guard.

With this exception there is no human life or habitation between these fortified towns and villages, and throughout the whole of the four western provinces, except to a very limited extent among the hills, where the Spaniards have not been able to go and drive the people to the towns and burn their dwellings, I saw no house or hut in the 400 miles of railroad rides from Pinar del Rio province in the west across the full width of Havana and Matanza provinces, and to Sagua La Grande, on the north shore, and to Cienfuegos, on the south shore of Santa Clara, except within the Spanish *trochas*.
Two Paths Diverge

San Juan Hill by Kurz and Allison, 1899

quered the last of Spain’s colonial territories. The Spanish navy was quickly defeated in the Battle of Manila Bay in the Philippines. San Juan Hill was stormed by Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders, allowing the U.S. to occupy the Puerto Rican harbor. Finally, the U.S. Navy destroyed the remaining Spanish ships in the Gulf of Mexico. It was a devastating war for Spain and heralded the United States’ emergence as a superpower, which would be seen more clearly in just fifteen years during World War I. The Treaty of Paris, signed August 13, 1898, gave the United States all of the Spanish Empire’s territories to administrate, including Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and Cuba.

American Empire? United States-Latino relations soured slightly as the details of this administration were worked out. The U.S. government had no intention of starting its own empire, or even appearing as though it wanted one. There was pressure to make sure the formerly Spanish colonies were stable before releasing them completely. The U.S. had learned from the era of Latin American independence that gaining freedom was only the first step to keeping it.
They wanted to make sure that Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—each having no history of democracy—did not disintegrate into warring factions backed by military dictators as almost all of the former Spanish colonies had. In the end, Cuba was given supervised independence as a stepping stone to complete independence in 1902. Puerto Rico became a “territory” of the United States, governing

**YELLOW JOURNALISM.** Two New York journalists, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, helped mobilize the American public towards war in 1898. Their sensationalist pieces about Cuban suffering, complete with photos and drawings which were not always accurate, tipped readers from both political parties towards proactively wanting to liberate Cuba. Hearst, for example, published articles about a young female revolutionary being held hostage in Cuba, and started a press campaign to support her evacuation. Pulitzer became famous for his witty political cartoons which drummed up enthusiasm for war. These were printed with yellow ink, giving rise to the name “yellow journalism.” Several New York journalists even stationed themselves in Cuba just to provide photos that would sway American opinion. At one point, Hearst boasted that he created the Spanish-American War himself and was the true liberator of Cuba. While this was not true, it was true that New York newspapers propagandized the war and modeled emotional appeals that were copied by other papers across the country. If not for that, opinion would have been more divided.
TWO PATHS DIVERGE

Mexican suspicions of American imperialism, which had been harbored since the Monroe Doctrine and the Mexican-American War, grew as the twentieth century began. Mexico was not happy with U.S. intervention in Cuba or the sustained presence the U.S. now occupied in the Gulf of Mexico. Mexicans were also disturbed that the United States suddenly purchased Hawaii and began administrating Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines in the Pacific. The U.S. had its reasons for doing so, which had nothing to do with building an empire, but the fear was that America was becoming the next Spain or France to contend with.

The Roosevelt Corollary

Suspensions heightened even more when President McKinley was suddenly shot in 1901, making the vice-president and hero of San Juan Hill, Theodore Roosevelt, president. Roosevelt was a much bigger supporter of American presence worldwide than McKinley had been, and inserted himself in various foreign negotiations whenever he saw opportunity. He won a Nobel Peace Prize for mediating a peace treaty between Russia and Japan, and, in 1902, prevented another “Pastry War” by Germany, Italy, and Britain, who planned to blockade Venezuela in order to make them repay delinquent loans. Theodore Roosevelt was proud of American accomplishments in the Spanish-American War and felt very protective of the Caribbean area he had helped to secure, especially Cuba and Puerto Rico.
This interest culminated in the president’s own “Roosevelt Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine. In 1904, he stated that:

“Chronic wrongdoing or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation. And in the Western Hemisphere, the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.”

In other words, Roosevelt was giving the United States discretionary authority to intervene in Latin America if there was enough trouble. The question became about what was considered “trouble,” and whether Roosevelt intended to annex Latin American regions with political problems or police them in perpetuity. This was a major change in the philosophy of the Monroe Doctrine after almost a century. In context, Roosevelt created this corollary to justify brokering peace between Europe and Venezuela. He was attempting to end the “right” of nations to intervene on the principle of unpaid debts, which had caused multiple wars with Latin America, including the Mexican-American War. But political cartoons were drawn up depicting Roosevelt ruling Latin America and evil Uncle Sam lurking to control the Caribbean. Cuba and Puerto Rico’s political and economic dependence on the United States during Roosevelt’s first term only confirmed the fear.

Roosevelt added even more fuel to the fire when he backed Panama’s liberation from Colombia in 1903, mostly to negotiate construction of the Panama Canal. Roosevelt desperately wanted a canal to shorten the South American shipping route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and to help the U.S. Navy quickly access either ocean. When he discovered that the Colombian government intended to usurp the profits, Roosevelt and a French Panamanian worked together to declare Panama’s independence and oust Colombia from the deal entirely. Panama then legally permitted Roosevelt

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TWO PATHS DIVERGE

to begin U.S. construction for $10 million, giving the U.S. perpetual trade rights. The Panama Canal was a sixteen-year long feat of engineering and technology—a great success, especially for the Panamanians—but some Latin Americans saw Roosevelt’s actions as imperialism, not statesmanship.

YELLOW FEVER: Yellow fever was a huge problem for workers on the Panama Canal. It stopped French construction in 1903 and then began to hinder U.S. contractors. Having been brought to Cuba and South America through the African slave trade, no-one knew exactly how yellow fever spread, but most assumed it spread through infected people or materials as did other diseases. Yellow fever continued to hinder Panama Canal work until a U.S. Army doctor, Walter Reed, discovered that it was a virus spread through infected mosquitos. Moreover, infected mosquitos bred in areas with poor drainage—in dirty, standing water. This was the first virus ever discovered, and launched the fields of epidemiology, bacteriology, and microbiology. The U.S. Army took control of cleaning up the entire canal zone in 1907, ridding it of mosquitos and thereby yellow fever. The Army then went into Cuba and Puerto Rico, and did the same. The Panama Canal was finished in 1920, which in itself was a great accomplishment, but perhaps an even greater one was the relief from such a deadly disease. Business, politics, and medicine, in this case, all worked together.
The following excerpt from President Theodore Roosevelt encapsulates the “melting pot” idea of American immigration—that all nationalities are welcome as long as they unite in supporting American values and institutions rather than their own separate ones.

There are plenty of persons who have already made the assertion that they believe the American people have a short memory and that they intend to revive all the foreign associations which most directly interfere with the complete Americanization of our people. Our principle in this matter is absolutely simple. In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here does in good faith become an American and assimilate himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the man’s becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American. If he tries to keep segregated with men of his own origin and separated from the rest of America, then he isn’t doing his part as an American. There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American but something else also, isn’t an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag, and this excludes the red flag which symbolizes all war against liberty and civilization just as much as it excludes any foreign flag of a nation to which we are hostile. We have room for but one language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house; and we have room for but one soul loyalty, and that loyalty is to the American people.

TWO PATHS DIVERGE

Taft’s Dollar Diplomacy

Between 1908 and 1912, a new U.S. President, William H. Taft, decided to scale back the politically aggressive presence of his predecessor and instead assert American influence in Latin America economically. This strategy was called Dollar Diplomacy. The idea was that Americans would back political candidates in foreign countries who approved of the business and public policies Americans thought were healthy. The United States would financially support those countries by building businesses, technology, and infrastructure, as long as their preferred candidates were in place. Economic influence, however, quickly led to physical intervention because the United States was forced to get militarily involved when their chosen candidates were threatened. They ended up policing nations, particularly in the Caribbean, to make sure that U.S. property and workers were not destroyed by the revolutionaries who wanted them out.

Banana Wars and Banana Republics. The problems with Dollar Diplomacy were most clearly seen in the “Banana Wars” between 1898 and 1934, so called because one of the earliest U.S. military interventions took place in Honduras, defending the U.S. United Fruit Company’s banana plants. In 1907, Nicaraguan rebels escaped to Honduras and attacked the conservative leader who was supporting the Honduras-U.S. banana trade. U.S. Marines were sent to guard American company property and broker an agreement between radical and conservative factions. When Nicaraguan rebels rose up again, the U.S. returned and, with Mexico’s help, drafted a peace treaty to try and prevent further invasions between the Central American nations. In the end, however, trouble-making continued and the U.S. Marines found themselves conducting police missions on and off again in Honduras and Nicaragua until 1925, often getting involved in leadership quarrels and backing whoever seemed most amenable to law and order.
This kind of policing by the United States increased during Taft’s presidency and that of his successor, Woodrow Wilson. Newspapers regularly reported Marine deployment in the “banana republics” to stop one disturbance or another in the Caribbean. Between 1909 and 1912, Marines went to Nicaragua to keep rebels from destroying American railroads and company property. They were deployed to the Dominican Republic off and on between 1903 and 1924 to break up deadly skirmishes between rival political factions. Marines found themselves in Haiti in 1915 to solve a government dispute, and on Cuban shores to restore order five times between 1906 and 1921.

It was a quandary for Americans who did not want chaos and revolution in their so-called “backyard,” but could not find a way to make trading stabilize the region. The American assumption was that investing in Latin Caribbean exports—bananas, tobacco, sugarcane, and coffee—was the best way to give Central Americans jobs and opportunity, which would hopefully lead to political freedom. Trying to keep peace in countries that hated their governments, however—and who relied on revolution to express their dis-
satisfaction—was a no-win situation. From the perspective of Latin revolutionaries, the United States was seen as an imperialist force backing rulers, landowners, business owners, and the very authorities Latin Americans were trying to unseat. From the perspective of the Taft and Wilson administrations, however, Europeans were the true imperialists; if they were to be stopped from recolonizing Latin America, there were few alternatives other than to have the U.S. police the unstable areas.

Wilson’s Moral Diplomacy

When Woodrow Wilson became president in 1912, he reshaped foreign policy from Dollar Diplomacy to “Moral Diplomacy.” Moral Diplomacy meant that the United States, the flagship for decentralized government and free trade, had a moral obligation to support nations that were moving towards representative government and a duty to hinder those regimes that were not. This dovetailed with Taft’s strategy of economically supporting Latin American leaders whose values and policies were in line with the United States, and sanctioning those who were not. Wilson, however, strengthened the moral component involved and insisted that the United States had a mission to break up empires and spread liberty across the world. He resurrected the old Puritan idea of the U.S. as a “city on a hill,” saying that people wanted liberty, prosperity, and opportunity, and that the United States had a unique calling to help them obtain it. Practically speaking, Wilson maintained that revolutionary regimes that came into power through murder or tyranny would not be formally recognized by the U.S. government for trade or political purposes. If nations wanted to negotiate with the United States or receive aid, they would have to conduct themselves in a healthy manner. Regarding Latin America specifically, Wilson’s official position was, “I am going to teach the South American republics to elect good men.”

The Eve of the Mexican Revolution

As the United States was getting heavily involved in Latin American affairs, the Mexican Revolution broke out. In 1910, bitter fighting between liberals and conservatives ensued with the aim of absolutely eradicating the other. For almost one hundred years, decentralized government and economy had eluded Mexico. Though multiple constitutions had been written, and seasons of liberal reforms had been tolerated, Mexico essentially had a century of dictators and rule by the military caudillo. There was no regard for Lex Rex.

In addition, Mexico was missing some of the key cultural and institutional bases of self-government. There was almost no middle class, or class of educated intellectuals, business owners, and property owners. By 1900, only 3% of Mexican citizens owned any land at all, and most were illiterate. Mexico was therefore missing a society of participation and debate, of freedom of speech and religion, and of free press and assembly. Instead, military coups and uprisings were seen as normal, offset by figures like Díaz who controlled everything in order to assemble some form of economy. The United States hoped that bringing Mexico into the modern era technologically would heal relations and better the quality of life for the average Mexican, but so few Mexicans had any role in the economic modernization going on that they resented it rather than welcomed it. To them, modernization consisted of deals between the highest tier of society and foreign governments, with most of the work being completed by foreign hands. Meanwhile, peasants and Indians had been dispossessed—their tribal lands taken, divided, and sold off. Church land had also been forcibly sequestered and sold to the highest bidders.

Revolutionary anger was therefore aroused towards the central government, the upper classes, and foreign businessmen. Anger was also felt by many towards the Catholic Church because, even though it was becoming dispossessed itself, still represented heavy central authority. The two sides of the Mexican Revolution were, at first glance, not very different from the two sides Agustín Itur-
bide and Vicente Guerrero represented in the days of Mexican independence. A conservative centralist faction that stood for business, the Church, and the military was pitted against a liberal faction that wanted its anti-clerical constitution back, with land and assets taken from the powerful and dispersed to the disenfranchised. There seemed to be no middle ground. War was inevitable.

Chapter Summary

The period between 1850 and 1910 was a time where the two republics of the United States and Mexico diverged on two very different paths. In the United States, productivity spiked and the great revolution in agriculture, industry, and mining became America’s engine of wealth. After the Civil War, America became widely known for its freedom and, while discrimination was an issue, immigrants from all over the world flocked to America to take advantage of that freedom. The opportunities to own land, find work, and believe or worship freely were things still unknown in most of the world. Some of America’s greatest assets and challenges emerged from this mass immigration and population increase.

The disadvantage to the United States’ expansion and development was that they found themselves policing Latin America, trying to keep order, and trying to spread their political, economic, and social values abroad. This was unappreciated by many because it appeared to be only a shade different from European imperialism. It was first resisted by Benito Juárez, the great liberator of Mexico in the 1860s, who had a pragmatic alliance with Abraham Lincoln but wanted nothing to do with American government, businessmen, or religious philosophy. It was resisted less by Porfirio Díaz who at least wanted to take advantage of American investment in Mexico but maintained a dictatorship in order to do it. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, most Latin Americans did not want foreign intervention of any kind—economically helpful or not—and many ended up wanting to radically expel all European and American influence by the early 1900s. This was the heart behind the Banana Wars in Central America and would motivate much revolution in the following era.
**Discussion Questions**

1. Do you think The Gold Rush was a good or bad thing? Explain why it is suggested to be an impetus to freedom in America.

2. What impact did the Gold Rush have on immigration? How did Manifest Destiny provide opportunities for diverse populations?

3. Explain how the Northwest Ordinances and the Preemption Act empowered pioneers.

4. Create a timeline identifying the parallel influence of pioneer settlement and the Civil War. Summarize the impact of the Civil War on western development.

5. How did western settlement impact the lifestyles of the American Indians? How could expansion been handled differently? Would it have been possible for greater harmony to exist between pioneers and Indians?

6. Describe the most valuable contributions to modern technology that resulted from western expansion.

7. What would be the purpose of government intervention and regulation of marriage and funerals, such as in 1857 Mexican Constitution? How does such secularization benefit a government and/or citizens? What is your opinion about the issue?

8. What is the relationship between the U.S. Civil War and the Battle of Puebla? Why do you think President Lincoln aided General Ignacio Zaragoza?

9. Explain the complexity of the relationship between the Mexican and American governments after the Mexican-American War, specifically during Taft’s presidency.

10. What is the difference between the United States support of Mexico during the French invasion and the lack of U.S. support to Cuba during the Ten Years War? What could have been done differently in Cuba to maintain positive relations?
11. How would you summarize the impact that Yellow Journalism had on the American public?

12. What is your opinion of modern bias in written, oral, and visual media in today’s news and political culture? Research examples and provide a bibliography with information attributed to source materials.

13. Select a current political article from a reputable local or national newspaper. Evaluate the validity of the source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author. Provide a bibliography with information attributed to source materials.

14. What impact did the Gold Rush and the Northwest Ordinances have on the abolition movement, if any?
Proclamation 2017 Pre-adoptive Sample
CHAPTER 6

1910-1940: REVOLUTION AND WORLD WAR
SECTION 1
6-1: The Mexican Revolution

SECTION 2
6-2: Revolution in Latin America and Beyond
The Mexican Revolution

The biggest conflict in Mexican history, the Mexican Revolution, was a culmination of almost 100 years of swinging back and forth between centralist and liberal factions in Mexico, neither of which led common Mexicans into freedom or prosperity. While the United States emerged from civil war in the 1860s and experienced a boom of agricultural and industrial growth well into the 1900s, Mexico descended into civil war in the 1900s after decades of instability and economic depression. Ultimately, their Revolution resulted in a completely new form of government that looked to a new philosophy called socialism to solve the country’s political, economic, and social problems. The advantages of this new government were that Mexican honor was restored and, eventually, Mexico found itself on the road to economic progress. The disadvantages were that religious and political persecution continued, many died in the crossfires, and almost as many ended up fleeing the country.

The flight of over one million people to the United States ushered in the great flowering of the Mexican-American community. The Mexican-born population went from 100,000 in 1900 to 1.5 million in 1930. Immigrants came with a wide variety of experiences and political persuasions. Some were seeking refuge, while others were just seeking jobs. Most were informed by the immediate context they had just left.

Background to Revolution

Desire for revolution grew in Mexico over the span of
Porfirio Díaz’s regime. By 1908, many were upset with his heavy handed rule and policy of *pan o palo*. After thirty years, the Porfiriato developed tools of political repression in order to keep his regime in place. Some tactics such as handpicking governors and imprisoning critics were trademarks of past dictators. Others tactics were new, such as the **labor camp**, where he deported resistant groups, such as the Yaqui Indians, to work plantations in terrible conditions. To keep law and order throughout Mexico, Díaz created two new police forces. One was the *rurales*, a group that pursued bandits in small rural villages across Mexico. The other police force was the *jefes políticos*, a centralized group that put down large-scale rebellions and foiled conspiracy plots. Díaz also controlled the courts, the Congress, and the press.

There was little representation of the Mexican people in Díaz’s government, and even less economic participation in the free market. Díaz invited American and European companies to come and modernize Mexico, but money stayed within a small circle of government officials, landowners, and investors. Foreigners installed railroads, electricity, and streetcars. They upgraded Mexican cities, ports, and factories. Companies like **Standard Oil** bought property...
and land rights across northern Mexico to dig for coal and petroleum, and then sell it. While technology and development benefitted Mexico, many people became eager to scale back international business. They felt that nations like the United States and Britain were profiting more than Mexico and keeping Díaz in power. A growing middle class who had spent their entire lives under the Porfiriato started to criticize Díaz for neglecting the Constitution of 1857. As criticism leaked out, repression increased. This fueled criticism for more events, and by 1910, an election year, Díaz was under a lot of pressure to liberate Mexico and permit an authentically free election.

**The Election of 1910.** Prior to the election, Díaz accepted an interview with an American journalist where he famously remarked that, “Mexico is ready for democracy.” Those who heard this comment interpreted it to mean that Díaz was not going to run for re-election, and that his 35-year reign was finally over. Díaz, however, had no intention of giving up the presidency, and imprisoned his main competitor, Franco Madero. Despite this attempt to hold onto power, supporters of Madero insisted that Madero had won the election and broke him out of jail. When Díaz saw this, he rallied federal troops across Mexico to defend his position. Madero fled to Texas to plan Díaz’s overthrow, and the Mexican Revolution began.

**The Early Phase of Revolution**

**The Regeneration Movement.** Before his run for president, Franco Madero had associated with a revolutionary group called *La Regeneración*, or “The Regeneration.” This group was inspired by a radical Russian philosophy called *anarchism*, and called for total overthrow of the Mexican government. Between 1900 and 1918, *La Regeneración* published a newspaper to inspire others to destroy the Mexican system, including its central government, the church, and rules surrounding property ownership. The more moderate
of their followers, such as Madero, remade these goals into a new plan for Mexican governance. They thought Mexico could be reformed if the government would use its power to help laborers, Indians, and peasants, while punishing the clergy, property owners, and foreign businessmen. These kinds of goals were in Madero’s mind when he ran for president in 1910.

**Díaz Resists Madero.** From Texas, Madero wrote a strategy to retake Mexico City called the Plan de San Luis Potosí. In it, he declared that Díaz’s current presidency was illegal, and that Mexicans should take up arms and force Díaz out of Mexico City. When the day for action came, however, Díaz’s troops repelled the attack. In response, rebel leaders Pancho Villa and Pascual Orozco decided to help Madero by fighting Díaz’s troops in northern Mexico. For several months, Madero funneled them weapons from San Antonio to fight Díaz. War was so close to the U.S. border that President Taft stationed American soldiers along the border for hundreds of miles to protect Americans and their property. In those days, much of the border was an invisible line in the desert with no fences or guards, and bullets whizzed through El Paso, Texas and Douglas, Arizona. Property was damaged, two Americans were held hostage, and yet Taft held U.S. troops back from engaging Mexican soldiers directly. U.S. troops protected American citizens the best they could while trying to shut down the arms dealers selling weapons across the border. They also erected the first refugee camps for Mexican families and soldiers who began fleeing the violence, often showing up by the hundreds with no possessions.

**Madero Briefly Assumes Power.** Villa and Orozco fought battles on Madero’s behalf until Madero left San Antonio to lead the revolutionaries himself. In 1911, Madero fought decisively, and Díaz’s troops surrendered. The coup could have ended there, except that once Madero took office, both conservative and liberal factions were dissatisfied with his
rule. In particular, a radical revolutionary from Morelos, Emiliano Zapata, continued to rally peasants and Indians against the central government. Madero fought back, burning down villages and deporting resisters to labor camps, but the more he fought, the more standing the southern revolutionaries had.

**Huerta Replaces Madero.** In 1913, Madero was ousted by a former ally, General Victoriano Huerta, in a violent event known as La Decena Trágica, or “The Ten Tragic Days.” Huerta arrested Madero, who was then assassinated on his way to prison, and began centralizing power as Díaz had. For quelling revolt, he received support from European powers, but the Huerta regime started off on dubious footing; it was not the constitutional transfer of power for which many revolutionaries were fighting.

**Constitutionalists Battle Huerta.** At this point, Pancho Villa and the governor of Coahuila, Venustiano Carranza, formed the Constitutionalist Party and began a guerilla warfare campaign against the Huerta government. They insisted that Huerta’s rule was illegal and should not be recognized by Europe or the United States. Since Huerta instituted a dictatorship once he was in power, liberals felt betrayed, as they had under Santa Anna, Díaz, and others. He used the military rather than the Congress to enforce his will. He violently suppressed his opponents and began filling prisons with political dissidents. In the north, Villa and Carranza mobilized against him. One of their main tactics was to seize the railroads and supply lines, hijacking them in order to roll troops or cars set on fire into cities where Huerta’s troops were stationed. In southern Mexico, Zapata’s revolutionaries began to gain traction as well, executing Huerta’s troops upon capture. The number of Mexicans fleeing to the United States increased as northern and southern rebels fought violently against Huerta.

**The U.S. Continues “Watchful Waiting.”** During the early
years of the Mexican Revolution, U.S President Woodrow Wilson tried to maintain Taft’s neutrality, calling his policy “watchful waiting.” In the United States, there was popular support for the Constitutionalists because they were seen as the underdogs fighting a series of tyrannical military dictators. Many Mexican-Americans also supported one or more of the rebel armies. U.S. Congressmen suggested aiding the Constitutionalists, but Wilson maintained the weapons ban at the border and moved American battleships closer to Veracruz and Tampico to watch the fight against Huerta progress. The U.S. had more than $1 billion of property in these cities, especially in their northern oil fields, but Wilson believed getting involved with Mexico’s civil war would cause trouble. Britain and France also had business at stake in Mexico, but were distracted by impending war in Europe. In 1914, World War I broke out and interrupted their concerns over Mexico.

Wilson Decides to Intervene

In 1913, President Wilson withdrew recognition of the Huerta regime and began to put pressure on Huerta to hold an election or face economic sanctions. As Huerta began to suffer financially, he occupied the ports of Veracruz and Tampico to finance his war against the Constitutionalists. Seeing his desperation, Germany began to support Huerta and ship him arms, while commencing World War I. This drew Mexico into the sphere of Germany and the Central Powers, which alarmed Wilson. In 1914, the United States was not formally involved in World War I, but morally and economically supported the Allies, the British and French. The last thing Wilson wanted was a war between the U.S. and Mexico, backed by Germany. Sensing danger, Wilson recalled the U.S. ambassador to Mexico, initiated the evacuation of American citizens from Mexican cities—many of whom were being arrested and abused—and lifted the weapons ban to aid the Constitutionalist army.

**economic sanctions**
withdrawal of trade and financial exchange with another country in order to employ power over foreign or security policies

**Central Powers**
one of the two main factions during World War I with the opponent being the ; the alliance originally between Germany and Austria-Hungary grew to include the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria

**Allies**
countries that opposed the Central Powers in World War I, including the French Republic, the British Empire, the Russian Empire; later to include Italy; secondary members were Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and Romania; the United States was an “Associate” Power
WORLD WAR I: Sometimes called, “The Great War,” World War I began almost accidentally when a Serbian revolutionary suddenly executed the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Through a domino effect of alliances, Europeans were pulled into war with one another: Germany came to defend Austria-Hungary, and Russia came to defend Serbia; France allied with Russia against Germany who had long been their arch-enemy; Britain joined France to defend them; Bulgaria and the Ottoman Turks sided with Serbia and Russia for various reasons. Between 1914 and 1918, the Central Powers fought the Allies on two fronts, partly as a result of German nationalism and militarism which had been growing in strength since the mid-1800s.

In the beginning, World War I seemed like the very definition of a “European” war, so President Wilson tried desperately to keep America out of it. For years, the German provinces had been proclaiming that they were the new leaders of European art, science, and philosophy, and that the laws of history, evolution, and economics were driving them toward success over everyone else. One of Germany’s most famous philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche, wrote that he saw the old “idols” of Western Europe—freedom, trade, and Christianity—falling to new values of destiny and power. Armed with the most modern technology and a militaristic attitude, Germany had already defeated France a number of times and looked forward to asserting its dominance over an even larger span of territory. Wilson reconsidered his neutral stance in 1917, after his attempt to broker peace between the Allies and Central Powers failed, and the spread of war to North and South America began to look inevitable. The first Mexican-American veterans fought for the United States on the Allies’ side, beginning in late 1917.
The future, ladies and gentlemen, is going to be very different for this hemisphere from the past. These States lying to the south of us, which have always been our neighbors, will now be drawn closer to us by innumerable ties, and, I hope, chief of all by the tie of a common understanding of each other. Interest does not tie nations together; it sometimes separates them. But sympathy and understanding does unite them, and I believe that by the new route that is just about to be opened, while we physically cut two continents asunder, we spiritually unite them. It is a spiritual union which we seek...

What these States are going to see, therefore, is an emancipation from the subordination, which has been inevitable, to foreign enterprise and an assertion of the splendid character which, in spite of these difficulties, they have again and again been able to demonstrate. The dignity, the courage, the self-possession, the self-respect of the Latin-American States, their achievements in the face of all these adverse circumstances, deserve nothing but the admiration and applause of the world...

I want to take this occasion to say that the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest. She will devote herself to showing that she knows how to make honorable and fruitful use of the territory she has, and she must regard it as one of the duties of friendship to see that from no quarter are material interests made superior to human liberty and national opportunity. I say this, not with a single thought that anyone will gainsay it, but merely to fix in our consciousness what our real relationship with the rest of America is. It is the relationship of a family of mankind devoted to the development of true constitutional liberty.
The Tampico Affair. Amidst the growing concern about a German-Mexican alliance, on April 8, 1914, several U.S. Navy sailors were arrested by Huerta’s soldiers in the port of Tampico, after having offered the customary salute to the Mexican flag. Wilson ordered Huerta to return the sailors and offer a reciprocal salute as an apology. There was a stalemate the next day as Huerta decided to release the Americans but forego the salute. Realizing Huerta could occupy or destroy American property there, Wilson ordered a blockade of both ports with the intent to hold them until Huerta’s troops were driven out. U.S. Marines landed with the intent to protect American property, block German weapons from reaching Huerta, and aid the Constitutionalist army in the north.

U.S. Occupation of Veracruz

Pancho Villa welcomed U.S. intervention and began to work with General John “Blackjack” Pershing to subdue Huerta’s forces in Veracruz. As federal snipers shot at American soldiers, U.S. troops worked to expel Huerta’s forces without civilian casualties. After victory, the U.S. military began to restore order and released over three hundred political prisoners who were being held and starved in the garrison at San Juan de Ulúa. In the seven months they occupied Veracruz, the U.S. tried to empower local governors to retake control of the city. Trying to heal relations with the Mexican people, U.S. troops mingled with them and let them try new food and technology they brought.
On April 20, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson sought Congress’ approval to occupy Tampico, following the seizure of American sailors. In his address, he describes his intentions to avoid war and offending all of Mexico.

This Government can, I earnestly hope, in no circumstances be forced into war with the people of Mexico. Mexico is torn by civil strife. If we are to accept the tests of its own constitution, it has no government. General Huerta has set his power up in the City of Mexico, such as it is, without right and by methods for which there can be no justification. Only part of the country is under his control. If armed conflict should unhappily come as a result of his attitude of personal resentment toward this Government, we should be fighting only General Huerta and those who adhere to him and give him their support, and our object would be only to restore to the people of the distracted Republic the opportunity to set up again their own laws and their own government.

But I earnestly hope that war is not now in question. I believe that I speak for the American people when I say that we do not desire to control in any degree the affairs of our sister Republic. Our feeling for the people of Mexico is one of deep and genuine friendship, and everything that we have so far done or refrained from doing has proceeded from our desire to help them, not to hinder or embarrass them. We would not wish even to exercise the good offices of friendship without their welcome and consent. The people of Mexico are entitled to settle their own domestic affairs in their own way, and we sincerely desire to respect their right. The present situation need have none of the grave implications of interference if we deal with it promptly, firmly, and wisely.... I, therefore, come to ask your approval that I should use the armed forces of the United States in such ways and to such an extent as may be necessary to obtain from General Huerta and his adherents the fullest recognition of the rights and dignity of the United States, even amidst the distressing conditions now unhappily obtaining in Mexico.

Outside Veracruz, relations were not as harmonious. Americans fought Huerta’s troops near the Rio Grande and drove them out, but Mexican citizens began to express their anger over American intervention by looting American houses and stores, and by destroying American factories and property. In Tampico, Americans who were staying in the inns just barely escaped death by Mexican mobs. In Monterey, an American official was imprisoned, while crowds burned American flags in protest. Tens of thousands of U.S. citizens were forced to flee as they were threatened with injury or death. Large numbers of women and children ran for miles along railroad tracks to get across the U.S. border or onto ships that were waiting at the ports; some had personal property stolen, and others were even tortured.

**Huerta’s Defeat.** Finally, a peace delegation was sent by the ABC Powers of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile to broker peace between Mexico and the United States. This was the first time outside Latin American leaders got involved with a significant Mexican event. The United States agreed to withdraw from Mexico, and moral victory was assigned to the Constitutionalists, which led to Huerta’s resignation on July 15, 1914. This should have pleased the Constitutionalist Party, but both Villa and Carranza refused to take part in the peace process, causing U.S. support to shift away from them. The United States felt justified in defeating Huerta, whose military dictatorship could have brought World War I into the western hemisphere, but soldiers’ personal contact with northern rebels that year made them somewhat regretful of having aided the revolutionaries.

**Constitutionalist Infighting.** After Huerta was overthrown, Constitutionalists began to fight one another. Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata met together and agreed that Carranza and his general, Alvaro Obregón, were not revolutionary enough to lead the next phase of Mexican government. Villa and Zapata were rebel leaders with much power over large portions of the population, and neither believed the
federal government could really reform. At the Battle of Celaya, however, Carranza and Obregón’s troops used German machine guns and barbed wire to defeat Villa’s army. As Carranza assumed power in Mexico City, the U.S. decided to recognize his government because he was the more moderate of the remaining revolutionaries. This greatly angered Pancho Villa, who had helped Americans oust Huerta in Veracruz and resented their backing of his political opponent.

**Mexico-U.S. Relations Strain**

Over the years, America had become home to many Mexicans. After 1848, the large majority of Mexican-Americans resided in Texas, close to the border. Many were sharecroppers or tenant farmers, ranchers, traders, or officials in city government. In New Mexico and Arizona, much of the population and leadership were Mexican, Indian, or of mixed ancestry. In California, the influx of settlers after the Gold Rush created a unique multi-national culture of opportunity-seekers, but the south remained a bastion of Mexican culture where Spanish-speaking schools, churches, orphanages, and even universities flourished. In such areas, Mexican-Americans were sometimes the dominant ethnic group.

The overall Mexican population in America was still small, however—fewer than 100,000 in 1900—and with little border control in the Southwest, the line between “Mexican” and “Mexican-American” was still blurry. After the Mexican Revolution broke out, large numbers of Mexican-Americans still felt loyal to their homeland and planned to return, either after a stint of migratory labor or after the violence subsided. Between 1910 and 1930, as fighting continued, hundreds of thousands came, and the Mexican-American population became very diverse. Mixed in with permanent settlers were tens of thousands of squatters and guest workers. Mixed with pro-American Mexicans were those who opposed American actions in Mexico. As factions in Mexico City shifted, and migratory workers came and went, at any given time the Mexican-American community could be comprised of completely different people just trying to make a decent wage and escape violence in the streets.
Plan de San Diego, Texas. Wave after wave of refugees and political exiles poured into southern Texas especially, where multiple train stations existed on the border, and a large population of Spanish-speakers already existed. Among these refugees and exiles were a minority of revolutionaries who planned insurrections, gathered arms, and built bases of support among the Mexican-American community. Mexican supporters of Díaz, Madero, Huerta, Carranza, and Villa were all known to be in Texas in the early 1900s, as were Mexican anarchists and radicals. While some were harmless, others were agitators, which caused Texan authorities much concern.

By 1914, a revolutionary plan concocted in a Mexican prison made it into radical hands in Texas. The plan called for a Mexican and Mexican-American alliance to re-conquer the Mexican Cession by massacring Americans all across the Southwest. The plan stated that the staging ground for mass action would be the small town of San Diego, Texas, where Mexican revolutionaries would cross the Rio Grande and begin destroying property, killing people, and liberating Texas from the United States. Mexican-Americans were supposed to join in, and from there, revolutionaries would begin executing all white American males over the age of sixteen, in addition to all Mexican-Americans who refused to join them. Additionally, the Plan de San Diego called for black and Indian populations to be spared, then recruited, on the promise that they would receive land once reconquista had been accomplished. It was an extremely radical plan, in line with the most radical in Mexico at the time.

The first raids began in the summer of 1915, and were led by small bands of Mexican revolutionaries with Mexican-American allies. They targeted police, landowners, and Tejano leaders. Armed with modern weaponry, they held train passengers hostage, tore down telegraph wires, and destroyed equipment and property; twenty American citizens died as raids continued throughout the summer. As stores of illegal arms were uncovered in southern Texas and suspicions of terrorism ran high, a race war broke out and Texas Rangers began imprisoning and executing Mexicans and
Mexican-Americans indiscriminately. Approximately 300 were said to have been killed between 1915 and 1916. After President Wilson officially recognized the Carranza regime in Mexico, Carranza said he would help the U.S. capture Mexican raiders, but the raids did not stop permanently.

**Massacre in Columbus, New Mexico.** On January 11, 1916, Pancho Villa tried to provoke war with the United States and instigate *reconquista* by executing 15 American miners in Chihuahua, Mexico and waiting for U.S. forces to show up in retaliation. When U.S. troops did not appear, Villa led hundreds of Mexicans across the U.S. border and attacked the small town of Columbus, New Mexico. After killing 18 Americans there, Villa got his wish and President Wilson sent General Pershing with 10,000 troops into Mexico to capture him. Villa led pursuant American forces 400 miles into the Mexican interior, where Carranza’s troops, angered at U.S. invasion, fought back. Meanwhile, revolutionary raids resumed over the U.S. border. Wilson spent almost a year trying to capture Pancho Villa while avoiding formal war with Mexico. In 1917, however, Wilson gave up and withdrew U.S. forces. War had been avoided, but U.S.-Mexico tensions ran high from these provocations and invasions. A great deal of lingering hostility remained especially in Texas, where racial tensions ran high until mid-century. Many Mexican-Americans faced discrimination, segregation, and suspicion because of the two nations’ political fallout.
The Zimmermann Telegram

By 1917, World War I had been going on for three years, and Germans who had first armed Huerta were now supporting Carranza. Observing Mexico’s repeated incursions into the United States, German envoys told President Carranza that they would help him retrieve the Mexican Cession back from the United States if Mexico would ally with Germany in World War I and fight the U.S. on Germany’s behalf. This Germany-Mexico alliance was precisely what Wilson had feared under the Huerta regime, and was intercepted in typewritten code, in the Zimmermann Telegram. Fearing outright war with the United States, and likely Britain and France as well, Carranza turned down the offer. Americans who had been trying to avoid entering World War I were unable to deny how close it now was to them. Following the German sinking of American ships off the East Coast, the threat of war could not be ignored any longer.

President Wilson declared war against Germany and entered World War I officially on April 6, 1917. Over two million American troops were deployed to Europe, where they reinforced British and French units on the Western Front. After Germany launched the Hundred Days Offensive, German troops were decisively defeated and surrendered on November 11, 1918. Mexico, however, remained officially neutral, and the Great War stayed confined to Europe.

The Revolutionary Agenda Continues

The Constitution of 1917. Constitutionalists had fought for the 1857 Constitution, and Carranza was elected President by the Mexican people in 1917, but Villa, Zapata, and many state delegates did not think he was revolutionary enough. They pushed forward a more radical constitution that they believed would actualize principles that Mexicans had sought for years and protect workers and farmers in the future. In 1917, the new Constitution
CAMPAIGNS OF WWI: Originally, as Europeans became embroiled in World War I, everyone believed it would be a short war. The Allies said, “the boys will be home by Christmas”, while the Germans said their troops would be home “before the leaves fall from the trees.” To everyone’s regret, this did not occur. As the Germans fought the French, their strategy—the Schlieffen Plan—was to form a long flank and get around Paris, encircling it. This did not work, and both the Germans and the Allies ended up digging trenches to hold their ground and outflank each other. Soon thousands of miles of trenches were cut across France, with all communication, firing, and troop maneuvering done from the ground except for the sporadic charge across land to the next trench. For three years, massive slaughter occurred on both sides. French author Erich Remarque noted, “on every yard there lies a dead man.”

