

shortly afterward was appointed minister to England. He was elected vice-president for Jackson's second term, and succeeded his friend to the presidency. He was an adept in practical politics, being expert in the organization and management of parties. The importance of New York's voice in national councils made Van Buren, who was the sovereign state's spokesman, a national figure, and put him on the road to the highest preferment. But he proved himself a statesman as well as a politician, and while president, he performed the duties of his high station with wisdom and courage.

447. The Financial Panic.—The period preceding and embracing Jackson's administration had been one of great prosperity. Roads and canals were being built in all parts of the country. There was also much railway building. Such enterprises require large sums of money. The rapid material development of the country gave a headlong impulse to speculation and trade. Farms multiplied, cities sprang up, banks were everywhere. Every one seemed to be striving to become rich and to be succeeding in the effort. But the easy success led to over-confidence, to recklessness, and to ruin. Speculation ran wild; people borrowed too much; the banks loaned too willingly. The government lost large sums of money through the failure of some of the state banks. The banks of New York suspended in a body, and numbers of banks in other parts of the Union followed. Business failures were numerous, trade stopped, factories shut down, enterprises were abandoned.

448. The Sub-Treasury.—The president called an extra session of Congress and in his message to the body proposed a new treasury plan. He advocated the government's use of specie¹ only in its transactions. He thought it best to cut

¹ Specie means coin of silver or gold. Paper money is only the government's promissory note to pay in specie.

away from banks altogether and urged the building of government vaults for the safe keeping and handling of government funds by the government's own officers. A bill embodying the president's plans finally passed, in 1840, and was the beginning of our present modified, developed system. Vaults and safes were supplied in the treasury building at Washington, and in six of the principal cities of the Union "sub-treasuries" were established for government deposits and with government officers to receive and disburse funds.

449. Slavery.—The abolition agitation at the North continued and began to be of national importance. It was estimated that abolition societies contained, in 1837, one hundred and fifty thousand members. New abolition papers were established and some of the Northern states made new laws that reflected the new ideas of the emancipation crusade. Elijah Lovejoy, editor of an emancipation sheet at Alton, Illinois, while defending his press from destruction was killed by the mob. The Abolitionists used the incident for political purposes. Wendell Phillips made his first great speech in behalf of the cause to which he afterward devoted his wonderful oratorical talents, in discussing the Lovejoy matter in a public meeting in Boston.¹ Feeling at the North was divided, and the extreme wing of the Abolitionists was as bitterly condemned by the majority of its own section as by the Southern people. Congress again refused to receive the numerous emancipation petitions that came pouring in. Southern people became more and more restless under the continued and violent agitation of the Abolitionists. When a Northern mem-

¹ Phillips was a man of culture and independent character. He joined the extreme wing of the Abolition party that clamored for disunion. He refused to take the oath to support the Constitution of his country. He was afterwards a champion of the temperance movement, of the labor agitation, of the woman's rights crusade. He devoted his whole life to the advocacy of reforms of one kind or another.

ber of Congress made a bitter abolition speech in the House, Southern members rose in a body to leave the hall.¹

450. Scientific Progress. — This period of four years saw the beginning of some things that greatly aided and some that revolutionized the methods of civilized society: Morse patented his magnetic telegraph; steam vessels began to make regular and quick trips across the Atlantic; James Smithson left a fortune for founding a scientific institution in our country; Daguerre's sun-pictures began to be known and to lead the way to modern photography; bold explorers sought to satisfy an enlightened curiosity by voyages to the regions of the north and of the south poles.

451. Summary. — Speculation led to a financial panic that caused business failures all over the country. Public enterprises were abandoned and trade became stagnant. The president called an extra session of Congress and proposed a new plan for handling the public funds. We were to guard and control our own money in vaults in the treasury building in Washington and in sub-treasuries in different parts of the country. Congress approved the plan. Many people joined the anti-slavery crusade. However, the majority of the people, North and South, condemned the abolition agitation. This was a period of scientific advancement: the telegraph was patented, a bequest was received for founding a scientific institution, daguerreotypes began to be noticed.

452. Thought Questions. — Give two reasons for Van Buren's failure to be reelected. What do you consider the most important event of this administration? Why?

¹ "Slade, of Vermont, in a two hours' speech, raked the institution with a merciless severity such as that body had never experienced before." — *Schouler*. Wise, of Virginia, rose to his feet and called on his colleagues to leave the hall. But Slade was ruled out of order, and the body, amid much confusion, quickly adjourned.

