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Description

President Polk is determined to acquire California and the southwest, and he provokes a war with Mexico to achieve his goal.

Keywords

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**APA**


**CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE**


**Transcript**

NARRATOR: President James K. Polk was determined to wrestle California and its important ports away from Mexico. When Mexico spurned Polk’s offer of money, he provoked a war. Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor, known as "Old Rough and Ready," to lead 4,000 men to the border of Texas and Mexico.

Professor MARIA MONTOYA (New York University): We’ll probably never know what really militarily set off the incident between Mexico and the United States. There was a territorial dispute about where the border was, whether it was the Rio Grande River, or whether it was farther North at the Nueces River. And at one point, it does seem clear that Polk had his troops cross the Nueces into this sort of demilitarized neutral zone.

NARRATOR: For months, the American troops waited for Mexicans to fire on them. Finally, in April, Mexican soldiers crossed the Rio Grande and killed 16 Americans. Polk asked Congress to declare war and most of the nation's legislators backed him. The war dragged on for more than a year until General Winfield Scott and his troops occupied Mexico City in September of 1847. Worn out by war, the Mexican leader, Antonio López de Santa Anna, agreed to negotiate for the territory Polk wanted.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, gave the United States territory now comprising California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, and parts of Colorado. In return for the half-million square miles of new land, the U.S. paid Mexico 15 million dollars.