After the United States joined the Allies in 1917, the American Expeditionary Force began to wind up the war. U.S. troops were sent to Allied areas that were almost vacant, while Germans martialed all of their troops to the Western Front for a final assault. The United States supplied an initial force of 500,000 men, which grew to 2 million by 1918. They engaged at the Battle of Cantigny and the Battle of Belleau Wood. At the Battle of St. Mihiel, General John J. Pershing defeated the Germans at the Swiss border and secured southern France. His troops then went north to fight at Meuse-Argonne, the other German flank. This offensive lasted over a month and was tremendously draining on both sides. As the fourth round of autumn leaves began to fall, Germans began to withdraw and go home. On the eleventh month and the eleventh day, at the eleventh hour—November, 11, 1918—the Allies and Central Powers signed the Treaty of Versailles, giving victory to the Allies. Americans lost 50,000 men in the 8 months they fought, and France, Britain, Russia, Germany, and Austria each lost 1–2 million, over the four years. Especially disillusioning was the fact that little changed as an outcome of the war—nothing major was gained or lost except Europeans’ faith in their old culture of patriotism, glory, and monarchy. As Remarque lamented, “…the world as they taught it to us, broke in pieces.”
contained articles that nationalized Mexico’s coal, oil, and mineral industries, seizing them from foreign ownership. It also gave the central government the power to deport foreigners whenever they chose, and to forbid them from owning property. The Constitution enumerated workers’ rights such as minimum wage laws and the right to strike. Public education was insisted on, and all schools were to be secular rather than Catholic. Another important part of the Constitution demanded that the lands that Díaz seized from Indian tribes be returned back to the Indians and recollectivized. Villages that did not have “enough land and water” were permitted to take property from adjoining landowners. In essence, the 1917 Constitution gave the Mexican government authority over land, private property, and civil rights. They could expand them or retract them as they saw fit, to favor or punish certain groups. It was a large expansion of central power, and it was up to the President to actualize these plans; they were written out, but the plans still had to be funded, employed, and enforced.

Instability in the New Regime

Because Carranza himself was not as radical as the Constitution his delegates created, his term as president did not fare well. Civil war continued between Villa’s and Zapata’s radicals in the north and south, moderate Constitutionalists, and remaining conservatives. The new laws dismantled the economy Díaz had created, and Mexico experienced deep depression and inflation. Trade and manufacturing slowed, the food supply dried up, and violent strikes had to be broken up by the military. Only a little land was redistributed back to Indian villages, while many hacienda owners had their lands returned to them. In response, Zapata continued rallying Indians against the central government, which led to his assassination in 1919. This, in addition to Carranza’s non-endorsement of Alvaro Obregón for president, led to Carranza’s assassination in 1920. Three years later, Pancho Villa was also assassinated. Almost all of the fathers of the Mexican
The following articles come from the 1917 Constitution. The first establishes the state’s authority over the Catholic Church, and the prohibition of Catholic involvement in education (which had previously been the source of education in the country). The second declares all land, property, and underground resources (minerals, gas, oil, etc.) to belong to the state rather than individuals. It also reserves the authority of the Mexican government to revoke property from non-Mexican citizens.

Article 3: According to the religious liberties established under article 24, educational services shall be secular and, therefore, free of any religious orientation...Religious corporations, ministers of religion, stock companies which exclusively or predominantly engage in educational activities, and associations or companies devoted to propagation of any religious creed shall not in any way participate in institutions giving elementary, secondary and normal education and education for laborers or field workers. The State may in its discretion withdraw at any time the recognition of official validity of studies conducted in private institutions.

Article 27: The property of all land and water within national territory is originally owned by the Nation, who has the right to transfer this ownership to particulars. Hence, private property is a privilege created by the Nation. Expropriations may only be made when there is a public utility cause. The State will always have the right to impose on private property constraints dictated by “public interest”. The State will also regulate the exploitation of natural resources based on social benefits and the equal distribution of wealth...All natural resources in national territory are property of the nation, and private exploitation may only be carried out through concessions....

Foreign nationals cannot own land within 100 km of the borders or 50 km of the coast; however, foreigners can have a beneficial interest in such land through a trust where the legal ownership of the land is held by a Mexican financial institution. The only precondition sine qua non to granting such a beneficial interest is that the foreigner agree...
Revolution were now gone. All of them had worked hard for their agenda, but none were able to lead Mexico out of centralist control and into freedom.

The pressure fell on General Obregón to implement the revolutionary reforms better than his predecessors. In 1920, he ascended to power and made the restoration of land back to Indians his main priority. He distributed ejidos, or collective landholdings, back to many villages by seizing them from the wealthy. Obregón also started public schools, emphasizing indigenismo, pride in Mexico’s Indian past and revolutionary history. In many cities, he subsidized artwork, murals, and cultural displays along these themes. Additionally, Obregón oversaw the first nationalization of Mexican industry by seizing companies from private owners and handing them over to be administrated by labor union leaders. These leaders often worked with government officials so that forthcoming laws would benefit laborers and peasants at the bottom of the social hierarchy rather than owners and managers at the top. In particular, Mexico City
became closely aligned with the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM), one of the largest labor unions in Mexico. This was one of the most significant and permanent results of the Mexican Revolution.

Socialism under Calles

In 1924, Obregón was succeeded by an ally of his, Plutarco Elias Calles. Calles continued the socialist program of land redistribution and foreign divestment. He pressured foreign oil companies to surrender their owners’ deeds to the land they were on, and exchange them for government leases. This not only weakened company claims to the raw resources they obtained, but also forced them to give the Mexican government more of their profit, since they would not renew the companies’ leases if they did not do so.

Calles also strictly enforced the anti-clerical laws, which had first passed in 1857 and restricted religious displays in public, roles of priests and nuns, and religious charities and schools. He was the first to zealously roll back Catholic influence in Mexican culture. It was his belief that Mexico’s poor would never be free if they remained Catholic, and that they could not be de-Catholicized unless religious behavior was illegalized in Mexico. Calles hoped that, over time, this would lead to future generations of Mexicans becoming secular or re-indigenized. In a private telegram to a Mexican official, Calles wrote:

“The Catholic Church in Mexico is a political movement and must be eliminated in order to proceed with a Socialist government free of religious hypnotism which fools the people… within one year without the sacraments, the people will forget the faith…”

In contrast to the United States’ model of separation of church and state, Calles set up the new Mexican state to extinguish the church. For Calles, secularism was very

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socialism
A way of organizing society based on collective ownership of production, emphasizing equality over achievement, and causing individuals to become dependent on the state for all things from food to health care; eliminates the individual’s opportunity to provide for oneself

separation of church and state
a post-Constitution phrase coined by Thomas Jefferson emphasizing the intent that the government should not be involved in the business of the church; often used interchangeably in casual context with the Establishment Clause, which is part of the First Amendment to the US Constitution

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important to the success of the Mexican Revolution because the Catholic Church was the established religion of the government. Not only did Catholicism by its nature support traditional principles of authority and hierarchy, but overturning the old government required overturning the religion it was affiliated with; they were viewed as one and the same.

The Cristero War

As Calles began closing churches, monasteries, and Catholic schools, Catholic Indians and peasants called Cristeros rose up under the war cry, “Viva Cristo Rey y La Virgen de Guadalupe!”, or “Long live Christ the King and the Virgin of Guadalupe!” In 1926, the Cristero War broke out where priests were hanged on telephone poles by revolutionaries and shot in their own churches. Catholic children were executed for not renouncing their faith, and forceful re-education campaigns were planned, motivating the Pope to make a worldwide proclamation, denouncing the persecution in Mexico. In 1929, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico brokered a peace agreement, the arreglos, between Calles’ troops and Cristeros, but Calles continued to execute and deport Catholics, many of them Indians and mestizos, until 1934. Many fled from the terror, whether they were religious or not. Tens of thousands flocked to the United States, congregating in cities like Los Angeles, El Paso, and San Antonio. Priests fled as well, shrinking the number in Mexico from 4,500 to just over 300.

By the time church bells were permitted to ring freely in Mexico, more than 90,000 Mexicans had died in the war of religious persecution—four times the number of Mexicans who died in the Mexican-American War. Ten times that number—approximately one million—had fled revolutionary violence since it broke out in 1910, and sought refuge in the United States. This refugee crisis created the first sizeable Mexican-American population since the Mexican Cession was acquired in 1848, and made the United States a base for Latinos who would flee persecution in the future.
Certain of Our children, deserters from the army of Jesus Christ and enemies of the Common Father of all, have ordered and are continuing up to the present hour a cruel persecution against their own brethren, Our most beloved children of Mexico. If in the first centuries of our era and at other periods in history Christians were treated in a more barbarous fashion than now, certainly in no place or at no time has it happened before that a small group of men has so outraged the rights of God and of the Church as they are now doing in Mexico, and this without the slightest regard for the past glories of their country, with no feelings of pity for their fellow-citizens. They have also done away with the liberties of the majority and in such a clever way that they have been able to clothe their lawless actions with the semblance of legality...

...All foreign priests and religious men have been expelled from the country. Schools for the religious education of boys and girls have been closed, either because they are known publicly under a religious name or because they happen to possess a statue or some other religious object. Many seminaries likewise, schools, insane asylums, convents, institutions connected with churches have been closed. Every Mexican citizen who is engaged in the education of children or of youth, or holds any public office whatsoever, has been ordered to make known publicly whether he accepts the policies of the President and approves of the war which is now being waged on the Catholic Church. The majority of these same individuals were forced, under threat of losing their positions, to take part, together with the army and laboring men, in a parade sponsored by the Regional Confederation of the Workingmen of Mexico [CROM], a socialist organization. This parade took place in Mexico City and in other towns of the Republic on the same day. It was followed by impious speeches to the populace. The whole procedure was organized to obtain, by means of these public outrages and the applause of those who took part in it, and by heapimg all kinds of abuse on the Church, popular approval of the acts of the President.

Both men and women who defended the rights of the Church and the cause of religion, either in speeches or by distributing leaflets and pamphlets, were hurried before the courts and sent to prison. Again, whole colleges of canons were rushed off to jail, the aged being carried there in their beds. Priests and laymen have been cruelly put to death in the very streets or in the public squares which front the churches...[Many] have been taken to prison handcuffed, through the public streets, surrounded by armed soldiers, locked up in foul jails, harshly treated, and punished with prison sentences or fines. Moreover, Venerable Brothers, and in narrating this We can scarcely keep back Our tears, some of these young men and boys have gladly met death, the rosary in their hands and the name of Christ King on their lips...No one, surely, Venerable Brothers, can hazard a prediction or foresee in imagination the hour when the good God will bring to an end such calamities. We do know this much: The day will come when the Church of Mexico will have respite from this veritable tempest of hatred, Pope Pius XI: “Iniquis Afflictisque,” November 18, 1926. Online by the Vatican, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_18111926_iniquis-afflictisque.html
In the election of 1928, Obregón won a second term as president but was assassinated shortly after taking office. Calles was his vice-president, but under the Constitution of 1917, was prohibited from serving as president again until someone else had served an intervening term. Not wanting to forfeit power or transgress the new Constitution, Calles constructed the PRI, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or Institutional Revolutionary Party. The PRI was a party comprised of different union leaders in Mexico who owned or administrated various industries, along with some revolutionary military personnel, and rural Indian leaders. The intent of the PRI was to safeguard the socialist reforms gained through the Mexican Revolution and prevent military dictators from controlling Mexico again. The new Mexican President had authority over the courts, Congress, and property of Mexico—but only for six years. He was also beholden to unions and workers’ interests which were now represented in the government itself.

In 1928, Calles himself headed the PRI but staffed the executive office with short, interim presidents until the term of Obregón
was technically fulfilled. At that point, in 1934, the Mexican economy had almost ground to a halt. Strikes were high, production was down, and hours and wages were depressed. Between the Great Depression in 1929 and the expulsion of foreign businessmen from their country, the PRI was temporarily at a loss of how to re-stimulate the Mexican economy. The PRI’s goal of preventing a return to conservative leadership—which had always been done before in such cases—held firm. They would forge a new path for Mexico for the rest of the twentieth century.

Section Summary

The Mexican Revolution began as a result of bitterness towards the Díaz regime, which took Mexico down the path of economic modernization, but neglected constitutional rule and civil liberties. Some Mexicans bettered themselves, but were seen as a fortunate minority by outside revolutionaries. In the north, Pancho Villa defied central authority and became the seed of the Constitutionalist party. In the south, Emiliano Zapata was the figurehead working for the Indian revolution, which had been strong since the days of Santa Anna. These men and others resented central authority, property owners, and foreign industrialists. They, along with liberal leaders like Franco Madero and Venustiano Carranza, declared war on conservatives and tried to make it impossible for them to hold office again. They succeeded, but then began fighting amongst themselves, accusing each other of not being revolutionary enough. The Constitution of 1917 was written to enumerate the radical measures being fought for, but it was difficult to actualize them. The moderate path eluded Mexico, and one leader after another was executed, causing many citizens to flee.

The Mexican Revolution culminated in a radical regime that declared war on the Catholic Church and ended the two-party system in Mexico. Both liberals and conservatives were replaced by a secular, union-run party, the PRI. Their power
was boosted by a public education and awareness campaign that emphasized Mexico’s revolutionary history, Indian rights, and nationalism. This is still strong today. The revolutionaries’ goal of purging Mexico from colonial vestiges and foreign capitalism was accomplished, but they acquired new problems, including a significant economic crisis.

The United States became involved in the Mexican Revolution because fighting occurred over the border and around U.S. property in Mexico, and because the U.S. had a vested interest in preventing a Mexico-German alliance during World War I. Woodrow Wilson involved himself in Mexican affairs between 1914 and 1917, specifically over these issues. In response, the U.S. was almost provoked into a second Mexican-American War by revolutionaries who wanted a pretext to fight the United States, take back the Mexican Cession, and punish them for interfering in their affairs. As almost one million Mexican refugees and exiles crossed the border to find economic opportunity and escape religious persecution, the United States rallied to incorporate them, and the existing Mexican-American community grew and diversified. While some retained loyalty to Mexico and wished to return, others were grateful to settle. While a few were revolutionaries with radical alliances, the majority went on to assimilate into free society. Most, however, came to the United States with the Mexican Revolution somehow as part of their framework, and in this way, the Mexican Revolution became part of America’s multicultural identity.
Revolution in Latin America and Beyond

Worldwide Revolution

Latin American revolution was only one sphere of revolution asserting itself around the world in the early twentieth century. Ever since the days of the French Enlightenment, philosophers had speculated about a new world order free from religion, central authority, and unequal wealth. For many years, this had simply been a fantasy, but as these ideas percolated in Europe and passed through many different minds, others started to develop pathways to achieving it. Some, such as the French revolutionary, Maximilien Robespierre, advocated for political weapons like the guillotine and attacking the nation’s ruling class. Others, such as Karl Marx, advocated a worldwide revolt of factory workers, who would seize their masters’ property and run things according to new rules of fairness and equality. Throughout the 1800s, many emphasized the importance of overturning the Pope, Christian doctrine, and moral hindrances to revolution. The entire world was poised to experience the fruit of this radical thought when it suddenly gained political footing in the early 1900s.

Problems in the World Economy

Starting in the nineteenth century, the path of industrialized nations like the United States and Britain began to significantly diverge from that of the less industrialized nations. Whereas quality of life had been similar for many throughout the colonial era, a few nations suddenly developed trade, business, industry, medicine, and became completely
different places than their counterparts. These nations invested their own money in less developed nations, creating jobs and markets that they believed would benefit both of them economically, yet investors continued to be richer and healthier than their dependents. As time went on, the quality of life between rich and poor nations seemed to widen even more.

Mexico under Díaz, for example, modernized due to American and European investment. It obtained trains, which bolstered their shipping economy, and developed mills, refineries, and factories that produced manufactured goods. Mexico still had an export economy, which meant that it was almost completely dependent on foreign powers to stay economically afloat. If foreigners did not invest more money in Mexican business and trade, the economy would slow and Mexico would become poorer. If foreigners did not purchase enough goods, or sell enough, the dependent nation also suffered. There was so little infrastructure, education, and stability in Mexico that regular citizens did not have a pathway to earn money, make a living, or move up in life. Many could not support themselves, and continual revolution in the streets made it hard to conduct regular business.

Additionally, because the United States was the biggest investor and purchaser of Mexican goods, whenever the United States was doing well economically, Mexico did so also. Whenever there was a panic or economic recession, however—as there were in 1873, 1884, 1893, and 1907 (economic chart?)—the people of Mexico suffered. This dependency, with its up and down cycles, created a lot of resentment in Mexican people towards the United States and the capitalist economy in general. Mexico and other Latin nations with primarily export economies desired to be independent of foreign booms and busts, but did not have an alternative.

**export economy**
[economic term] an economy reliant upon a few exports being bought up; no self-sustaining industry or business

**panic**
[economic term] emotional withdrawal of bank dollars and investments in a fearful response to real or imagined instability in banks and stock markets, resulting in financial depression of values and prices

**recession**
[economic term] a period of economic decline, expected from time to time, in industrial production, employment, real income, trade, wages, retail sales

**capitalist**
[or “free market”] system of trade and industry controlled by private business owners and corporations, for profit, rather than by the government
The Great Depression, which rocked the worldwide economy beginning in 1929, was a tipping point for lesser-developed nations. For almost a decade following 1929, the United States did not have enough internal economy to support its dependents. Mexicans who fled the Revolution in its early phase were able to cross the U.S. border and find work in Texas or California, but those who fled later could not. America could not absorb any surplus labor during the Great Depression because there were not enough jobs for American citizens, let alone enough to offer to immigrants. The Dust Bowl and pestilence which decimated Western farms in the 1930s only added to the trouble. Many Mexicans fleeing revolutionary violence found themselves unwanted in the United States and unable to support themselves. On the Mexican side of the border, however, the situation was no better. People were starving there too and had no way to fix the recession. This no-win situation encouraged revolutionary sentiment throughout Latin America. Many perceived the American and European system to be the reason why they were suffering, and felt it was time to try some other system.

Marxist-Leninism was born in this context. In 1848, Karl
Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* to expound a political and economic philosophy that addressed the exact problems lesser developed nations were facing. Marx posited a **utopian** society where no one had privileges or opportunities that the rest of the world did not have. There would be no colonial powers or even separate nations anymore—just a worldwide society with people ruling themselves and working together to meet each other’s needs. This utopia required revolution, however, and mass action to reverse who was currently rich and powerful. Riots, strikes, and boycotts were all tools that could be used to protest powerful nations’ policies and presence, and to reverse the flow of money and power from top to bottom.

Marx challenged underdeveloped nations to jettison notions of democracy and the free market, arguing that these kept the powerful in place and everyone else oppressed. He blamed these things for perpetuating a cycle of poverty and inequality that the lower classes could not escape. Marx had a special hatred for religion, calling it “the opiate of the masses”, because it kept people submissive and heavenly-minded, and distracted them from the glorious future that could be achieved on earth by revolution. He similarly attacked the ideas of central government, social class, and private property by saying that if the poor workers of the world would just unite, they could end the entire regime of work and labor that their oppressors had foisted upon them. Marx called this form of socialist theory, **communism**, from the idea that after worldwide revolution was achieved, all property would be held in common, shared freely and equally in a new, redeemed world order.

Marx and those who followed his philosophy insisted that there would have to be a long war against the current system and the authorities that held it in place. All over the world were people, nations, and institutions perpetuating private property and privileges, and they all had to be destroyed. It was an ugly business, but Marxist-Leninism promised that
the ends justified the means. By declaring war on the powers that be, revolutionaries would achieve true freedom.

There would be no war, no poverty, and no inequality once the richer nations were gone. In Marxist-Leninism there was finally an offer to end all the problems the less-developed world was experiencing. It was alluring to believe that the left-behind nations could achieve total equality with prosperous nations, if they would just war for it.

**Lenin and Communist Revolution**

Karl Marx’s ideas circulated Germany, France, and England in the late 1800s, having a significant but limited effect because of the non-revolutionary nature of Western Europe. Europeans had fought wars with one another over the years, but were pacified by monarchy, bureaucracy, and Christianity; the ethic since the Middle Ages had been to prevent war whenever possible through treaties, arranged marriages, and checks and balances of power. Consequently, Marxism in Europe generated Socialist Parties, or Labor Parties, which lobbied for workers’ rights, and trade unions which conducted strikes and boycotts. Violence sometimes broke out, but overall there was not the massive revolutionary upswing Marx said was needed to cause a toppling of the European order. It took Vladimir Ilyich Lenin—a fierce Russian revolutionary—to spearhead this.
Lenin believed that he could martial enough power to ship Marxist revolution worldwide from Russia. He believed that Marxism in Europe was weak, but that a new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) would lead the world into communism by force. Soviet Communism would annihilate oppressor nations—mostly the capitalist West—and organize the classless, stateless system its allies would inherit. In 1917, Lenin withdrew Russia from World War I and rolled tanks into Moscow to initiate this revolution. He executed the Russian royal family and took over the capital. Imprisoning and executing resisters, he collectivized farms and property across Russia to prepare for redistribution and a state-run economy. Lenin also took over schools and newspapers while illegalizing the Church and private property. The whole goal was to end traditional ways of thinking and create new citizens whose only loyalty was worldwide revolution—the end of Western beliefs, values, and ways of running things.

There were many places in the world, including Latin America, which were prepared to receive this message. Many of them had been dabbling in socialist theory and revolution before Lenin’s rise to power. In Mexico, socialist theories had ranged from mild to extreme for many years. Since the days of Juárez, many Mexican leaders supported land redistribution to Indians and farmers. Major strikes had been conducted in oil and mining centers since at least 1890. Lenin’s rise to power in 1917 provided a rallying point for revolutionaries around the world by defining the struggle, the strategy, and the goal, all in a systematic plan and vocabulary. He offered solidarity and a route to victory, if revolutionaries around the world would unite. Lenin called this the Third International, which was an international body of leaders dedicated to fomenting rebellion around the world. It became the basis of a worldwide political party, the Communist Party, which walked in lockstep with Lenin’s orders from Moscow. Many nations already had Workers’
Parties, Socialist Parties, or Labor Parties that were willing to ally with Lenin; some changed their names and became part of the Third International. Others remained independent but fed off of Communist momentum. Together, Communist and revolutionary parties put forth radical candidates for office, backed by armed leaders, labor unions, and social agitators of various kinds. They were all dedicated to conquering the West, which in Leninist fashion, they accused of being thoroughly imperialist, racist, and greedy.

Revolutionary Socialism in Latin America

Communist agitation worked. Between 1917 and 1919, labor union activity and revolutionary socialism exploded in Latin America. In Brazil, unionized workers and revolutionaries took to the streets of Sao Paulo so powerfully that the government retaliated with force. In Peru, mass strikes spread from farms to cities between 1918 and 1919. In Chile, the capital was similarly paralyzed by strikes and protests, and in Argentina, the number of strikes rose from 80 to more than 350 in just three years, with participants increasing more than tenfold. All over Latin America—in Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Cuba—riots, strikes, and civil unrest prevailed.

Additionally, the Third International began to set up Communist
Parties under Lenin’s direction to make sure that they spread revolution in Latin America the exact way Moscow wanted. Between 1918 and 1925, Communist Parties were founded in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Guatemala. Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela acquired them a few years later. The goal was to add to the revolution already going on, and when possible, augment it in a predictable and organized way.

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, one of the founding fathers of revolution was Augusto César Sandino, who worked for U.S. Standard Oil in Mexico in the 1920s, and built up resentment toward foreign business during that time. In 1927, he stirred up armed revolution among Nicaraguan peasants, who raided foreign coffee plantations, destroyed foreign-owned mining equipment, and disrupted foreign canal work. Sandino escaped being captured by the Nicaraguan government, however, and by U.S. Marines who arrived to broker peace. For his efforts in setting back Western trade and business, he was officially endorsed as a hero by the USSR and Communist China, and was lauded in both Latin American and U.S. newspapers by Communist journalists. Those who read the articles opposing U.S. action in Nicaragua did not know that the Lenin and Third International were behind these press releases—they thought they were reading about Nicaraguan liberation. Later, the Communist Party moved away from endorsing Sandino, but he remained the hero of the Nicaraguan people, even more so after his assassination in 1934. His legacy would eventually be picked up by the Sandinista

U.S. Marines with a flag from Augusto César Sandino’s forces
National Liberation Front, a group of Communist revolutionaries who would overthrow the Nicaraguan government in 1979.

Argentina

Another Leninist, Victorio Codovilla, pioneered Argentina’s slide into revolutionary socialism with a radical union leader, Hipólito Yrigoyen. This initiated “the Radical Phase” of Argentinian history. Codovilla became active in revolutionary politics in 1912, then became an Argentinian delegate to the Third International who funneled messages back and forth from Moscow. Yrigoyen founded the Radical Civic Union and then became President of Argentina in 1916. During his term, organized workers initiated such disturbances in the streets of Buenos Aires, that Yrigoyen had to end it by force in La Semana Trágica, “The Tragic Week.” Through his relationship to radicals, Yrigoyen gave money to the Soviet Union, even against a Latin American agreement that forbade lending money to Lenin. In 1927, Sandino wrote to Yrigoyen from Nicaragua and asked him to organize a revolutionary conference in Buenos Aires to discuss how to unify all the socialist and labor movements in the western hemisphere. Codovilla was instrumental in planning this conference, which took place in 1929. Additionally, a group of Russian revolutionaries planned a conference in Buenos Aires that raised eyebrows. For several years, Argentina found itself the hub of revolutionary socialist planning in Latin America, with key leaders from Brazil, Chile, and other Latin nations converting to Communism or allying with it through their experiences in Argentina.

Brazil

In Brazil, a revolutionary activist, Luís Carlos Prestes, became the leader of the Brazilian Communist movement after attempting several failed rebellions against large landowners in the 1920s. In 1922, Prestes rallied a small number of
The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class and take possession of the earth and the machinery of production and abolish the wage system...

“These conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one, an injury to all. Instead of the conservative motto, “a fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wage system.” It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Brazilian soldiers to fight for land redistribution and control of Brazil’s dairy farms and coffee plantations. The goal was to punish Western plantation owners and merchants who profited off the exports. The uprising failed, however, so in 1924, Prestes organized “the Long March.” For three years, Prestes’ army walked across the Brazilian countryside, trying to rally poor farmers to their cause. After 5,000 miles, they had gained many farmers’ sympathies but little actual support. For this insurgency, Prestes was exiled to Argentina where he officially allied with the Communist Party.

Returning to Brazil in 1935, Prestes and his newfound revolutionaries attempted to take over the Brazilian government in an event called the *Intentona Comunista*. He had organized a group to fight landowners and the state, and this group, with Soviet support, attempted to oust the sitting Brazilian president, Getúlio Vargas. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful, the Brazilian Congress granted more power to the presidency to prevent such a takeover again. This initiated a swing back towards central dictatorship for Brazil, whose leaders imprisoned Prestes and his supporters. Later, however, Prestes reentered the Brazilian government, even serving as a senator, and continued to lobby for Soviet-aligned policies well into the 1970s.

**Revolution Leads to Dictatorship**

Communism energized revolution in other Latin nations as well. In Chile, a Third International member, Luis Emilio Recabarren, almost became president in 1920. In Venezuela, the Communist Party was similarly troubling even though it never got control of the government. In Bolivia, revolutionary socialists nationalized the oil industry in 1936, seizing U.S. Standard Oil’s company and property. Radical union organizers and strike leaders had great influence in many countries.

The ultimate result of such revolutionary socialism was, in many nations, vacillation between revolutionary dictatorship
on the Left and military dictatorship on the Right. Countries that experienced significant riots, strikes, and labor organizing activity in the early 1900s found themselves with heavy-handed dictators soon afterwards. After President Yrigoyen in Argentina came José Uriburu, whose rule in the “Infamous Decade” stopped just short of allying with Nazi Germany. In Brazil, the Intentona Comunista was followed by pro-German outreach as well, because Germans were successfully purging their nation of Communists at that time. In Nicaragua, Sandino’s insurgency resulted in a family dictatorship that ruled for 35 years. Dictatorships were established in many Latin nations as they sought to suppress Marxist-Leninist activity in favor of strong nationalism and control. This swinging back and forth from one authoritarian group to another would last throughout the twentieth century.

Importantly, developing Latin nations moved away from Western values such as representative government, freedom of worship, and especially free market capitalism. Most moved towards state-run economies that controlled their nations’ workers and resources. Unlike Western Europe and America, where decentralized government, economy, and religion all went together, most Latin nations went from heavily controlled Catholic colonies to radical regimes of one form or another because large segments of society had not enjoyed their experience under Western headship and believed that that pathway was a dead end.

Revolutionary Socialism in Mexico

During the Mexican Revolution, radical socialists inspired by Marxism tried to influence the path the Revolution would take. While politicians like Madero and Carranza tried to change Mexico by reforming its government, radical revolutionaries aimed to destroy the government altogether. In its place, they wanted a new social order with no authorities, no business, and no private property.
Ricardo Magón and the PLM. The most radical brand of revolutionary socialism in Mexico began under the anarchist leader, Ricardo Flores Magón. Magón was the founder of the *La Regeneración* movement that inspired Madero, and worked tirelessly for the overthrow of Mexican government between 1900 and 1922. He did most of his radical work from exile in Texas and California where he recruited discontented Mexican-Americans to join him in his mission. He first opposed Díaz, then Madero, and then the Constitutionalists. For his protests and published works, Magón was arrested approximately every two years beginning in 1892 when he was a student in Mexico City, until his final arrest in Los Angeles in 1918. He lived as an outlaw and penned many of his articles from prison.

Magón’s most seditious activity was the founding of the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM), which he created to organize rebellion against the Mexican government in 1905. The PLM was a party of revolutionaries, ready to pick up arms to free Mexican workers from their oppressors. From his base in the United States, Magón recruited and armed the PLM to fight Díaz’s troops in northern Mexico. Even before the opening shots of the Mexican Revolution had been fired, Magón had already staged uprisings across northern Mexico. In 1911, when Madero left Texas to overthrow Díaz, Magón permitted the PLM to help him, but then insisted they continue fighting after Madero’s ascendancy for an entirely new social order he called *Tierra y Libertad*, or “Land and Liberty.” For this, Magón earned the respect of Zapata, who was also dissatisfied with standard reforms. Magón continued printing manifestos to encourage revolutionary socialists across Mexico and America, and even ran his own commune outside Los Angeles for a short time. Colleagues of his formed a radical labor union that joined Lenin’s Third International and hired out “Red Battalions” to fight in Mexico City. Ultimately, Magón’s operations ended when he was convicted of espionage and sedition in the United

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**commune**

*general* a group of people who live together, sharing responsibilities and possessions
Zapata and the Morelos Commune. Emiliano Zapata was one of the most radical revolutionaries during the time of the Mexican Revolution. Called “the caudillo of the South,” he rose to power in 1910 by going from village to village and telling the peasant farmers that they were oppressed and needed liberation. By 1913, Zapata was ready to take action and, with an army of converts, routed sugar mill owners off their plantations. He then attempted to join the plantations into a commune run by the peasants. The goal was for farmers to work only a few hours per day, making only what was needed for all to survive, without wages or profit. Everyone would have enough without utilizing female labor, child labor, supervisors, or a police force. There would be no property lines or individual ownership either. This did not work out as planned, but Zapata’s troops kept southern villages in and federal troops out.

Over time, Zapata’s control extended over Morelos and portions of southern Mexico, as he created an alternative political-economic system to that of Mexico City. President Carranza opposed this,
and after defeating Pancho Villa in the north, turned to subdue Zapata’s stronghold in the south. After Zapata’s assassination in 1919, investigators discovered that destruction, cruelty, and control had been rife throughout the Morelos Commune. Zapata’s army had dynamited trains, destroyed mills and villages, and executed many opponents. Starvation and disease killed many. Similar results were found across Russia and China where communism had forcibly taken over private property and traditional ways of life.

Calles and Cárdenas. The Communist Party was established in Mexico in 1919, but was not a potent force because in the 1920s, President Calles was already explicitly promoting socialism. He persecuted the Catholic Church, oversaw the Mexican government’s transition to a single political party, and strengthened the government’s ties with organized labor. His support of socialism increased until the 1930s when Calles suddenly outlawed the Communist Party, began repressing strikes and unions, and withdrew support from Sandino, whose land redistribution campaign he had been supporting. This about-face shocked the interim President of the PRI, Lázaro Cárdenas, who decided that after all of the gains of the Mexican Revolution, suppression of workers could no longer be tolerated. On August 9, 1936, Cárdenas had Calles arrested, who, it was apocryphally
There are people, who in good faith ask this question: how would it be possible to live without government? And they conclude saying that a supreme chief, a crowd of officials, large and small, such as ministers, judges, magistrates, legislators, soldiers, jailers, policemen, and executioners, are necessary. These good people believe that without authority we would all turn ourselves over to excesses, the result being that the weak would always be the victim of the strong. This could happen only in this case: that the revolutionaries, through a weakness of the guillotine, would leave afoot social inequality. Social inequality is the fountain of all the antisocial acts that the law and the bourgeois consider crimes with theft being the most common of those crimes. Well, when all mankind will have the opportunity to work the land or to dedicate itself, without the need to work for salary, to be able to survive, who will take theft as a profession the way it is seen now?...

I have spoken with many thieves, with hundreds of thieves; almost all of them have stolen out of necessity…The immense majority of the jail population is composed of individuals who have committed a misdemeanor against property: theft, swindling, fraud, falsification, etcetera, while in a small minority of delinquents, prisoners with crimes against people, are found. Once private property is abolished, when one will have all of the means to choose a job of one’s liking, but beneficial to the community; humanizing the work in a virtue that will not affect the patron and make him rich, but to satisfy necessities; returning to the industry the thousands and thousands of day laborers that today corner the government in its offices, in the districts, and the prisons themselves; all will be put to work to gain sustenance, with the powerful help of machinery of all kinds, it will be necessary to work only some two or three hours daily to have everything in abundance. Would there then be those who prefer theft to be able to live?...

No, there is no need to fear life without government; we long for it with all of our hearts…Mexicans: remember how the rural populations of Mexico have lived. Communism has been practiced in the rural huts; authority has not been missed; before, to the contrary, when it was known that an agent of authority was coming near, the men would flee to the forest because authority is only present when men are needed for the barracks or for contributions to maintain the parasites of the government and nevertheless life was more tranquil in those places where laws were not known nor the threat of the gendarme with his club. Authority is not missed except to maintain social inequality.

Mexicans: Death to Authority!
Long Live Land and Liberty!

**DIEGO RIVERA:** Diego Rivera was a famous revolutionary painter who was born to an upper class Jewish family in Guanajuato. After a sophisticated art education in Europe, he toured Russia under Lenin in the 1920s. Rivera then returned to Mexico where he joined the Communist Party and helped found the Revolutionary Union of Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors. He painted many Mexican Revolution scenes including Zapata, and proudly put “There is no God” on one painting, which caused quite a stir. In 1933, he caused another scandal in the United States for creating a mural for the Rockefeller Center in New York City that depicted Lenin and the fathers of Communism. Several years later, Rivera helped coordinate Trotsky’s coming to Mexico and gave him a house to reside in. Some years later, the two had a falling out, and Trotsky was assassinated not long after leaving Rivera’s home. Today, the house in Coyoacán is open as a tourist attraction and gives a rare glimpse into a revolutionary’s home in exile, still in pristine condition.

America Straddles Interventionism

Revolution in the world greatly distressed the United States in the early twentieth century. U.S. officials wanted to stay out of foreign affairs while simultaneously stopping war and...
authoritarian regimes. There did not seem to be a way to do both, so the U.S. danced back and forth over the line of interventionism by both staying out of Latin affairs and occasionally inserting themselves into the middle of them. They were resented for this, sometimes even by their own constituencies.

From “Moral Diplomacy” to “Good Neighbors”

President Wilson. Woodrow Wilson was a strong believer in the moral order of the world, and during his two terms as president, from 1912–1920, Wilson walked a difficult line of keeping peace and using force to achieve it. Regarding Latin America, he denounced outright conquest of Latin territory, but invaded Tampico in 1914 to protect American businesses and prevent Huerta’s dictatorship from allying with Germany. He almost invaded again when the American oil fields were threatened in 1918. Wilson also sent Marines to Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba to restore order militarily. He campaigned in 1916 on staying out of World War I, yet was compelled to join it one year later. While Wilson received much criticism for his choices, both domestically and internationally, he ultimately desired world peace and dreamed of a day when an international organization would be able to keep and enforce peace worldwide. His personal project, the League of Nations, embodied this agenda and became the precedent for the future United Nations.

President Coolidge. Wanting to scale back Wilson’s level of intervention, President Calvin Coolidge (1924–1928) pulled U.S. forces out of the Dominican Republic, but kept Marines in Haiti and Nicaragua. Additionally, Coolidge continued to uphold the Platt Amendment, which kept Cubans from electing their own president. For these policies, the U.S. administration was criticized in 1928 at the Pan-American Conference held in Havana. The 1920s was
a time of serious Communist proliferation, and Coolidge was skeptical of revolutionary activity. He was also focused on post-World War I Europe and how to keep the peace there in an increasingly volatile situation. The Kellogg-Briand Pact he put forth essentially outlawed war as a political solution in Europe and became the source of international law after World War II.

**President Hoover.** Following Coolidge, Herbert Hoover (1928–1932) began to scale back intervention in Latin America. He issued a policy that stated that the United States would no longer serve unilaterally as the policeman of Caribbean affairs. Hoover still asserted the right of the U.S. to intervene, but removed Marines from Nicaragua and planned the forthcoming evacuation of Haiti. It was his ambassador to Mexico who intervened during the Cristero War to broker peace between Calles and the Cristeros, but received international praise for this decision. Latin American relations were just beginning to improve when the Great Depression forced Hoover to raise taxes on imports in 1930, which in turn hurt many Latin economies, especially Cuba’s sugar trade.

**The Good Neighbor Policy.** President Hoover coined the term “good neighbor” as it concerned Latin America, stating in 1928 that the United States had “a desire to maintain not only the cordial relations of governments with each other, but also
In that speech in Mobile, President Wilson first enunciated the definite statement “that the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest.” The United States accepted that declaration of policy. The President went further, pointing out with special reference to our Latin American relations, our neighbors, that material interests must never be made superior to human liberty. Nevertheless, we know that largely as a result of the convulsion of the World War and its after effects, the complete fruition of that policy of unselfishness has not in every case been obtained...It therefore has seemed clear to me as President that the time has come to supplement and to implement the declaration of President Wilson by the further declaration that the definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention.

The maintenance of constitutional government in other Nations is not a sacred obligation devolving upon the United States alone. The maintenance of law and of the orderly processes of government in this hemisphere is the concern of each individual Nation within its own borders first of all. It is only if and when the failure of orderly processes affects the other Nations of the continent that it becomes their concern; and the point to stress is that in such an event it becomes the joint concern of a whole continent in which we are all neighbors. It is the comprehension of that doctrine—comprehension not by the leaders alone but by the peoples of all the American Republics—that has made the conference now concluding its labors in Montevideo such a splendid success. A better state of feeling among the neighbor Nations of North and Central and South America exists today than at any time within the memory of this generation.

the relations of good neighbors.”2 In his inaugural address of March 1933, the new President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, took this to the next level by saying, “In the field of world policy, I dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others.”3 FDR said this in the specific context of changing U.S.-Latin relations, and his Good Neighbor Policy became the cornerstone of doing just that. FDR proclaimed that the United States would no longer send in Marines, uninvited, nor seek to solve Latin American problems unilaterally. Instead, he claimed that the U.S. would try to engage the ABC Powers and give Latin nations their autonomy. Additionally, FDR sought to change the popular image of Latinos in America, encouraging positive press, including the presence of Latin-American celebrities in Hollywood movies. This campaign was well timed because hundreds of thousands of Mexican-Americans were trying to assimilate in the U.S. after the Mexican Revolution. The Mexican-American community was still small—only 1–2% of the total U.S. population—but was growing in influence and respect.