HARRISON AND TYLER'S ADMINISTRATION.

One Term: 1841-1845.

453. Harrison's Death. — William Henry Harrison, of Ohio, the hero of Tippecanoe, and a veteran of the War of 1812, was put forward by the Whigs¹ for the presidency. The party supported him with the greatest enthusiasm. The most was made of his quiet and modest way of living. He was called the "Log-Cabin Candidate," and a miniature log-cabin, with a barrel of cider at the door, was a part of every popular demonstration in his support. Speakers stirred the pulse of the people with glowing accounts of his gallant military services in the early days.² He was triumphantly elected. But the old general was already in feeble health and the excitement of the campaign and the pressure of affairs at the beginning of the administration proved to be too much for his shattered strength to endure. He died April 4, after having been president but a month.³



William Henry Harrison.

454. Services and Character of John Tyler. — John Tyler, the vice-president, succeeded to the presidency. He was

¹ The National Republicans began to be called Whigs during Jackson's presidency. Clay was the leader — for a number of years, the dictator — of this party.

² The campaign cry was "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." See § 386 for an account of the battle of Tippecanoe.

³ William Henry Harrison was born in Virginia in 1773. He had been governor of Indiana Territory twelve years. He was living in Ohio at the time of his election to the presidency.

born in 1790, and was the son of a distinguished Virginia family. He had but to show ordinary ability to be sure of political preferment; but he was possessed of much more than average ability. He became a member of the Virginia Legislature at twenty-one and was reelected several times. He was elected to Congress when he was but twenty-six and served two terms. In 1825, he was elected governor of his state and



John Tyler.

was reelected on the expiration of his first term. But before the expiration of his second term, he was elected to the United States Senate. He sat in the Senate nine years, resigning in 1836, because he was not willing to vote to expunge the resolution of censure on President Jackson as the Legislature of his state had instructed him to do. In 1835, he was put forward by some of the Democratic states as a candidate for the vice-presidency, but was defeated. He was nominated for the same position on the Whig ticket, with Harrison for the head of the ticket, in 1839, and this time he was elected.

He was a man of brilliant talents, and of independent character. His acceptance of the nomination on the Whig ticket, and his succession to the presidency because of his nomination, placed him in a false position, as most of his political career had been spent in the ardent advocacy of the principles of the Democratic party.

455. The Bank Bills. — Congress, after the sweeping Whig victory, hastened to repeal the sub-treasury law enacted during

the last administration. This left the government without any system of protecting and managing its funds; but it was the purpose of Congress to provide some plan at once. Trouble arose over the selection of a system. Henry Clay, who was by common consent the leader of the party, fell back on the national bank plan and proposed to create a new bank patterned after the old United States Bank of Philadelphia. His bill, creating this bank, passed both houses; but the president sent it back with his veto. A second bill, changed to meet the president's wishes or to force his approval, favored by Clay and the Whig following, was passed. This bill was also vetoed. The party, with Clay at its head, had made the creation of a new bank part of its policy, and there was so much indignation felt at the president's course that all of his cabinet, except Daniel Webster, secretary of state, resigned their places. A plan proposed by the president did not get the support of Congress, and throughout his administration the control and preservation of the funds depended upon his own judgment. His management was unusually careful and cautious and was very successful.

456. The Ashburton Treaty. — Recently there had been many collisions between American citizens and British subjects on the Canadian borders and on the high seas. In the eyes of many, our grievances had grown to such an extent that a high-spirited nation must, to preserve its dignity, insist upon apology and redress. War with Great Britain was again threatening, and indeed imminent. After many attempts to adjust the difficulties between the two countries had failed, England sent Lord Ashburton to Washington to treat with our secretary of state in settlement of disputed points. An agreement was reached on the most pressing matters in controversy. The forty-ninth parallel was decided upon as a line of boundary between the United States and Canada, from the Great Lakes to

the Rocky Mountains; and the two countries entered into an agreement to return criminals escaped from one country to the other and to suppress the slave trade on the seas.

457. Tariff Legislation.—The compromise tariff bill of 1833 had been framed to provide for a reduction of the rate of duty year by year. In 1842, the expenditures of the government exceeded the income. The Whigs thought that the remedy for the deficit lay in a higher tariff, and accordingly a bill raising the rate was enacted.

