SOFTWARE & TECH

Timeline Of Mexican American War

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795584302770350

Introduction: Understanding the Conflict Between Neighbors

The **Timeline Of Mexican American War** is more than a sequence of battles; it is a story of territorial ambition, political tension, and clashing visions for the future of North America. Lasting from 1846 to 1848, this conflict reshaped the map of the continent and set the stage for future relations between the United States and Mexico. To truly understand the war's impact, one must walk through the key events that led to the first shots, the major campaigns, and the eventual peace settlement. This article presents a detailed, chronological account of the war, highlighting the causes, decisive moments, and lasting consequences.

Prelude to War: Setting the Stage (1821–1845)

The roots of the Mexican-American War stretch back decades before the first cannon fired. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, its vast northern territories, including Texas, California, and New Mexico, remained sparsely populated. The United States, meanwhile, was expanding westward under the ideology of Manifest Destiny—the belief that it was destined to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Tensions simmered over the boundary of Texas, which had declared independence from Mexico in 1836 and was annexed by the U.S. in 1845. Mexico considered Texas a breakaway province and warned that annexation would be an act of war.

The Texas Annexation and the U.S. Offer to Buy California

In early 1845, the United States Congress approved the annexation of Texas, and President John Tyler signed the resolution just before leaving office. Mexico immediately severed diplomatic relations. President James K. Polk, an ardent expansionist, took office in March 1845 with a clear agenda: acquire California and settle the Texas boundary dispute. He sent diplomat John Slidell to Mexico City in November 1845 with an offer to purchase California and New Mexico, and to recognize the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas. The Mexican government, under President José Joaquín de Herrera, refused to even receive Slidell, viewing the offer as an insult. Polk, frustrated by the diplomatic failure, ordered General Zachary Taylor to move his troops into the disputed territory along the Rio Grande.

1846: The War Begins

The year 1846 marks the official start of armed conflict. The **Timeline Of Mexican American War** begins with a skirmish that Polk used to justify a declaration of war.

April 25, 1846: The Thornton Affair

A Mexican cavalry unit crossed the Rio Grande and attacked a U.S. patrol commanded by Captain Seth Thornton. Eleven American soldiers were killed, and the rest were captured. When news reached Washington, President Polk claimed that American blood had been shed on American soil. Congress declared war on May

13, 1846, with strong support from southern and western states, though many northerners and Whigs opposed it as an aggressive land grab.

May 8, 1846: Battle of Palo Alto

General Zachary Taylor's forces engaged Mexican General Mariano Arista's army north of the Rio Grande. It was the first major battle of the war. Taylor's use of artillery, particularly the "flying artillery" that could move quickly and fire fast, proved decisive. The battle ended in a U.S. victory, forcing the Mexicans to retreat.

May 9, 1846: Battle of Resaca de la Palma

The next day, Taylor pursued the retreating Mexican army and defeated them again at Resaca de la Palma. This victory secured the U.S. grip on the northern bank of the Rio Grande and allowed Taylor to cross into Mexican territory. The town of Matamoros fell shortly after.

June–July 1846: The Bear Flag Revolt and the Conquest of California

While Taylor campaigned in northern Mexico, a separate theater opened in California. American settlers in the Sacramento Valley, encouraged by explorer John C. Frémont, rebelled against Mexican authority. On June 14, they captured the town of Sonoma and raised a flag with a grizzly bear—the "Bear Flag Republic." The revolt quickly merged with U.S. military efforts. Commodore John D. Sloat of the U.S. Navy seized Monterey on July 7, claiming California for the United States. By August, most of California was under American control, though resistance continued into early 1847.

September 20–24, 1846: The Siege of Monterrey

General Taylor advanced south into Mexico and attacked the heavily fortified city of Monterrey. After a bloody three-day battle, Mexican General Pedro de Ampudia surrendered the city. The terms allowed the Mexican army to evacuate with their weapons, a decision that angered President Polk, who wanted a more aggressive campaign.

December 25, 1846: Battle of El Brazito

In the New Mexico theater, Colonel Alexander Doniphan led a force of Missouri volunteers south into Chihuahua. They defeated a Mexican force at El Brazito, near present-day El Paso, clearing the way for the capture of Chihuahua City in early 1847.

1847: The Turning Point and American Offensive

1847 was the decisive year. The United States launched a two-pronged strategy: Taylor would continue in northern Mexico, while a new army under General Winfield Scott would land at Veracruz and march to Mexico City.

February 22–23, 1847: Battle of Buena Vista

General Santa Anna, back in command of the Mexican army, marched north with a large force to crush Taylor. The two armies met at the Angostura Pass near Buena Vista. Despite being outnumbered, Taylor's troops held their ground in a fierce two-day battle. Santa Anna withdrew during the night, and the battle ended in a strategic U.S. victory. Buena Vista was Taylor's last major engagement of the war; he returned to the U.S. as a national hero and later became president.