The Good Neighbor Policy Is Test

Cuba in 1933. FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy had scarcely been uttered when it was tested in Cuba in the summer of 1933. When a revolutionary coup attempted to unseat the ruler there, the American ambassador in Havana panicked and asked for Marines and battleships to arrive as back-up. FDR refused to respond on high alert, sent only a few ships to patrol from afar, and did not send any troops on the ground. After the affair, FDR declared his willingness to help Cuba have their first free elections, which was praised in Latin America at the Pan-American Conference the next year. In 1934, FDR withdrew Marines from Haiti, which also received praise.


Nationalization of Mexican Oil, 1938. The Good Neighbor Policy was tested more intensely in 1938 when Mexico nationalized its oil industry, taking it away from foreign owners. In the late 1800s, oil fields in Tampico and Veracruz were bought and excavated by British and American petroleum companies. *El Águila*, “the Eagle,” became one of the largest oil fields in the world, with wells producing tens of thousands of barrels per day. As the Mexican Revolution took over, however, and violence broke out against foreign companies, oil strikes in Tampico intensified. In 1936, a large strike led to great oil shortages for several days, and workers demanded millions of dollars in wage increases. Foreign employers refused to pay, believing that President Cárdenas could not, or would not, ensure that strikers would not immediately strike again after returning to work.

In response, on March 18, 1938, Cárdenas invoked the anti-foreigner articles of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, and decreed that all oil found in Mexico rightfully belonged to the Mexican state—that foreigners had no right to it. On this “economic independence day,” as Mexicans called it, Cárdenas repealed the right for international businessmen to own, operate, or administrate any of the oil rigs across Mexico. He then created **PEMEX**, a state organization to run the entire process of exploring, mining, refining, and selling oil in Mexico. Roosevelt was faced with a choice about whether to protest or militarily intervene against this seizure of American property. In view of the Good Neighbor Policy and the brewing of World War II, he chose not to. Instead, he encouraged American oil companies to accept the loss and keep importing oil from Mexico at the higher prices. During World War II, the Allies bought a great amount of oil from Mexico to fight the war, and the money they paid for it caused a great boom in the Mexican economy.

**Good Neighbors for a Time**

Americans found themselves in a quandary during this pe-
period, knowing they were unwanted but unsure of how to practically disentangle themselves from Latin affairs. When American citizens and property were threatened abroad, it was natural to want the Marines to move in. When revolutions were fought in the streets, it was natural to want American officials to come mediate and help convene an appropriate government. Additionally, Americans wanted leaders they believed in rather than ones that would foment rebellion or take what they considered to be a wrong turn. FDR, however, was bold enough to jettison much of this responsibility in favor of seeking camaraderie and alliance. His more hands-off approach led to more negotiating with Latin nations than had previously occurred. While he was not unanimously supported in this—his own policies were questionably revolutionary for Americans at home—he broke with the past and aided Pan-American relations prior to World War II.

The Good Neighbor Policy did not completely rework America’s reputation the way that FDR had hoped. He received credit for not getting involved in every Latin affair, but was criticized for maintaining basic elements of both Moral Diplomacy and Dollar Diplomacy. Roosevelt used money, for example, to court Brazil away from allying with Nazi Germany and into supporting the Allies with troops and cheap rubber. Similarly, FDR gave Mexico $340 million to build U.S. naval and air bases on the Mexican coastline, even though many Mexicans did not want the deal. These negotiations led to Latin suspicion that the United States still maintained political influence in their countries, and to internal criticism in America that, “We are not winning the friendly collaboration of the peoples of Latin America. We are trying to buy it.”4 Some Latinos immigrating to the U.S. at this time shared this criticism and felt uneasy in their new homeland.

Chapter Summary

The Mexican Revolution (1910–1930) started as an attempt to

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achieve reforms that were stated in their Constitutions of 1824 and 1857, but that never came to fruition—reforms such as voting, land ownership, and representation of common Mexicans. It became more violent, however, as revolutionaries who valued Indian rights, workers’ rights, and anti-clericalism pushed for the entire government, economy, and religious system to go. The latter message was preached by revolutionary socialists like Magón, illustrated by artists like Rivera, and put forcefully into place by leaders like Zapata. They fought Madero, Carranza, and the Constitutionalists, who believed that the government was the vehicle for change, not the stumbling block.

Much revolution was further driven by the birth of Communism, which defined, systematized, and fomented rebellion throughout the world. The goal was to unite revolutionaries in a quest against Western values and presence, and to give them hope for a new world order. Although some revolutionaries preferred to stay independent, Soviet Communism provided a source of authority and money when necessary. For a time, much Latin American revolution was aided by the Communist agenda, their momentum, and new source of moral authority. In response, many Latin rulers became harsh military dictators who tried to quell strikes, worker rebellions, and mass action in their streets, utilizing violence and control from a different angle. The colonial ideal of representative government was snuffed out.

All of this uproar inspired mass migration of Mexicans and Latin Americans. In the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, Latinos would still be coming to the United States because of events set in motion in the early 1900s. Revolutions continued from this time forward based on a similar philosophy, still aligned against America and the prosperous West, and hoping that the right peasant leader or military strongman could restore the honor and success their nations were due. Latinos exiting this world entered the United States with a variety of viewpoints and experiences, some sympathetic to the revolutions they left and others hoping desperately for a new start.
Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree with the actions of Porfirio Díaz? What positive outcomes were a result of his rule and decisions? What outcomes were negative, in your opinion? What would you have done differently in his place?

2. What was the importance of La Regeneración? Explain why their platform would have been attractive to the masses. How closely do you think Franco Madero aligned with the philosophy of anarchism?

3. Would it have been better had President Wilson not intervened with Huerta in 1913? Why or why not?

4. What would you recommend to the leader of a free country struggling with a recession?

5. Which person in this chapter would you most like to spend a day with and why?

6. What is your opinion of Cárdenas repealing the right for international businessmen to own, operate, or administrate any of the oil rigs across Mexico and creating PEMEX?

7. Create a poster comparing the American Revolution with the Mexican Revolution. Use visual images to facilitate appreciation of multiple perspectives. Provide a bibliography with information attributed to source materials.
SECTION 1

7-1: Mexican-American Immigration

SECTION 2

7-2: The Quest for Civil Rights
Mexican-American Immigration

Introduction

When the Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910, there were approximately 100,000 Mexican-Americans living in the United States. During the next twenty years, as civil war raged in Mexico, approximately 1 million fled, creating the modern Mexican-American community in America. Most settled in Texas or California, looking for a job and a chance to start over. Meanwhile, a great wave of immigration was sweeping the United States more generally, and 18.5 million people became Americans between 1900 and 1930. An increasing percentage of these immigrants were not from Western Europe, which meant that the United States was presented with a vast diversity of new cultures, languages, and religions all at once. This presented challenges for the American public, and ethnic hostilities arose from fears about the direction the nation might take if its newcomers brought competing allegiances with them. This affected Mexican-Americans’ assimilation but ultimately led to a strong civil rights movement that won them equality, representation, and respect at national and local levels.

The Context: A Nation of Immigrants

In 1860, immigration was a simple, normal part of American life. Foreigners arrived regularly from Europe through busy East Coast ports like New York City, and either settled or moved farther out in order to farm. Immigration was decentralized and run by individual states with little federal attention. As the number of immigrants began to increase
in the 1880s, Ellis Island was built and the first regulatory policies were employed. Doctors examined incoming passengers for illness, inspectors examined their luggage and possessions, and federal officials checked names and documentation. By 1890, better records were being kept, and cities in the East were doing their best to cope with burgeoning foreign populations. New York, Philadelphia, and Boston all had foreign-born populations over 25%, and it was commonly said that New York City had more Italians than Rome, more Irish than Dublin, and more Germans than Berlin.

New non-Western groups were also beginning to arrive. Official immigration policy was open so that as revolutionary movements occurred worldwide in the early 1900s, people from those nations came to the United States. **Assimilation** was the central policy advocated by the U.S. government to deal with the diversity of newcomers. President Theodore Roosevelt stressed that all immigrants were welcome as long as they were willing to jettison their home allegiances and become authentically American. This kind of speech was not seen as offensive—after all, immigrants had fled to America precisely for its distinctive qualities. America offered the prospect of a job and the opportunity to move up in the world no matter one’s background, religion, or socioeconomic status. Most immigrants therefore embraced assimilation and joined with others on the difficult march toward prosperity.

<table>
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<th>Immigration Chart</th>
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<td>1841-1860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.4 million</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Other Western Europe</td>
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<td>Asia</td>
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**assimilation**

the process of accepting and practicing the traits of a dominant culture in order to become socially indistinguishable from other members of the community
Immigration to America meant that many families sold everything they had in order to come, and brought only a few possessions with them. They left friends and community behind, and told their children to learn English, work hard, and become Americans. Children were usually sent to public school while parents and grandparents worked low-wage jobs that did not require language skills or experience. Some immigrants had special skills and could be employed right away in a middle class profession, but more often, parents and grandparents had to acquire multiple jobs in order to feed everyone in their family. Life became about saving and working hard enough to get a higher-paying job, and perhaps send children to college or give them a place in a family business. Immigrant families lived relatively poorly in cramped, neglected neighborhoods until they made enough money to move to a better location. The pathway was difficult, and not all made it. Still, it was possible for a family to raise itself out of poverty in just one or two generations, and that was different from anywhere else in the world.

The Mexican-American Experience

During the immigration boom of 1860-1930, those of Mexican origin accounted for 1 million people or approximately 5% of the total 18.5 million immigrants. However, Mexican immigration was not centered in the East Coast with passengers disembarking ships at Ellis Island, and the government
receiving them with relatives and suitcases. Mexican immigrants walked or took a train somewhere across the 2,000-mile land border in the American Southwest. There were **ports of entry** all across Texas, and later Arizona and California, where Mexicans would take a train, get off at El Paso or other railway station, and start looking for work right away. Often, labor recruiters called *enganuchadores* would be sent by large companies to contract Mexican workers right at the stations. They would pay their fees and send them on the next train to the correct working destination. The *enganuchadores* spoke Spanish so that they could negotiate a simple labor contract on the spot. After 1890, this was the most common experience for a Mexican crossing the border. Families came together sometimes, especially during the Cristero War, but that was less common. Around two thirds of Mexican immigrants were men of working age, travelling alone.

In the beginning, more than 90% of Mexican-Americans lived in Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico, with the majority of immigrants being contracted to work some-
RAILROADS ALONG THE MEXICO-U.S. BORDER: The Texas-Mexican Railway was built slowly from Corpus Christi, TX, to San Diego, TX beginning in 1875. By 1883, the first 150 miles had been laid, and a bridge was built across the Rio Grande from Laredo, TX to connect with Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, on the Mexican side of the border. From then on, Mexico and the U.S. were officially connected by transportation. Various railroad companies and financiers worked hard to connect the railway from Texas to California. Rail stops where Mexican immigrants could enter the United States included (from east to west): Brownsville, TX, Laredo, TX, Eagle Pass, TX, Piedras Negras, TX, El Paso, TX, Nogales, AZ, Douglas, AZ, and Calexico, CA. Tickets from central Mexico ranged from $10–$15 ($250-$375 in today’s currency), in addition to work visa fees of $18 (or $450 today). Eventually, roads created more ports of entry so that today there are 47 places where people can legally cross the border. But the rail stops have remained essentially the same, and Border Patrol currently polices the border in divisions which are based off of these historic entry points.
What is true of patriotism and reform is true also of Americanism. There are plenty of scoundrels always ready to try to belittle reform movements or to bolster up existing iniquities in the name of Americanism; but this does not alter the fact that the man who can do most in this country is and must be the man whose Americanism is most sincere and intense. Outrageous though it is to use a noble idea as the cloak for evil, it is still worse to assail the noble idea itself because it can thus be used. The men who do iniquity in the name of patriotism, of reform, of Americanism, are merely one small division of the class that has always existed and will always exist, the class of hypocrites and demagogues, the class that is always prompt to steal the watchwords of righteousness and use them in the interests of evil-doing. The stoutest and truest Americans are the very men who have the least sympathy with the people who invoke the spirit of Americanism to aid what is vicious in our government or to throw obstacles in the way of those who strive to reform it.

Many became sharecroppers or **tenant farmers**, where they could live with their families or other workers on a landowner’s property, and pick cotton or tend crops. Others were contracted to work in construction, railroad maintenance, or mines. In the early 1900s, Texas was a challenging place to live because of the long, complicated history between itself and Mexico. The Plan de San Diego was leaked in 1915, when Mexican revolutionaries threatened to massacre American citizens and liberate the Southwest from the United States. This event prompted the lynching of Mexican-Americans and considerable racial tension, on top of Texas’ history of slavery and segregation. Texas Rangers and police dealt with years of border raids, which increased during the Mexican Revolution, and they pursued many exiled Mexicans who funneled weapons, planned coups, and stirred up revolutionary sentiment. In addition, Texan cities were not urbanized with many niches and pathways to success like New York City—it was largely agricultural, had rough terrain, limited diversity, and extremely vigilant law enforcement. Mexican-Americans who were arriving in Texas therefore met harsh circumstances in which to thrive.

Still, success was possible. A landed class of Spanish and Mexican-Americans had lived in the United States since Guadalupe-Hidalgo and before. Tens of thousands had been naturalized in 1848, and another 10,000 came during the Gold Rush. Entire portions of Texas, California, New Mexico, and Arizona had Spanish-speaking cities with established institutions, a thriving Catholic community, and upper and middle class families. From these families came the first Hispanic statesmen, such as Joseph Marion Hernández, a Florida State Representative of the 1820s, and Romualdo Pacheco, a former Californio who became the first Latino governor of California and then the first Mexican-American U.S. Representative in 1879. In 1914, the second Latino U.S. Representative was elected, Benigno
Cárdenas Hernández, from New Mexico. Octaviano Larrazolo became the first Mexican-American U.S. Senator, in 1928, closely followed by Dennis Chávez in 1935. Benjamin Cardozo became the first Hispanic Supreme Court justice in 1932. Leaders such as these had a vested interest in helping new Mexican-Americans assimilate, get an education, and move up in life. They initiated the first laws and policies to help them do so.

Being a Mexican-American immigrant was challenging. Economically, it was difficult to rise out of poverty without adequate education and language skills. Socially, it was difficult to combat the years of political fallout between the United States and Mexico that created suspicion and hostility for those whose appearance or name portrayed Mexican origin. Still, Mexicans risked fleeing their country because of the great violence and economic instability. Starting in 1911, thousands of refugees crossed the border starving, wounded, or fleeing military service. The U.S. Army set up processing camps to feed and house refugees, many of whom were malnourished and terrorized by the civil war that was spreading across northern Mexico. Because Mexico’s most productive companies, run by foreigners, had been shut down, the Revolution also destroyed all prospects of stable work.

Migratory workers were, in contrast, welcomed on American farms, where World War I had taken many men from the fields and left large vacancies for laborers. Between 1914 and 1918, Mexican workers who crossed the border legally received visas, or guest worker permits that allowed them to work for six months before they had to return to Mexico. Many did this and returned to Mexico regularly in order to bring wages home to their families, while others overstayed their visas and settled illegally in Los Angeles until further work could be found. While Mexico was plagued with instability and economic recession, Mexican workers made an average of $2.75 to $3.50 per day\(^1\)—between five and ten times what they would have earned in Mexico.

\(^{1}\) Approximately $50 in today’s currency
Conditions for Immigrants

Between 1910 and 1930, one government official summed up living conditions for immigrants in Los Angeles this way:

On the tuberculosis chart for the city [Los Angeles] there is a black cloud about the Plaza region. The causes are clear: low wages, seasonal employment, high rent, overcrowding, and inadequate nourishment. The average family has five members and the average house has two rooms, for which exorbitant rents are charged. In Los Angeles, 28 percent of these Mexicans’ homes have no running water, 79 percent have no bathrooms, and 68 percent no inside toilets—many cases, six or eight families use a common toilet.

-Vernon McCombs

Michael R. Ornelas, Beyond 1848: Readings in the Modern Chicano Historical Experience. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Pub., 1999), 123.

Eugenics and Restrictionism

Some restrictionists borrowed arguments from eugenics research that an unrestricted flow of immigrants would bring poverty and difficulty for the United States, due to their cultural and biological differences.

The time has come again when it is necessary for Congress to save California for Californians.

- NY Congressman Albert Johnson, 1929

It is the contention of Californians who work among the Mexicans of Los Angeles County that if those who clamor for more Mexican labor could travel with them through the Belvedere and the Maravilla Park sections of Los Angeles...and see the endless streets crowded with the shacks of illiterate, diseased, pauperized Mexicans, taking no interest whatever in the community, living constantly on the ragged edge of starvation, bringing countless numbers of American citizens into the world with the reckless prodigality of rabbits, they would realize the social problems brought into the United States by an unrestricted flow of Mexican peon labor are far in excess of any labor problems with which the state may be confronted.

-Kenneth L. Roberts, Saturday Evening Post

times the working wage in Mexico. This was reason enough for many people to cross the border, hoping to return to their home country when things settled down.

As the war economy boomed, it was relatively easy for Mexicans to get jobs in factories or farms. Those who gained skills and learned English could get promoted or hired for the next job more easily. Many received the opportunity to move to Chicago or New York and work in meat-packing plants, steel mills, print shops, or manufacturing mills, where wages were sometimes higher. The effect of the guest worker program was that instead of Mexicans deciding to leave home and pursue life permanently in the United States, over 80% traveled to working locations temporarily, where they lived in Spanish-speaking enclaves until they returned home. This was something no other immigrant group could do. It created a mobile supply of cheap labor which American companies came to depend on to keep their prices down. It also kept political and cultural ties to Mexico alive within the Mexican-American community. At any given time, thousands of Mexicans were crossing over the border and back, so the community remained in great flux.

Restrictionism and the Red Scare

Total U.S. immigration reached its peak in the early 1900s, but did not stay that way for long. As Southern and Eastern Europeans immigrated in increasing numbers, the public started to notice more civil disturbances. There were more strikes, riots, and mass action protests. Revolutionary pamphlets and plots began to surface. Among the most radical was the Haymarket Square bombing in 1886 that was led by a Russian revolutionary spin-off in Chicago, the International Working People’s Association. During a labor protest, Marxist union organizers threw a bomb at police who were trying to break up the rally, and ended up killing 11 people and wounding many more. The fact that the revolutionary labor movement in Chicago was made up of mostly German immigrants fueled suspicion that radicalism was being imported by immigrants and would end if
The U.S. government restricted immigration. Those who agreed with this concept were called restrictionists.

In 1900, the unthinkable happened: President William McKinley was assassinated in an open-air public festival by a revolutionary socialist whose family had emigrated from Poland. The U.S. government quickly imposed the first immigration restrictions, outlawing revolutionaries and anarchists from entering the country. The first few were deployed in 1903, with additional restrictions against criminals, terrorists, and traffickers being added in 1907 and 1917. Immigration fees were increased, and the first literacy tests were enacted with the hope that this would reduce the number of Eastern European immigrants.

As the German threat grew between World War I and World War II, and both Nazism and Communism loomed over Europe, the American public began to fear exiles coming from countries with significant revolution—Germany, Italy, Russia, and Poland. They worried that radicals would overthrow the U.S. government and establish a socialist state. This was called the Red Scare of 1917. While most immigrants were clearly seeking refuge from terror, a small minority were interested in exporting

it. The Haymarket bombing and assassination of McKinley confirmed this, as did the trial of Ricardo Flores Magón in 1918, and two more sets of bombings carried out by radical Italian anarchists between 1918 and 1920. Circumstances at the time seemed desperate enough that restrictionists looked to bar immigrants from radicalized countries in Europe. While some were simply panicking, there was legitimate fear about various groups and where their loyalties were.

BOMBING CAMPAIGNS CONTINUE IN AMERICA: Italian revolutionary Luigi Galleani and his followers sent mail bombs to over a dozen Congressmen and U.S. officials, as well as wealthy industrialists J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller. Some of these were intercepted and diffused, but several of them reached their targets and detonated, killing their innocent handlers. A second round of Galleani’s bombs made their way to eight different cities and narrowly missed the house of a young Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. The American public was watching this kind of terror unfold at the same time Lenin was organizing Communism and the Third International. There was considerable fear of worldwide revolution.

Another series of bombings occurred, linked to Galleani in 1920, after two Italian revolutionaries, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were accused of robbing a shoe store and murdering two employees. They insisted that they were innocent, and following their arrest, the anarchist group they were associated with detonated a bomb on Wall Street and sent others through the mail to American embassies across the world. Many innocent people were killed, and the highly publicized trial raised public awareness of ethnic-based gangs, mafias, and crime rings. Following these events, more of the public became anti-immigration. Many feared the political intentions of hostile nations and linked them automatically, if incorrectly, with peoples’ ethnicity and national origin.
Immigration Restrictions

Legislation in the 1920s started to curtail open immigration and developed an entire government administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, to handle and scrutinize immigrants. Head taxes increased, as did background checks, medical exams, and personal interviews. The Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 imposed the first limits on the number of European immigrants, apportioning quotas for each nation based on the National Origins Formula. In 1929, quotas were adjusted again to help diminish the public’s fears that revolutionary radicals were still entering the country. By 1940, immigrations numbers had dropped to their lowest levels in over a century.

Mexicans, however, remained exempt from these controls. While legislators were restricting immigration all through the 1920s and 1930s, U.S. companies lobbied Congress to make sure that Mexicans did not get restricted in any of the quotas that were being imposed. American companies had come to prefer Mexican laborers to white, black, or any other ethnic group because it was quick and easy to hire Mexicans who arrived by train in large numbers; most of them came without families, only stayed a short while, and then returned to Mexico. El Paso’s immigration station became equipped to provide basic inspections, baths, medical exams, and literacy tests, but experienced little change compared to Ellis Island. In 1919, Mexicans had to start officially applying for admission to the U.S., but railroad, produce, and cotton companies continued to flourish on cheap, Mexican labor, especially in Texas and California.

Mexicans continued to cross the border for work until the Stock Market Crash of 1929 inaugurated the Great Depression and dealt a definitive blow to immigration. There was now no draw for foreigners to find work as national unemployment rose to a startling 25% average, and even up to 75% in some areas. The Dust Bowl, which swept the Great
Plains in the 1930s, made things worse. Half a million Midwestern farmers left their homes amid swirling storms of dust in order to find work, mainly in California. They aimed to pick oranges or take whatever farm work was available, but California could not absorb all the surplus labor that suddenly arrived. The first deportations of Mexican laborers occurred to offload the overabundant labor supply, especially those who worked for the cheapest wages. These were accompanied by further deportations across the West that totaled between 300,000 and 500,000 Mexican-Americans. Additionally, many left on their own volition. Wages dropped low enough that it was no longer worth it to stay. Additionally, Cardenas’ rule in Mexico stabilized the nation enough that some figured the time had come to return home. Others were simply tired of the discrimination they faced while there was so much competition for jobs. The years of unrestricted U.S. immigration were over, and for Mexicans, it seemed like opportunities had closed.

**Mexicans Welcomed in World War II**

**The Bracero Program.** World War II, however, changed everything. After a decade of being unwanted, Mexicans suddenly found themselves in great demand again as guest workers in 1941. Joining the draft, over 4 million American men left their jobs as
In 1940, as World War II was breaking out in Europe, President Franklin Roosevelt gave a speech in Dayton, Ohio where he expressed his desire that the Latin republics join with the United States in fighting to preserve democracy. In it, he articulates the idea that America is a land of immigrants that experiences peace because its citizens subordinate any private allegiances to the modern cause of freedom.

It is natural that all American citizens from the many nations of the Old World should kindly remember the lands where their ancestors lived, and the great attributes of the old civilization in those lands. But in every single one of the American Republics, the first and final allegiance, the first and final loyalty of these citizens, almost without exception, is to the Republic in which they live and move and have their being.

For when our forefathers came to these shores, they came with a determination to stay to become citizens of the New World. As we established our independences, they wanted to become citizens of America—not an Anglo-Saxon American, nor an Italian-American, nor a German-American, nor a Spanish-American, nor a Portuguese-American—but just citizens of an independent nation of America.

Here, we do not have any dual citizenship. Here, the descendants of the very same races who had always been forced to fear or hate each other in lands across the ocean, have learned to live in peace and in friendship.

No one group or race in the New World has any desire to subjugate the others. No one nation in this hemisphere has any desire to dominate the others. In the Western Hemisphere no nation is considered a second-class nation.

farmers and industrial workers to fight Hitler and the Nazis in Germany. As in World War I, this left large vacancies in farms and industrial plants that Mexican manual laborers—braceros—could fill. In 1942, the U.S. Congress passed the Emergency Farm Labor Agreement, or “Bracero Program,” which re-invited Mexican workers to America and gave them legal permits that promised adequate housing, food, and basic care in their contracted jobs. The program was negotiated with the Mexican government so that, under pressure from Mexican labor unions, the U.S. agreed to pay transportation costs, provide a fair wage, and guarantee workers certain civil rights.

While total U.S. immigration numbers remained low during World War II, several hundred thousand Mexicans crossed the border to take advantage of the Bracero Program between 1942 and 1945. As the war continued, “Operation Bootstrap” permitted Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Central Americans to also come as guest workers. This created small pockets of Latinos throughout America.

**Mexican-American War Heroes**

A significant number of Mexican-Americans participated in the Allied forces of World War II, giving them a chance to share in its triumphs. Latinos were in fact the largest U.S. minority group represented in the war, with between 250,000–500,000 either volunteering or being drafted to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. Mexican-Americans served as airmen, sailors, and infantry. Some, such as Louis Gonzaga Mendez Jr., became officers. Latino women joined as nurses, radar techs, and secretaries. Some Latino regiments became famous in the war for their daring accomplishments. In Mexico, several American-trained regiments became the Mexican Expeditionary Force, which served heroically in the Philippines with Allied General Douglas MacArthur. This helped to heal some of the racial and ethnic tensions
WORLD WAR II SUMMARY: World War II was fought mainly to subdue Nazi Germany, which had arisen under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, in order to address longstanding economic depression and deep political embarrassment from Germany’s loss in World War I. At the end of the Great War, Germany sank into debt and recession, and its new government, the Weimar Republic, attempted to fix the economy through socialist policy. As Germany persisted in poverty, and the Marshall Plan failed to revive it, the Nazis—The National Socialist Party—won a surprise election through Hitler’s campaign of a strong nationalist and military dictatorship. Immediately, Hitler began persecuting Marxists and Jews—whose wealth he coveted, and whom he suspected of sinister plots—and began a campaign to rid Europe of undesirables. This started in Germany and Austria with the Jewish Holocaust, and expanded into a military storming of all of Europe. Eastern Europeans were liquidated, especially in Poland where many Jews lived and large numbers of extermination camps were erected. Britain, under the leadership of Winston Churchill, was bombed relentlessly. Paris was taken, and Hitler’s ideology spread through France, Spain, and Italy, while being adapted to Asian taste in Japan.

Ultimately, it was Britain and the United States who attacked from Germany’s western border, teaming up with the self-serving whims of Josef Stalin and Soviet Russia on Germany’s eastern border, that ended Hitler’s reign and that of the entire Nazi regime. Peace was concluded at the meeting of Britain, America, and Russia at Potsdam, with Nazi war criminals such as those who headed Hitler’s extermination camps and secret police being tried at the Nuremberg Trials. The German military dictatorship was dismantled, yet Stalin drew an “Iron Curtain” down Europe, dividing it in half right through the capital city of Berlin, to bring the eastern portion under his Communist empire. The western half of Europe was rebuilt and returned to normal, while the eastern half stood yet to be liberated from a new enemy. That quest would continue for four decades, making World War II the beginning of a half-century of ruthless dictators who killed more than 100 million people to liberate the world from Western values and systems.
that had long characterized Mexico and the United States. Fighting Adolf Hitler and the Nazis had a unifying effect, especially on top of the Good Neighbor public relations campaign of the 1930s.

**Braceros Continue Post-War**

In the first years of the Bracero Program, approximately 70,000 Mexicans came per year, with most returning after their work contract expired, or settling temporarily in southern California until they could sign another contract. The number of Mexican workers increased exponentially when World War II ended in 1945 and American veterans did not generally return to the fields. The Allies winning the war created a boom in the American economy and an expansion of the professional and service sectors. The U.S. government financially assisted U.S. veterans in going back to college, owning a home, and receiving other benefits so that they would not have to live on subsistence wages. Chemical and industrial technologies were also booming so that there were more factories, engineering plants, and construction

**LATINO REGIMENTS:** Mexican-Americans were represented in multiple regiments that served in World War II. The 158th Regimental Combat Team was a unit of the Arizona National Guard that saw action in the South Pacific and the Philippines. This team included Mexican-Americans and Indians, and was nicknamed the “Bushmasters” for having trained deep in the jungles of South America. Mexican-Americans also served in the 36th Infantry Division from Texas, which saw action in Italy, France, and Austria. They gained honor for securing and liberating prisoners at the Dachau concentration camp, one of the most brutal to European Jews. Puerto Ricans fought in the 65th Infantry Division, which conducted operations in Panama, North Africa, and France.

Mexican-Americans were also represented in the 200th and 515th Coast Artillery from New Mexico, which suffered in the Bataan Death March that took place in the Philippines. Imperial Japanese commanders marched 80,000 Americans and Filipinos as prisoners of war, 60 miles inland from the Philippine coast under extreme physical abuse. They were then herded onto boxcars to be shipped farther north, and several hundred died each day due to wounds, starvation, and disease. In New Mexico, a Bataan Memorial Museum stands to commemorate their sufferings, and a Bataan Memorial Death March is conducted every spring to honor the brave Americans, including Mexican-Americans, who fought.
NUMBERS DISCREPANCY: For many reasons, it is difficult to speak in precise terms about population and immigration numbers for Mexican-Americans. To begin with, data collection in the past was less accurate and extensive than it is today, as was accurate labeling of the data. Numbers for “Mexicans,” “Mexican-born,” and the entire Mexican-American community are easily lumped together or confused. Secondly, statistics compiled by the Mexican government and that of the United States often conflict. The Mexican government generally has higher rates of emigration than does the United States’ official data. Neither country has tracked illegal crossings definitively, although both sides agree that illegal immigration has outnumbered legal immigration at certain times. Then there is the problem of re-crossing, and how that affects statistics gathered. An estimated 20–25% of those deported during the Bracero Program crossed and recrossed the border multiple times, but most reports do not factor in how many of those immigrating have crossed back and are returning. Many reports only record the number of incoming immigrants in general, without factoring in the numbers of those deported or freely choosing to return. For these reasons and more, even the best American and Latino scholars disagree over the population and immigration numbers they consider to be the most accurate. For the sake of analysis, numbers must be chosen, but are always chosen with the mindset that many of them are simply the best estimates possible.

 projects than ever before. This meant low-wage jobs were still available and even more plentiful than before. There was still room in the market for Mexican labor, especially in agriculture.

Consequently, after the war, even larger numbers of braceros began arriving. By 1955, 400,000 Mexicans were crossing the border per year, and agriculture and industry were still booming. By 1964, when the Bracero Program was officially terminated, more than 5 million Mexican contracts had been offered. This brought the Mexican-American population up to around 6 million, in addition to the millions of Mexicans who had crossed the border illegally during these years and were therefore not counted by the U.S. Census. While the latter number was not officially kept by either the Mexico or U.S. side of the border, it was commonly said in those days that illegal Mexican workers at least equaled legal workers. Corroborating this sentiment was the fact that, over the 22 years of the Bracero Program, the number of legal contracts issued—5 million—was the same number of illegal immigrants apprehended
by U.S. Border Patrol.

The Bracero Program indirectly encouraged illegal immigration to outpace legal immigration because it cost companies more money and time to hire legal workers. Without having to fulfill Mexican labor union agreements, or go through the lengthy process of obtaining legal permits from the U.S. government, employers could easily hire illegal workers while retaining flexibility about how much they would pay, what kind of work they wanted done, and how much lodging and associated care they would provide. Braceros themselves knew this and were often divided about whether they should obtain work legally or illegally; sometimes the same laborer got work both ways. On one hand, workers wanted legal permits so they could pass through Border Patrol easily and receive the union benefits promised. On the other hand, some laborers preferred to take the risk of crossing illegally without permits because they knew they had a better chance of being hired once they were across. Additionally, if arriving illegally, they avoided visa fees, which were substantial—approximately $18 per person.²

A document-forging business soon sprang up, as well as an elaborate system of border trafficking through smugglers called coyotes. In 1941, 40,000 illegal braceros were caught being smuggled or carrying forged documents. This number swelled to 500,000 by 1951. Ultimately the number of illegal immigrants increased not only because it was cheaper and easier for both them and their employers, but also because it became harder for legally contracted Mexicans to get work. Many braceros who began as legally contracted workers continued on as illegals once their first contracts expired, knowing that even though they would receive fewer benefits, they would at least avoid going home and being replaced by cheaper, incoming illegal workers. The market and competition therefore drifted towards an illegal labor market with very low wages.

² Approximately $340 in today’s currency

³ Approximately $340 in today’s currency
The Post-War Climate

**Concerns Grow in Mexico.** Following World War II, as braceros were still crossing the border by the hundreds of thousands, the Mexican government began to be concerned that they were losing a significant part of their labor force to the United States. With a population under 28 million, a significant part of their population was working abroad. During the war, the Bracero Program had been economically expedient because Mexicans who were working abroad sent money home to their families, which supported them while there were food shortages or other economic crises. Following the war, however, Mexico’s economy suddenly boomed in what was called “The Mexican Miracle.” The Allies had bought raw resources from Mexico for four years—rubber, oil, minerals—and the new Mexican president, Manuel Camacho, began using the money to pay off debts, develop Mexico’s schools, roads, and plumbing, and invest in factory machinery. These efforts paid off as Mexico began to make its own products and sustain itself in the area of food and raw materials. Additionally, President Camacho, who was a practicing Catholic, reduced some of the anti-clericalism of the 1930s and permitted foreign companies like Sears and Coca-Cola to come back to Mexico. While the government still kept import taxes high so its people would “buy Mexican,” foreign franchises began to stir up a market for consumer goods.

As post-war Mexico began to modernize and develop some amount of self-sufficiency, labor unions and farmers called for their workforce back. In 1945, Mexico City demanded that the U.S. deport Mexican laborers more quickly and efficiently, and transport them to central Mexico where they had less of a chance of re-crossing the border. Braceros, however, continued to immigrate to the U.S. for the higher wages. In 1954, Mexican President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines sent 5,000 Mexican troops to the U.S. border and demanded more deportations. Mexico City then summoned members of U.S. President Eisenhower’s staff to discuss how to stem the tide of Mexican immigrants crossing the border.
Operation Wetback. In 1954, the two governments came up with a plan, dubbed pejoratively as Operation Wetback, which relied on massive Border Patrol teams intercepting Mexican illegal immigrants. These immigrants were to be processed and deported back to Mexico, far from the border. Hundreds of American immigration officials with buses, planes, and transportation vehicles went to work, rounding up braceros and handing them off to Mexican officials, who then transported them from the border to Mexico City. Over 1 million laborers were processed in the Operation’s first year alone, and by the 1960s, there were still hundreds of thousands being apprehended. The number of U.S. Border Patrol agents doubled, and technology advanced, but it was not good enough. In 1964, both Mexico and the United States acknowledged that the Operation had failed, and that something else would have to be done if the goal was to stop the tide.

Hard feelings remained between Mexico City and Washington DC. Mexico demanded that the U.S. take illegal immigration more seriously and provide better border control, but the U.S. was assuming the bulk of the cost to do so. The U.S. received domestic criticism as well when some who were deported claimed to be Mexican-American citizens, not illegal workers. Additionally, Border Patrol officials were criticized for arresting and mistreating illegals they caught. Even though Mexican officials had spearheaded the deportation effort and were responsible for deportees once over the Mexican border, the U.S. was criticized when illegals were deported too suddenly without being able to notify their families, or were transported to Veracruz or central Mexico without food or supplies. In the end, approximately 2 million Mexicans were returned to Mexico by 1964, some multiple times.

Latino Experience Improves

Inside America, civil rights for Latinos were beginning to increase, making it more attractive to stay and become a permanent citizen. In 1945, the first Medal of Honor awarded to a
Mexican-American was given to WWII veteran Macario García, by President Harry Truman. Another veteran, Hector P. García, became an important post-war activist by creating the American G.I. Forum to make sure that Latino servicemen got the benefits they were promised. He helped Mexican-Americans fill out the proper paperwork and was not afraid to advocate for them through the proper government avenues if they were neglected. In 1949, García successfully petitioned a Texas Senator for a proper military burial for Felix Longoria, a Mexican-American veteran who had been denied the right, and this resulted in the first Mexican-American veteran to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Soon after this, the American G.I. Forum spread from Texas to other states, and eventually became a vehicle for civil rights for Mexican-Americans in general, especially braceros.

In post-World War America, sensitivity to racial and minority issues was growing on a national level. President and retired General, Dwight D. Eisenhower, began working off...
of New Deal foundations to increase federal spending on healthcare, education, and public assistance. In international affairs, the United States was advocating for decolonization of every existing empire, hoping to liberate countries from their European headship. Africa, for example, was decolonized, and India also was at this time. Since Nazism had risen to power on the idea of racial supremacy, it became the worst of offenses to be racially intolerant, and the United States began trying to amend this both in the world and at home.

It was a fitting time to redress racial wrongs because as the Cold War escalated after World War II, Latinos began to flee to the United States as Communist revolutions spread to their nations. First the upper and middle classes evacuated as their land and property was targeted by revolutionaries. The poor then followed, if they could, as violence and starvation overtook them. By the 1960s, this had happened in both Cuba and Puerto Rico. Both countries had a difficult history with the United States, but soon it became their land of refuge. Immigration and civil rights policy were evolving, to meet the needs of many.

Cubans Welcomed. Driven by Communist takeover, Cubans became the second-largest Latino minority in the United States in the 1960s. In 1959, a revolutionary socialist, Fidel Castro, led a coup on the existing Cuban government and began executing and imprisoning resisters. Trying to turn Cuba into an anti-American state that was aligned with the USSR, Castro began nationalizing all of Cuba’s exports, industries, and institutions. He took over $1 billion worth of American property, seized land to redistribute it, and consolidated power over the nation’s schools and unions. This prompted many Cuban business owners, landowners, and intellectuals to flee. Most headed to the United States, to Florida, since it was only 90 miles away. The first exodus was by ship, to Miami, where refugees made a new home and were soon creating Cuban stores and businesses. There
had been a Cuban community in the United States already—approximately 70,000 in Florida, New Orleans, and New York, in 1950—but after Castro’s takeover, the number of Cuban-Americans more than doubled to 160,000 by 1960.