458. The Dorr Rebellion.—In its state government, Rhode Island still followed the charter granted it by Charles II. of England. This charter granted the right to vote only to owners of real estate and their eldest sons. The result was a limited and very unequal representation. As universal suffrage was the method in every other state, there was much discontent felt here. Petitions and remonstrances proving useless, a new constitution was formed and Thomas W. Dorr was elected governor (1842) by a popular vote, most of the votes, according to the charter, being illegal. The charter or legal voters also elected a governor and contested the legality of the new constitution and of Dorr's election. Both sides took up arms. Dorr was arrested and tried for treason and sentenced to imprisonment for life. But the next year legal voters and delegates elected by those who had no right to vote, met by common consent in the same convention, and framed a new constitution which removed most of the restrictions complained of. Dorr, after a short imprisonment, was pardoned.

459. The Mormons.—Joseph Smith, a native of Vermont, produced a book which, he said, was a revelation from God. Mormon was represented as the author of the book, and the agent of the divine revelation. With this book, Smith founded a new religious sect. The people who adopted the faith were

called Mormons. The Mormons founded a settlement at Nauvoo, Illinois. One of their doctrines was that a man might have several wives at the same time. Their faith and practices were severely condemned by the people around them. Indignation rose to such a pitch that in a riot Smith was killed (1844). Under the leadership of Brigham Young, the Mormons emigrated to the desert region near Salt Lake in Utah. By bringing the water from the mountains to their barren territory they made it productive, and the Mormons were soon among the most prosperous people in the country. Salt Lake City became a rich and beautiful city.

460. The Telegraph.—Professor Morse had already secured a patent for his invention, the magnetic telegraph, but he was not able to build telegraph lines to test his instrument properly. Aid was asked of Congress. After years of waiting, \$30,000 was appropriated to build a line between Washington and Baltimore, a distance of forty miles. The line was completed in 1844, and the message, "What hath God wrought?" was sent from Washington to Baltimore by Professor Morse in the presence of many distinguished people. There are now thousands of miles of telegraph lines, connecting, in instant communication, cities and hamlets all over the world.

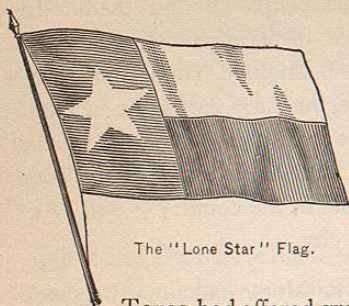


Professor Morse.

461. Extension of Territory: The Annexation of Texas.—The vast stretch of the continent bordering on the Pacific

Ocean and the Rio Grande, formerly held by Spain, now belonged to Mexico, that nation having thrown off the Spanish yoke. This territory included what is now Texas, New Mexico, Arizona,

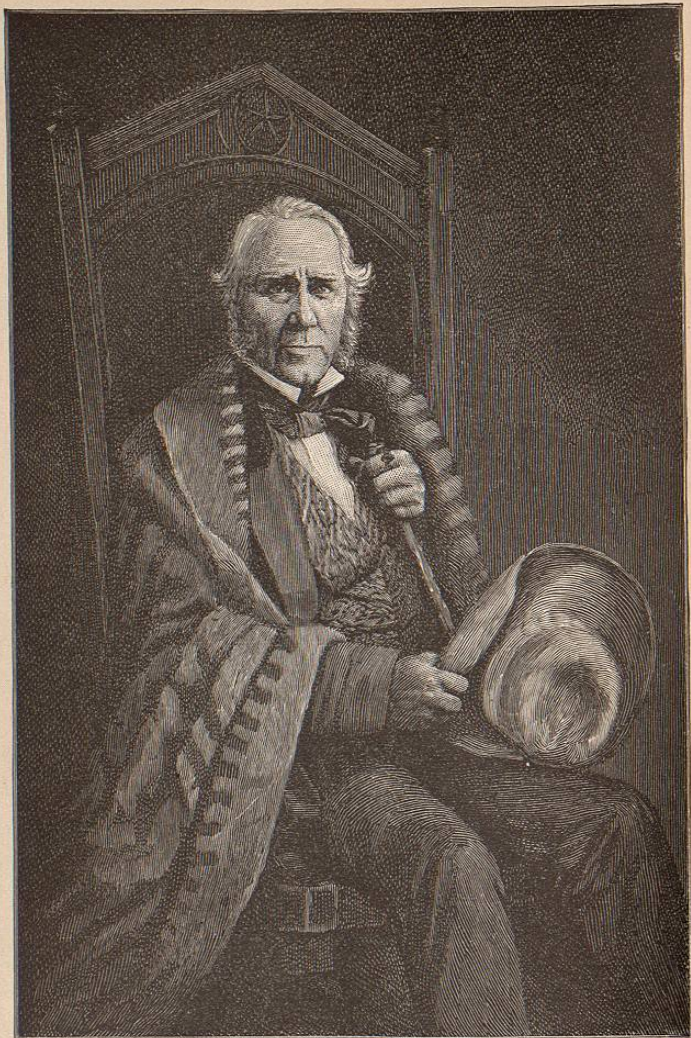
California, Nevada, Utah, and part of Colorado. Piece by piece, in one way or another, it all came into the possession of the United States. Texas was our first acquisition from it.