March 9–29, 1847: Siege of Veracruz

General Winfield Scott executed the first major amphibious landing in American military history. His force of about 12,000 men landed near Veracruz, the key port on the Gulf of Mexico. After a brief siege and heavy naval bombardment, the city capitulated. Scott's army now had a secure base to advance inland along the historic route of Hernán Cortés toward Mexico City.

April 17–18, 1847: Battle of Cerro Gordo

Santa Anna attempted to block Scott's advance at a mountain pass called Cerro Gordo. He positioned his army on high ground, but Scott's engineers, including Captain Robert E. Lee, discovered a trail that allowed U.S. troops to flank the Mexican positions. The battle was a decisive American victory; Santa Anna barely escaped capture, fleeing on a mule. The road to the capital lay open.

August 20, 1847: Battles of Contreras and Churubusco

Approaching Mexico City from the south, Scott faced stiff resistance. On the same day, U.S. forces won two battles: at Contreras (a nighttime assault) and at Churubusco (a fierce fight at a fortified monastery). Over 4,000 Mexican soldiers were killed or wounded, while U.S. losses were moderate. The victories brought Scott's army within sight of Mexico City. A temporary armistice was negotiated but failed when peace talks broke down.

September 8, 1847: Battle of Molino del Rey

Believing the Mexican army was casting cannons at a mill complex called Molino del Rey, Scott ordered an assault. It turned out to be a heavily defended position. The U.S. troops suffered heavy casualties, but eventually drove the defenders out. It was one of the bloodiest engagements of the war.

September 12–14, 1847: Capture of Mexico City and the Battle of Chapultepec

The final obstacle was the fortress of Chapultepec Castle, which guarded the western entrance to Mexico City. After a day of heavy bombardment, U.S. forces stormed the hill on September 13. Among the attackers were young cadets, the "Niños Héroes," who fought bravely; legend says one wrapped himself in the Mexican flag and leaped from the castle walls to avoid capture. On September 14, Scott's army entered Mexico City and seized the National Palace. The war was effectively over in the capital.

October 1847 – February 1848: Guerrilla Skirmishes and Occupation

Despite the fall of Mexico City, scattered resistance continued. Mexican guerrilla bands attacked U.S. supply lines and isolated patrols. The U.S. military occupation faced challenges in maintaining order. Meanwhile, Mexican moderates and conservatives realized further resistance was futile and sought peace.

1848: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and Aftermath

The final phase of the **Timeline Of Mexican American War** is marked by diplomacy and territorial cession.

February 2, 1848: Signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Negotiated by Nicholas Trist, the treaty was signed at the Basilica of Guadalupe Hidalgo in Mexico City. Its key terms included:

- Recognition of the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas.
- Mexico ceded the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.
- The United States paid Mexico $15 million and assumed claims of American citizens against Mexico (about $3.25 million).
- Mexican citizens living in the ceded territories were granted U.S. citizenship unless they formally chose to remain Mexican.

The treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate on March 10, 1848, and by the Mexican Congress on May 30, 1848, ending the war.

July 4, 1848: Ratification Proclaimed

President Polk formally proclaimed the treaty in effect on July 4, 1848. The American flag now flew over nearly 1.2 million square miles of new territory—an enormous expansion that fulfilled Manifest Destiny but also

renewed fierce debates over the expansion of slavery.

Long-Term Consequences of the War

The **Timeline Of Mexican American War** does not end with the treaty. The conflict had profound effects on both nations. For the United States, the acquisition of vast western lands intensified the sectional conflict over slavery, leading directly to the Compromise of 1850 and eventually the Civil War. For Mexico, the loss of half its territory caused deep national trauma, economic hardship, and political instability that lasted for decades. The war also set a precedent for U.S. interventionism in Latin America. Today, the border established in 1848 remains a source of tension and cultural exchange.

Conclusion: A War That Shaped Two Nations

The **Timeline Of Mexican American War** charts a short but transformative conflict. From the first skirmish at the Rio Grande to the final treaty in Guadalupe Hidalgo, each event reveals the ambitions and tragedies of a war that redrew the map of North America. While often overshadowed by later wars, its legacy endures in the geography, demographics, and relations between Mexico and the United States. Understanding this timeline helps us appreciate how a few years of fighting permanently altered the destiny of two neighboring countries.

Related Articles

- **Are James Blunt And Emily Blunt Related**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/are-james-blunt-and-emily-blunt-related.pdf
- **Was Remember Me Based On A True Story**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/was-remember-me-based-on-a-true-story.pdf
- **Ess Employee Self Service Costco**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/ess-employee-self-service-costco.pdf
- **The Case For Christianity By Cs Lewis**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/the-case-for-christianity-by-cs-lewis.pdf

TOPIC INDEX

#timeline • #mexican • #american • #war

DIGITAL EDITION

timeline-of-mexican-american-war

DIGITAL EDITION

timeline-of-mexican-american-war

DIGITAL EDITION

timeline-of-mexican-american-war

DIGITAL EDITION

timeline-of-mexican-american-war