As Castro’s regime became increasingly Sovietized through the 1960s, Cuban refugees continued to increase. Between 1960 and 1962, Cuban parents sent more than 14,000 children ahead of them, alone, to the United States to avoid the terror of Cuban Communism. In Operation Peter Pan, these children were picked up and cared for by Catholic charities until they could be reunited with their parents. In 1965, Castro permitted more Cubans to leave, opening a window of opportunity for people to flee to the United States. “Freedom Flights” flew daily between 1965 and 1973 and brought more than 260,000 Cubans ashore, mostly to Florida, where the U.S. government provided more than $1 billion for their care. As Castro exported revolutionaries across the Caribbean, Nicaraguans, Haitians, and other refugees joining Cubans gave Miami the nickname “the Caribbean Ellis Island.” The Cuban-American population continued to increase through the second half of the twentieth century as the Castro regime continued oppressing the rich and poor and increased its nuclear weaponry.

Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Puerto Ricans became the third most populous Latino minority, ushered into America first by the Great Depression and then by Communist takeover in the 1960s. Like Cuba, they had a complicated history with the United States. After the Spanish-American War in 1898, Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory, which meant that the United States chose Puerto Rico’s government officials and took official responsibility for Puerto Rico’s welfare. In 1917, revolutionary sentiments against the United States caused the U.S. to grant Puerto Ricans more freedom and autonomy. The Jones Act permitted all Puerto Ricans to become official U.S. citizens, and the Supreme Court case of Balzac v. Porto Rico (1922) declared that Puerto Ricans mi-
grating to the U.S. mainland would be ensured “every right of any other citizen of the U.S., civic, social, and political.” This caused Puerto Ricans to start migrating to the U.S. in mass numbers.

As the Great Depression took hold and their sugar trade was devastated, Puerto Ricans moved for jobs, education, and opportunity. Whereas other immigrants were deterred from entering the United States in the 1930s, Puerto Ricans were an exception because they were officially American citizens, moving to a new locale similarly to how Dust Bowl migrants were moving to California. By 1940, at the end of the Depression, there were 70,000 Puerto Ricans in the United States, 88% of whom resided in New York City where they owned restaurants and stores, and staffed factories, mills, and other facilities. When Puerto Rico became a U.S. “commonwealth” with complete political autonomy in 1947, still more continued to migrate for economic opportunity, reaching 300,000 by 1950. In the 1960s, Communism began to radicalize Puerto Rico, and a minority of activists began to seek complete liberation from the United States, whom it blamed for providing insufficient welfare and keeping them poor. During the 1940s, U.S. officials tried to ease the effects of the Depression on Puerto Rico by sponsoring industrial development and modernization projects. These efforts did not work, and the island remained mired in deep poverty. Revolution was preached, even by Catholic clergymen on the island. American food stamps and aid were insufficient, so weaponry and violence began to increase. Anti-American sentiment was high, yet the Puerto Rican population in the United States boomed to 887,000 by 1960, with most hoping for a new start. They would similarly be followed by Haitians, Dominicans, Hondurans, and others. These joined Mexican immigrants to comprise a Latino population of approximately 3% of the total U.S. population.

Immigration Policy Overhaul

By the 1950s and 1960s, the worldwide situation had changed enough that immigration policy needed an overhaul. America had become a superpower, was leading a decolonizing effort, and facing an anti-Western enemy—Soviet Communism—that was caus-
ing even more to evacuate their homelands than in previous eras. The quota system of the 1920s and 30s had kept European numbers in check for several decades, but other nations had been exempted, ignored, or restricted. By the time Mexico was demanding its labor force back, and other Latin nations were requesting entry to the U.S., reforms were very much needed.

The Immigration Act of 1952, the McCarran-Walter Act, put all nations on equal footing by abolishing previous restrictions and exemptions. It required all immigrants to first apply for work visas to get into the country, and then obtain green cards to stay. This immediately started to shift the demographics of who was entering the United States; Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans began to form a substantial portion of total immigrants. In 1965, the first limits on Latin American nations were imposed, with provisions made to keep tighter controls on the border, and to encourage settled Latinos to pursue legal U.S. citizenship. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, abolished the quota system based on the National Origins Formula and replaced it with a yearly cap on the total number of visas issued. The U.S. would permit a certain number of work visas to be given out per year, per country, on a first-come, first-serve basis, but then allow a largely unrestricted number of visas to immigrants with special skills and family members already residing in the United States. This new policy rewired American immigration by providing a needs-based calculus. It was created in the context of aiding Cold War refugees in particular and expressing a new tolerance for groups like the Chinese who had been restricted in the past. Immediately, the proportion of European immigrants dropped significantly in favor of non-European groups, especially Latin Americans. In 1966, Cuban refugees were immediately naturalized by law—the fastest naturalization on record, which showed the United States’ commitment to their new approach.

green cards
informal term for a United States Permanent Resident Card, which allows individuals to live and work in the U.S. on a permanent basis.
This new policy was hailed as a more fair approach to immigration, and one that treated every nationality equally in their quest to enter the United States. One year earlier, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had declared that all American citizens, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity, now had equal political, economic, and social rights before the law. This legislation, in combination with the new immigration laws, aimed to incentivize immigrants—Latinos in particular—to become naturalized and assimilated so they could enjoy basic American freedoms.

**Section Summary**

Between 1880 and 1930, U.S. immigration was at its peak. Over 20 million foreigners fled violence, repression, and economic conditions in their own countries to come to America and begin again. During this time, immigration laws remained open until violence and revolutionary sentiments started to make their appearance in the public eye. Key segments of the American public associated this violence with immigration and the significant changes taking place in American values and ethnic constitution. In this vein, they sought to restrict immigration and suppress minority influence, believing that society needed to return to order and stability, not fundamentally change.

In the midst of this, Mexican-Americans prevailed and formed a unique community based on factors that distinguished them from other groups, especially their immigration pattern. One of the most distinctive aspects of Mexican-American society was the fact that until 1970, 80% of Mexican immigrants did not become permanent, naturalized citizens. Instead, they commuted to the United States for work and sent money home to their families across the border. Some stayed in the United States for long stretches at a time, while others crossed and re-crossed the border multiple times. This immigration pattern was supported by American legislators and businessmen, especially during
the two World Wars, and eventually led to the supremacy of illegal immigration. This complicated things for both the American government and the Mexican government, who, after World War II, resented the loss of its labor force and pushed the United States to change its policy. After experimenting with various kinds of immigration policies in the context of bigger worldwide affairs, the U.S. ultimately devised one that aimed to treat Mexican immigration the same as immigration for other groups. This was difficult to enforce after a century of permeable border crossing, but it was enacted just in time to facilitate hundreds of thousands of refugees coming from other Latin American nations during the forthcoming decades of the Cold War.
The Quest for Civil Rights

Introduction

The struggle for and attainment of civil rights for minorities is one of the crowning achievements of a free society because it demonstrates the ability of a society to reform itself and change some of its deepest-held beliefs. In the United States, equal rights for minorities were achieved by regular citizens who caused enough public outcry that institutions, laws, and courts responded. This first civil rights movement began in the aftermath of the Civil War when many were eager to abolish the kind of culture that nurtured slavery. However, not long afterward, the quest for civil rights stalled. The period between 1880 and 1930, when immigration and revolutionary activity were at their peak, set back early civil rights because fears about the political ambitions and values of immigrants and minorities were strong. Due to both real and imagined events, it became easy to stigmatize entire groups. Segregation, ghettos, and non-assimilated enclaves encouraged this. As World War II broke out and a very real enemy emerged in the figure of Adolf Hitler, domestic fears abated and public zeal became focused on defeating Nazism. By the time the war was over, one of the greatest forces of racism had been culturally and politically extinguished. Americans were ready to restart the civil rights movement, and had fresh eyes to do so.

Early Civil Rights

The Birth of Civil Rights. The earliest American civil rights movement began after the Civil War (1861–1865) on
behalf of the black community, America’s largest minority group. Between 1865 and 1877, in a period called **Reconstruction**, northern Republican states ruled the Democratic South and did not allow Confederate states to be immediately reinstated in Congress. Instead, Republican governors and **Freedmen’s Bureaus** ran Southern states. They staffed local governments and courts, with federal troops as back-up. To enforce abolition, they reformed taxes, schools, charities, and welfare laws, and also began modernizing the South to get it away from cotton crop dependence. **Union Leagues** registered freed male slaves to vote and also formed political clubs to organize action against the efforts of white southern Democrats trying to regain control in society. This federal takeover was bitterly contested by many southerners.

While this was going on, the Republican Congress in Washington D.C. was determined to pass the first civil rights legislation before Southern states were reincorporated back into the Union. The Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 came first, constitutionally abolishing slavery. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 then gave all free men the same rights, and imposed penalties on those who denied them to former slaves. Republicans hoped that these laws would force southern states to change, but President Andrew Johnson, who was
a Democrat from Tennessee and wanted to see southern states incorporated back into the government as soon as possible, vetoed the bill. This prompted the Republican Congress to pass the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, which upheld the rights of black citizens through the Constitution. The amendment stated the following:

“No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

The Fifteenth Amendment followed in 1875, which gave all American citizens the right to vote regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” It was further supplemented by the Civil Rights Act of 1875 that gave all citizens, regardless of race, the “full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water [transportation], theaters, and other place of public amusement.” These acts and amendments were forged in the context of black and white relations, but served as the bedrock for all future minority rights, including Latinos. Unfortunately, some of these efforts would be undone or unenforced in the period following.

Roots of Racial and Ethnic Hostility

Civil rights moved along a good trajectory after the Civil War, but stalled between 1880 and 1930 because racial inequality had deep roots. Additionally, revolutionary activity in this period encouraged more racial and ethnic hostility. For various reasons, large portions of the American public began to fear for the unity and safety of their country. They worried about what would happen if the traditional Western European base of the population disappeared, or was subjugated by immigrant and minority activity. These things had to be overcome in order for civil rights to move forward.
Anti-Reconstruction & Jim Crow Laws. Forcing civil rights on Southern states during Reconstruction failed because it bypassed representational avenues and trumped the beliefs of millions of citizens, including veterans and previous legislators from the South. While freed slaves were being mass registered for the Republican Party by Republican governors, southern white citizens had been disenfranchised. Many resented the legislation passed by the North and responded by creating their own local laws and institutions that restricted further change from the federal government. Jim Crow laws mandated segregation in public places, transportation, and schools, as well as hindered blacks from voting by imposing poll taxes, literacy tests, and housing requirements. Racist signs went up, and intimidation was used at voting stations—which were not private—to pressure voters into electing certain candidates.

At the worst end of the spectrum was the Ku Klux Klan, which was a grassroots organization formed in 1868 to oppose the Republican redesigning of society and “keep the Negro in his place.” The KKK terrorized communities by
riding around, armed, at night and threatening anyone they believed was overturning the white American South. They attacked and murdered innocent blacks, burned the houses of Union League members, and threatened to lynch Republican governors. The Force Acts of 1875 stopped the KKK militarily, but the movement resurfaced during World War I to protest immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, and then again in the 1960s to protest civil rights in Alabama and Mississippi. While the KKK was only a small minority of activists, they influenced a larger sphere of the public to fear the effects of Catholics, Jews, blacks, and other minorities gaining power in society.

Jim Crow laws and grassroots fear of a multiracial society were difficult to overcome. Many of the civil rights laws passed during Reconstruction were invalidated after the South returned to Congress, and the ideological differences that caused the Civil War in the first place still lingered. In 1883, the Supreme Court unwittingly upheld the South’s right to discriminate by ruling that the federal government could only desegregate government property, not private property. This meant that individuals and businesses could still legally practice segregation, and since Republicans were not willing to alienate the South again and renew war, racial bias and social inequalities persisted. While
The heart and language of the first civil rights bills in the United States had been good, American society would have to live up to those ideals later as more peoples’ attitudes thoroughly changed.

**The Eugenics Movement.** Between 1880 and 1930, resistance to civil rights and immigration came not just from traditionalists in the South, but from some of the most educated in the North, who desired to extinguish poverty by controlling population numbers, especially in poor communities. They embraced a unique form of evolutionary theory called eugenics. The idea was that instead of allowing individuals to marry and produce children freely, different measures including sterilization should be enforced by the government to maximize the number of desirable groups in society and minimize the number of undesirables. Eugenicists suggested that poverty, alcoholism, crime, low intelligence, and all “unfit” traits were genetic. They could therefore be extinguished if government policy became more scientifically aligned. This had important racial and ethnic implications.

Eugenics directly impacted immigration and civil rights policy because societal planners became concerned about keeping the number of poor and uneducated citizens under control, as well as limiting their influence. This included immigrants and minorities, who disproportionately were poor and uneducated. Research was subsidized by businessmen, philanthropists, and politicians who wanted to fix poverty by decreasing the number of the poor. In 1910, the Eugenics Research Office opened in New York City under the guidance of biologists who desired to study Southern and Eastern Europeans in hopes of discovering a scientific pretext for restricting their immigration. In the 1920s, the president of the Eugenics Office became politically involved with the passing of the Immigration Act of 1924, which was the first immigration law to impose national quotas. Later, eugenics researchers persuaded 18 states to
pass sterilization laws under the guise of improving poor, urban areas. California’s Mexican, Indian, and Asian populations were a prime target of these laws, with California carrying out the majority of U.S. sterilizations in the 1920s. The poor in Southern and Appalachian states, both white and black, were also targeted. While eugenicists did not target any one racial or ethnic group in particular, they did foment fears about immigrants and foreigners perpetuating poverty. Polluting the gene pool and overwhelming the system were added to the list of reasons why Americans needed to restrict immigrants’ and minorities’ success in society; science had been perverted to substantiate racism.

**Labor and Economic Competition.** Another source of racial and ethnic hostility that stalled civil rights was the American labor movement. While Marxist-Leninism originally emphasized the importance of international workers joining together in solidarity against their employers, most labor unions—including those of America between 1880 and 1930—wanted to protect their own nation’s workers and saw foreign workers as an undesirable source of competition. At the time, the most powerful union in the United States was the American Federation of Labor (AFL) under the leadership of Samuel Gompers. Gompers believed that minorities, especially illegal Mexican workers, threatened Americans by taking their jobs and driving down wages. He observed employers hiring illegal braceros because they could pay them less. He knew American strikes could be broken by foreign workers, so Gompers, along with most trade unionists of the day, did not support immigration or civil rights policy to advance minorities in society.

This attitude persisted through the World War era. Eventually, Gompers went to Mexico City to broker a deal with President Carranza and curtail Mexican immigration. Carranza welcomed the idea and, in addition to restricting legal immigration, made it a high crime to cross the border illegally. However, Carranza’s CROM officials told Gompers that he was betraying the international labor movement and should accept Mexican laborers in American unions. Gompers disagreed, arguing that accepting Mexican laborers into unions would only incentivize more to come. Throughout the
1920s, American labor unions continued to resist immigration for providing an overabundance of low-wage workers, and also resisted civil rights for making it easier for minorities to compete for higher-paying American jobs. When the Great Depression struck in the 1930s, unions were among the first to demand that immigrants be deported. While some American unions were progressive enough to accept black workers, the majority barred immigrants’ and minorities’ admission until it was mandated in the 1960s.

**The Red Scare and Communist Revolution.** The rise of Communism in 1917 and the Red Scare that accompanied it between 1917 and 1920 also set back the cause of civil rights. The goal for revolutionary socialists was a Marxist-Leninist uprising similar to the one going on in Russia, and as the public began to be aware of such a desire—especially circulating among poor, working class immigrant communities—they sought to restrict immigration and minority influence in culture. They learned of bombs in their streets and being sent through the mail. They discovered that President McKinley had been shot by anarchists, who were increasingly making the news with violence and crimes. The time was one where radicalism stalled the pro-
gress of civil rights because revolution in the streets swayed the public to want order, not significant change. It led many to fear others simply because of their national origin.

**Negative Experiences.** Also fueling racial and ethnic hostility were everyday, negative experiences between people of different cultures. In Texas, California, and New York, this was especially common as different groups judged and misjudged others based on their lifestyle, standard of living, or religious practices. To some, foreigners seemed to bring poverty, crime, disease, and a tax burden. Others attributed alcoholism or other negative traits to groups they observed committing the offending behavior. Many simply misjudged foreigners as odd—as people who spoke strange languages, cooked strange foods, or dressed unusually. In June 1943, the Zoot Suit riots broke out when U.S. Navy sailors who were stationed in Los Angeles observed Mexican-American youths wearing long, baggy suits which had been illegalized to save cloth for the war effort. Perceiving the fashion as a sign of disrespect, they demanded one youth exchange it; the youth refused, and a series of riots resulted. Situations like this occurred because of inaccurate perceptions between ethnic groups, which were in turn often based on political baggage that countries such as Mexico and the United States had with each other.
Early Latino Activism

Difficult times, however, did not prevent progress within the Mexican-American community for civil rights. Sometimes the places with the worst racial conflicts actually engendered the most strides forward. Cities like Los Angeles, Santa Fe, and San Antonio, which had Spanish-Mexican foundations, also had Latino governors, businessmen, and landowners even in the 1800s. The Southwest, where 90% of Mexican-Americans lived, had multiple Spanish-speaking newspapers circulating their communities by 1900. The very first universities in the southwest—the University of California, the University of Arizona, and the University of Texas—opened between 1880 and 1930, and Mexican-Americans were among the first graduating classes. On the East Coast, the first Mexican-Americans graduated Harvard, Georgetown, and professional business, medical, law, and engineering schools at this time. Additionally, tens of thousands of Mexican-Americans joined World War I to demonstrate their patriotism. Many established Mexican-Americans felt it was important to help newer Mexican immigrants assimilate into American culture as they had—even if it meant facing discrimination.

The process of assimilation did not mean that Mexican-Americans had to give up their heritage. New Mexico entered as the 47th state in 1912, officially bilingual, with state laws forbidding segregation of English and Spanish-speakers in schools and workplaces. Arizona entered as the 48th state, and along with New Mexico, sent the first Latino Senators, Representatives, and court officials from the state to the national level. In Mexican-American communities, there were Catholic groups, labor organizations, social clubs, and mutual societies that celebrated Mexican-American culture. Some also raised funds for political issues pertaining to the Mexican-American community. While many Americans were completely unaware of these issues, Latino concerns began to be articulated more widely.
LULAC. After World War I, the first modern Mexican-American civil rights leaders emerged. Among them were the founders of LULAC (the League of United Latin American Citizens), who organized in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1929 to fight discrimination. Being founded mainly by Latino veterans who believed in American citizenship and ideals, LULAC emphasized the need for Mexican-Americans to become permanent, legal citizens, attend good American schools, and adopt American values. Activists like José de Luz Sáenz set up LULAC chapters all across Texas that focused on desegregating schools. In 1930 and 1931, LULAC sued its first school districts in California and Texas to permit Mexican-American children to attend better white schools; this act achieved press and community awareness of the problem. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, LULAC paved the way for statewide school desegregation, which they finally achieved in California through *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947), and in Texas through *Delgado v. Bastrop* (1948). Schools did not immediately desegregate when these victories were achieved, but the weight of American law transferred to the side of Mexican-Americans, and these court cases paved the way for national desegregation that occurred through the Supreme Court in 1954. It also propelled LULAC lawyers into the Supreme Court in *Hernandez v. Texas* (1954), where they successfully argued that Mexican-Americans should be able to serve on juries based on their Fourteenth Amendment rights. This was an important win which had positive implications for Mexican-Americans through the rest of the civil rights movement.

LULAC continued to pursue desegregation of public facilities, fair water and farming policies, the abolition of poll taxes, and even the restriction of Mexican immigration, believing that these issues were the key things that would help Mexican-Americans assimilate and prosper. While they lobbied for minimum wage laws and better conditions for braceros, they officially opposed the Bracero Program and illegal immigration. They aided the American G.I. Forum in obtaining benefits for Latino veterans, set up preschool programs for poor Mexican-American children, and helped Mexican-American communities obtain charities and civil programs like
The systematic exclusion of persons of Mexican descent from service as jury commissioners, grand jurors, and petit jurors in the Texas county in which petitioner was indicted and tried for murder, although there were a substantial number of such persons in the county fully qualified to serve, deprived petitioner, a person of Mexican descent, of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment, and his conviction in a state court is reversed. Pp. 347 U.S. 476-482.

(a) The constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws is not directed solely against discrimination between whites and Negroes.

(b) When the existence of a distinct class is demonstrated, and it is shown that the laws, as written or as applied, single out that class for different treatment not based on some reasonable classification, the guarantees of the Constitution have been violated.

(c) The exclusion of otherwise eligible persons from jury service solely because of their ancestry or national origin is discrimination prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment.

(d) The evidence in this case was sufficient to prove that, in the county in question, persons of Mexican descent constitute a separate class, distinct from “whites.”

(e) A prima facie case of denial of the equal protection of the laws was established in this case by evidence that there were in the county a substantial number of persons of Mexican descent with the qualifications required for jury service, but that none of them had served on a jury commission, grand jury or petit jury for 25 years.

(f) The testimony of five jury commissioners that they had not discriminated against persons of Mexican descent in selecting jurors, and that their only objective had been to select those whom they thought best qualified, was not enough to overcome petitioner’s prima facie case of denial of the equal protection of the laws.

(g) Petitioner had the constitutional right to be indicted and tried by juries from which all members of his class were not systematically excluded.
the Boy Scouts. From inside the U.S. government, New Mexico Senator Dennis Chávez attempted to pass the first civil rights bill in 1944 that would “prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, creed, national origin, or ancestry.” While the bill was defeated, it paved the way for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which would define and uphold civil rights for all minority groups in America.

Civil Rights and the Great Society

Early Latino activists had successfully started using the courts in America to begin achieving equal rights. Slowly, racial perceptions and stereotypes of Mexican-Americans were changing. By the 1930s and 1940s, Mexican-Americans were serving in the national government, editing newspapers, achieving military distinctions, and becoming community leaders. The pressure that LULAC and other activists were applying caused more schools and universities to admit Mexican-American students, and began chipping away at segregation more broadly. It remained, however, for the United States to deal with its biggest source of civil rights injustice—discrimination against the black community—in order for all minorities to finally receive equal treatment under the law.

President Eisenhower (1952–1960). The Eisenhower Administration took the first big steps in addressing the problem, which had been hovering like a dark cloud over the United States since Reconstruction laws were struck down in the 1880s. After World War II was over, Eisenhower actualized Harry Truman’s Executive Order 9981, which, in 1948, officially desegregated the military, including its bases, schools, and hospitals. Eisenhower resurfaced this directive in his State of the Union Address of 1953, insisting he would end segregation not just in the military, but in the government and civil service sectors as well. He then established a civil rights department to hear complaints and address voting injustices. He also increased government
spending on welfare, health, and education, to expand programs for minorities and the poor which FDR had started twenty years earlier. More money suddenly became available for scholarships and financial aid to help communities like Mexican-Americans, built on Eisenhower’s belief that federal funds should not enable discrimination.

Eisenhower also nominated Earl Warren to the Supreme Court, who soon became the Chief Justice and categorically desegregated U.S. schools in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954). Although the case dealt specifically with black school children being denied equal access to public schools and universities in the South, the effect of Brown v. Board was to deal a death blow to Jim Crow laws and segregationist practices everywhere they still existed. It would not be accomplished overnight, but the Warren Court made its stand that it did not believe in a segregated, minority experience of America, and would actively guide the conscience of the American people on this matter. This opened the door to more sweeping civil rights.

John F. Kennedy and “The New Frontier.” In the election of 1960, the founder of the American G.I. Forum, Hector García, was looking for a way to involve the Mexican-American community in politics. He wanted to see them engaged
in the voting process, as well as given attention by prospective candidates, with the ultimate goal of having more representation on the national level. The Democratic nominee for President, John F. Kennedy, responded to García’s outreach and agreed to give Latinos his attention in exchange for their support in the election. “Viva Kennedy” Clubs grew in Mexican-American cities to help bring them to the polls, which worked—Kennedy won by a slim margin over rival Richard Nixon, partly due to his carrying the state of Texas which 200,000 Mexican voters had helped him win.

President Kennedy then took office and initiated “The New Frontier” with his vice-president, Lyndon B. Johnson, a Texas Senator who was sympathetic to the Mexican-American cause and who had, years ago, aided Hector García’s campaign to bury Private Felix Longoria with honors. The New Frontier was Kennedy’s program to end racial discrimination as well as fund education and welfare even more substantially than Eisenhower. Kennedy acted strongly on behalf of the black civil rights movement, which was growing in the early 1960s. He protected the Freedom Riders, who protested segregation on public buses, and forcibly integrated the University of Alabama, whose governor stood in the doorway to prevent two black students from attending. He also supported Martin Luther King Jr., the NAACP, and the March on Washington by providing government funding. Most importantly, Kennedy drafted a Civil Rights Act that proposed to outlaw racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination in the workplace, housing, schools, colleges, and all other public places. He had just initiated the bill in Congress when suddenly, on November 22, 1963, he was assassinated by Communist revolutionary Lee Harvey Oswald as he rode in a presidential procession down the streets of Dallas, Texas. In a flash, the country lost their beloved charismatic leader, and the New Frontier hung in the balance.

President Johnson and “The Great Society.” After Kennedy’s death, his Texan vice-president, Lyndon Johnson,
In 1960, President Eisenhower urged the U.S. Congress to admit more immigrants and ease the processing of refugees. Advocating the end of racial and ethnic restrictions, but upholding the importance of assimilation and acquiring citizenship, Eisenhower desired to loosen restrictions based on data and sentiment from the 1920s and 1930s.

To the Congress of the United States:

I again urge the liberalization of some of our existing restrictions upon immigration. The strength of this nation may be measured in many ways—military might, industrial productivity, scientific contributions, its system of justice, its freedom from autocracy, the fertility of its land and the prowess of its people. Yet no analytical study can so dramatically demonstrate its position in the world as the simple truth that here, more than any other place, hundreds of thousands of people each year seek to enter and establish their homes and raise their children.

To the extent possible, without dislocating the lives of those already living here, this flow of immigration to this country must be encouraged. These persons who seek entry to this country seek more than a share in our material prosperity. The contributions of successive waves of immigrants show that they do not bring their families to a strange land and learn a new language and a new way of life simply to indulge themselves with comforts. Their real concern is with their children, and as a result those who have struggled for the right of American citizenship have, in countless ways, shown a deep appreciation of its responsibilities. The names of those who make important contributions in the fields of science, law, and almost every other field of endeavor indicate that there has been no period in which the immigrants to this country have not richly rewarded it for its liberality in receiving them.

In the world of today our immigration law badly needs revision. Ideally, I believe that this could perhaps be accomplished best by leaving immigration policy subject to flexible standards. While I realize that such a departure from the past is unlikely now, a number of bills have already been introduced which contain the elements of such an idea. The time is ripe for their serious consideration so that the framework of a new pattern may begin to evolve.
You may well ask, “Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. I just referred to the creation of tension as a part of the work of the nonviolent resister. This may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word tension. I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension that is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal. We must see the need of having nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. So the purpose of the direct notion is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. We, therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged in the tragic attempt to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

was sworn in and continued the push for civil rights. In fact, Johnson enlarged it, calling his own program for America, “The Great Society.” This included massive government spending on health, welfare, education, the arts, city and public works projects, and public services, in addition to comprehensive civil rights legislation. Johnson also declared a “War on Poverty,” believing that taxpayer-funded programs would elevate poor and minority communities off welfare and into the middle class permanently. While the elimination of poverty eluded Johnson, and the mismanagement of the Vietnam War cost him a second term as president, he passed the monumental Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion in all public venues—the workplace, schools, housing, government—and all public accommodations including bathrooms, restaurants, theaters, and stores. The law also ensured that civil rights trials would be given fair hearings by federal courts, and that federal funding would be withdrawn from any institution found to be practicing discrimination. It was a monumental bill, and the Voting Rights Act, which followed in its wake, banned all remnants of Jim Crow that southern states had been using to keep black Americans from voting.

Regarding Mexican-Americans specifically, Johnson himself was known to have appointed more Mexican-Americans to government positions than anyone before him, initiating the first affirmative action on behalf of Latinos. Unions were also ordered to accept minorities or be forcibly disbanded, which greatly affected Mexican immigrants. The fight for black civil rights during the terms of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson had become the advent of civil rights for all.

Results. The effect of such monumental legislation was that racist practices in American society were forced to change under penalty of being sued or losing funding. Although the years directly following the Civil Rights Act were some of
Often young Americans write to ask their President, “What can we do to help our country?” Well, this is my answer: If you want to help your country, stay in school as long as you can. Work to the limit of your ability and your ambition to get all the education you can absorb—all the education you can take. What you are doing now is the most important work that you can possibly do for your country. Once upon a time a boy or girl could go pretty far in life with only a smattering of formal education. But to be a dropout of school today, to quit school today before you go as far as you can, means to aim a loaded pistol at your life. It means playing the game of Russian roulette with your chances of success. If your education falters or fails, everything else that we attempt as a Nation will fail. If you fail, America will fail. If our schools and our students succeed, we will succeed. If you succeed, America will succeed. It is just as simple and just as difficult as that.

I am so happy to be back where these memories are so strong. Thirty-eight years have passed, but I still see the faces of the children who sat in my class. I still hear their eager voices speaking Spanish as I came in. I still see their excited eyes speaking friendship. Right here I had my first lessons in poverty. I had my first lessons in the high price we pay for poverty and prejudice right here. Thirty-eight years later our Nation is still paying that price. Three out of every four Mexican-American children now in a Texas school will drop out before they get to the eighth grade. One out of every three Mexican-Americans in Texas who are older than 14 have had less than 5 years of school. How long can we pay that price? In one school district alone, one out of every two children is of Mexican-American descent. But two out of every three graduating seniors this year will be Anglo. How long can we pay that kind of a price? In five of our Southwestern States, 19 percent of the total population has less than 8 years of school. Almost one-fifth of the population in five States has less than 8 years in school. What is the percent of the Mexican-Americans with less than 8 years of school? How many Mexican-Americans have less than 8 years of school? Fifty-three percent. Over half of all the Mexican-American children have less than 8 years of school. How long can we pay that price?

I will give you that answer this afternoon. I will give that answer to America this afternoon. I will say: We can afford to pay that price no longer. No longer can we afford second-class education for children who know that they have a right to be first-class citizens. No longer can we afford to say to one group of children: Your goal should be to climb as high as you can. And then say to another group: Your goal should be to get out as soon as you can. For the conscience of America has slept long enough while the children of Mexican-Americans have been taught that the end of life is a beet row, a spinach field, or a cotton patch. To their parents, throughout the land this afternoon, we say: Help us lift the eyes of our children to a greater vision of what they can do with their lives. And to all Americans, we say this: Help us—please help us—lift the shame of indifference from the plight of our children.

the most tumultuous in American history—riots, protests, and assassinations in the streets prevailed—the long-term effect of civil rights meant that all minorities including Mexican-Americans were represented politically and could bring lawsuits if abuse occurred. As Hector García had wanted, Latinos were now being heard and even courted by candidates because their vote was considered important. Their social causes were also being trumpeted, with federal money widely available to sponsor healthcare, education, or welfare initiatives on their behalf.

By the 1970s, Latinos were in top positions across American society. They were Harvard law graduates, like Texas Representative Frank Tejeda, and CEOs, like Cuban-American Rita Rodriguez.
They were national officials like the INS and Border Patrol director, Silvester Reyes, and the co-founder of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Eligio “Kika” de la Garza. In addition, innumerable Latino activists staffed voter registration drives, ran financial aid and scholarship programs, lobbied on behalf of migrant workers, and offered free, legal representation in their communities. Those who had sung the hymn “We Shall Overcome” with Martin Luther King Jr., had now prevailed.

**Chapter Summary**

The era between 1880 and 1960 was a time of transition for America as it left the Civil War era and became the modern, multicultural nation it is today. It was a tumultuous time politically and socially. Americans fought early battles to redesign Southern society in the 1880s, only to enter World War I and World War II, which turned the country into a modern superpower of which great things were expected. Some groups, such as the KKK and traditionalists, rejected this status and the changes that went with it. Others, such as eugenicists, tried to use modern science to control and extinguish what they saw as societal defects. Among the American public at large were scuffles between different racial and ethnic groups who misjudged and misunderstood each other. There was also hostile competition among groups, such as in the labor movement, as each flood of immigrant workers presented another challenge for American workers lobbying for higher wages and more benefits.

At the height of American immigration between 1910 and 1930, revolutionaries in urban, industrial communities criticized the American system, with some taking radical action against it. This scared many into wanting to curb immigration and prevent cultural reordering of society, including civil rights. In the midst of this was the height of Mexican immigration into the U.S., with one million people fleeing the Mexican Revolution and joining the 100,000 Mexican-Americans already in the country. Another 5 million Mexican immigrants arrived after World War II, prompting the Mexican president to demand a serious change. This, however, was at odds with the needs of many poor Mexicans themselves, and
the various groups of Americans who wanted to aid or utilize them.

For most of the early twentieth century, 90% of Mexican-Americans lived in the southwest, with about 70% in Texas; many of them were migrant workers, illegal residents, or non-assimilated residents of some kind. Once here, Mexican immigrants joined in the fight for civil rights, which was being spearheaded by the black community. Organizations like LULAC and individuals like Hector García fought segregation and encouraged Mexican-Americans to use the courts to claim their rights and get the laws of freedom applied to them. Civil rights leaders then worked hard to get Mexican-American contributions recognized and their interests represented in Washington D.C. long-term. Many of these men and women rose through adverse circumstances to become leaders in government and affect change.

Importantly, observing the horrific acts of Adolf Hitler fundamentally changed the American attitude towards civil rights and the battles that Mexican-Americans and others were fighting. After World War II, every American president decided to aid the crusade for political and social equality among American minorities. Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson oversaw sweeping civil rights legislation, as well as the tricky process of enforcing that legislation and integrating minorities into the mainstream. Throughout the 1960s, this would be difficult, but the U.S. government and courts were determined that America would stand without official prejudice from that time forward.


**Discussion Questions**

1. What information would you use to support or oppose immigration restrictions after the assassination of President McKinley?

2. What would you cite to defend the actions of Mexican immigrants in 1911 for fleeing their country to find work in the United States?

3. How would you explain the reluctance of America to become involved in World War I?

4. Select a President from the Civil Rights Era and explain whether or not you would have acted the same way under the given circumstances. Which decisions do you support and what would you have done differently?

5. Write three new titles for this chapter based on what you know.

6. Compare and Contrast Assimilation, the National Origins Formula, and the Braceros Program. How would you improve the immigration policy?

7. Can you elaborate on the reason why Southern states may have resisted Civil Rights for freed slaves? Imagine that you are a southern businessman fearful of a multiracial society and write a letter to your Northern brother explaining your fears. Research and include images from the period in your presentation. Provide a bibliography with information attributed to source materials.

8. Compose and perform a dialogue or monologue that will communicate the thoughts of a young mother during the Red Scare.

9. Considering Civil Rights in America in the historical context discussed within the text: identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
Chapter 8 The Cold War Era
SECTION 1
8-1: The Cold War

SECTION 2
8-2: Cultural Movements during the Cold War
The Cold War Era

The Cold War

Introduction

World War II ended in 1945 just as the next crisis in world history, the Cold War, arose. The Cold War was a long, expensive war between the Communist countries of the world led by the USSR and the free nations of the world led by the United States. Instead of going to war with one another outright, the US and the USSR engaged in proxy wars, battling for the allegiance of other nations as Communism spread. They did this by providing finances, troops, weapons, or special training to their allies. Additionally, Communist nations coerced others to join them through invasion and sheer force. Both sides used spies, stockpiled nuclear weapons, and printed propaganda. Between 1945 and 1991, major wars all across the globe were ultimately the result of Communist countries trying to spread their system and the United States trying to prevent it.

The United States tried to contain Communism because it caused famine, natural disaster, and civil war with casualties into the millions. Some nations in Latin America fell or almost fell to Communism because they had significant revolutionary factions who believed that the U.S. and the West had caused their problems. Throughout the Cold War era, the United States tried to expel Communism from Latin America by aiding anti-Communist regimes and organizing the assassination of revolutionary leaders; this effort had limited success. Additionally, many Latin governments implemented repressive dictatorships in response to Communist threat. These were not much better than Communism for the people of Latin America. Between oppressive leadership
and persistent poverty, many fled to the United States between 1960 and 1990, thereby increasing Latino diversity in America. Latino immigrants came with a variety of experiences and perspectives—some hopeful, and some reflecting anti-American narratives of the regimes they had left. These perspectives could be seen in the cultural movements that Latinos participated in during the Cold War era, both mainstream and radical.

The War against the West

During World War II, the USSR fought on the same side as the United States and Western Europe, invading several Eastern European countries to fight Nazi Germany. After World War II, the Allied Powers expected Josef Stalin to free those countries, but instead, he colonized them. Taking over Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and others, the USSR turned their governments into Communist regimes and cut off their contact with the Western world. Overnight, trade and communication with them ceased. Eventually, a cement wall that divided the German capital of Berlin was erected, symbolizing the great break between the free nations of the West and the Communist countries of the East. The leader of England, Winston Churchill, called this the “Iron Curtain.” In 1945, the United States decided to counter this takeover, initiating the Cold War.

Iron Curtain
a political, military, and ideological boundary dividing Europe into Soviet influence on the east and non-Soviet-controlled alliance to the west
WHAT IS COMMUNISM?: Communism is a form of government where everything is owned by the government, and all economic activity is controlled by the government. All businesses, stores, land, and resources are owned by the state, and individuals do not make their own decisions about what they are going to produce, how they will produce it, or what it will cost. The government controls what is made, when, and how. It chooses suppliers, quantities, and prices of goods, as well as wages, hours, and conditions for workers. Since they eliminate employers and experts, communist governments have historically had trouble ordering the right amount of goods that people need, or manufacturing things the right way. Citizens usually do not have enough food or goods, and many times items are of poor quality with no other purchase options available. Sometimes there are widespread famines due to mismanagement. Businesses and farms are supposed to be collectively owned and run by workers, but often end up in decay since no-one is in charge and no-one has money to repair or upgrade them.

Communism also restricts common Western freedoms. In a communist government, there are no elections, so the populace cannot vote their leader out of office. People do not have freedom of religion or political assembly. Individuals can be arrested for their beliefs or opinions, or in the most oppressive regimes, even killed for such. Communist nations often have few clergy, intellectuals, or free-thinkers because people are not allowed to criticize the governing beliefs of their country or express loyalty to a higher authority. Schools, technology, and healthcare often suffer under communism. In addition, communism restricts freedom of information. People are told how well their country and leaders are doing, but often do not have access to any data that would say otherwise. They may be told that outside information from news media or the Internet are lies, or be prohibited from viewing this kind of information altogether. Many communist countries display numerous pictures of their leaders or reminders of patriotic duty so that citizens will remember to think loyally at all times. Communism exists on a spectrum of intensity, and different kinds of communism have been observed across the world, but the inability to speak, worship, vote, and conduct business freely are common identifying characteristics. Many communist countries also have conspicuous government officials who police public spaces to control daily activity.
The United States’ first act was to do the opposite of the USSR and decolonize all Western empires, including those of the British and the French. Nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that had colonial powers over them were freed. As the reigning superpower of the world at that point, the United States took a stand for decentralized government and self-determination for all countries. Unfortunately, most newly freed nations had no history of political, economic, or social freedoms to become successfully self-governing. Few had stability, welfare, or education. Most were poor with single export economies that still required a wealthier power to be their buyers, developers, and investors. This made them ripe for Communist takeover.