The "Lone Star" Flag.

The Texas Revolution. —

Mexico, in an effort to people Texas, had offered grants of land to immigrants. Some Southern states formed Texas colonies. Moses Austin of Missouri, after much discouragement, obtained permission to establish a colony of three hundred American families. But Austin died before he could execute his plan. His son, Stephen F. Austin, carried out the terms of the contract, gained other concessions from the Mexican government, and established in the province about twelve hundred families from the United States. In the course of time, settlers from the United States became more numerous in Texas than Mexicans. These pioneers in the wilderness carried with them the love of freedom and the notions of government they had imbibed in our own country. The inevitable followed. Mexico's arbitrary and imperious government and Santa Anna's attempt to overthrow the republican constitution forced the Texans into revolt. Texas' independence was declared March 2, 1836. But the Mexican yoke was thrown off only after a heroic struggle on the part of the patriot pioneers. The Texans were hardy, liberty-loving settlers, but they were poorly armed and without military training. The Mexican army was composed of regular soldiers and had the parent state to sustain it with supplies and reinforcements. The Texans fought for their rights; the



Sam Houston

Mexicans to retain their possessions. The moral advantage was on the side of the settlers and they won in the struggle. The most important events of the Texas revolution were the siege of the Alamo, the massacre of Goliad, and the battle of San Jacinto. One hundred and forty-four Texans, taking refuge in the Alamo in San Antonio, an old Spanish building combining a church and a fort, were besieged by a force of four thousand Mexicans. A small relief party of thirty-two Texans made their way to the inside of the fort. After eleven days of resistance the fort was taken by storm and every Texan soldier killed (March 6, 1836).¹ Near Goliad, Colonel Fannin, with about four hundred men, was surrounded and attacked by a force of more than two thousand Mexicans. The Texans, after a heroic resistance, felt compelled to ask for terms. Formal terms of surrender were agreed upon and signed by the commanding officers on both sides. The patriot prisoners were then marched back to Goliad. In a few days, in barbarous violation of the terms of the treaty and of the rules of civilized warfare, the Mexicans stood the captive Texans up in rows and ruthlessly shot them down. At San Jacinto (near the present city of Houston) General Sam Houston, with seven hundred Texans, charging with the battle-cry, "Remember the Alamo," "Remember Goliad," routed the Mexican army of 1500 (April 21, 1836). Santa Anna, the President of Mexico,² was taken prisoner and a treaty of peace was effected.

The Republic of Texas. — But Mexico did not acknowledge the independence of Texas, and made unsuccessful efforts afterward to conquer the state. The Texans set up a repub-

¹ Two American women, a child of each, a Mexican woman and a negro servant escaped the massacre.

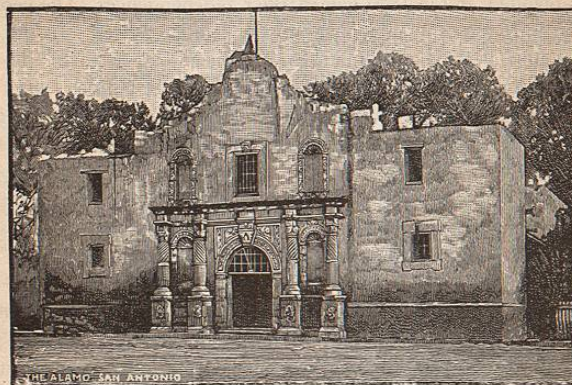
² The blood of the Texans butchered in the Alamo and at Goliad cried out for vengeance, but prisoners were treated in a humane manner. Santa Anna, in due time, was released and later served as a Mexican officer in the war between Mexico and the United States.

lican government modeled after that of the United States. The United States and England and France acknowledged her independence. During the nine years of her existence as an independent republic, Texas had the following presidents: (1) David G. Burnet (provisional); (2) Sam Houston; (3) M. B. Lamar; (4) Sam Houston; (5) Anson Jones. Henry Smith acted as provisional governor during the earlier part of the revolution.