Communized nations were forbidden to throw off Communism. Hungary tried to get rid of its Soviet government in 1956, but was brutally invaded by the Soviet army. Czechoslovakia revolted in 1968, but was crushed by Soviet invasion in 1969. In 1980, Polish Solidarity leaders almost won freedom for Poland but were stopped by the Communist army. Near the Berlin Wall, people were even beginning to risk their lives to flee Communism by jumping over the barbed wire chasm, or crashing trucks through the cement panels. Except for Austria, no nation successfully left the Eastern bloc.

As the US and the USSR began building nuclear weapons and space technology in order to intimidate each other, officials realized that Communism could not be confronted head-on in the USSR or Eastern Europe without causing nuclear war. They therefore settled for a policy of containment, or confining the spread of Communism. This was at first attempted in Asia, where geography made the USSR the likely sphere of influence. As early as the 1940s, the U.S. began offering finances and supplies to Iran, Greece, and Turkey to defeat Communist movements. They were successful, but in 1949, China succumbed to Communism under Mao Zedong, whose policies caused the deaths of millions of Chi-
THE COLD WAR ERA

**domino theory**
a foreign policy theory that the fall of a noncommunist government would cause surrounding countries to follow, like dominos; a justification and argument for increasing military involvement and intervention during the Cold War

nese. In the name of progress, Mao executed landowners and organized peasant workers into communes that quickly became like slave labor camps. He then became a main sponsor of Communism in Asia. With the USSR’s help, China supported North Korea’s conversion to Communism in 1950—resisted in South Korea by Americans during the Korean War. China then sponsored Communism’s advance into Southeast Asia, especially Vietnam, an event Americans attempted to thwart from 1954 to 1975. After the U.S. lost this important ground, Communism spread into Laos, Burma, and Cambodia where millions more died under revolutionary takeover. This spread of Communism into bordering areas was called the **domino theory**, and motivated U.S. containment efforts.

**THE VIETNAM WAR:** After a decisive victory against Communism in South Korea during the Korean War (1950), the U.S. was divided over whether they should fight a similar war against Communism in Vietnam. In the 1950s, they began helping France maintain its government in Vietnam, but Vietnam defeated the French in 1954. Afterwards, North Vietnam became a Communist state, while South Vietnam set up a free republic. The North sent armed guerilla bands into the South which brought about the fall of the South Vietnamese government, and the United States became increasingly invested in making sure the South did not come under Communist control through the 1960s and 1970s. With the USSR and China funding and supplying Communist revolutionaries, however, the U.S. experienced great tactical failure in the jungles of Vietnam and eventually withdrew forces in 1973. Vietnam fell to Communist invasion officially in 1975, and the first waves of “boat people” or Vietnamese refugees fleeing Communist Vietnam, found themselves on foreign shores, including those of the United States.
The loss of Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain and the subsequent fall of Southeast Asia to Communism motivated the United States to take action between 1950 and 1990. Wherever the Soviet army went, capitals were overtaken, religion was outlawed, economic and environmental abuse occurred, schools and information were controlled, and food, medical care, and housing suffered. Afterward, missile bases and nuclear weapons were built to defend the regime. All over the world, the USSR was coercing allegiance to this new order, and the United States felt compelled to resist it. As technology improved and human rights abuses were leaked, the U.S. was willing to send aid, weapons, and Special Forces to prevent the undeveloped world from falling to Communism. This included Latin America, where Communist activity grew in the 1960s.

**Sovietizing Latin America**

Although the Cold War officially began after World War II, Latin America had already experienced decades of anti-Western thought and revolution. From the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the Banana Wars of the early twentieth century, opposition to the U.S. was already a rallying point among many Latin Americans. Additionally, key individuals networked Latin nations into Lenin’s Third International by 1930. In the early years of the Cold War, Stalin dismissed Latin America as a viable theater for worldwide war against the West, calling it “an obedient army to the United States.” This was short-sighted and would change dramatically in the 1960s with the alliance of revolutionaries like Che Guevara and Fidel Castro with the new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev.

As Communism pushed into Latin America, the United States resisted it and sent anti-Communist forces into multiple nations. As Communist and anti-Communist regimes fought for control, repression and poverty led many Latin Americans to flee to the United States. Some were hopeful, and some were not. Some were pro-America, and some were not. Some came temporarily, to get an education or acquire savings, while others fled permanently and adapted to life in the United States. Many Latinos congregated
Nikita Khrushchev  
November 26, 1956

Although the Soviet General Secretary eventually became famous for a shoe-banging incident while speaking at the U.N. in 1960, several years before, Nikita Khrushchev publicly denounced the Western world at a Polish embassy and threatened, “We will bury you,” or sometimes more literally, “We will dig you in.”

“We are Bolsheviks! We stick firmly to the Lenin precept—don’t be stubborn if you see you are wrong, but don’t give in if you are right. About the capitalist states, it doesn’t depend on you whether we [the Soviet Union] exist. If you don’t like us, don’t accept our invitations, and don’t invite us to come to see you. Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you.”

Fidel Castro  
May 1, 1961

The following excerpt is from a speech made by revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in Havana, during a May Day celebration. In it, he describes the Marxist ideals which will define the new “motherland” of Cuba, including economic levelling.

Those who paraded today were the working people who will never resign themselves to work for the parasites. In this manner our national community has understood what the revolution is, and has understood clearly what the meaning of a revolution is in which a nation gets rid of parasites from the outside and those inside. We remember that because of the nationalization of the largest industries of the nation, and just before the U.S. factories were nationalized, some asked: Was not this factory a Cuban factory? Why should a Cuban factory be nationalized? Well, such a factory did not belong to the People, it belonged to some man. Now they belong to the nation... The motherland of today where we have won the right to direct our destiny, where we have learned to decide our destiny, a motherland which will be, now and forever—as Marti wanted it—for the well-being of everyone and not a motherland for few!

The motherland will be a place where such injustices will be eliminated. Now we can have the real concept of motherland. We are willing to die for a motherland and which belongs to all Cubans. That is why the exploiting classes could not have the real concept of motherland. For them, the motherland was a privilege by which they took advantage of the work of others. That is why when a Yankee monopolist, when a leader, or a member of the U.S. ruling circles, talks about the motherland, they refer to the motherland of monopolies, of the large banking monopolies... This is their concept of motherland. That is why the People receive the real concept of motherland only when the interests of the privileged classes are liquidated, and when a nation with its wealth becomes a nation for everyone, the wealth for everyone, and opportunity and happiness for everybody.

in New York City, Florida, Texas, and southern California where Mexican-Americans had already established Spanish-speaking communities. These continue to house the large majority of Mexican-Americans today.

Guatemala

In 1950, the Guatemalan president Jacobo Árbenz believed it was time to nationalize the Guatemalan economy, starting with the banana industry, which was Guatemala’s key source of income. The United States owned the banana farms, factories, and railways, but Árbenz seized all the property and prepared to redistribute the land to peasants. The U.S. suspected that Communist control and communes were forthcoming, so President Eisenhower organized a small military force and ordered the overthrow of Árbenz in 1953. Eisenhower then helped install a new president, Carlos Castillo Armas, who was willing to work with the United States and allow them to use Guatemala as a base for training contras, or anti-Communist rebels. While this prevented Guatemala from falling to Communism, Armas was oppressive in his own right and dealt cruelly with Maya villages in the western part of the country, where he suspected Marxism was spreading. In the 1970s and 1980s, thousands of peasants were killed in the quest to maintain anti-Communist control of the nation. Hundreds of thousands more organized against the central government in small rural guerilla forces, and civil war consumed the nation between 1960 and 1996.

American intervention in Guatemala had been done secretly and swiftly with a small band of Hondurans and Nicaraguans trained by the CIA. This inspired a young revolutionary named Ernesto “Che” Guevara to take up arms against the United States. Guevara was in Guatemala when Árbenz was ousted, and interpreted the occurrence to mean that the U.S. was the force standing in the way of Communist revolution. He spoke of la lucha armada, “the armed struggle,” and taught that citizens should not wait for proper political
GUATEMALAN-AMERICANS: The first wave of Guatemalan-Americans began in the 1930s and 1940s as citizens fled two dictatorial regimes similar to Porfirio Díaz’s in Mexico. They arrived in the United States via Mexico and settled in large, urban areas in Southern California, Florida, Houston, and New York. The Guatemalan civil war of the 1970s and 1980s, however, brought hundreds of thousands of refugees, both legal and illegal, to the U.S. in a very short time. Civil war destroyed villages and farmlands, and went on for more than thirty years. The difficulties Guatemalans faced while crossing Mexico and the severity of their situation at home motivated the United States to help Guatemala negotiate an end to their war in 1996. Today, over 1.2 million Guatemalan-Americans live in the U.S.

**foco**
a theory of revolution to provide a focus for discontent through paramilitary, domestic terrorism, or urban warfare

conditions to launch a revolution, but should force one to happen wherever people were upset. A successful strategy, said Che, was to use focused, armed guerilla groups—the **foco**—because small units of soldiers could cause a lot of damage and then quickly retreat into rural areas. Che’s philosophy of revolution soon spread throughout Latin America.

**The Cuban Revolution**

In 1959, Cuba was a modern, literate nation with a growing middle class. Like most Latin nations, it still had a heavy export economy, but progressive health, education, and technology were being developed. This stopped suddenly when Cuba was radicalized by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, who turned the nation into a base for Communist revolution in the 1960s.

**Guevara and Castro Create the Revolution.** After Cuba was given its autonomy by the U.S. in 1934, it plunged into political chaos as the United States had feared. After two decades of dictatorship and turmoil, a young revolutionary socialist, Fidel Castro, attempted a coup in the capital. It failed, and he was exiled to Mexico, where he planned a second attempt. In December 1956, Castro led a small guerilla army with his brother Raúl as well as Che Guevara, which was successful. Cubans celebrated, expecting Castro to return the country to constitutional rule. Within two years, howev-
er, Soviets were shipping Cuba weapons, and it became clear that the two countries had formed an alliance. Fidel Castro consolidated control over Cuba, seizing American business and industry as well as the majority of Cuban private property, then nationalizing entire sectors of the economy, and forcing Cuban workers to join a labor union controlled by him. Cuban business and landowners fled to the United States, who in response to the loss of their property, severed all trade with Cuba. Cuba then became dependent on the USSR, which spent billions of dollars buying Cuban sugar and providing oil, loans, and aid. In 1961, Castro officially declared himself a Communist, and Cuba, a communist state.

The Bay of Pigs & Cuban Missile Crisis. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy attempted to overthrow Castro with a CIA-trained force of 1,500 Cuban exiles, but they were defeated by Castro’s troops on the beach at the Bay of Pigs. The new leader of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, was shipping Cuba nuclear missiles to help make Castro the leader of Communism in the Western Hemisphere. On October 16, 1962, the U.S. became aware of this plan, blockaded the incoming weapons in the Caribbean, and demanded that Cuba disarm its missile bases. Thirteen days later, Khrushchev and Kennedy negotiated an end to the standoff by agreeing that the missiles would be removed, and in exchange, the U.S. would not invade Cuba and would remove some of its own missiles from Eastern Europe. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief after this encounter but was shaken by how close the world had come to nuclear war. It became clear how much of a threat Communism was, and how far revolutionaries were willing to go to beat American influence in the world.

Exporting Communist Revolution. After the Cuban Revolution, Che Guevara went first to Africa and then to Bolivia to foment similar revolutions. In 1967, however, the Communist Party in Bolivia rejected Guevara’s influence, the peasants turned against him, and Bolivian forces aided by American Green Berets defeated his foco of 50 rural soldiers. After the Bolivian government ordered his execution, Guevara became a folk hero of rebellion, armed struggle, and the pursuit of justice by people against their government. He
Fidel Castro became a major exporter of Communist revolution around the world. He sent 60,000 Cuban soldiers to Angola as well as units to Yemen, Ghana, Algeria, and Nicaragua. For decades, Castro trained, armed, and financed thousands of revolutionaries from other Latin American nations and became the hub of revolutionary organizing in the Western Hemisphere. Because he permitted Cubans to flee periodically, over 500,000 Cubans came to the United States between 1959 and 1980. Most settled in Miami, optimistic and hopeful that the United States would continue to strongly oppose Castro and Communism.

**Dominoes Continue to Fall**

As President Kennedy struggled to fight Soviet Communism in Cuba, he attempted to heal relations with other Latin nations so that they would not be tempted to follow the same path. He created the

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**CUBAN-AMERICANS:** Cuba has a longer history of American relations than most Latin American countries, which is one of the reasons why Cubans are one of the most populous Latino minorities in the United States. In 1870, there were already 12,000 Cuban-Americans, most living in New York, New Orleans, and Florida. Another 100,000 immigrated between 1900 and 1959, mostly for jobs and education. Like many other Latin nations, Cuba experienced depression, inflation, and unemployment during its governmental turnovers. Political exile was also common under Fulgencio Batista in 1933 and then under Castro in 1959. Compared to Mexican-Americans, Cuban-Americans had a higher percentage of immigrants arriving with education, wealth, or business skills, which made their concerns different once they settled in the U.S. While Mexican-American leaders lobbied for illegal immigration rights, economic leveling, and Spanish education, Cubans were more generally concerned that America not accept Cuban political refugees, trade or buy Cuban products, or adopt socialist policies.

I Love Lucy actor Desi Arnaz immigrated when Batista came to power. Father had been a wealthy Cuban mayor but was imprisoned and his property taken during Batista’s coup.
Alliance for Progress in 1961 which gave Latin American governments $20 billion in aid on the condition that they agree to certain democratic reforms. Kennedy felt confident that incentivizing good policies would prevent further Sovietization, stating that “Those who make peaceful change impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.”¹ He also believed he could heal old wounds if he took responsibility for U.S. mismanagement of poor countries in the past. No one was sure whether Latin Americans would accept such an apology and move towards the United States’ sphere of influence or away from it. Meanwhile, Soviet attention was on Latin America. Khrushchev was taking a fresh look at the possibility that Latin America could be harnessed to wage war against the United States.

Nicaragua

In 1979, a group of revolutionary socialists banded together to form the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FLSN), named after César Augusto Sandino. With support from Cuba and the USSR, they began to militarize Nicaragua, drawing an army of over 100,000 to implement a Soviet-like state. At first, the Nicaraguan people rejoiced with the Sandinistas’ takeover because they thought this meant victory and prosperity. However, after several years of Marxist policy, the economy remained depressed and more and more people desired to leave the country. Buying subsidized food, for example, was cheaper than farming, so people did not farm and there were massive food shortages. Also, many Nicaraguan landowners and business owners fled as soon as the Sandinistas took power in order to avoid persecution; this left little expertise and educated workers in the country. Concerned that Nicaragua would follow the path of Cuba, U.S. President Ronald Reagan stopped economic trade with Nicaragua and organized a guerilla army of contras to disrupt the Sandinista regime. At that time, the Nicaraguan president, Daniel Ortega, had already received


Daniel Ortega
training in guerilla warfare by Castro in Cuba and was dedicated to Communism’s spread in Latin America. However, the USSR’s inability to financially support Nicaragua in the 1980s slowly brought about the downfall of the Communist state in Nicaragua.

El Salvador

Communists attempted to take over El Salvador in 1932 when Indians and peasants rose up against their government. This uprising was extinguished by federal troops, and the insurgent leader, Farabundo Martí, was executed. In 1979, several Communist guerilla armies again tried to overthrow the existing Salvadoran government. These groups merged with the official Communist Party in Cuba and renamed themselves the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). For twelve years, with money from the USSR, Cuba, and Nicaragua, the FMLN fought federal troops who were backed by the United States. Youths were recruited to be guerilla soldiers, bombs were detonated, and assassinations and kidnappings became rampant. Thousands of innocent people died as guerilla soldiers hid within residential areas, and the federal army burned entire villages to lure them out. As fighting continued in the countryside for years, the effect of war sunk in: massive unemployment, poor water and medical services, and significant homelessness. As death squads and human rights abuses continued into the 1990s, the U.S. and the United Nations were prompted to initiate a peace process, which they did under the Chapultepec Accords. People today are still seeking justice for crimes committed during those turbulent decades.
Chile

Chile had dabbled in revolutionary socialism prior to 1930 but democratized in subsequent decades. In the 1960s, a moderate Catholic socialist, Eduardo Frei, was elected President and began breaking up haciendas to disperse to small farmers, unionizing farmworkers, and nationalizing the American-run copper industry. When the economy did not improve, Chileans elected a more radical leader, Salvador Allende, who was a self-proclaimed Marxist and implemented “The Chilean Road to Socialism.” His program included seizing massive amounts of land to redistribute, as well as taking control of hundreds of private companies in mining, banking, transportation, manufacturing, and communication. As strikes and food shortages paralyzed the country, moderates in the Chilean government looked for a way to impeach Allende. In 1973, the Chilean Supreme Court and Congress permitted the military, run by General Augusto Pinochet, to put the country under martial law to restore order. A very violent turnover ensued, but Chileans permitted it because they expected the army to call for elections as soon as they subdued the revolutionaries. Instead, a military dictatorship remained for 16 years who repressed unions and basic civil liberties. The nation had swung from one end of the political spectrum to the other almost overnight.

Though not the main players, the United States and the

EL SALVADORAN-AMERICANS: At almost 2 million people today, Salvadoran-Americans recently surpassed Cubans as the third most populous Latino minority in the U.S. As is the case with most Central Americans, there was not a substantial number of Salvadorans in the United States prior to the Cold War. The first wave of immigrants came in the 1970s as civil war escalated. Young men in particular fled to escape being drafted into one of the many armies that vied for power. Another 230,000 followed legally in the 1980s, with up to 1 million estimated illegals accompanying them. Ultimately, El Salvador lost 20–30% of its population by 1990, with over half choosing to come to the United States.
USSR were behind the scenes in Chile during those years, trying to influence the sphere Chile would inhabit. The U.S. spent money to advertise against Allende’s election in 1970, while the USSR spent more to support him. The U.S. then attempted to prevent Allende from taking office and cut off loans to Chile after he did, while the USSR spent massive sums of money to support the Chilean economy and positive press for Allende as long as he was in office. This made it as though the Chilean economy was not suffering under Communist policy as much as it really was. While there was no mass exodus of Chileans to the United States during this time, a wave of approximately 100,000 —mostly upper and middle class citizens who could afford it— fled both Allende and Pinochet in the 1970s.

Colombia

In Colombia, a small group of Leninists had formed the first Communist Party prior to 1930. Peasants and workers seized land, conducted strikes, instigated riots, and formed workers’ communes that trained guerilla armies and fought off federal troops, similar to Zapata’s commune in Mexico. By 1961, this faction had grown to 20,000 revolutionaries who tried to declare independence and start a second state in Colombia. When the Colombian government was unable to quell the rebellion, the U.S. was brought in to help. American officials advised Colombian troops on how to attack the Communist colony and stay informed of future movements to re-organize.
In 1964, the radical revolutionaries did reorganize as FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), and began to network with the Soviet Union. They grew from a small-scale guerrilla group that terrorized poor, peasant areas, into a formidable force that aimed to control cities and entire industries. When they were held back from political power in the 1980s, they began a terrorist campaign—assassinating government officials, murdering farm owners and workers to seize land, kidnapping children and local leaders, and gaining members and power through illegal drug trading. While much of Latin America wanted to leave Che’s “armed struggle” behind, FARC represented exactly what he had meant by revolution through a determined guerilla army.

Grenada

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. policy of containment centered on preventing the formation of “a second Cuba” in Latin America. In 1983, a Communist government took over the small Caribbean island of Grenada (map) and, with Cuban funding, began building a large air base. With all indications that it was going to become a base for the Soviet Union, President Ronald Reagan believed another Cuban Missile Crisis was in the making. When a domestic coup broke out among citizens in Grenada, Reagan used it as an opportunity to send in U.S. Marines and install a free provisional government. Although this kind of direct American involvement had not occurred in Central America since the 1920s, the changeover in control was positive for citizens.
in Grenada. They avoided the kind of chaos that other Latin nations were experiencing. The event inaugurated the turning of the tide of Communism in Latin America.

The End of the Soviet Empire

The Cold War came to an end in 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down, and Eastern Europe was freed from the Iron Curtain. The West rushed in to help liberate and heal nations that had been crushed under Soviet governance. In 1991, Russians themselves threw off their Communist government, electing a new president and refusing to allow USSR tanks to overtake the capital.

This officially ended the Cold War, but there were many steps involved in reaching that point. In the 1960s, President Kennedy announced that Americans would “pay any price” and “fight any foe” that stood in the way of liberty. He took the first steps towards reconciling with nations who mistrusted the West by offering aid to any who would help fight Communism, and withholding aid from those who would not help. In the 1970s, U.S. President Nixon signed the first nuclear weapons limitations with the USSR that slowed the arms race. By then, American businesses were developing computers, aerospace, and military technolo-
even putting a man on the moon—which put the USSR on the defensive. By the 1980s, Ronald Reagan took a more definitive stand against Communism by calling it an “evil empire” and opposing its spread directly. Building up America’s military and boosting its economy allowed him to intimidate the Soviet government, which was running out of money. By the time Reagan demanded USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall, the West was starting to see the first real cracks in the Soviet empire. In 1991, the empire collapsed, and with it many of its allies whom it had been financially and militarily supporting.

Results of Soviet Communism. The collapse of the Soviet Union facilitated some Latin nations in climbing out of Communism. Whereas in 1980s, most Latin American nations were torn by civil war, by the year 2000, almost all had regained stability. Yet, because revolutionary socialism and anti-Western attitudes had preceded Soviet Communism, those attitudes did not vanish overnight, nor did the poverty and violence which had torn many countries apart. Many Latin nations had significant economic hurdles to conquer from decades of repelling foreign business, nationalizing industries and bringing them under state control, abolishing private property, and enacting price controls, wage laws, and expensive labor policies. Since many of these agenda items still appealed to Latin peasants and workers, the end of Communism did not mean the end of socialist policies that hindered prosperity. Public services like healthcare and education did not suddenly reboot either. Without private companies or the free market, technology, goods, and know-how remained scarce for some time. In nations that did not desire its people to profit, there was little middle or upper class to rise into, and the difficulties of working class and peasant life continued.

Communism had other effects. Communism had originally been a workers’ movement and emphasized the authority of the state to own land, resources, and jobs. Therefore, Latin American nations experienced mass urbanization—including
the growth of the megacity and associated slums—during
the Cold War era. In Peru, for example, the capital, Lima,
became home to 75% of the population. Peasants left farms
to go to cities where jobs and goods could be found. Many
fled rural areas where guerilla movements took over villag-
es and mountainsides. Not only did this cause major strain
on urban cities that could not provide enough jobs or re-
sources for the majority of the population, it also caused the
growth of crime, as citizens found it difficult to get what
they needed. Mafias, crime rings, black markets, gangs, and
gun violence all proliferated in Latin cities in order to pro-
vide money, goods, and protection. Drug and weapon traf-
ficking also increased because many guerilla armies used
profits from illegal drug and weapon sales to fund their ac-
tivities. Communism contributed directly to the danger and
violence that is still observable today in many Latin Amer-
ican metropolises.

Still, Communism was not responsible for all Latin Ameri-
can ills, many of which had predated the twentieth century
and would therefore continue into the twenty-first century.
Nations struggled with providing adequate healthcare, ed-
ucation, and welfare even before the first Communist Par-
ty was formed, and would still struggle afterwards. Many
countries had employment problems, violence problems,
and a history of ineffective government. Soviet Com-
munism simply aggravated these things and made them
harder to overcome. Consequently, Latin Americans had
decisions to make as they neared the twenty-first century.
Would they continue along the same philosophical trajec-
tory as the century before, or make a clean break? Lati-
nos who had left these regimes to migrate to the United
States and begin again—many of whom now lived in Span-
ish-speaking communities which resembled home—had to
ask themselves the same question. They would answer dif-
ferently, depending on their personal experiences and the
situations they fled.
Ronald Reagan
40th U.S. President
June 12, 1987

From behind bulletproof glass, President Ronald Reagan spoke in West Berlin about the tragedy of Communism behind the Iron Curtain. In his speech, he calmly but firmly appealed to the Soviet Union to dismantle the wall which divided Germany—and much of Europe—in half.

In the 1950’s, Khrushchev predicted: “We will bury you.” But in the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history. In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind—too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself. After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.

And now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Some political prisoners have been released. Certain foreign news broadcasts are no longer being jammed. Some economic enterprises have been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control. Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? Or are they token gestures, intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it? We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace.

There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!
Section Summary

A form of revolutionary socialism called Communism began to spread across the globe in the early twentieth century. Communism was developed and led by the USSR against the Western powers, especially the United States. While the two countries never fought outright, there were off-site wars in many places to determine whose sphere of influence would reign. This polarized the world into pro-West and anti-West camps.

Outside of Mexico, most Latin Americans who immigrated to the United States after 1930 were victims of the Cold War from its inception under Lenin and Stalin and its spread through Castro and Khrushchev. Communism did not inaugurate revolution in Latin America, but did augment and subsidize it. Communism united militant movements and offered a revolutionary narrative about the world uniting against Western oppressors. It also provided many of the troops, weapons, and finances for revolution because it sought to bring nations into its own sphere of influence. After 1960, Cuba was the gateway to doing this in Latin America, although other sympathetic movements existed independently. Most shared the belief that Western powers had made them poor and needed to be replaced by an alternative power that would usher in a new world order.

Latinos immigrating to America in the second half of the twentieth century grew up under these regimes. Some were sympathetic to the anti-Western climate they had lived in, while others believed immigrating to the United States was their chance for a new start. Once in the U.S., their experience was colored by their history and how they interpreted it—most enjoyed freedom in the United States, but some hoped that revolutionaries would change the U.S. as well. Some were also suspicious of U.S. policy towards their countries of origin—either helping them or hurting them depending on which side of the Cold War they were on. For
its part, Communism offered little political, economic, or religious benefit, but citizens hoped in it because it trumped the cause of regular people. As a result, Latin nations generally suffered through the back and forth of Communist and anti-Communist regimes throughout the Cold War era. It was a complicated time.
The Cold War era was a turbulent time for the United States as it went head to head with Soviet Communism. Wars were fought, nuclear weapons were built, and business and technology boomed. Much effort was put into keeping the U.S. system alive and seeking alliances, while nation after nation sought an anti-Western alternative. This had drastic effects on American society, not the least of which were cultural movements that opposed basic American assumptions and values.

The Counterculture. By 1968, civil unrest was increasing over the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. Desegregating the South had led to riots, police brutality, a Ku Klux Klan reprisal, militant black leaders, and the assassinations of nonviolent leaders like Martin Luther King Jr.; this was on top of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert Kennedy, who were both proponents of civil rights. People read about uprisings and violence in the streets almost every day in the newspaper. America’s involvement in the Vietnam War made things worse. The U.S. began sending more soldiers overseas to fight the “quagmire” of Communism in Southeast Asia, but their troops were not winning. The military draft had put American youth on edge, especially as fatalities rose. Huge numbers of protesters gathered in every major city in the United States to protest the war. This peaked in 1969 at the Moratorium in Washington D.C. when 500,000 gathered outside the U.S. Capitol to make the government hear their pleas.

Frustration over civil rights disturbances and the Vietnam
JOAN BAEZ: Joan Baez is a Mexican-American folk singer who became a darling of the 1960s counterculture. After growing up in upper-class New York, she converted to Quakerism and spent the rest of her life pursuing civil rights, social justice, and the anti-war movement. She met Martin Luther King Jr. and performed at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. She also played at Woodstock, a concert where songs against the establishment were made famous. Over her long career, she recorded multiple songs and albums in Spanish, including “Juan de la Cruz” which is a tribute to Mexican braceros and their trials. She became famous for her acoustic version of “We Shall Overcome,” or “Venceremos,” which became a popular liberation slogan throughout Latin America in the 1960s. Today, she is one of the few music heroes from the 60s who still performs and composes, and continues to win the highest awards for her work.

Woodstock

a pivotal outdoor music festival held on a dairy farm in New York with 32 acts and an audience of 400,000 people that defined a prevalent counterculture

counterculture

a significant and persistent influence of values and behaviors opposed to that of the social mainstream of the day

War made conditions ripe for a larger cultural rebellion called the counterculture. Entire segments of the population, especially high school and college youth, began to declare war on traditional society. “Turn on, Tune In, and Drop out” became the motto as idealistic youth who opposed the war and were frustrated with societal imperfections abandoned traditional values, turned to music and drugs, and read different kinds of manifestos, looking for a new plan of society that they could believe in. Some joined communes or cults where they practiced back-to-earth living, alternative family arrangements, and socialist economics. Others joined movements to advance feminism, Black Nationalism, or Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights. Entire segments experimented with alternative eating, dressing, religion, and sexual practices while protesting nuclear weapons, participating in marches or sit-ins, or otherwise opposing status quo America. They were often encouraged by sympathetic adults, especially in New York City, Chicago, and California.

In the midst of the counterculture and societal turmoil which gave rise to it, a sector of revolutionaries started to mar-
shal circumstances toward their own ends. They believed different
groups fighting for their own ends—feminism, civil rights, alter-
native lifestyles, and religions—could together bring about a larg-
er revolution. In 1962, a radical student group published the Port
Huron Statement which declared that the university was the new
hub for revolution, and that students’ goal should be “to build a
base for their assault upon the loci of power.” To do this, both they
and the academic community should reach out to allies in the labor,
civil rights, and local community as well as “import major public
issues into the curriculum.” This became a strategy of activism in
the 1960s and 1970s. Campaign by campaign, contemporary de-
mands from different segments of society could all be part of bring-
ing down the entire political and economic establishment.

Educated, Urban Warfare. Using civil rights and anti-war dis-
turbances as a springboard, revolutionary students launched their
own violent campaigns against American police, government, and
authority. A violent protest during the Democratic National Con-
vention was carried out in Chicago in 1968, with hundreds injured.
This was followed by the Days of Rage in 1969, where a small
group of militant students—an educational foco—carried out an
even more violent street assault. In 1971 and 1972, the same organ-
ization bombed several government buildings, including the U.S.
Capitol and the Pentagon. For several years, revolutionary students
stirred up violence in the streets, attacked police and private proper-
ty, and encouraged peers to be arrested for the greater cause. In fact,
all around the world—Germany, England, France, Mexico—radical
student activists took to the streets in large urban centers to protest
Western civilization and its attack of Communism in the Cold War.

The Venceremos Brigade. Some youth visited nations that the
U.S. or Western allies opposed during the Cold War in order to
show their solidarity with those revolutionary regimes. In 1969,
the first Venceremos Brigade traveled to Cuba in order to work
alongside manual laborers and protest American policies. There,
they met with Castro officials to discuss how to better radicalize
students on university campuses and articulate the pro-Communist

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position. These students did not just want America to stop fighting Communism, they wanted America to lose. Many innocent American youth were already motivated to protest the Vietnam War and the military draft, but radical student organizers were able to marshal this anti-war protest into larger rallies against the police, the government, and America in general.

The Chicano Movement

A significant number of Latino activists joined the counter-culture and its strategy of using the university and curriculum as a base for a larger revolution against society. In the 1960s, a Mexican-American pride movement called the Chicano movement largely originated from the university and, like the Port Huron Statement called for, extended into labor, civil rights, and other community venues. The heart of the Chicano movement revolved around creating a Mexican-American community that resided within, but was untouched by, white American society. Common goals included separate courses of study in schools—called Chicano Studies—separate political parties that nominated only Mexican-American candidates, the Spanish language as a second national language, and organized resistance to government action that affected Latino neighborhoods. The term “Chicano” became one of solidarity, and many began using it to show they were victors rather than victims.

WHAT IS A CHICANO? Originally a derogatory term, the term “Chicano” is now a preferred term by many Mexican-Americans, although people disagree on its exact definition. Some use the term almost synonymously with “Mexican-American” while others use it to refer more specifically to American-born descendants of Mexican immigrants. Sometimes “Chicano” is used to mean Mexican-Americans who take special pride in their heritage, those who support more rights for Mexican-Americans, or those who rebel against the system. In the historical context of the 1960s, when the term “Chicano” began to be associated with an entire movement, the word carried with it a specific connotation of separating from the white American community. One famous Mexican-American journalist defined “Chicano” as “a Mexican-American with a non-Anglo image of himself.” [This definition is the one used and explored in the rest of this chapter.]
José Vasconcelos and Cosmic Race Theory

The ideas motivating the 1960s Chicano movement began in Mexico during the Revolution. In the 1920s, President Álvaro Obregón appointed José Vasconcelos as his minister of education with the goal of producing a public education program suitable for the Mexican people. The government agreed that it was very important that this education reflect new Mexican values and history, not traditional Catholic or European ones. As a result, Vasconcelos formulated a secular and nationalistic body of thought that would support a distinctly Mexican theory of education. It was called “cosmic race” theory.

Vasconcelos taught that Anglo-European culture had defined mestizo blood and biracial ancestry as bad, while in reality, they were good. In his view, mestizo races were in fact superior to “pure” blood races because they carried the best traits of multiple races combined. The mestizos of Latin America, said Vasconcelos, were superior because their blood contained elements of European, Asian, African, and Indian races all in one. Far from being inferior, as European and American societies said they were, “the bronze race” was the best in the world—uniquely gifted to inherit the earth and, eventually, displace pure blood races. Elements of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and other important European philosophers were represented in this theory.

Cosmic race theory undergirded Mexico’s new public education program of indigenísmo. Government money was spent on art, music, and schools that glorified Mexico’s Indian and revolutionary past and criticized its European and Catholic foundations. The content of Mexican education was set up in opposition to Western politics, economics, and religion, which were viewed as outgrowths of colonialism and oppression. This view was not confined to Mexico. Vasconcelos himself spent many years in the United States, first for his own education and later, during intermittent years of exile under Huerta, Carranza, and Cárdenas. While in the United States, he taught on college campuses, was invited to speak by many on foreign affairs, and worked in Washington D.C.
Aztlán—the legendary, but possibly mythical, ancestral home of the Aztec people suggested to be located in northwest-ern Mexico or southwest United States

Indo-Mexican
indigenous people of Mexico

Alurista & MEChA

In 1967, a student and poet from Morelos, Alberto Urista—“Alurista”—was attending the University of San Diego. Alurista co-founded a campus group called MEChA (Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán), named after the word “match,” to start a fire. This group popularized the idea that the Mexican Cession lands, referred to as “Aztlán,” were the spiritual homeland of Indo-Mexican people and therefore rightfully belonged to them. MEChA did not advocate seizing the land by force, as Pancho Villa and the Plan of San Diego had. Rather, it simply proclaimed that reconquista was the destiny of mestizo people. As Alurista penned it in the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán,

“In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal ‘gringo’ invasion of our territories, we, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our People of the Sun, declare that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny.”

Alurista’s declaration evoked elements of Vasconcelos’ cosmic race theory, Aztec mythology, and longstanding Mexi-

can grief over the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The idea was that Chicanos would separate from mainstream American society as they educationally and spiritually awakened to their unique destiny. They would then retake the American Southwest through a variety of ways. Alurista’s declaration became the preamble and manifesto of MEChA, which later opened chapters in Texas, Colorado, and other California universities. Its poetry and goals spoke to many young Mexican-Americans who straddled two worlds, one Mexican and one American. Especially for the children of Mexican immigrants who no longer lived in Mexico but were not always accepted as fully American, Vasconcelos’ cosmic race theory and the Aztlán narrative were appealing. They said that Mexican-Americans deserved to be in the United States and would inherit a land that represented them uniquely. With effort, they could overcome segregation and discrimination that was still visible in the 1960s, and rise to the top of society.

**Plan de Santa Barbara.** In 1969, MEChA declared the Plan de Santa Barbara, which called for **Chicano Studies** to be implemented in all California public schools. The document emphasized that Chicano Studies should be organized along similar lines as Mexican *indigenismo*, rather than the typical Anglo core curriculum. MEChA activists insisted that Mexican-American students needed a Mexican-American education that was unique and separate from what other students were required to study, and one that was taught in Spanish. In this way, Alurista and MEChA parted from mainstream activists pursuing educational reform through the G.I. Forum, LULAC, and associated groups. Chicano activists wanted something different than desegregation and access to good schools. They wanted schools within a school and a statement that they were unique from, not the same as, other American students.

**Chicano Park.** This kind of thinking fueled the campus activism necessary to create Chicano Studies and achieve its
implementation throughout the California school system. It also fueled more radical protests such as the takeover of Chicano Park in 1970. When agreements to a San Diego park that had been promised to the Mexican-American community were almost revoked, Chicano students walked out of high schools and colleges to occupy the park while flying the Aztlán flag. Eventually their cause prevailed, and Diego Rivera’s revolutionary artwork was brought in to display in the park. Today Chicano Park includes a mix of revolutionary, indigenous, and Catholic art that gives tribute to racial solidarity.

Corky Gonzales & the Crusade for Justice

Chicano Youth Liberation Conference. Another key individual in the Chicano movement was Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales. Gonzales grew up with a difficult childhood in Colorado as the son of Mexican immigrants. In 1969, he decided to make Denver a hub of revolutionary organizing and held the first Chicano Youth Liberation conference. There, he debuted a story, *Yo Soy Joaquin*, about a man who identifies as neither Mexican nor American, neither European nor Indian, but a new race; he is released into greatness because he is no longer defined by other people groups who tell him who he is. Gonzales’ story was printed and posted in many Mexican-American communities, becoming a kind of manifesto for Chicano self-determination, ethnic pride, and the importance of a homeland, Aztlán. Many Mexican-Americans who attended Gonzales’ conference were mobilized to take action in their home states.

The Crusade School. While MEChA was lobbying for Chicano
Ruben Salazar was a Mexican-American journalist who commonly reported on the Chicano movement to mainstream American society. In 1970, he wrote an article published by the LA Times attempting to define the term “Chicano” along with its racial and political distinctives. Later that year, after Salazar was accidentally killed by police during an anti-Vietnam riot, his articles became more famous and Salazar Park was named in his honor in East Los Angeles.

A Chicano is a Mexican-American with a non-Anglo image of himself. He resents being told Columbus “discovered” America when the Chicoano’s ancestors, the Mayans and the Aztecs, founded highly sophisticated civilizations centuries before Spain financed the Italian explorer’s trip to the “New World.” Chicanos resent also Anglo pronouncements that Chicanos are “culturally deprived” or that the fact that they speak Spanish is a “problem.” Chicanos will tell you that their culture predates that of the Pilgrims and that Spanish was spoken, in America before English and so the “problem” is not theirs but the Anglos who don’t speak Spanish.

Having told you that, the Chicano will then contend that Anglos are Spanish-oriented at the expense of Mexicans. They will complain that when the governor dresses up as a Spanish nobleman for the Santa Barbara Fiesta he’s insulting Mexicans because the Spanish conquered and exploited the Mexicans. It’s as if the governor dressed like an English Redcoat for a Fourth of July parade, Chicanos say. When you think you know what Chicanos are getting at, a Mexican-American will tell you that Chicano is an insulting term and may even quote the Spanish Academy to prove that Chicano derives from chicanery. A Chicano will scoff at this and say that such Mexican-Americans have been brainwashed by Anglos and that they’re Tio Tacos (Uncle Toms). This type of Mexican-Americans, Chicanos will argue, don’t like the word “Chicano” because it’s abrasive to their Anglo-oriented minds. These poor people are brown Anglos, Chicanos will smirk.

What, then, is a Chicano? Chicanos say that if you have to ask you’ll never understand, much less become a Chicano. Actually, the word Chicano is as difficult to define as “soul.” For those who like simplistic answers, Chicano can be defined as short for Mexican. For those who prefer complicated answers, it has been suggested that Chicano may have come from the word Chihuahua—the name of a Mexican state bordering on the United States. Getting trickier, this version then contends that Mexicans who migrated to Texas call themselves Chicanos because having crossed into the United States from Chihuahua they adopted the first three letters of that state, “Chi,” and then added “-cano,” for the latter part of Texano. Such explanations, however, tend to miss the whole point as to why Mexican-American activists call themselves Chicanos. Mexican-Americans, the second largest minority in the country and the largest in the Southwestern states (California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado), have always had difficulty making up their minds what to call themselves. In New Mexico they call themselves Spanish-Americans. In other parts of the Southwest they call themselves Americans of Mexican descent, people with Spanish surnames or Hispanos. Why, ask some Mexican-Americans, can’t we just call ourselves Americans? Chicanos are trying to explain why not. Mexican-Americans, though indigenous to the Southwest, are on the lowest rung scholastically, economically, socially and politically. Chicanos feel cheated. They want to effect change. Now.
Studies in the California school system, Corky Gonzales built his own private school in Denver to teach Indo-Mexican pride. Based on Vasconcelos’ ideas, Gonzales created the school to teach an alternative education that uplifted Mexicans and indigenous peoples as well as offered free tuition and healthcare. During the Chicano movement, Gonzales’ school was a center for activism and a base for his organization, the Crusade for Justice. There, he organized Mexican-Americans for street action such as civil rights demonstrations, school walkouts, anti-war marches, and labor strikes. More controversially, miscellaneous bomb ingredients were found when police gunfire accidentally detonated an entire story above the school. After the 1968 massacre of student activists in Tlatelolco, Mexico, Gonzales renamed the school Escuela Tlatelolco, which still serves the Mexican-American community today.

By 1970, Corky Gonzales’ fame was rising in the Chicano Movement. He left Colorado briefly to make a bid for a new political party in Texas called La Raza Unida (“The United Race”). He was defeated and returned to Escuela Tlatelolco to keep community organizing in Denver. Street protesters standing with other counterculture activists cried, Venceremos! At this time, Venceremos was being used as the rallying cry of Salvador Allende’s socialist party in Chile as well as the Farabundo National Liberation Front in El Salvador. Latino revolutionaries were making it clear that they no longer intended to be passive about where they perceived injustice, whether in Latin America or in the United States.

The Brown Berets & “La Causa de la Raza”

Corky Gonzales’ Chicano Youth Liberation Conference energized multiple Chicano groups, including the Brown Berets in Los Angeles. The Brown Berets organized several years earlier to protest anti-Chicano policies in schools, healthcare, employment, local government, and the community as a whole. They gained a particular reputation for confronting what they considered to be discriminatory behavior by the Los Angeles Police. During the Vietnam War, the Brown Berets set up chapters in cities with significant Latino populations to mobilize larger numbers for what they called la
Causa de la Raza, “the Cause” or “liberation” of “the Race.”

In 1968, the Brown Berets organized a series of high school walkouts to protest unfair policies and substandard conditions in poor East LA schools. Supported by high school teacher Sal Castro, a Korean War veteran who believed in the Chicano agenda, the Brown Berets and MEChA youth rallied hundreds of youth to walk out of their classes—some carrying signs saying, Viva la Raza, “Long live the Race” or “Long live the People.” The Brown Berets joined MEChA in San Diego for the takeover of Chicano Park, sent members to help Aztlán activists in New Mexico, and aided Puerto Rican activists in Chicago and New York. With chapters in multiple cities, the Brown Berets supported Chicano uprisings in many places. Chicanos in Denver staged their first walkouts, and in a few years, Houston followed.

In 1970, the Brown Berets organized the Chicano Moratorium, one of the most high profile events of the entire Chicano movement. Thousands of Chicanos and their supporters conducted an anti-Vietnam march in Los Angeles, which was forcefully broken up by the police and resulted in the death of two Brown Beret members and Mexican-American journalist, Ruben Salazar. Salazar was a Korean War veteran, worked for the L.A. Times, and was sympathetic to Mexican-American issues, including how hard it was to achieve U.S. citizenship. When he was killed by a policeman’s tear gas container during the uproar, he became a martyr for the cause, and the park where he was killed was renamed in his honor. Afterwards, Brown Berets continued to be active in Chicago, Seattle, New York, Detroit, St. Louis, and other metro areas where civil rights and anti-Vietnam protests were popular. They even attempted to occupy a small California island and claim it for Mexico. Following this, the Brown Berets were disbanded by federal officials. The only chapter to survive, in San Diego, reorganized itself as the National Brown Berets of Aztlán and continued to lobby for California to be returned to Mexico.
Chicano Liberation Front. While the Brown Berets waned in influence after 1972, another radical group, the Chicano Liberation Front, was just peaking. The death of Ruben Salazar during the Chicano Moratorium provoked the Chicano Liberation Front to retaliate. In 1971, they detonated a series of bombs in Los Angeles and threatened to damage even more property. On October 12, 1974, El Día de la Raza (“The Day of the Race”), stores, banks, and schools all around California were put on a list as potential bomb targets. The Chicano Liberation Front clarified that the purpose of the day, a Latin American holiday, was to “…celebrate with our people of the South, the Inauguration of Revolutionary action against the violence of economic exploitation, political subjugation, and social degradation by the Yankee Elite.”

The Chicano Liberation Front conducted urban warfare until 1976, taking credit for over a dozen instances of revolutionary violence.

Reies Tijerina

Reies Tijerina, from New Mexico, was another important Chicano activist in the 1960s. He contributed much of the thrust behind reconquista and reclaiming Aztlán as a Chicano homeland, even conducting an early attempt to do so. As early as the 1950s, Tijerina began researching the history of Spain, Mexico, and the United States, looking for evidence that land grant policies had been breached by the U.S. in the 1800s. After running a small commune in Arizona, he lived as a fugitive for several years while coordinating Spanish, Mexican, and Indian citizens who believed they were the rightful land grant heirs to the southwest. Forming La Alianza (“the Alliance”), he took the research briefly to Mexico where he hoped officials would trumpet his cause. To his disappointment, he was deported with a warning from former President Cárdenas that pursuing the matter further would only lead to bloodshed.

Dissatisfied, Tijerina attempted reconquista in 1966 with 300 members of the Alianza. They occupied Carson National Forest in New Mexico, proclaimed a republic, and detained park rangers who tried to have them removed. The Alianza forfeited their occupation after a few days, but their actions got them in trouble with New Mexico.

THE COLD WAR ERA

PROBLEMS WITH AZTLÁN THEORY: Aztlán is said to be the legendary homeland of the Aztecs prior to their migration to Tenochtitlan, somewhere to the northwest of Mexico City, and, in some accounts, a mythical paradise. Like many tales of ancient origins, it is difficult to discern how literally the legend can be taken. In the 1960s, Aztlán was asserted to be the southwestern United States and therefore the rightful entitlement of Indians, Spanish, and Mexicans who were dispossessed after the Mexican-American War. A number of problems arise from this assertion, including that there is no known linkage of Aztecs to the United States. Scholars know that the American Southwest was occupied and fought over for centuries by the Navajo, Apache, Kiowa, Pima, Utes, Comanche, and others. However, the Aztecs are known to have migrated from Chichimec territory in northern Mexico, with no Aztec-like civilization existing in the United States. Importantly, American Indians did not recognize private property or official land rights so there is no easy way to declare whose land it originally was, or handle conflicts that would emerge over such a decision.

Reyes Tijerina’s attempt to unite all Indians, Spanish, and Mexicans into a single faction against Anglo settlers overlooks the long history of those groups fighting with, and among, one another. If a remnant of México could one day be proven to be rightful descendants of some existing land plots in the U.S., this would not legally entitle all current Mexicans to an entire republic of the Southwest, or require them to open it to all Indo-Hispanic people. The same could be said for other Indian tribes. Tijerina also overlooked legal matters concerning authorities. The following year, several members of the Alianza were arrested, and Tijerina conducted an armed raid on the Tierra Amarilla courthouse to free them. For kidnapping two guards and leading police to pursue him through the mountains, he was briefly imprisoned. His escapades gained him attention from Corky Gonzales and other Chicano activists, who chose him to lead the Latino-Indian faction of the Poor People’s Campaign in Washington D.C. in 1968. Afterwards, Tijerina engaged in more protests and scuffles with the law before finally being arrested for murder and sentenced to more time in prison. He had succeeded in bringing attention to the land grant issue, but his radical actions alienated some. Those who yearned for Aztlán began to look for other ways of redistributing land back to Mexicans and Indians.
landholders and their descendants who sold their land, looking to make money and move. Some deeds may have been acquired unscrupulously, but the majority was legally sold. Today, most current residents in the Southwest are not actual descendants of original title holders but hold legal deeds of their own which cannot be annulled. Chicanos who have made the claim that they are rightful heirs of the American Southwest are relying on an argument based on cultural and political solidarity, not legal or historical grounds.

Progress a Different Way

The result of advancing La Causa de La Raza was a Mexican-American separatist movement that sought to work outside the American system. Chicano activists criticized and desired to replace that system for promoting Anglo racism that they believed a Mexican-American could never fully overcome, at least not without being compromised. This was a very different approach than of Dennis Chavez, Henry Gonzalez, and other Latino politicians who, at the same time, were working inside the American system to achieve reforms. It differed from the approach of civil rights leaders who organized Viva Kennedy clubs and mass registered Mexican-Americans to vote. The latter was led by Kennedy, Johnson, and others in order to help Latinos prosper within modern, democratic society. Chicanos, on the other hand, adopted a revolutionary narrative that opposed Western civilization and wanted to

destroy this society. Two sets of Mexican-American activists, with similar hopes for their community, were pursuing two different approaches.

**Immigration and Labor Reform**

LULAC, the G.I. Forum, and early Latino civil rights groups were already using the American political and economic system to promote candidates and policies they wanted; this included immigration reform. In the 1950s, a son of Mexican immigrants, César Chávez, began a movement that turned into one of the largest lobbies for migrant workers in the Civil Rights era. During the Bracero Program, when millions of legal and illegal Mexican immigrants came seeking work, Chávez and his co-organizer Dolores Huerta founded the United Farm Workers union to help them oppose harsh conditions and low wages. After helping Filipino grape harvesters in 1965, the United Farm Workers organized strikes in Delano, California and marched on the capital in Sacramento. This inspired strikes and boycotts in bracero communities across the West and got many companies to sign contracts saying they would hire unionized workers. Chávez and Huerta successfully raised public awareness of issues facing migrant workers, and while opposing illegal immigration and the Bracero Program, advocated for all workers’ rights to adequate healthcare, education, and housing. Huerta, who famously stood behind Robert F. Kennedy when he was assassinated in 1968, worked with the U.S. government to achieve greater welfare for Mexican workers and their families, including programs that provided shoes, food stamps, legal counsel, and important documents in Spanish. Both she and Chávez also advocated amnesty, which occurred under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act.

**Education Reform**

In 1948, Hector García opened the American G.I. Forum
to help reform education in the Mexican-American community. A college-educated veteran who believed in the American system of education, García did not try to start his own schools with private courses of study, but rather worked to get Mexican-Americans into the best American schools. In 1968, LULAC helped sponsor MALDEF (the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) to continue pushing for civil rights in schools and workplaces. Many MALDEF cases served underprivileged Latino communities by redistributing funds from larger, wealthier schools to poorer ones that Mexican-American children attended. Through the 1970s and 1980s, MALDEF continued this mission as well as advocated fairer districting that represented Mexican-Americans better in the political process. In 1982, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Plyler v. Doe that the children of illegal immigrants were constitutionally protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, MALDEF began to advocate on behalf of these children, especially in the state of Texas, to make sure that they received access to public schooling.

On a lay level, educational reformers were also making progress. In 1978, a Bolivian immigrant with Aymara Indian ancestry, Jaime Escalante, became famous for helping an underprivileged class of Los Angeles Latinos learn calculus and pass the AP Calculus exam. He became so successful that his graduates became the largest proportion of those entering the University of Southern California from East Los Angeles. Escalante avoided political and social agendas and instead pushed for “hard work, and lots of it, for teacher and student alike.” Several Latino teachers followed in his footsteps and, while they were not always appreciated for evading the Chicano movement, they helped get hundreds of Mexican-Americans into college.

Political Reform

Working off of civil rights legislation put forth by Presi-

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dents Kennedy and Johnson, and a pro-Latino segment of Congress pioneered by legislators like Dennis Chávez and Henry Gonzalez, the new Nixon administration facilitated political, economic, and social reforms for many minorities, including Mexican-Americans. It oversaw the desegregation of public schools and permitted the busing of minorities to schools outside their neighborhoods to achieve racial integration. President Richard Nixon hired more women and minorities than his predecessors and implemented the first **affirmative action** program, called the Philadelphia Plan, in 1970. Under this plan, industrial employers with large government contracts were required to hire a certain number of black workers, even if those workers had been refused union membership. This attempted to counteract racial discrimination on the part of both employers and unions. In the following years, U.S. courts refused to hear challenges to the Philadelphia Plan on the grounds that it was consistent with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Courts were now on the side of all minorities, making it easier for them to find work.

**Indian Rights.** Regarding rights for indigenous peoples, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson took the first steps toward recognizing Indian rights and providing large amounts of aid during the Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s. President Nixon did even more. Officially condemning the U.S. policy of **termination**, which attempted to end tribal autonomy and required Indians to obey the same laws as all U.S. citizens, President Nixon gave a landmark speech in 1970 that upheld tribes’ autonomy over their own government, land, and activities. United States leadership had been divided for a long time over how to improve economic conditions for Indians and raise them to the same standard of living as average Americans while also respecting their land and traditions. Nixon took the position that Indian tribes should be allowed to govern their own affairs, while the U.S. government committed large amounts of regular aid for education, land improvement, and health services.
This new policy of self-determination was most clearly seen in the path the U.S. government pursued with Alaskan natives after acquiring the state in 1959. Alaskan natives were given 44 million acres and almost $1 billion in oil revenue to handle in their own way and administer through their own villages and businesses. This kind of partnership was to take place in Indian communities throughout the United States wherever tribal chairmen existed.

Religious and Social Reform

In 1978, Pope John Paul II began to rejuvenate faith in the worldwide Catholic community, as well as heal historical wounds. One of his first trips as Pope was to Mexico in 1979 where he began racial and religious reconciliation. Since the Mexican Revolution, the government had cut off the Roman Catholic Church from Mexico so that the Pope could not network with bishops, priests, and clergy there; they were not even permitted to wear religious clothing. The head of the Church, however, blessed millions of Mexicans and Indians who filled the streets to see him. The Pope also
Together, the free nations of the Hemisphere pledged their resources and their energies to the Alliance for Progress. Together they pledged to accelerate economic and social development and to make the basic reforms that are necessary to ensure that all would participate in the fruits of this development. Together they pledged to modernize tax structures and land tenure—to wipe out illiteracy and ignorance—to promote health and provide decent housing—to solve the problems of commodity stabilization—to maintain sound fiscal and monetary policies—to secure the contributions of private enterprise to development—to speed the economic integration of Latin America. And together they established the basic institutional framework for this immense, decade-long development.

This historic Charter marks a new step forward in the history of our Hemisphere. It is a reaffirmation of the continued vitality of our Inter-American system, a renewed proof of our ability to meet the challenges and perils of our time, as our predecessors met these challenges in their own days. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century we struggled to provide political independence in this Hemisphere. In the early twentieth century we worked to bring about a fundamental equality between all the nations of this Hemisphere one with another—to strengthen the machinery of regional cooperation within a framework of mutual respect, and under the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt and the Good Neighbor Policy that goal was achieved a generation ago.

Today we seek to move beyond the accomplishments of the past—to establish the principle that all the people of this Hemisphere are entitled to a decent way of life—and to transform that principle into the reality of economic advance and social justice on which political equality must be based. This is the most demanding goal of all. For we seek not merely the welfare and equality of nations one with another—but the welfare and the equality of the people within our nations. In so doing we are fulfilling the most ancient dreams of the founders of this Hemisphere, Washington, Jefferson, Bolivar, Marti, San Martin, and all the rest.

...We are joined together in this Alliance as nations united by a common history and common values. And I look forward—as do all the people of this country—to the day when the people of Latin America will take their rightful place beside the United States and Western Europe as citizens of industrialized and growing and increasingly abundant societies. The United States, Europe, and Latin America—almost a billion people: a bulwark of freedom and the values of Western civilization—invulnerable to the forces of despotism—lighting the path to liberty for all the peoples of the world. This is our vision—and, with faith and courage, we will realize that vision in our own time.

visited the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and the Bahamas, demonstrating to Latin Americans that they were important and respected. While renouncing Marxism firmly, the Pope’s blessing of millions of simple people, his apology for the Church’s historical abuse, and his beatifying multiple Mexican and Indian saints reinvigorated Catholic commitment in Mexican and Mexican-American communities. His loosening of Church policy to permit Mass in vernacular languages, including Spanish, also revived interest in returning to religious services.

The reign of Pope John Paul II also contributed to greater acceptance of Mexican-Americans as part of the Christian community in the United States. He created solidarity among Catholics worldwide as he stood against Communism and called for Christian unity against it. He also fostered Protestant-Catholic unity by allying with Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and non-Catholic leaders to condemn totalitarian governments. This built bridges between racial and ethnic groups which had before been separate. The 1980s and 1990s saw more of this racial reconciliation as people were moved by the suffering of the poor under Communism across the globe. Many, in response, turned to religious faith to cope and help heal the wounds of the Cold War era.

Chapter Conclusion

The Cold War Era was a challenging time when underdeveloped nations found themselves caught up in a war over civilizational values between the U.S. and the USSR. While Western nations fought to preserve representative government, the free market, and basic civil liberties, Communist nations fought for the West’s demise and the spread of a socialist, totalitarian system which they believed would create greater liberty. In Latin America, where U.S. and Western European influence was already being resisted, most nations had revolutionary factions rise up, determined to give revolutionary socialism a try. Most were bolstered by the Com-
munist narrative, although some, like Fidel Castro, directly tied themselves to the Soviet crusade. The Communist hope was that Latin America would wage war against the United States, so the U.S. spent decades resisting Communism’s spread in Latin nations by arming contras and supporting anti-Communist regimes, some of which were bloody and repressive in their own right.

Domestically, the United States faced its own challenges. The counterculture movement was inspired by the Communist quest for liberation from traditional Western values, and many experimented with alternative living styles and socialist philosophy. Some even went as far as trying to aid Communist revolution through terrorism or urban focos. College-educated youth in particular saw themselves as agents of transformation, and radical and mainstream activism sometimes blended together as both sought change in American society. For Mexican-Americans especially, there were two paths to societal change. One was through the radical Chicano movement who emphasized racial solidarity and joined with counterculturalists’ cry for power, separatism, and revolution. The other was through more traditional avenues: political and educational reform, the labor movement, and religious commitment. The spirit of the age in the 1960s and 1970s was for change and progress, but ironically, perhaps the greatest change came not from domestic demands but from new ethnic groups fleeing Communist persecution. These forced the demographics and values of America to change. With newfound diversity, came great compassion.
Discussion Questions

1. How is The Cold War different than previous types of foreign policy and war engagement?

2. Compare the conditions of poverty in Latin America to those in Communist governments? Why would Communism be appealing to Latin American people?

3. Explain how the soviet communist government would prevent occupied countries from escaping communist rule? What were the most important things that these countries lacked that prevented them from escaping communism on their own?

4. How did containment impact U.S. foreign policy? What difficulties did the U.S. encounter in the attempt to suppress communist expansion in Asia?

5. Discuss the concerns related to arming Latin leaders and training contras to combat communism. What dangers are involved? Can you predict future problems or concerns with the foreign policy? What were the advantages?

6. Explain how Ernesto “Che” Guevara disrupted the ability of Nicaragua and the U.S. to protect the Americas from communism. What were his motives? How was he instrumental in causing Cuba to fall to Soviet communism? Why do you think Guevara is revered as a hero, despite his contributions to the long-lasting difficulties in Cuba and other Latin American countries, nearly casting the world into nuclear war?

7. Why do you think Nicaraguans believed that Sandino’s Marxist policies would improve their circumstances? How does subsidization of goods increase a countries likelihood for food shortage and starvation?

8. How does guerilla warfare impact civility and humanity in war?
9. What did President Reagan do differently in Grenada and why did it help turn the tide of Communism in Latin America?

10. How did Communism in Latin America contribute to already existing hardships in certain countries?

11. Find an example to illustrate how universities and curriculum strategize and radicalize to promote counterculture movements. Create a bibliography from your research and use computer software to create a written, graphic, or visual product to share with the class.

12. Why do you think there continues to be an enduring frustration and focus on cultural and racial differences in modern society? What is your advice for restoring a positive emphasis on such differences in order to celebrate them instead of feeding into a fear submission or elitism based on race and culture? Is it possible to celebrate historical heritage, culture, and traditions while not judging one another on the basis of bloodline “purity” or variations? If so, How soon or distant do you believe that it can occur.


14. What progress has been made to benefit the Mexican-American community through political activism?
SECTION 1

9-1: Contemporary Issues

SECTION 2

9-2: Mexican-American Heritage
Contemporary Issues

Introduction

In 2013, the U.S. Census declared there to be 54 million people of Hispanic origin in the United States, with 35 million of them having Mexican ancestry. This makes Latinos the largest minority group in America and Mexican-Americans its largest subcomponent. By 2060, the Census predicts that the Latino population will reach 129 million or 31% of the total U.S. population, with Mexican-Americans still the largest nationality. Clearly the importance of Mexican-American heritage, as well as the issues facing their community, will grow in the next few decades; it is important that we understand both.

Today, a variety of contemporary issues face the Mexican-American community which have their roots in the last century of modern history. The Mexican Revolution, Civil Rights era, and the Cold War opened problems that have been challenging to solve. Economic disparity between the United States and Mexico is one major issue because it is responsible for the high rate of Mexican immigration which has continued since 1930, and which in recent years has been predominantly illegal rather than legal. Illegal immigration has since caused a number of economic and security problems in the United States over which people are divided on how to solve. Poverty, non-assimilation, drugs, crime, and exploitation are among some of these problems. Studies have shown that the Mexican-American community suffers from a significant gap in education levels, employ-
ment, wages, housing, and other issues relating to poverty that persist through the second, third, and fourth generations. Civil rights measures meant to address these issues have created new problems including a draw for more illegal immigrants and a high price for taxpayers. Fortunately, Mexican-Americans have made significant gains in political and civil arenas, and their concerns are being debated very seriously. As more Mexican-Americans involve themselves in these areas, they help shape the answers for today and the questions for the future.

**Political Representation**

After years of hard work, Mexican-Americans and Latinos are well-represented in the U.S. government on local, state, and federal levels. For over a century now, the U.S. has had Latino mayors, councilmen, and city officials. New Mexico and Arizona, which are 45% Latino, have had statewide governors, legislators, and court officials with mixed Spanish, Mexican, and Indian ancestry since the late 1800s. Representation on the national level has become more common since World War II, as have the presence of Mexican-Americans in security, the military, and foreign affairs.

Mexican-Americans and Latinos have also ascended into the highest positions in the United States government. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan appointed the first Latino Cabinet member, Dr. Lauro Cavazos, as U.S. Secretary of Education. This selection was followed by the first Latino Surgeon General, Antonia Novello, appointed under President George H. W. Bush, and Mexican-American Henry Cisneros as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Bill Clinton. In 1989, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Cuban-American, became the first Latina elected to the U.S. Congress, and in 2011, Susana Martinez, a Mexican-American, became the first Latina governor. Under President Barack Obama, Sonia Sotomayor, of Puerto-Rican ancestry, was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Numerous
The Hispanic peoples, their traditions, language and culture are a vital part of the American heritage. Their influence on our nation began with the Spaniards long before our revolution brought independence from England. This heritage can today be found almost everywhere in our daily lives: the arts and music we enjoy, the architecture of the homes and buildings in which we live and work, the history we read, and the language we use.

The Hispanic peoples today add to our strength as a nation with their strong devotion to family, deep religious convictions, pride in their language and heritage and commitment to earning a livelihood by hard work. Outstanding Hispanic men and women have advanced our nation in science and technology, business and public service. From the Southwest to the Northeast of the United States, they carry on their tradition of service to the communities in which we all live. This year, San Antonio has joined Miami and other American cities in electing a prominent Hispanic citizen as its mayor. Hispanic Americans bring to us, as well, a tradition of respect for the role of women both at home and in the workplace. Hispanic Americans serve with distinction in our military services today as they have served with leadership and courage on the battlefield in defense of this nation in the past.

Their contributions all too often go unrecognized. It is, therefore, fitting that we set aside this week to honor the Hispanic peoples that are among us as a nation of Americans.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan chose to honor the contributions of the Latino community by proclaiming the first National Hispanic Heritage Week. In the proclamation, he mentions how recognizing one culture’s unique elements dovetails with recognizing their unity and “brotherhood” with all Americans.

Latino statesmen have also made presidential bids, including former ambassador Ben Fernandez, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, and Florida Senator Marco Rubio.

Today, Latinos make up over 11% of the U.S. voting population, and their interests are represented in Congress, chiefly by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Conference. Both organizations raise public awareness and funds for important policy issues as well as network with non-government groups for support on certain topics. For example, in 2006, Latino congressmen pushed for the Voting Rights Act amendments of 1975 to be renewed; these amendments were the first legislation to make Spanish language assistance mandatory at polling stations. The Latino congressmen were successful, and the

HENRY CISNEROS: Before he served as a Cabinet member, Henry Cisneros was the mayor of San Antonio, Texas. On his father’s side, he is descended from early Spanish settlers in New Mexico and a long line of migrant workers, army officers, and civil servants. On his mother’s side, he is descended from a middle-class Mexican family who fled Porfirio Díaz’s regime. Cisneros attended Catholic school in Texas, went to college during the civil rights movement, and served for a time in the National Guard before teaching and entering politics. After his political career, he became president of Univision, a Spanish-speaking media outlet, and is currently chairing a program to provide better housing to low-income families.

SUSANA MARTINEZ: Susana Martinez, who became the governor of New Mexico in 2011, is descended from a Mexican general who opposed Porfirio Díaz in the early phase of the Mexican Revolution. Her grandparents came to the United States as poor immigrants and settled in El Paso, Texas. Martinez’s father served in the Korean War as a U.S. Marine and then in the El Paso police force, inspiring Susana to get involved in law and civil service. Later, Susana moved to New Mexico, where she worked her way up to becoming District Attorney and specialized in helping victims of rape and domestic abuse. As governor, she has maintained one of the highest approval ratings nationwide.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus
a group composed of members of congress, formed in 1976 by five Hispanic congressmen, who monitor legislation and work to ensure that the needs of Hispanics are being met within it
federal government appropriated more money to expand Spanish language assistance. Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, measures like these have become more common. Both federal and state governments are motivated to help minorities succeed, and are willing to allocate many resources to aid them. Governments sponsor Latino scholarships, loans, and financial aid. They provide welfare for poor families and subsidize Latino advocacy groups, such as the National Council of La Raza. State funding in California and Texas supports Chicano Studies in schools and their projects in the community. Increasingly, states like New Mexico and California are trying to aid the children of illegal immigrants who may or may not be U.S. citizens yet. While criticisms can be made against these efforts, many government bodies are doing much to help Mexican-Americans and Latinos succeed.

Separatism Movement

Some Mexican-American activists continue to suspect whether or not the U.S. government can truly represent Latino interests, and promote a brand of politics in line with the 1960s Chicano Movement. A respected lawyer and professor from the University of Texas-Arlington, José Ángel Gutiérrez, is a current spokesperson for the Aztlán movement and Mexican-American separation from U.S. society. Calling Mexican-Americans “a hostage people,” Gutiérrez believes Mexican immigration and birth rates in the U.S. will outpace other people groups so that the American Southwest can be separated and reunited with Mexico. Another separatist, Charles Truxillo, similarly insists that Hispanics and Indians in northern Mexico and the southwestern United States should reunite and form their own republic with an exclusively Indo-Hispanic government. Broadly speaking, however, traditional U.S. political parties are very interested in how to involve and prosper Latino communities as part of helping multiculturalism succeed in America.

multiculturalism
including diverse cultures by considering, accepting, and coordinating behaviors and values

George H. W. Bush 41st U.S. President
April 25, 1989

The following is an excerpt of remarks made at the University of California - Los Angeles, where President George H.W. Bush lauded the contributions of Mexican-Americans to the United States and the efforts of activists within their community.

It was over a year ago at a LULAC [League of United Latin American Communities] meeting in Texas where I said the time had come, long since, that we have Hispanics in the President’s Cabinet. And now we have two outstanding Secretaries: Manuel Lujan and Lauro Cavazos. I don’t want to embarrass this guy, but it was here at UCLA, on one of these questions they ask you at these debates out of a clear blue sky -- and they asked me: Name a couple of contemporary heroes, or who are your heroes? …

What immediately came to my mind was Jaime Escalante, who is here with us today. And I -- here he is -- I told Jaime -- I said, “Look” -- I saw him later; I think it was back at the White House or somewhere -- I said: “I hope I didn’t throw you into some kind of partisan limelight there because what I really wanted to do, though, is express my feeling of contribution, my feeling of respect for the contribution that you have made in this -- what we’re talking about here today -- excellence in education.”

So, right amongst us again is one of my genuine heroes. I see many business people here, people that know what entrepreneurship means and have taken the lead in starting businesses and building them. And you are creating new jobs and cutting unemployment in the process -- here in California, many of you from across the country. And as America’s fastest growing minority in the 21st century, you, more than ever, will help tell the American story... We are rural and urban; native-born and foreign-born; Hispanic and non-Hispanic; brown, black, white -- but most of all, we are Americans. So, my plea is: Let’s join our hands together, for the future is ours.
Spanish Language or Not?

Traditionally, English has been upheld as the only U.S. national language for the purposes of connection and solidarity. For a decade or more, however, there has been a movement to add Spanish as a second official national language. Both Congress and Latino leaders are debating the advantages and disadvantages of making this change.

English-Only. Currently, English is the most accessible lan-

WHOSE LAND IS IT? In northern New Mexico and southern California, descendants of the oldest royal Spanish colonies still exist. One community in San Luis, Colorado reconstructed the Spanish landscape of their town and practice Spanish-style living on an original land grant from the King of Spain. Another community outside of Santa Fe contains descendants of those who built the original Governor’s Palace—a Spanish capital erected in the 1590s before the Pilgrims and British colonies were developed. Many of these Spanish-Americans consider their ancestors to be the first Americans and do not identify as an Indo-Hispanic group. For historical reasons, they prefer to classify themselves separately and preserve colonial Spanish-Catholic traditions the best they can.
language for navigating one’s way around the United States. It is also increasingly the language of international business, spoken by 1 billion people worldwide. Some worry that promoting Spanish as a national language will lead to the Spanish-speaking community not putting as much effort into learning English well, or even at all, and therefore hindering their employment and higher education pursuits. With time, this could lead to a bigger division between the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking populations, with two sets of governments, schools, marketplaces, and institutions. Dual languages are likely to create “separate” but not “equal” spheres, which could result in the Spanish-speaking community feeling more marginalized. Some also worry that Spanish-speaking communities could, over time, become more connected to the world of Mexico rather than to the United States, threatening the stability of the country.

**Bilingual Advocates.** Advocates of **bilingualism** argue that promoting Spanish will help Spanish-speaking immigrants and children traverse American society better. They will not have to worry about making errors while voting, signing financial agreements, or conversing with important people. Government, schools, and public spaces will be easily navigable. Latino children in Spanish-speaking schools will benefit because they will not have to learn English in order to learn everything else. They will also stay connected to the world of their parents and ancestors. Proponents point to other countries such as Canada and Switzerland that have multiple national languages as proof that having two languages does not necessarily lead to “two societies.” In some cities like Los Angeles and El Paso, more than 70% of the population already speaks Spanish, so making Spanish an official national language would simply formalize what is already a practical reality for them. Other advocates say that institutionalizing Spanish would be an issue of respect—a public sign that Spanish-speakers are as equally valued as English-speaking citizens.

**bilingualism**
the ability of an individual to speak and use at least two languages
ConTEMPORARY ISSUES

For both perspectives, larger issues raised by the language debate are important to consider: How does a country speaking different languages stay united? Will a precedent be set for more languages to be instituted? Would this be advantageous to English- and Spanish-speakers? The public in coming years will have to determine if dividing the language base of the country will help the United States accomplish its goals or not.

Education and Economic Concerns

After the Cold War, American researchers began to compile data about different immigrant groups that had come to the United States, to see how they were faring. Many groups, including Cambodians, Laotians, Dominicans, and Salvadoreans, came from extremely poor circumstances and had little to nothing when they came. Concern began to grow when studies revealed that of all groups, Mexican immigrants were the most likely to be living in poverty than any other group—31% in 1998, compared to native-born Americans at 15%.2 One-third of Mexican-Americans were also receiving government assistance. Statistics such as these were concerning because Mexican-Americans had been in the United States longer than other Latino groups. They had not fled Communist or dictatorial violence like others, and had substantial representation and support in Spanish-speaking cities. Further research revealed that Mexican-American poverty was related to lower than average educational success. This was hindering employment opportunity and keeping wages low, with trickle down effects to the second, third, and fourth generations. Today, this is still a prime concern in the Mexican-American community.

Education Statistics

In a society where education is fundamental to prosperity, overcoming educational deficits is the first step to overcoming poverty. Students must gain literacy, learn writing and

communication skills, and establish good study habits, all of which civil rights leaders and educational reformers have encouraged in the Mexican-American community. However, Mexican immigrants have historically arrived in the United States with some of the lowest levels of education compared to other immigrant groups. In 1990, researchers found that while 81% of Europeans, 84% of Asians, and 95% of African immigrants to the U.S. had completed high school, only 39% of Mexican immigrants had done so—the average immigrant having completed just over 6 years of schooling.\textsuperscript{3} Due to the ease and lower expense of crossing the Mexico-U.S. border, more of Mexico’s poor immigrate to the United States compared to the poor of other countries. This gives them a disadvantage once they arrive, even compared to other minorities. Additionally, the continual flow of poor, undereducated immigrants keeps educational rates for the community statistically low. Even as some Mexican-Americans pursue higher education and professional careers, more are coming in at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder and having to start from the beginning.

Subsequent generations of Mexican-Americans are also remaining in poverty due to education problems. While they are more likely than their parents to have completed high school, only 14% are going on to become college graduates.\textsuperscript{4} While enrollment is high, dropout rates are higher. A study by La Raza in 1998 also reported that high school dropout rates are high for Latinos—30%, compared to 12.5% for black Americans and 7.1% for white Americans. Today, the rate is similar, with some predominantly Latino school districts graduating less than 40% of its students.\textsuperscript{5} Without a high school or college education, the likelihood of wages being adequate enough to own a home and support one’s family are low. For the last several decades, Latino researchers have found that after initial progress between first and second-generation Mexican-Americans, education and income levels stall in subsequent generations. Unlike other immigrant groups whose college enrollment increases through the second, third, and fourth generations,

\textsuperscript{4} Pew Hispanic Center. \url{http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/05/12/statistical-portrait-of-hispansics-in-the-united-states-1980-2013-trends/}
\textsuperscript{5} Plaza de La Raza. \url{http://www.plazadelaraza.org/school/audiences/}
third and fourth-generation Mexican-Americans are not more likely to go to college or earn higher wages than their parents. In some cases, wages and total years of schooling actually decrease by the third and fourth generations. This data has been concerning to many.

Multiple reasons have been suggested to explain this data. For first and second generation Mexican-Americans—immigrants and their children—the language barrier is often attributed as a factor slowing assimilation and prosperity. Spanish-speaking parents may not know how to get their children enrolled in schools and programs, nor can they help with homework. Children who speak Spanish fluently, but not English, may be held back if they attend schools where all instruction is in English. Additionally, Mexican-American leaders have noted how difficult the migrant lifestyle can be for a child in school. The focus of the home is fieldwork and wages, not studying, and relocation can make it difficult for children to keep up with schoolwork, especially if they decide to work alongside of their parents to increase the family income.

The language barrier is a less common problem today than it was in the past, partly due to the Equal Educational Opportunities Act which made bilingual services more available in public schools. Also, in heavily Latino cities, it is common for teachers and administrators to speak Spanish, in addition to the student body. In Los Angeles, for example, an average of 70% of students speak Spanish. High dropout rates in metro areas like these are generally not due to language deficiencies but to urban education problems. Many students struggle with motivation and basic skills. Poverty, broken homes, and the lack of an educational climate hinder studying. Gangs and drugs also vie for students’ allegiances, and a substantial percentage of youth are derailed by addiction, abuse, teen pregnancy, jail, or other troubles. This is a complex problem to solve but prevails in many American cities, irrespective of race or ethnicity.

Additionally, cultural messaging plays a role. Chicano philosophy, which pervades urban Latino areas, often reinforces the idea that
rebellion against the establishment is part of the true Mexican identity. High school and college youth may refuse to attend class, speak English, or learn certain subjects because they perceive injustice in the school system—sometimes led by well-meaning Latino adults. This hinders prosperity because adequate employment depends on many years of intense study, especially in the English language, and increasingly in fields such as computer science, engineering, marketing, and management. Avoiding these subjects, or rigorous education in general because it is deemed “white learning,” all but condemns adherers to a life of struggle. In instances where Latino faculty guide Mexican-Americans into successful pathways, such as Jaime Escalante’s calculus challenge in East Los Angeles, more youth end up going to college and finding careers. This requires viewing assimilation as a good thing rather than a betrayal of one’s roots. This is statistically more common among Cuban-Americans, whose heritage promotes a positive view of business and advancement. They are therefore receiving a different kind of cultural messaging and, by the third and fourth generations, are not displaying the same educational, employment, and income trends that Mexican-Americans are.