The State of Texas. — But it was the desire of the Texans to be annexed to the United States, and advances looking toward this union had been made in Jackson's, Van Buren's, and Tyler's administrations. The United States, however, hung back; so long as Mexico regarded Texas as only a revolted province, yet to be brought back to allegiance, any interference on the part of our country could but bring on a war with Mexico. But additions to the population of Texas from the United States continued, and the feeling in favor of annexation grew stronger. President Tyler was in favor of annexation and encouraged the Texans to urge their propositions. Finally, the question became a national issue. Against the project, it was urged that Texas would add a vast territory to the slave section of our country; that we would involve ourselves in a war with Mexico by annexing her revolted province; and that we had no moral right to Texas until Mexico renounced her claims. On the other hand, it was held that the balance between the free and the slave territory ought to be preserved by this annexation; that the union would give us a vast fertile tract to add to our domain;¹ and that Texas had fairly earned her independence, which independence Mexico never would formally recognize if left to herself. The

¹ Texas contains more than 262,000 square miles of territory. It is larger than all the New England and Middle Atlantic States together. Daniel Webster said it was so large a bird could not fly over it in a week.

objections came chiefly from the North. The Southern people were in favor of annexation. Polk, the candidate put forward for the presidency by the Democrats, was in favor of annexation. Clay, the Whig candidate, was opposed to it. Polk was elected and his success was due largely to his position on this matter. As soon as the result of the election was



The Alamo, San Antonio.

known, a bill annexing Texas was brought up in Congress, was passed, and was signed by President Tyler just three days before the expiration of his term.

462. Florida and Iowa Admitted. — During the last year of this administration, Congress admitted Florida and Iowa to the Union as states: but Iowa did not comply with the terms and become a state till a year later.

463. Summary. — President Harrison died after having served but a month, and John Tyler, vice-president, became president. The sub-treasury bill of Van Buren's administration was repealed. The Whig party, which had elected Tyler, passed bills through Congress establishing a new national bank. The president vetoed the bills. Congress would not adopt the plan proposed by the president. The funds were governed only by the president's judgment and care. The Ashburton Treaty settled the north-

ern boundary of the United States as far west as the Rocky Mountains. The forty-ninth parallel was made the dividing line. The tariff rate was raised. The Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island grew out of the desire of the people for universal suffrage. The old charter was set aside and suffrage was granted as in other states. A telegraph line was built between Washington and Baltimore and the first message was sent in 1844. Texas, a Mexican province, had been colonized from our Southern states. The colonists revolted and in 1836 gained their independence. The people of Texas wished to annex their republic to the United States. In the presidential election, Polk, who was in favor of annexation, defeated Clay, who was opposed to it. Texas was annexed three days before Tyler's term expired. Florida and Iowa were admitted during the last year (1845), but Iowa did not become a state till one year later.

464. **Thought Questions.**— Contrast Tyler's popularity before and after his inauguration as president. Account for the change. Mention the important tariff bills passed in the last three administrations. How did the acquisition of Texas differ from the previous acquisitions of territory? What European first traveled through Texas? By whom was the first attempt at settlement made? By what different nations has Texas been claimed? What do you consider the most important event in this administration?

POLK'S ADMINISTRATION.

One Term: 1845-1849.

465. **Services and Character of the New President.**—

James K. Polk was born in North Carolina, in 1795, and lived to the age of fifty-four; through most of his life, his home was in Tennessee, to which state the family had removed in his boyhood. He became a member of the Tennessee Legislature at the age of 28. He was a friend of Andrew Jackson, and assisted in electing this illustrious Tennessean to the United States Senate. He became a congressman, and had fourteen years' consecutive service. He was twice elected speaker of the House. After retiring from Congress, he was elected governor of his state. He had not been publicly announced as a candidate for



James K. Polk.

the presidency when the Democratic convention met in 1844; but none of the prominent candidates could secure the necessary two-thirds vote, so Mr. Polk was put forward by his friends as a compromise candidate and was nominated. Polk was a man of ability, careful and painstaking in investigation, prompt and decided in execution. In his inaugural, he named four measures which he wished to signalize his administration.¹ He accomplished all of them.

¹ "There are four great measures which are to be the measures of my administration: One, a reduction of the tariff; another, the independent treasury; a third, the settlement of the Oregon boundary question, and lastly, the acquisition of California."— *Schouler's History of the United States*, Vol. IV, p. 498.