**JEFF BEZOS:** Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon.com, originally grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His mother’s family had been ranchers in Texas, and his Cuban father fled Castro as a youth. Although it was challenging, his father pushed himself through the University of Albuquerque, always telling Jeff, “Your education is yours—once you have it, it cannot be taken away.” Growing up ranching and vaccinating cattle, Bezos soon turned to engineering and computer science, and learned about nuclear technology in New Mexico. After college, he worked in several prestigious places, including Wall Street, establishing Internet businesses. Soon after he went on to establish Amazon.com, one of the world’s most successful companies, and his parents formed the Bezos Family Foundation, which gives millions of dollars to schools, scholarship funds, and educational programs.
Employment Opportunity

Over the years, most Mexican-American immigrants have come to the United States to find work. Entry-level jobs in farming, construction, and factories are still commonly pursued, especially in the Southwest. Many companies still pay for the travel, transport, housing, and healthcare of the migrant workers they hire. Substandard care for these workers has been continually addressed since 1950 by labor unions like United Farm Workers, citizen watch groups, and government agencies; these have brought many issues to public awareness, including pesticide usage on U.S. farms. Other unions like the Farm Labor Organizing Committee admit migrant workers applying for work visas on the Mexican side of the border, so that they will not be taken advantage of when they arrive in the United States. The biggest concern for migrant workers is currently low wage rates, which, as has historically been the case, remain low because the supply of immigrants is high, and illegal immigrants will work for less.

Also concerning for many has been the slow rise of Mexican-Americans into middle class professions. In the 1990s, a study found that 67% of Mexican immigrants in southern Florida and southern California were still working low-wage jobs—e.g. cleaning, construction, lawn service. Mexican-American enrollment in middle class professions was staying low at approximately 11%, even into the third and fourth generations. Self-employment levels are also among the lowest of minority groups, at only 5.8% in 2011. Multiple factors including education levels and the desire to be in the American business community were found to be at the root of this problem. Lingering mistrust of Americans, the free market, and the climb to prosperity hindered some from pursuing the education and “Americanization” perceived in many professions. Also, naturalization rates were problematic. Researchers in the 1990s discovered that Mexican immigrants were not becoming U.S. citizens at the same rate as other immigrant groups. In 1998, only 32% of Mexican immigrants who arrived prior to 1980 had become U.S. citizens, compared with an average of 80% for immigrants.

7 http://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/reports/hispaniclaborforce/
from the Soviet Union, Ireland, the Philippines, and elsewhere. In 2013, the Migration Policy Institute reported that only 25% of the Mexican-American community had become naturalized citizens, whereas the Pew Research Center reported a slightly more optimistic count of 36%. Regardless of which number is more accurate, better education and employment opportunities which require citizenship are scarce for a large portion of the Mexican-American community.

For those taking advantage of education and citizenship rights, opportunities are better. This segment of the Mexican-American community is increasingly staffing boards, law firms, schools, and colleges, news media, and large corporations. The majority of U.S.-born Mexican-Americans report an extremely low rate of workplace discrimination, at 3% in 2015. While the percentage of Latinos in top management positions and college faculty has sometimes been criticized, it is growing every year. Self-employment is beginning to increase, especially as more Mexican-Americans are opening landscaping, construction, and service companies. In 2011, the median salary of Latinos working full-time was found to be lower than that of white Americans, but the disparity disappeared when held constant for the same kind of job and years of education required. It should be noted that median salary statistics are also affected by free-will choices to work part-time jobs or jobs with lower salaries such as teaching, ministry, or community advocacy, which many Latinos do.

Housing

The home ownership rate in the Mexican-American community is lower than the national average, but this is due to the substantial percentage of Mexican-born immigrants that form almost one-third of the Mexican-American population, many of whom are poor, undereducated, or illegal. When first-generation immigrants are ex-

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cluded, home ownership among Mexican-Americans approximates the national average, around 60%. Because the ability to afford a house is directly tied to income level and educational achievement, home ownership rates are expected to rise as more Mexican-Americans attend college and obtain higher-paying jobs. Low-income housing reforms have made it possible, however, for 45% of illegal immigrants to become homeowners as of 2008—-a commendable number.

Some policy analysts have expressed concern that Mexican-Americans are still “ghettoized” or “segregated” in areas away from whites, blacks, or other minorities. Some of this is incidental or voluntary, rather than by design. Many Mexican-Americans still live close to where they crossed the border because it is familiar or convenient. Many Latinos choose to live in neighborhoods that speak Spanish and have well-established Latino communities, schools, churches, and businesses; blacks and whites are known to self-segregate similarly, and different ethnic groups within Latinos do as well. Illegal immigrants also tend to congregate in communities where they feel safe from deportation and where services are available. Others stay where they are to be close to Mexico, family, or work. Consequently, there are large Latino communities that demonstrate permanency over time. Many American communities, Latino or not, demonstrate a similar permanency. The desire to move from one’s place of origin and own a better home is common across America, but limited for many because of finances or other constraints, regardless of one’s race or ethnicity.

**Mexico-U.S. Relations**

The state of affairs in Mexico, and Mexico-U.S. relations, affect the Mexican-American community in different ways. To begin with, trade policy and employment opportunities in Mexico drive Mexican immigration. Immigration then affects wages and employment in the United States. For the last two decades, 80–85% of Mexican immigration has been illegal, which, in addition to 2.5 million unauthorized Central Americans crossing the Mexico-U.S.

border, has been increasingly tied up with an illegal drug trade. This is affecting security and well-being in the United States. Mexican-Americans more removed from the Spanish-speaking world and immigrant communities may be unaffected by these issues, but others are being confronted with their effects quite often.

**Trade and Employment in Mexico.** Since most Mexican immigrants come to the United States for jobs, many U.S. leaders have sought to help Mexico create more employment opportunities and better wages in their own country. In 1994, a **trade agreement** called NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) was signed between the United States, Canada, and Mexico to encourage modern business and industry in Mexico. NAFTA lowered taxes on imports and exports between the three nations in order to encourage them to trade with each other. Additionally, the U.S. set up **maquiladoras**, manufacturing plants, on the Mexican side of the border for Mexican workers to assemble goods and then export them for a profit. Mexico also received benefits for permitting the United States and Canada to start business franchises such as Walmart in Mexican cities. The hope was that Mexico would continue to industrialize, obtain consumer goods, and increase its employment rate. This would
in turn reduce the need for Mexicans to immigrate to find work, and help Mexico’s economy become more self-sustaining. The Mexican government, which has always resisted losing its labor force to the U.S., approved.

NAFTA has had mixed success and continues to be a much-debated topic. With one-third of the Mexican-American community being first-generation immigrants, NAFTA has not visibly diminished Mexican immigration yet. Critics say NAFTA unintentionally boosts immigration because buying cheap food imports from the United States reduces the need for farmers; when these farmers leave their rural areas to find urban employment, some cannot find it and move to the United States. Critics also maintain that the United States profits from NAFTA and retains too much power in the Mexican economy. Supporters, on the other hand, say that the trade agreement benefits predominately Mexico. Its employment has increased, goods are circulating, and exports bring in $200 billion per year. Canada and the U.S. reliably buy Mexican products while providing imports and machinery they would not otherwise have. In 2010, the U.S. State Department reported that Mexico and the United States do as much business in about one month as Mexico does with all 27 countries of the European Union in a year.12 Proponents in Mexico and the U.S. agree that, with time, the future of Mexican immigration might change if the underlying factors do.

### The Illegal Drug Trade

Due to the busy import-export business that the United States and Mexico have with each other, approximately $1 billion of goods cross the Mexico-U.S. border each day. However, with legal transport also come illegal goods, especially drugs. Drug cartels in Mexico compete to sell illegal drugs to United States dealers, receiving money and sometimes weapons in return. In the 1990s, over 80% of U.S. cocaine came across the southern border. Today, the majority of heroin does as well. In addition to

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12 U.S. State Department. [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/05/142020.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/05/142020.htm)
NAFTA
January 1, 1994

The following is an excerpt from the official Preamble to North American Free Trade Agreement. Its stated intentions include developing economic cooperation between Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

The Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the United States of America, resolved to:

- STRENGTHEN the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations;
- CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader international cooperation;
- CREATE an expanded and secure market for the goods and services produced in their territories;
- REDUCE distortions to trade;
- ESTABLISH clear and mutually advantageous rules governing their trade;
- ENSURE a predictable commercial framework for business planning and investment;
- BUILD on their respective rights and obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and other multilateral and bilateral instruments of cooperation;
- ENHANCE the competitiveness of their firms in global markets;
- FOSTER creativity and innovation, and promote trade in goods and services that are the subject of intellectual property rights;
- CREATE new employment opportunities and improve working conditions and living standards in their respective territories;
- UNDERTAKE each of the preceding in a manner consistent with environmental protection and conservation;
- PRESERVE their flexibility to safeguard the public welfare;
- PROMOTE sustainable development;
- STRENGTHEN the development and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; and
- PROTECT, enhance and enforce basic workers' rights.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

ZAPATISTAS STILL AT WAR: The Zapatista Liberation Army (EZLN) declared war on the Mexican government on January 1, 1994, when NAFTA went into effect. The EZLN was named after Emiliano Zapata, who collectivized land in southern Mexico for Indians and peasants, and resisted federal control during the Mexican Revolution. Indian communal property, ejidos, became protected under Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, but this article was substantially revised by the Mexican government in 1994 so that Mexico could sell property to Canada and the United States to develop along the Mexican border. Since then, the Zapatistas have been occupying Chiapas, a rural southern state in Mexico, where Maya guerrillas resist the Mexican government and fight for peasant control of the land. While many are sympathetic of indigenous peoples’ stance against the government controlling Indian land, EZLN guerrillas have committed many human rights abuses in villages where Indians either resist joining their movement or continue Western practices like Catholic worship.

fostering an epidemic of addiction in today’s society, which affects all Americans, the drug business affects Mexican-Americans, especially illegal immigrants. Many illegal immigrants—even children and the elderly—have become pawns of traffickers who smuggled them across the border in exchange for making them drug couriers. Some then continue in the drug trade because of poverty or gang involvement. In recent years there has been concern over the increased volume of drugs crossing into the U.S. In 2014, over 9,000 ounces of heroin, 3,800 pounds of methamphetamine, 4,500 pounds of cocaine, and almost 2 million pounds of marijuana were intercepted by U.S. Border Patrol; most of these were increases of 40–65% from previous years.13

With the increased volume of drugs comes drug-related violence, which affects both the United States and Mexico. Drug cartels have networks that funnel drugs into many cities, and they compete against one another violently. In Ciudad Juárez, over 3,000 drug-related murders in 2010 made the city unsafe to work or visit, causing trouble and recession. Between 2006 and 2012, over 60,000 murders occurred in Mexico due to turf wars between cartels. The worse it gets, the more petitions Canada and the U.S. receive from Mexicans who want asylum. Violence spills over from one side of the border to the other.


asylum a person persecuted by their own country may find refuge and protection in a foreign nation granting diplomatic immunity
Both our countries owe them a great deal. And working together, both of us can build new conditions of fairness for them, as well as for the development and prosperity of our two nations. For this reason, we must, and we can, reach an agreement on migration before the end of this very year, which will allow us, before the end of our respective terms, to make sure that there are no Mexicans who have not entered this country legally in the United States, and that those Mexicans who have come into the country do so with the proper documents.

Mr. President, the values that we share and the interests that bind us must reaffirm our determination to make of the relationship between Mexico and the United States an example of prosperity and understanding. And this will only be possible if we are willing to strengthen the trust between our two nations, because it is only through trust that we will be able to reach the goals that we have set for ourselves. Together, let us defend the values of democracy and the respect for human rights in our region and throughout the world. Let us see free trade as the engine of economic growth and the source of a better standard of living for our two peoples. Let us understand development with justice to be an inclusive form of prosperity. Let us make law and respect for the law the indispensable framework on which the freedom and security of our citizens depend. Let us walk together along the path of prosperity with a firm step as partners and as friends, recalling the words of Benjamin Franklin: “A brother may not be a friend, but a friend will always be a brother.”
sometimes unwittingly increased by Mexican or U.S. authorities who seek to shut down traffickers. In 2008, the U.S. launched the Mérida Initiative in conjunction with the Mexican government to aid their law enforcement efforts. Some have been critical of this program, saying that the United States should legalize banned substances so that police apprehensions will end. This is a controversial issue with serious long-term effects to consider.

Immigration

Different Categories of Immigrants. Before discussing contemporary issues surrounding Mexican immigration, it is important to understand the different categories of immigrants in the U.S. There are illegal immigrants, commonly referred to as unauthorized or undocumented workers, who have no visas or legal papers. There are temporary residents, including students and seasonal workers, who obtain visas to stay for a period of time and then return to their country of origin. There are permanent residents who possess a green card to live and work in the United States permanently but who do not have full U.S. citizenship. Lastly, there are naturalized citizens who have full citizenship and therefore are able to vote and enjoy all the privileges of native-born Americans.
Illegal Immigrants. Numbers of illegal immigrants vary, but commonly used numbers in official studies indicate between 50–65% Mexican-American immigrants in the U.S. have immigrated illegally; 6.7 million is an often-used estimate. Some arrived illegally while others acquired illegal status by overstaying their student or working visas. Mexican-Americans also comprise over half of the United States’ undocumented population.\(^{14}\) Illegal immigrants often face hardship and exploitation while crossing the border, and other challenges afterwards. Since they must hide from the law, illegal immigrants may fabricate documents to live better lives, or live in ways that do not require driving, education, travel, or other common activities. They are subject to deportation if discovered by government authorities, and make an average of 15% lower wages than the average legal immigrant.\(^{15}\)

Temporary Non-immigrants. International students and migrant workers who intend to stay in the United States for a short length of time obtain a student visa or temporary work visa. These applicants are officially classified as “non-immigrants” because they are only permitted to stay for a designated period of time. Work visas are requested by an employer, who files a petition with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). The temporary worker fills out a form, pays a fee—approximately $200—receives an interview, and completes a background check. This is usually done at a U.S. embassy in the country where the applicant lives. Then, a visa is obtained that classifies the worker into one of several categories, one of which is temporary agricultural or non-agricultural work. The process is almost the same for international students except that school officials petition the visas and make sure students are taking adequate course loads to meet visa requirements. Students and migrant workers are permitted to bring their immediate families if they can prove that they can financially support them. This usually requires providing proof of a bank account, credit card, or business. When the visa expires,


Despite the deep bonds and values we share, attitudes—in both countries—are sometimes trapped in old stereotypes. Some Americans only see the Mexico depicted in sensational headlines of violence and border crossings. Some Mexicans may think America disrespects Mexico, that we seek to impose ourselves on Mexican sovereignty, or, alternatively, wish to wall ourselves off. And in both countries, such distortions can breed myths and misunderstanding that only make it harder to make progress together. I have come to Mexico because it is time to put old mind-sets aside... Just as Mexico is being transformed, so too are the ties between our two countries. As President, I’ve been guided by a basic proposition—in this relationship there is no senior partner or junior partner. We are two equal partners—two sovereign nations that must work together in mutual interest and mutual respect.

...In the United States, we recognize our responsibilities as well. We understand that the root cause of much of the violence here—and so much suffering for many Mexicans—is the demand for illegal drugs, including in the United States... We recognize that most of the guns used to commit violence here in Mexico come from the United States... We’ll keep increasing the pressure on the gun traffickers who bring illegal guns into Mexico, and we’ll keep putting these criminals where they belong—behind bars.

We recognize our responsibility—as a nation that believes that all people are created equal—to treat one another with dignity and respect. This includes recognizing how the United States has been strengthened by the extraordinary contributions of immigrants from Mexico and by Americans of Mexican heritage. Mexican-Americans enrich our communities, including my hometown of Chicago, where you can walk through neighborhoods like Pilsen and La Villita, dotted with murals of Mexican patriots, where you can stop at a fonda or hear the rhythms of timeless ballads, and where we are inspired by the deep faith of our peoples at churches like Our Lady of Guadalupe. We’re grateful to Mexican-Americans in every segment of our society—for teaching our children, running our companies, serving with honor in our military, making breakthroughs in science, and standing up for social justice. As Dr. Martin Luther King told Cesar Chavez, we are “brothers in the fight for equality.” Indeed, without the strong support of Hispanics, including so many Mexican-Americans, I would not be standing before you today as President of the United States.

Our shared future is one of the reasons that we in the United States also recognize the need to reform our immigration system... One man in Querétaro spoke for an increasing number of Mexicans. “There’s no reason to go abroad in search of a better life,” he said. “There are good opportunities here.”...Obviously, we seek to work with the Mexican government on all issues related to a well-regulated border. But I also believe that the long-term solution to the challenge of illegal immigration—so we’re not dealing with this decade after decade—is a growing, prosperous Mexico that creates more jobs and opportunity right here. I agree with the Mexican student who said, “I feel like we can reach the same level as anyone in the world.” And so I firmly believe: Juntos, podemos lograr más. Together, we can achieve more.

the holder is legally bound to return to their country of origin, but the Center for Immigration Studies estimates that up to 40% of illegal immigrants in the U.S. today are workers and students who overstayed their visas and did not return home.\textsuperscript{16}

**Permanent Residents.** Those who desire to immigrate to the United States permanently must apply for a Permanent Resident Card, popularly known as a green card. This form of identification lets an immigrant live and work in the United States permanently as long as they do not leave the country for an extended period of time. Applying for a Permanent Resident Card is similar to applying for a temporary work visa. Once the proper paperwork is submitted, it takes several months to receive it from USCIS. Once it is received, an immigrant can get a driver’s license and officially start applying to become a naturalized citizen. A green card holder can also request visas for their spouse and children to live in the United States if they were left behind. Even though a permanent resident is not a full U.S. citizen with voting rights, they are protected by law and are eligible for some benefits like **Social Security** and **Medicare**. They also have to pay taxes. There is some risk of deportation if illegal activity is discovered.

\textsuperscript{16} Center for Immigration Studies. \url{http://www.cis.org/North-Extensive-Abuse-Student-F-1-Visa}

**Social Security**

A massive U.S. government program paying out billions of dollars per year in benefits such as retirement income, disability income, Medicare, Medicaid, death benefits, and survivorship benefits.

**Medicare**

An immigrant residing in the U.S. government health program that subsidizes U.S. citizens and permanent legal residents of five or more years who are aged 65 or older; disabled; or having serious health problems but lack funding for treatment.
Naturalization. To become a U.S. citizen, an immigrant must be at least 18 years old and have a Permanent Resident Card. They must also have lived in the United States for three to five years. After submitting the required forms, paying a fee—about $680—and then passing a background check, the applicant is interviewed. During the interview, they are asked to read aloud one of three sentences correctly in English, then write one of three sentences correctly in English, and answer six out of ten U.S. citizenship test questions. If an applicant is over 50 years old and has lived in the United States for 20 or more years, they are permitted to skip this exam. When an applicant passes the exam, they pledge allegiance to the United States and promise to uphold the Constitution. Naturalized citizens receive proper documentation and are then entitled to the same rights and privileges as all American-born citizens. These include being able to vote, hold political office, obtain a government job, and receive more benefits like food stamps and financial aid for college. Obtaining citizenship can take several years depending on what state one lives in and how easy it is to assemble the necessary documentation. In 2013, the U.S. Census found that 25% of Mexican-American immigrants were naturalized U.S. citizens.17

![The Oath of Allegiance at a Naturalization ceremony](Proclamation2017 Pre-adoption Sample)

Immigration Rates

In 2014, the total number of American immigrants—those born in foreign countries—reached 42.4 million. Currently, Latinos are the largest minority group, constituting half of U.S. immigrants—21 million. Of those, Mexican-American immigrants comprise 11.6 million, or slightly more than half. Since the Immigration Act of 1965 permitted green card holders to obtain visas for immediate family members, immigration rates to the United States have been high for several decades. This has been particularly true for Mexican-Americans because immigration of one part of a family from Mexico often causes chain migration, or other relatives following after the first immigrants establish themselves. Since the U.S. economic recession began in 2007, the number of Mexicans immigrating to the U.S. has dropped slightly, but is still strong overall. What has changed most over time is the proportion of Mexican-Americans immigrating illegally. The fact that 80–85% of the most recent waves of Mexican immigrants are illegal is concerning to many people.

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<th>Immigration Rates</th>
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<td>Illegal Mexican-Americans</td>
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Curbing Illegal Immigration

The majority of Americans approve of immigration because somewhere in their background, their ancestors immigrated too. Unlike other countries which employ a points-based system that accepts only high-value immigrants, the American ideal is that young and old, rich and poor, male and female, can come and seek a better life. However, respecting
American laws is also important. While most Americans are pro-immigration as long as it is done legally, most feel that illegal immigration causes substantial problems for both the immigrants who cross the border and the society that receives them. Illegal immigration permits the poor, for example, to be exploited by traffickers who are growing in power. Many people who live in border states see this abuse every day. Due to the fact that illegal immigrants fear deportation and involvement with legal authorities, crime and exploitation can circulate unabated in their neighborhoods. Those who have hostile views towards American government and culture may also gain strongholds in immigrant communities because of the difficult challenges they face. This may express itself in various unhealthy ways.

Additionally, there is economic difficulty in supporting immigrant groups that stay in poverty due to limited language skills, education, and employment opportunities. There is much long term cost in providing education, healthcare, and services, especially in border states where the majority of illegal immigrants settle. Also, while many Mexican laborers are grateful for jobs and sent $22 billion in remittances back to their families in Mexico in 2013 alone, there are those who argue that illegal laborers take jobs from native-born workers while rerouting productive money to a foreign economy. The economic recession that the United States has experienced since 2007 has heightened this concern. Currently, the United States is in the awkward position of being asked by Mexico to restrict immigration while being petitioned by Mexican immigrants to relax immigration policy. Much debate revolves around what should be done.

**Building a Wall?** For several decades, politicians have debated whether or not to construct a wall or barrier across the 2,000-mile border of the United States and Mexico from San Diego, California to Brownsville, Texas. Advocates for a wall say that other methods used to stop illegal immigration have failed. More Border Patrol forces have been added, and employers are fined for hiring illegal workers, but illegal immigration continues to increase.

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Some also say that a wall would make traffickers of people, drugs, and weapons easier to catch by restricting points of entry. Currently, average barriers exist in some areas, but only southern San Diego has a significant wall, which has effectively decreased illegal activity and neighborhood disturbances from Tijuana, Mexico. Those who desire a wall assert that the rest of the Mexico-U.S. border needs similar attention.

Those who oppose building a wall argue that desperate people will find a way to get across any barrier that is erected. In addition, building a 2,000-mile wall will be time-consuming, expensive, difficult to manage, and challenging to administrate; many issues concerning the roles of federal, state, and local officials—and possibly the Mexican government—would need to be resolved. Instead, they argue that time and energy should be spent on better deterrents such as punishing illegal immigrants and drug traffickers more strictly. Some suggest better policing and technology, including computer programs that detect immigrants using counterfeit documents and employers hiring them because these would work more effectively than a wall. Others suggest denying the employment and benefits which draw illegal workers in the first place. Debate will likely continue for some time, with many believing a combination of these strategies should be applied.

**Amnesty or Not?** For almost a century, people have disagreed...
over whether illegal immigrants should be given amnesty or not. Many do not want to enforce deportation or arrest upon those who have crossed illegally for humane reasons, and would rather end the troubles that unauthorized individuals experience by legalizing them. Most Latino civil rights organizations and labor unions—even if they oppose illegal immigration on principle—desire amnesty for illegal immigrants once they are in the country so they can access the same education, healthcare, voting rights, courts, and welfare programs as everyone else. The assumption is that, legal or not, individuals and families deserve the same basic human rights protections simply because they are within United States borders. Not giving them such things is disadvantageous because unassimilated enclaves of illegals fearing deportation hide within American society and cannot climb out of poverty. This ultimately benefits no one.

Opponents respond that offering amnesty collapses the meaning of U.S. citizenship and is unfair to those entering the country legally, who spend much time and money to acquire citizenship the right way. It also incentivizes more immigrants to come illegally and bypass the trouble. In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act attempted to end the problem of illegal immigration by giving 2.7 million unauthorized immigrants permanent resident status and providing them a pathway to citizenship in five years. It also made it illegal for companies to hire more undocumented workers. Illegal immigration continued at the same rate or higher, however, leading to today’s illegal population that is almost 250% higher. While many want amnesty legislation passed again, opponents of amnesty respond that history will repeat itself. They insist there must be a cost rather than a benefit to coming to the U.S. illegally, or illegal immigration will continue, along with Mexican-American exploitation, for decades to come.
Unrestricted Immigration. A minority suggests going beyond amnesty and decriminalizing illegal immigration altogether so that there would be no need for border police or citizenship distinctions of any kind. The argument that people should be able to move and work across “open borders,” is a position that has many concerning implications. For one, the unrestricted ebb and flow of visitors from different countries poses important security risks, economic risks, and even health risks, not to mention the challenge of providing adequate housing, goods, and services to a population in continual flux.

Diversity of Opinion. There are diverse opinions regarding immigration policy, even among the Mexican-American community. Many want reforms that make immigration, visas, and citizenship easier. Others want illegal immigrants to have food stamps, financial aid, and voting rights. However, some are uncomfortable with the implications of such

AMNESTY MEASURES TODAY: New York City is currently trying to pass the “New York is Home Act,” which would confer statewide citizenship to 3 million illegal immigrants living in New York City. It would make them eligible for drivers’ licenses, voting rights, financial aid for college, healthcare, professional licensure, and the right to hold office. This has not yet passed, partly because it raises significant authority issues between federal and state levels of government.

The DREAM Act has been considered by the U.S. Congress, and attempts to provide a pathway to citizenship for foreign-born youth brought into the country illegally by their parents. Many of these young people attend high school and work “under the table” in restaurants or businesses, but are currently not eligible for college, driver’s licenses, or benefits that permanent residents have. Under the DREAM Act, they would be granted temporary legal status and made eligible for these privileges. After going to college or serving in the military, they would become eligible for full citizenship. The bill would also make it easier for students with illegal status to attend college at in-state tuition prices.

The Ventanilla de Educación or “Education Window” is a program in the California state school system that helps undocumented Latino youth get into college, receive loans or financial aid, and be shielded from deportation while studying. It aims to help Latinos in southern California, where there are at least 1 million unauthorized Mexican youth hoping to avoid deportation and become U.S. citizens.
reforms which include attracting a continual flow of illegal immigrants, keeping wages depressed, and perpetuating poverty. At the same time, people decry big business and the wages and conditions Mexican immigrants accept; permissive immigration policy makes it easier for companies to hire workers at reduced wages while stating this is good for the economy. Many also do not want the base of Latinos, who will comprise about 30% of U.S. society by 2060, to move towards poor, unassimilated immigrants and their children. Concerned that their own community is not prospering and teaching their children to take advantage of what American society offers, some Mexican-Americans disapprove of voting rights and citizenship extended to those who are more tied to Mexico than to the United States. Many are caught between the desire to extend charity and the pressing needs of their country.

Section Summary

Mexican-Americans have moved forward over the course of history, yet doing so has been challenging. A patchwork of issues has arisen from Mexico’s complicated history with the United States and the different pathways the two nations have taken. Economic disparity is one source of tension, driving complicated questions about immigration, the Mexican economy, drugs, and exploitation. The civil rights movement also opened up important questions about Mexican-American political representation, assimilation and the Spanish language, and education and employment opportunity. Today, there exists a wide range of opinions on each of these issues, even among the Mexican-American community itself. Yet the underlying concern of everyone is how to help Mexican-Americans succeed long term in the context of a healthy multicultural nation. As more Mexican-Americans involve themselves in the democratic process, whatever solutions arise will be the result of a well-informed debate from sectors with different concerns.
Mexican-American Heritage

Introduction

One’s heritage consists of traditions, knowledge, and values handed down from the past. It is expressed through food, clothing, music, dance, and art. It can be seen in the language and vocabulary people use, as well as activities they perform and education they receive. This text has focused on history as a source of heritage because history explains where people’s traditions, knowledge, and values originate from, and how culture and society come to function the way they do.

The history of both the United States and Mexico inform the Mexican-American identity, even though certain values conflict and these two countries have at times been at odds with one another. Many in the Mexican-American community have experienced this tension as they or their families went from Mexicans no longer living in Mexico to Americans who were not Anglo-American. There is, however, no single Mexican-American identity. Mexican-Americans are very diverse because people have different experiences that make them who they are. Some have connections to the indigenous era, some to the Spanish colonial period, and some to modern periods in Mexican or U.S. history—or some combination of these. Mexican-Americans migrated to the U.S. at different times, from different families, and under different circumstances, from 1848 until today. This text has focused on the history of Mexico and U.S. relations to contextualize the different traditions, knowledge, and
values of both countries. Both cultures have a place in the Mexican-American identity, even though each individual must sort out exactly what that looks like for him or herself.

Historical Summary

From the indigenous era to the present day, each period in Mexican-American history contributes something to the Mexican-American identity and tradition. Key events, achievements, and lessons learned form the basis of a collective history that is still being discussed and debated today. Many contemporary issues stem from these periods in history, and understanding their roots in the past may help us resolve these issues for the future.

The Indigenous Era

The indigenous age in Latin America lasted until 1500 AD, and many Mexican-Americans still feel connected to Indian culture. Partly due to its preservation in mestizo society as well as renewed interest among historians, politicians, and laypeople, Indian heritage is increasingly influencing the Latino identity. Personal connection to Maya, Aztec, Inca, or other Indian ancestry contributes feelings of loyalty to one’s tribe, one’s bloodline, or la Raza, in modern times. “Viva la Raza” was proclaimed in the 1900s as a modern manifestation of a tribal worldview where one’s family and tribe were everything. The Aztlán movement, with its assertion that Indo-Hispanics have an ancient, blood connection to the land in the American Southwest was also popular. The underlying hope that this land would be returned to indigenous or mestizo control, and that it would ideally return as a collective inheritance rather than in private lots, reflects the indigenous value of collective ownership and the rejection of the private property system that Europeans brought. Resistance to profiting off that land, by developing business on it, for example, reflects further rejection of the European business and wage labor system.

While a thoroughly indigenous mindset is uncommon, Many Mexican-Americans with Indian heritage remain skeptical of modern society, especially Western politics and economics which are based
on private property, wage labor, and systems of government that are foreign to the Indian way of life. In Mexico, Indians were the ones to spearhead Mexican independence, with many continuing the fight against the European system of management through the 1800s. Many were martialed by Cold War guerilla movements in the 1900s and continue resisting encroachment to this day because they have not yet achieved the control they have been fighting for since the days of Father Hidalgo. There exists sympathy for this movement in Spanish-speaking intellectual circles, and in the indigenísmo movement in art and education, even in the United States. Those less connected to Indian heritage may still feel an attachment to “their people” or “the way it was” before European values changed things. They may feel connected to indigenous wisdom, ways of doing things, or achievements. Symbols, such as the Aztec symbols used on the Mexican flag and currency, may invoke a deep sense of national pride based on what one’s indigenous ancestors stood for.

The Colonial Era

The Spanish colonial era contributed some of the most visible characteristics of Mexican-American culture, including its language. Many Mexican-Americans still speak Spanish, or have family members who do. Another important contribution to Mexican culture from Spain was Catholicism, which many Mexican-Americans still practice. Catholicism replaced indigenous religion but also mingled...
with it, producing a unique Latin form of a previously European religion. In American cities, Catholic churches and clergy continue a longstanding tradition of being some of the most important advocates for Latino issues.

Spain also influenced dance, music, food, and clothing across Latin America. Today these remain important touchpoints in the Mexican-American community. While some participate in traditional Spanish dancing festivals or mariachi bands, others prefer contemporary dance and music with Spanish-Latin elements. For many, authentic Mexican food is important to honoring one’s heritage. In addition to indigenous American ingredients, authentic Mexican food relies heavily on beef, chicken, pork, rice, cheese, onions, and spices that Spanish colonists brought from Europe.

Colonial Spain also influenced the less visible aspects of Mexican society that are foundational but easily overlooked: private property, national boundaries, the nuclear family and monogamy, literacy and writing, healthcare, and treaties and governing documents. These Western elements were features of British society also, which created an early point of compatibility between Mexican and American culture. Some contributions, however, were more welcome than others. Encomienda, which divided Indian collective lands into large private lots with indentured labor, inspired the land revolutions sought by Mexican peasants all the way into the Communist era. The Spanish upper class brought an aristocratic image of the good life as owning a large hacienda, having power and titles, laboring little, and owning precious materials; some still believe these define success in today’s society. The Spanish also created the mestizo race by intermarrying with the native population, and created the black, mulatto, and zambo population by bringing the African race to the continent through slavery. La Raza therefore has important Spanish elements which are alive and well in the Mexican-American community today.

**Age of Independence**

The age of independence, which saw both America and Mexico
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

SPANISH MUSIC AND DANCING: One of the most appreciated Latino contributions to American culture has been the introduction of Latin music and dance. Spanish-Indian cultures have historically been rich in these areas, as well as fashion, drama, and folklore, which make for great education and entertainment. Every year, Mexican-American festivals feature mariachi bands and traditional Spanish dancing. Some college campuses host Spanish-Catholic choir music and flamenco nights. Latin salsa, tango, and rumba are common on American dance competition shows. Many American youth listen to Latino music artists and can appreciate pop or hip-hop songs in Spanish. Latino celebrities in general are considered to be full of talent, drama, and appeal.

throw off its colonial parents, contributed to a desire for representative government that is still alive and well today. Although representative government was difficult to achieve in Mexico, the age of independence seeded the idea that regular people deserved to be heard and have their vote counted. Mexican-Americans knew this intuitively when they immigrated to the United States. At first, immigrants to the U.S. were focused on obtaining a job and wages, but they soon acquired the desire to vote, assemble, and express criticism in order to change things. This was the result of Protestant values underlying the constitutional system in the United States, which the Founding Fathers created. This system was set up to have non-violent rotating leadership, an amendment process to ensure civil liberties, a court system that defends those liberties, a government accountable to the people, a free economy, freedom of worship, and a stated purpose of the “pursuit of happiness.” These principles were deeply ingrained in the conscience of Americans living in that time, and are deeply ingrained in multicultural America today. The 1960s civil rights movement, which many Latinos participated in, was an extension of these founding principles to those who were not experiencing them to their fullest. Reparative legislation was achieved because enough people recognized that what was being asked for fit the spirit of the system when it was originally conceived.
The age of independence also encouraged people to hope for progress and social mobility. Leaders of the American Revolution said that people had the right to get ahead and prosper themselves, and that a good nation would promote this. Consequently, the Founding Fathers set up a system to implement fair tax systems, decent employment, and opportunity based on one’s education and passions; these are still things people want. The main tools to achieving prosperity were business and industry, which acquired a negative reputation in Mexico because it was kept in the hands of a privileged few. In the age of independence, however, people recognized that private companies put money in the hands of average people rather than a king or central government; the free market went hand in hand with political freedom. Americans today, including Mexican-Americans, seek higher wages (and even the right to strike in order to obtain them) because they recognize that money is power and opportunity to raise oneself up in whatever way one chooses. This chance to have a better life worked out uniquely in the United States and became the main draw for immigrants all over the world—even for those who disliked other things about being an American.

The Mexican-American War

The Mexican-American War (1846–1848) resulted in the loss of the Mexican Cession territory and political fallout between the United States and Mexico which is still felt by some today. Mexicans did not easily forgive their northern neighbor for waging what they viewed as a war of aggression, and although many Mexican-Americans are disinterested in the issue today, some use the view that America was in the wrong to promote a radical agenda. A few even believe in Reconquista, which was waged militarily several times and is now considered by some to be occurring through peaceful means such as immigration. In academic circles, it is still popular to teach the U.S. invasion of Mexican-controlled Texas, instead of Mexico’s invasion of a free Texan Republic. Both sides have their version of the account that omit important and complicated details about Santa Anna, border legislation, immigrant laws, and so forth. Also missing from most discussions is the broader
context of the war in international circles and the results of the war which controversially prospered many Mexican-Americans like the Californios. During Guadalupe-Hidalgo and the Gold Rush, Mexicans and Americans could cross the border if they did not like their citizenship. The first 100,000 Mexican-Americans made the United States their home during those years, from which came many of the first Mexican-American politicians, professors, and leaders. Still, the Mexican-American War made it harder to have a positive opinion of the U.S. because it appeared at the time that the United States would become the new Spain who would take advantage of Mexicans on principle. The place of refuge that the United States became for millions of Mexican families has helped change the minds of some, but not all.

**Caudillos through Díaz**

The rocky history of Mexico through the age of Santa Anna and dozens of caudillos that ended with Porfirio Díaz contributed to a sense that Western ideas were not good, and that politicians, business, and trade could be corrupt and exploitative. With the exception of Benito Juárez, who saved the country from French colonialism and wrote a very progressive constitution, Mexican leaders were generally unable to advance Mexican freedom. Most were hardly different from the Spanish kings and controlled the army, church, state, and business deals to keep foreign money flowing rather than to better their people. Meanwhile, the U.S. acquired a negative perception around the Latin world for their oil and fruit companies, the Banana Wars and military interventions, and their inability to get wealth to trickle down to Mexican peasants and Indians. Consequently, the attitude persists to this day in the Mexican-American community that politicians and businessmen could be perpetuating schemes to keep themselves in power rather than to listen to their oppressed constituents. Many in the Civil Rights movement believed this and doubted whether Kennedy, Johnson, or other presidents were really on their side.
The Mexican Revolution

By the time Díaz had reigned 35 years, Mexicans had acquired the feeling that politics, trade, and business would keep the poor disenfranchised and never uplift the Mexican people. Because the United States had built railroads all across northern Mexico and connected them to border cities like El Paso, which are still in existence today, the first waves of Mexican immigrants began to flood Texas and California. By 1930, over a million had come, and while some of them were revolutionary-minded, the majority was just glad they had escaped revolutionary violence. Border Patrol, humanitarian aid workers, and Catholic charities tried to help refugees who came with nothing, but incoming Mexican-Americans quickly realized that Texas, where the vast majority of immigrants settled, was a difficult place to live. Many rose from having nothing, through racial hostility and terrible working conditions, hoping that the next generation after them would have an easier time.
.. [A] hope-filled future is forged in a present made up of men and women who are upright, honest, and capable of working for the common good, the “common good” which in this 21st century is in such great demand. Experience teaches us that each time we seek the path of privileges or benefits for a few to the detriment of the good of all, sooner or later the life of society becomes a fertile soil for corruption, drug trade, exclusion of different cultures, violence and also human trafficking, kidnapping and death, bringing suffering and slowing down development.

The Mexican people anchors its hope in an identity which has been shaped in the trying and difficult moments of its history. It was forged by the wonderful witness of citizens who understood that, in order to overcome situations born of the obstinacy of individualism, it was necessary to have agreement between the political, social and financial institutions, and of all men and women committed to the common good and the promotion of the dignity of the human person. An ancestral culture together with encouraging human resources such as yours, should be a stimulus to find new forms of dialogue, negotiation, and bridges that can lead us on the way of committed solidarity. Starting with those who call themselves Christians, it is a commitment to which all of us must give of ourselves, for the construction of a “political life on a truly human basis,” and a society in which no one feels a victim of the culture of waste.

Leaders of social, cultural and political life have the particular duty to offer all citizens the opportunity to be worthy contributors of their own future, within their families and in all areas where human social interaction takes place. In this way they help citizens to have real access to the material and spiritual goods which are indispensable: adequate housing, dignified employment, food, true justice, effective security, a healthy and peaceful environment. This is not just a question of laws which need to be updated and improved – something always necessary – but rather a need for urgent formation of the personal responsibility of each individual, with full respect for others as men and women jointly responsible in promoting the advancement of the nation. It is a task which involves all Mexicans in different spheres, public or private, collective or individual. I assure you, Mr. President, that in this effort, the government of Mexico can count on the cooperation of the Catholic Church, which has accompanied the life of this nation and which renews its commitment and willingness to serve the great causes of mankind: the building of the civilization of love.

These stories and impressions are in the history of many Mexican-American families today. Many feel loyalty and appreciation for the United States’ acceptance of refugees at this time—most of whom were illegal and poor. On the other hand, between 1910 and 1930, Mexican revolutionaries tried to annihilate their post-colonial Western system with the idea that something new and radical had to be tried instead. This mindset continues to foment revolutionary thought in some corners of the Latino community today.

**World War Era**

From Mexican-Americans’ heavy immigration as braceros in the World War period came the understanding that America was an economic safety valve, or a chance for a better life. The Mexican-American community became heavily populated with laborers, and many spread outside the Southwest to fill job vacancies during World War II. Some were exploited if they immigrated illegally without union contracts, and a divergence in the Mexican-American community began between legal and illegal immigrants, with some resentment towards illegals who worked for less and put up with more difficulty. America acquired a growing laborer population as many Mexicans overstayed their visas to take on more work. Some urban cities, like Los Angeles, became predominantly Mexican-American cities with very poor sections where education, healthcare, and services were lacking, especially for illegal residents who feared deportation. This prompted Mexican-Americans to join the civil rights movement that lobbied for desegregated education, Latino admission into unions, better political representation, and restricted immigration. The U.S. responded, and Mexican-Americans increasingly joined the middle class through the army, higher education, and professional careers. Many became more assimilated and less connected to the world of Mexico, the laboring community, and the Spanish-speaking world. Mexican immigration continued at a high rate while the PRI in Mexico ran a socialist program that stifled employment and economic mobility. Citizens deemed too poor, too backward, from a bad family or village, or with too little education were increasingly shut out of opportunities. Many Mexican-Americans
today have stories of family members who left everything they had to cross the border and start a new life in this time period.

The Cold War

It was difficult to achieve civil rights, and many Mexican-Americans learned that they had to really fight in order to be heard. Some who felt more solidarity with Mexico than the United States joined the counterculture to fight for Latino respect. College youth attempted to force their campuses to provide indigenismo-oriented curriculum, Spanish-speaking faculty, and scholarships for poor and illegal students. Many in Latino neighborhoods protested the government’s action in Vietnam to protest their frustration with American society in general. Some walked out of class to prove that they were a minority that would be heard, or else they would form a separatist system of their own to rival the traditional American system. During the Cold War, as the United States fought Communism worldwide, these kinds of separatist and supremacy doctrines were concerning. While solidarity with one’s heritage was understood, Mexican pride at the expense of American culture did not seem productive.

Meanwhile, immigrants from all over Latin America fled to the United States as Communism or reactionary dictatorships overtook their home countries. Latinos fled with a variety of experiences and opinions about the United States, as well as differing opinions about one another. Cubans seemed to fit into Miami well, for example, and find their niche in the business community. Mexicans, on the other hand, seemed more ambivalent about assimilating into the American system and accepting American values. Some of this has passed on. Decades later, only 25% of Mexican-Americans who were foreign-born have become American citizens. Statistics also report that 52% of Mexican-Americans prefer to call themselves “Mexican” or “Mexicano,” while only 19% describe themselves as primarily “American.”¹⁹ The concern that many Mexican-Americans feel disconnected from American culture and values is still present.

Contemporary Matters

Contemporary issues for Mexican-Americans tend to revolve around the least assimilated Mexican-Americans because they currently need the most help prospering within American society. Popular policy issues include whether NAFTA should continue with Mexico, how illegal immigration and the associated drug trade can be combatted, whether illegal immigrants who are already here should be given benefits or general amnesty, and whether Spanish should become a second national language. Within the Mexican-American community—sometimes even within the same family—there is great diversity on these issues. There are also efforts to make sure that first-generation Mexican-Americans are getting registered to vote, enrolled in school, and involved in unions or civil rights organizations. Many of these are headed or funded by prosperous Mexican-Americans or Latinos in business or politics who have created organizations to reach out to their community.

LATIN LITERATURE: Inside American academics, more understanding of Latino art and history has been encouraged by the promotion of Latin American authors. Standard high school curricula have been diversified to include names such as Pablo Coelho, Isabel Allende, and Gabriel García Marquéz—all of whom have won international awards for their work. Many Latin authors do not live in the United States, but inform both majority and minority communities in the U.S. through their writings about what Latin Americans have been through. Many do so in artistic ways that bring to life the cultural drama of the centuries, especially the tensions between Western and non-Western values. Marquéz, for example, who lived in Colombia and Mexico, became famous for novels about Simon Bolívar, pro-Castro philosophy, and drug-related kidnappings. Others have contributed anecdotes, poems, and testimonials about daily life, immigration, persecution, and discrimination, all of which increase the diversity of the Western tradition.
The Latino and American Identity

Understanding the history of Mexico and Latin America helps us understand Latino heritage. Every year, hundreds of thousands of Latinos arrive in the United States. Many have had the same struggles and losses, and believe in the same heroes and principles. They operate out of the circumstances they left behind and the historical background that created those circumstances. They bring their cultural heritage with them to the United States, which is usually very strong in the first generation of immigrants. They interpret their experiences through the history and worldview they have. This history and worldview may abate somewhat in the second or third generation, but can be refreshed if re-immersed or re-taught. Multiple sources today, including Spanish news media and pop culture, intellectuals and celebrities, the clergy, politicians, and new immigrants bearing news from Mexico, keep the Mexican identity alive. Retaining one’s ancestral identity is possible, and it is a choice.

It is also possible to add to one’s identity. Cesar Chavez said that, “Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.” This should be remembered when examining both the Mexican and American elements of the Mexican-American identity. The fact is that both exist together in approximately 35 million people. It is a quest to blend the two together, and one that requires respect, honesty, and inquiry. It is challenging because Mexican-American heritage includes history from two very different nations. Both the U.S. and Mexico have Western colonial foundations, yet pursued different pathways based on different cultural inheritances. They have the potential to be harmonized, but are oppositional in key ways. Each individual is responsible for sorting through history to come up with a blend of values that honors their own experiences and ancestry. Most ethnic groups in America—including Western Europeans—have to go through the same process; it is part of living in a multicultural country.

The fallacy is that one has to choose whether they are Mexican or American as though there is no harmony between the two. Many Mexican-Americans have served the United States proudly in war, in foreign affairs, in politics, or in corporate America while still maintaining their Latino identity in ways that are important to them. It is very possible to speak English, go to college, pursue a career, and yet honor the memories of your ancestors who came to America and worked as ranchers, migrants, or laborers. It is just as easy to prefer authentic Mexican food and Latin music while appreciating the diversity of other options in America. Pressure exists that those of Mexican origin are not “Mexican enough” or do not have enough sympathy and respect for their roots if they venture beyond the Spanish-speaking world. This belief, along with the idea that Latin culture must be held up as superior and separate from American culture, holds many back today.

The uniqueness of the United States—and its challenge—is that it is a multinational country. While it is popular to consider the U.S. as “white” or “Anglo,” this obscures the great multinational constitution and influence throughout all of American history. It is true that the United States was built on the foundations of British common law and European documents of freedom; however, there have been multiple nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religions in America from its inception. Even in the days when most citizens were “white,” there were dozens of nationalities and religious denominations that competed with each other and were even hostile to one another. Overcoming this angst is part of what it means to be an American—accepting the “melting pot,” as some have termed it. The foundation of this experiment, broadcast by the Statue of Liberty’s message to the poor, huddled masses of the world, is unity under the Constitution, the rule of law, and the democratic process. This is why the U.S. naturalization process includes allegiance to these things in its interview phase. The laws and economic system of the United States were not created by a small, privileged group of men to bolster supremacy. They were created to be the glue
that binds diverse people together and gives them a collective boost towards prosperity. The only requirement is that all Americans honor freedom, independence, peacefulness, and tolerance, rather than an outside agenda.

Critics of this creed have argued that in this process of submission, multicultural elements lose their special value. Being part of the American system, however, causes not only individuals, but also minority groups to succeed. People today know more about their heritage and ancestry than at any other time in history, because of modern multicultural success. Mexican-Americans have created businesses, arts and literature, restaurants, and other vessels to keep their ancestry and heritage alive. Information abounds in libraries, the Internet, textbooks, and classrooms because people have made it their career to research and lift up different cultures around the world. Moreover, integration is seen every day in common neighborhoods, schools, and churches across the country. This is something pioneered by the American multicultural mindset that should be celebrated. It takes agreement across all ethnicities and nationalities that we should celebrate this and continue the experiment. When people of all nationalities and races submit to this societal creed, the American experiment succeeds and so do they.
Discussion Questions

1. How have the actions of U.S. citizens and the local, state, and federal governments either met or failed to meet the ideals espoused in the founding documents?

2. Consider the current topic of U.S. immigration as it relates to the historical context discussed in this text. Identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.

3. How does economic disparity in Mexico impact immigration to the U.S.? What policies should the U.S. consider in order to discourage illegal immigration, encourage legal immigration, and/or encourage economic prosperity in Mexico?

4. What would happen if the United States adopted Spanish as the second national language? What are the benefits? Can you think of another way to solve the problem of clear communication for all people in the United States?

5. Suggest three policies that would benefit Mexican-American’s success in U.S. culture? How would those same policies benefit the U.S. as a whole?

6. What is your opinion about building a wall to reduce illegal immigration across the U.S.-Mexico border? Is there a better solution to illegal immigration? What are your strongest opinions on illegal immigration, amnesty, and legal immigration?

7. Describe the picture in your head from this poem about the Statue of Liberty by Emma Lazarus:

   “Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
   With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
   Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
   A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

8. What did Cesar Chavez mean when he said that, “Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.”

9. Use technological resources to research women’s suffrage in both the United States and Mexico. Who were the heroes of each respective movement? What challenges are still ahead, if any? Compare suffrage in the United States and Mexico with that of other Latin American countries. Create a bibliography from your research and use computer software to create a written, graphic, or visual product to share with the class. Be sure to include visual images for the time period referenced.

10. Research immigration statistics from several reputable sources to cite the illegal population in the U.S., both total numbers of persons identified as illegals and number of persons identified as Mexican citizens who are in the country illegally. What factors might make these numbers vary from one source to another? What perceptions and/or policies might change if the numbers turned out to be significantly higher than reported? Use a graphic to demonstrate your findings and present both written and oral presentations of your report. Develop a bibliography with information attributed to source materials.
Summative Discussion and Evaluation

Select a topic of interest from the text (or assigned by instructor). Use a variety of available media sources and research strategies to write an essay and develop an accompanying oral presentation discussing a topic or creating an argument in favor of or against an issue. Apply social studies methodologies encompassing a variety of research and analytical tools to explore questions or issues thoroughly and fairly to include multiple perspectives. Locate, analyze, organize, synthesize, evaluate, and apply information about the selected topic, identifying, describing, and evaluating multiple points of view. Evaluate effects of major political, economic, and social conditions on a selected social studies topic. Construct a thesis that is supported by evidence; apply the conventions of usage and mechanics of written English; use social studies terminology correctly; use appropriate oral communication techniques; recognize and evaluate counter arguments; develop a bibliography with ideas and information attributed to source materials and authors using accepted social science formats such as Modern Language Association Style Manual (MLA) and Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) to document sources and format written materials; and use computer software to create written, graphic, or visual products from collected data.
Peer Comprehension Activity

After the instructor introduces the section, students should work in pairs or teams to complete the following tasks:

1. Engage Prior Knowledge
   a. Brainstorm, list, or create a web demonstrating what is already known about the subject.
   b. Make connections by sharing personal stories or examples of other texts of similar content.

2. Predict Content
   a. Based on the images, titles, and headers within the section, make a prediction about the main idea.
   b. Discuss how prior content influences your predictions about the section.

3. Visualize
   a. Create a mental image of what you expect to come in the section. Think about the events, characters, and setting.
   b. Discuss what more you need to know to have clear understanding and make notes

4. Read Aloud
   a. Select a person to read the content or take turns. (Use visualization as you read)
   b. Make notes about vocabulary, ideas, or events that you want to discuss further.
5. Summarize
   a. Clarify the main idea and briefly summarize the section.
   b. Discuss whether or not your prediction were accurate.
   c. Discuss new content.

6. Develop
   a. Review your notes from the visualization. Did you find out what you needed to know to deepen your understanding?
   b. Review your notes from the read-aloud. What vocabulary, ideas, or events do you have questions about?
   c. Make a list of questions, or if none, write a general question about the section to ask a group.

7. Discussion
   a. Participate in a group discussion about the section.
   b. Listen to different perspectives and points of view.
   c. Create an argument to defend your perspective.
   d. Think critically about the section.
   e. Answer Discussion Questions about the section.
Content Map

Use the Content Map to break each section down into smaller pieces to aid in understanding of content, vocabulary, and discussions.

Chapter Title
Section One Title
Section Two Title

Main Idea
Section One Main Idea
Section Two Main Idea:

Outline
Outline of Section One
Outline of Section Two

Questions
My questions about Section One
My questions about Section Two

Vocabulary Focus
Words to practice with synonyms, circumlocution
Words to practice with synonyms, circumlocution
ABC Powers: a loose entente between three South American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile), that were seen as the most powerful and wealthy countries, with the common interest of creating cooperation and mutual nonaggression.

Absolutist: A person who adheres to the belief that a ruler should have complete power, without the checks and balances of other branches of government or authorities.

Adobe: A sun-dried brick made of earth and straw.

Affirmative Action: a policy intended to eliminate unlawful discrimination between applicants.

Allies: countries that opposed the Central Powers in World War I, including the French Republic, the British Empire, the Russian Empire; later to include Italy; secondary members were Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and Romania; the United States was an “Associate” Power.

Altiplano: a narrow sequence of high plains between two peaks of the Andes Mountains.

Amnesty: a policy of granting immunity from punishment or deportation.

Amnesty: the act of a pardoning a political or legal offense, given by a government to a large group of individuals.

Anarchism: a belief in rejecting all government and societal organization in favor of voluntary, cooperative living.
Annexation: To become incorporated within another country or territory.

Assimilation: The process of accepting and practicing the traits of a dominant culture in order to become socially indistinguishable from other members of the community.

Asylum: A person persecuted by their own country may find refuge and protection in a foreign nation granting diplomatic immunity.

Audiencia: High court.

Aztlán: The legendary, but possibly mythical, ancestral home of the Aztec people suggested to be located in northwestern Mexico or southwest United States.

Bandits: Criminals, often belonging to a gang, who attack, steal, and disrupt.

Beatify: A recognition by the Catholic Church declaring that a deceased person has attained blessedness of heaven and authorizing them “Blessed” and able to intercede on behalf of those who pray in his or her name.

Bilingualism: The ability of an individual to speak and use at least two languages.

Bill of Rights: Ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution establishing certain fundamental rights and privileges of individuals.
**Bloc**: a group of countries connected or aligned by common goals or agreements

**Boomtowns**: Communities that arise rapidly due to sudden population and economic growth.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs**: federal agency responsible for management of land held in trust for indigenous tribes

**Californios**: Original Spanish colonists of California and descendants whose success rose through ranching during Mexican reign, but eventually lost much power, authority, and land after post-war Mexican land grants confused land ownership and rights and created expensive legal battles.

**Camino Real**: A mule trail, connecting Mexico City with access across Texas that became an important route for evangelization, trade, development, and immigration, therefore being dubbed a ‘royal’ road by the Spanish.

**Capitalism** [or “free market”]: a system of trade and industry controlled by private business owners and corporations, for profit, rather than by the government

**Cartel**: an enterprise meant to limit competition, fix prices, and/or control production; A drug cartel may be loosely managed or formal commercial organizations

**Causeways**: A raised path across wet ground

**Central Powers**: one of the two main factions during World War I with the opponent being the; the alliance originally between Germany and Austria-Hungary grew to include the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria

**Chain migration**: a social process through which family or community members immigrate to another country to join together by passing on knowledge of transportation, employment, and other operational wisdom
Chattel Slavery: A practice in which people are treated as property to be bought, sold, traded, and inherited for generations.

Chicano Movement: a Mexican-American pride movement

Chicano Studies: concerned with the study of Chicanos, Latinos, and Mexican Americans across fields of history, sociology, arts, etc.

Chinampas: floating gardens

Chuno: freeze dried potatoes

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency, agency responsible for providing national security intelligence to US policymakers in an effort to preempt threats, collect intelligence, and further national security

City on a Hill: a phrase contributed to Puritan John Winthrop, indicating that America would be watched by the world as in a phrase from the parable of Salt and Light in Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14 when he tells his listeners, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Civil rights: the rights of personal liberty regardless of race, sex, or religion including freedom, equality, and the right to vote

Civilized: A state of organized social interaction and behavior that is structured with rules or laws

Codices: an ancient book containing written history, scriptures, or records

Commune: [general] a group of people who live together, sharing responsibilities and possessions

Communism: [general] an economic and social system in which the government owns property, assets, and resources to be distributed, at the governments discretion, to the citizens
**Communist Party**: Lenin’s franchise, worldwide political party; satellites of Soviet Communism in each country; obedient to his orders in Moscow

**Confederacy**: the eleven southern American states that separated themselves from the U.S. during the American Civil War

**Congressional Hispanic Caucus**: a group composed of members of congress, formed in 1976 by five Hispanic congressmen, who monitor legislation and work to ensure that the needs of Hispanics are being met within it

**Congressional Hispanic Conference**: An organization, formed in 2003 that creates and promotes a legislative agenda tasked with promoting the interests of all American Hispanics in issues both domestic and international in nature

**Conquistadores**: “Conquerors”, leaders in the Spanish conquest of America in the 16th century, such as Hernán Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado, Cristóbal de Olid, Francisco Pizarro, Diego de Almagro, Sebastián de Benalcázar, and Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada.

**Constantinople**: Named the capital of the Byzantine Empire by Emperor Constantine due to its prime geographic location for trade.

**Constitutional Monarchy**: A system of government ruled by a king or queen in coordination with the shared power of the legislature

**Containment**: military and foreign policy to prevent territorial expansion of an enemy, especially during the Cold War to prevent the spread of communism

**Contras**: anti-communist rebels opposed to the left-wing, socialist governments

**Council of the Indes**: governing body communicating between the king and his governors
Coyotes: a person who is paid a high fee to smuggle immigrants into the United States illegally

Criollos: upper-middle class, born in the New World to Spanish parents, and often owned land or held administrative-level jobs

Crusades: intermittent military campaigns expressing papal authority in an attempt to reunite Christendom

Customs Houses: A government office where papers for goods entering or leaving a country were checked and duties were paid for and collected.

Decolonization: the peaceful or violent process of becoming independent from a colonizing country

Democrat Party: The oldest political party in the United States was formed in 1792 as the “Democratic-Republican Party” with a platform of decentralized government with limited powers, which was in opposition to the Federalist Party at the time.

Détente: the ending of strained relations between countries

Districting: [voter oriented] defining specific areas for voting for particular representatives in electoral districts by a commission or legislation

Divine right: the God-given right of a king or queen to rule directly so that they could not be removed or opposed by people

Dollar Diplomacy: Foreign policy that extends a country’s international influence by using financial power in order to ensure the financial stability of another country or region, resulting in the protection of commercial and financial interests between the two countries

Dominican: Roman Catholic religious order

Domino Theory: a foreign policy theory that the fall of a non-communist government would cause surrounding countries to follow, like dominos; a justification and argument for increasing
military involvement and intervention during the Cold War

**Draft**: requirement for citizens to serve in the armed forces at a certain age

**Economic sanctions**: withdrawal of trade and financial exchange with another country in order to employ power over foreign or security policies

**Ejidos**: lands taken and owned by the state, but permitted for Indian tribes to use collectively

**El Dorado**: a mythical land of fabulous riches

El Norte: “The North”; a term used to refer to the United States, illustrating the hope for a promised land and a new life there.

**El Quinto**: one-fifth or royal fifth

**Emancipation Proclamation**: President Lincoln’s announcement on September 22, 1862 declaring that all persons held as slaves were free

**Encomienda**: labor grants which permitted a Spanish landowner to control and receive regular income from forced labor on farms, ranches, or mines for as long as the encomienda was held

**Enlightenment**: a European period of heightened intellectual focus on reason and rationality over religion and superstition that impacted art, philosophy, and politics over approximately a century and a half

**Enumerated Powers**: governmental powers delegated by a constitution

**Eugenics**: a set of beliefs and practices based upon the possibility of improving the human race by controlling the genetic quality of the population through increased production of positive traits and/or reduced production, even sterilization, of people with undesired traits
**Executive Order**: a legally binding order coming from the U.S. President and not requiring congressional approval

**Executive**: the branch of government that provides diplomatic representation, oversight of use of laws, and appointment over officials

**Expansionism**: Political policy based upon a belief that a country should grow larger by expanding into new territory. 11th U.S. President James Polk grew America’s territory by more than a third, extending it across the continent.

**Export economy**: an economy reliant upon a few exports being bought up; no self-sustaining industry or business

**Export economy**: A term applied when a large percent of the nation’s economy is based on outgoing trade.

**Federalism**: a form of governing in which a national overarching government oversees smaller localized government systems

**Flota System**: a convoy system for shipping cargo fleets across the ocean

**Foco**: a theory of revolution to provide a focus for discontent through paramilitary, domestic terrorism, or urban warfare

**Fourteenth Amendment**: an amendment to the Constitution which declares that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside”

**Free Market**: a system in which buyers and sellers exchange goods based on supply, demand, and competition, without government intervention

**Freedmen’s Bureau**: a popular name for the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, provided aid in the form of food, housing, medical aid, schools, and legal assistance to former black slaves and poor whites in the South in the after-
math of the Civil War

**French Revolution**: The violent and universally significant overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in France by the people, resulting in a temporary republic

**Fugitive Slave Act**: A law requiring that escaped slaves be tried in a federal court without a jury and returned to their masters with the additional intent that persons who helped them to escape and flee would be treated as criminals and penalized with fines

**Great Plains**: a vast area of level country east of the Rocky Mountains, extending from Canada to southern Texas

**Greencard**: informal term for a United States Permanent Resident Card, which allows individuals to live and work in the U.S. on a permanent basis

**Guerilla Warfare**: looting, burning, and sacking of cities

**Haciendas**: an estate that often incorporated a plantation, mine, or factory

**Hapsburg Royal Family**: occupying the throne of the Holy Roman Empire from 1438-1740, the Hapsburgs are one of the most important royal house of Europe producing many emperors and kings

**Heritage**: traditions, values, languages, and other features belonging to a particular society

**Hispaniola**: the second largest island in the Caribbean, now shared between the Dominican Republic and Haiti

**Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)**: an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice from 1933 to 2003 which was responsible for inspecting immigrants at Point of Entry, detecting and deterring illegal entry, conducting investigations of criminal and administrative violations, and adjudicating green cards and naturalization.
Imperialism: gaining power by taking control of other countries or parts of the world

Incumbent: current holder of office

Indigenismo: political ideology advocating a strong social and political role for Indigenous peoples

Indo-Mexican: indigenous people of Mexico

Intendants: government officials

Internment Camps: a prison camp for forced relocation and incarceration of political prisoners

Islam: a religion as articulated by a religious text called the Qur’an as revealed by Muhammad and adhered to by Muslims

Jesuits: a religious congregation of the Catholic Church comprised of male evangelists

Jim Crow Laws: state and local laws enforcing racial segregation in the Southern United States after Reconstruction

Junta: a provisional government

Kateri Tekakwitha: An orphan raised by her aunts and uncles, Kateri was converted as a teenager and devoted her life to prayer, penitential practices, and care for the sick and aged. Kateri died of smallpox at the age of 24 and is known as the first Indian Saint.

Labor camp: a place where persons are imprisoned and forced to work under difficult conditions

Labor union: an organization representing the collective rights and interests of workers in negotiations with employers

Left vs. Right: [political, totalitarian] Right-leaning President Diaz promoted industry, development of infrastructure, foreign investment, modernization, and domestic police power at the expense of the rising working class and peasantry. Anti-Diaz Left-
ists promoted the rights of peasants and land workers in newspapers, providing a voice heard by many.

**Legislative**: the branch of government responsible for creating laws, levying taxes, and appropriating finances

**Line of Demarcation**: a line drawn on the globe by Pope Alexander VI in 1494 to designate which territories the Spanish could colonize and which ones were for Portugal

**Maize**: inedible, wild corn which Mesoamericans cross-bred with grass to develop modern, edible corn.

**Manilla Galleon Trade Route**: Ocean passage route providing trade across the Pacific Ocean between Manila in the Philippines and Acapulco in New Spain (Mexico) from 1565 to 1815; porcelain, silk, ivory, spices, and other exotic goods from China were traded for New World silver.

**Maquiladora**: a factory creating products for export by employing low-cost labor and duty-free imported materials

**Marxist-Leninism**: a political worldview seeking to establish socialist states through political power attained by any means, including violence and revolution

**Medicare**: a U.S. government health program that subsidizes U.S. citizens and permanent legal residents of five or more years who are aged 65 or older; disabled; or having serious health problems but lack funding for treatment.

**Mein Kampf**: the autobiography written by socialist Adolf Hitler

**Mercantilism**: reliance upon the control of raw materials like gold and silver to sustain the national economy

**Mesoamerica**: an area in Mexico and Central America which was a cradle of civilization for many early inhabitants who built cities, developed writing, traded with one another, and developed sophisticated art and agriculture
Mestizo: A person of mixed ancestry.

Mexican Cession: The U.S. purchase of Mexican territories including states currently known as Colorado, Arizona, California, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

Migration: A number of persons moving together to a new place for better living conditions.

Migratory Worker: Person who work in a country other than their own temporarily or seasonally.

Milpa: A mixed garden of corn and beans.

Minimum Wage Laws: Laws that define a minimum amount of money that workers must be paid in exchange for labor.

Mission: Colonization effort by the Catholic Church used to convert indigenous people to Christianity and educate them.

Mit’a: An Incan system of working for the collective, which rulers used to subdue their people in lieu of the traditional system of paying tribute. In mit’a, there was no private economy, trade, or occupation to produce goods that could be paid as taxes. There was instead a centralized economy where Indians paid their taxes through labor. It mirrored, most closely, European socialism. Instead of paying tribute with currency, harvest, or goods, natives rotated their wage-less labor in the army, mines, and publicly owned fields. Any textiles, utensils, roads, or buildings the empire needed, the mit’a laborers worked to produce.

Mitimaq: Incan Emperors policy of relocated favorables throughout the empire and dispersing insurrectionists who threatened it, potentially displacing entire communities.

Mounted Lancers: Horseback-riding Mexican cavalry who used steel-tipped spears for fighting.

Mourning: A period of wailing, silence, and sometimes fasting after the death of a loved one.
Mulattoes: a historical term for persons of mixed white and black ancestry

Multiculturalism: including diverse cultures by considering, accepting, and coordinating behaviors and values

Mutual Societies: an organization owned by its members and managed for their benefit by way of common services

NAACP: the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the United States works to ensure the political, education, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and eliminate race-based discrimination.

National Origins Formula: a provision of the National Origin Act in 1924 limited immigration to a percentage of the number of residents originating in that country living in the United States, resulting in a substantial drop in immigration, especially Southern and Eastern European immigrants (ending in 1965)

Nationalization: the theft of property and/or control from private industry as taken over by the government

Nomadic: Moving from place to place frequently with no fixed or permanent home

Oregon Trail: A series of Indian trails woven together through the prairie, desert, and Rocky Mountains that became a wagon road used by mountain men, trappers, explorers, and settlers travelling from Missouri to Oregon.

Panic: [economic term] emotional withdrawal of bank dollars and investments in a fearful response to real or imagined instability in banks and stock markets, resulting in financial depression of values and prices

Pantheistic: A belief that plants, animals, and objects in nature have spirits that should be honored and sometimes feared

Parliament: a group of people, elected or assigned, responsible
for making laws

**Pathway to Citizenship**: a series of requirements and actions that must be taken in order for an adult immigrant to be able to become a U.S. citizen

**PEMEX**: a state organization that runs the entire process of exploring, mining, refining, and selling oil in Mexico and is a major source of revenue for Mexico’s federal government, as it is currently the world’s eighth largest oil company

**Peninsulares**: a class of Spanish-born citizens, such as bishops, generals, or local governors, who help the highest positions in government, church, and military and were rewarded for their loyalty to the king

**Permanent resident**: an immigrant residing in the U.S. legally and lawfully as a permanent resident

**Philosophes**: writers, scientists, and thinkers who applied reason to their area of study during the Age of Enlightenment

**Placer Mining**: A mining method using water to recover heavy minerals from sand and gravel, such as in panning for gold. Using a technique known as panning, miners used pans to swirl gold deposits with water. The high density of gold caused it to sink more rapidly than moving water, therefore washing lighter materials over the side of the pan and leaving the gold behind. Placer mining is still used today for mineral extraction in the form of washing, dredging, and hydraulic mining.

**Platt Amendment**: established the terms under the United States would leave the government and control of Cuba its people and end U.S. occupation

**Poll tax**: a tax paid by an adult in order to vote in an election; enacted in the South to deter black voters

**Polytheistic**: honoring many gods on earth in an effort to win their favor
**Port of Entry**: a place where an immigrant may lawfully enter a country

**Poverty**: a lack of socially acceptable resources or possessions wherein basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter cannot be met; The U.S. Health and Human Services Guideline is $11,880 plus $4,160 for each additional person in the household. For example, a family of four with an income of less than $24,300 would be considered living in poverty.

**Presidio**: military fort

Propaganda often false or exaggerated messages delivered through media to help a cause, political leader, or government agenda

**Protestant Reformation**: A time of political, intellectual, and cultural upheaval challenging the Catholic Church’s ability to define Christian practice and promoting religious and political redistribution of power.

**Provisional Government**: A temporary entity appointed to govern until a permanent one can be established or restored.

**Proxy war**: a conflict between two countries that results in those countries fighting their opponent’s allies, assisting their own allies in fighting their opponent, or attacking the interests or territorial holding of the opponent

**Puppet Government**: a government appearing to having power but whose power is controlled by another

**Quipu**: A type of Incan communication using knot-and-string to ensure accuracy and privacy

**Ratify**: To make an agreement official by signing, consenting, or voting in favor

**Recession**: [economic term] a period of economic decline, expected from time to time, in industrial production, employment,
real income, trade, wages, retail sales

**Recollectivization**: lands that were private property or individual lots, taken and redistributed as collective or communal property

**Reconstruction**: a period of nation building for the United States after the Civil War, addressing fundamental issues such as national unity, infrastructural and physical rebuilding, bringing former Confederates back into the US government, and the role of free slaves in society

**Reducciones**: Indian communities in Latin America created in order to facilitate colonization by Europeans in an attempt to convert Indians to Christianity; exercise control over Indian populations; furnish a readily available labor force; and provide empty lands for private ownership.

**Repartimiento**: Indians paid tribute to the Spanish through forced labor in gold and silver mines rather than goods or currency

**Representative Government**: rulers are elected and given authority by the consent of the governed

**Republic**: a form of government ruled by elected officials chosen by citizens in order to represent them

**Reservations**: An area of land set aside as a place for a Native American community.

**Restrictionists**: those in favor of limiting or eliminating immigration

**Right to Strike**: a legal right of employees to stop working in an effort to promote their economic and social interests

**Rio de la Plata**: the area at the estuary where the Uruguay River and the Parana River meet the Atlantic Ocean on the east coast of South America, currently between Uruguay to the North and Argentina to the south
**Rio Grande**: The fourth longest river in the U.S., flowing from Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico, has marked the boundary between Mexico and the United States since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

**Royalists**: those who believes that a country should have a king or queen and who supports the monarchy

**San Salvador**: also known as Watling Island; the location of Christopher Columbus’ landing in the central Bahamas

**Sante Fe Trail**: America’s first great international commercial highway, stretching from Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico, used by both Mexican and American traders.

**Scientific Revolution**: a progression of scientific development based on physical investigation over several centuries in astronomy, anatomy, and physics that had significant influence over Europe’s intellectual culture.

**Secession**: becoming independent from the United States

**Self-determination**: a social movement and political policy to bolster tribal sovereignty by allowing tribes to maintain control over federal resources and reverse paternalistic policies over tribes

**Separation of church and state**: a post-Constitution phrase coined by Thomas Jefferson emphasizing the intent that the government should not be involved in the business of the church; often used interchangeably in casual context with the Establishment Clause, which is part of the First Amendment to the US Constitution

**Seven Cities of Cibola**: a mythical land said to hold seven cities of gold in the Sonora Desert

**Shamans**: holy men who administered healing prayer, herbs, and other medicine.
Slash-and-burn: To burn large areas of land to lie fallow, or unplanted, for several growing seasons, in order to allow nutrients to return to the soil

Social Contract: the belief that people will follow a written or hypothetical agreement based on moral and philosophical duties, obligations, and responsibilities

Social Security: a massive U.S. government program paying out billions of dollars per year in benefits such as retirement income, disability income, Medicare, Medicaid, death benefits, and survivorship benefits.

Socialism: A way of organizing society based on collective ownership of production, emphasizing equality over achievement, and causing individuals to become dependent on the state for all things from food to health care; eliminates the individual’s opportunity to provide for oneself

Socialism: A way of organizing society based on collective ownership of production, emphasizing equality over achievement, and causing individuals to become dependent on the state for all things from food to health care; eliminates the individual’s opportunity to provide for oneself

Soviet Communism: [led by USSR] a tightly disciplined organization of professional Communist revolutionaries who believed that international politics were dominated by class struggle and that the Soviet Union must see that surrounding capitalist countries were replaced with socialist governments; carried out by using carefully planned police, military, communications, and propaganda

Spanish Armada: a failed attempt by King Philip II of Spain to invade England, with the largest fleet ever seen in Europe, in order to avenge the death of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587, marking the turning point in years of religious dispute and protesting England’s expansion in the New World
**Spanish Inquisition**: A campaign started by Pope Sixtus IV in 1478 and carried out by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to punish those who were accused of secretly practicing the Jewish faith. The accused were presented before crowds and burned at the stake. Later, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the expulsion or conversion (to Catholicism) of remaining Jews.

**Speculators**: persons who buys something for their personal or company investment, in order to gain a profit in the future

**Spice Islands**: Now called the Moluc’ca Islands, the islands in eastern Indonesia became a center for a spice monopoly

**Squatters**: A settler living on an area of empty land with no legal permission.

**Standard Oil**: an American corporation, established in 1870 by John D. Rockefeller, that produced, transported, refined, and marketed oil and became the world’s first and largest multinational corporation, eventually determined to be an illegal monopoly by the US Supreme Court in 1911.

**States Rights**: the rights and powers retained by individual states and protected in the Constitution from interference by the federal government

**Stock Market**: An exchange (market) of shares (stocks) of publicly held companies in a free market economy, providing companies with access to capital funding in exchange for giving investors part of company ownership

**Strikes**: times during which workers stop labor in an attempt to force employers to agree to their demands

**Succession**: The act of separating from a nation.

**Taiping Rebellion**: one of the bloodiest civil wars in human history, a radical political and religious upheaval in China lasted 14 years, took approximately 20 million lives, and displaced millions of people
**Talud-tablero**: The architectural feature of an alternating pattern of a horizontal terrace with a vertical recessed inset built upon an inward-sloping vertical panel used in Mesoamerican stepped pyramids in Mexico

**Tejanos**: People of Mexican descent living in Texas, from as early as the Spanish occupation.

**Tenant Farmers**: laborers who rent property from landowners in order to live and raise crops

**Termination**: a policy that eliminated the U.S. treaty responsibility to indigenous tribes by breaking up reservations, relocating individuals, remove tax and law exemptions, and force them to participate in mainstream society under the rights and privileges of citizenship

**Texas Rangers**: A battalion of mounted riflemen, first appointed by the Congress of the Texas Republic through the authority of President Sam Houston, with the duty to protect the frontier.

**The Counterculture**: a significant and persistent influence of values and behaviors opposed to that of the social mainstream of the day

**The Dust Bowl**: a period of time during the 1930s in which drought, dust storms, and agricultural decline devastated people living in the Midwestern and Southern Plains

**The Great Depression**: a catastrophic, worldwide economic slump resulting in mass poverty, starvation, and loss of personal and business assets

**The Iron Curtain**: a political, military, and ideological boundary dividing Europe into Soviet influence on the east and non-Soviet-controlled alliance to the west

**The Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God**: A foundational premise prescribing that nature encompasses certain laws, obligations, and reasoning that align with Biblical laws and rules by
which humans should maintain a certain respect and reverence, first referenced by Lord Bolingbrook and then his former student Thomas Jefferson

**The Red Scare of 1917**: a fear resulting from the Communist Revolution, that the same would occur in America, causing suspicion that immigrants were involved in plotting a revolution

**Third International**: Lenin’s worldwide congress of Communist revolutionaries, sometimes called the ComIntern

**Tipis**: A home made of skins or cloth upon a frame of poles fixed in a cone shape

**Trade agreement**: an agreement between countries to establish free trade in goods and commerce

**Trade Monopoly**: A situation in which one entity controls the exchange of goods, preventing other entities or countries from participating in trade openly.

**Transatlantic Slave Trade**: The forced migration of millions of men, women, and children from Africa to the Western Hemisphere over four centuries in order to victimize them as slaves.

**Transcontinental Railroad**: The first railroad to connect the east coast of the United States with the west coast

**Triangle Trade**: a system that balances trade when export commodities are not required in the region from which its major imports come

**Tribute**: Goods paid to a dominant tribe in order to show subordination

**Unauthorized/undocumented worker**: a foreign-born person who is not living in the United States with legal authority and documentation

**Union Leagues**: associations organized to inspire loyalty to the Union during the Civil War, spreading to the South during Re-
construction to provide support to newly enfranchised blacks

**Union**: Twenty free states and five border slave states that did not separate from the United States during the Civil War

**United Nations**: formed in 1942 during the Second World War, a league of 26 nations pledged to fight together against the Axis Powers

**Utopian**: having impossibly perfect social organization

**Vertical archipelago**: uphill-downhill trade network to obtain different foods and supplies between farmers and traders

**Viceroy**: royal governor

**Visa**: [for temporary work, not travel in general] gives permission to enter a country and take a job for a temporary period of time

**Welfare**: a government program funded by taxpayers that helps the poor pay for food, housing, and medical costs

**Whig Party**: Formed in opposition to President Andrew Jackson in 1832, the Whig Party sought property rights, free trade, states’ rights, paper currency, and protection of American culture and dissolved during the American Civil War. Many Whigs joined the new Republican Party in 1854 to oppose slavery and modernize the economy.

**Woodstock**: a pivotal outdoor music festival held on a dairy farm in New York with 32 acts and an audience of 400,000 people that defined a prevalent counterculture

**Zambo**: a historical term for a Latin-American person of mixed African and indigenous ancestry
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