

**U.S. HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT  
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS  
DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2009**

## I. Reading from the Textbook

Make sure that you read the first half of “Chapter 6 – Westward Expansion and Civil War” from pp. 141-152 in Peiser and Serber’s *U.S. History and Government*. These pages focus specifically on the Westward Expansion. **There will be a quiz on Thursday!**

## II. Manifest Destiny

In the 1830s and 1840s, white American settlers began to move west of the Mississippi River. A large part of the West was covered by the Great Plains, where many Native Americans lived. In the Southwest and Far West, much of the land was owned by Mexico. In the Northwest, Great Britain claimed the Oregon Territory. Even so, white settlers seldom worried about who owned the lands into which they moved. They believed that the United States would soon take over the West. This idea, called Manifest Destiny, became popular among ordinary Americans as well as among America’s leaders. The reading below is a newspaper editorial, written in 1845, that explains Manifest Destiny.

Texas has been absorbed into [joined] the Union in the inevitable fulfillment [as part] of the general law which is rolling our population westward. . . . California will, probably, next fall away from . . . Mexico. . . . A[n] [American] population will soon be in actual occupation of California, over which it will be idle [impossible] for Mexico to dream of dominion [ruling]. . . . Our claims are based on the right of our Manifest Destiny to overspread and to

possess the whole of the continent which Providence [God] has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and . . . self-government. . . .

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Source: John L. O’Sullivan, *The Democratic Review*, New York, 1845.

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**On the back of this sheet of paper or another sheet, answer the following questions about the selection you have just read.**

1. What lands does the writer say are part of America’s Manifest Destiny?
2. What do you think might have happened when Mexico did not agree with the idea of Manifest Destiny?
3. Why do you think Americans in the 1830s and 1840s believed in Manifest Destiny?
4. Imagine that you are a member of a Plains tribe of Native Americans. Describe your feelings about the idea of Manifest Destiny.



### III. Lorenzo De Zavala

*Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821. For many years, however, the new Mexican government remained weak as different parties fought for power. Lorenzo de Zavala was a leader of Mexico's liberal party, which favored free elections and reforms to help the common people. De Zavala eventually moved to Texas, where he became the vice-president of the Republic of Texas. In this reading you will learn about Lorenzo de Zavala and the roles he played in Mexico and Texas.*

Lorenzo de Zavala, a mestizo of mixed Native American and Spanish ancestry, was born in the Yucatán region of Mexico in 1788. As a young man, de Zavala planned to become a priest. Instead, he went into politics and served for a short time as a representative from Yucatán in Spain's parliament. Later, he also served as a member of the Mexican Senate and minister of the treasury.

After the Mexican Revolution brought independence in 1821, Lorenzo de Zavala helped write Mexico's first constitution. Adopted in 1824, this constitution was modeled on the Constitution of the United States. It set up a federal system in which the central government was to share power with the Mexican states. However, it also gave Mexico's president very strong powers if the nation faced serious danger. From the start, several weak presidents allowed a strong general named Antonio López de Santa Anna to control the government.

As a leader of the liberal party, Lorenzo de Zavala fiercely opposed Santa Anna. He believed in democracy and hated rule by a *caudillo*, or strong man, like Santa Anna. De Zavala favored giving land to poor farmers. He also wanted the government to set up public schools to replace church-

run schools. De Zavala published a newspaper in which he attacked Santa Anna and his policies. In 1834, Santa Anna abolished the liberal party and exiled its leaders, including de Zavala. Forced to leave Mexico, de Zavala went to Texas, which at that time was part of the Mexican province of Coahuila.

In Texas, de Zavala quickly joined the cause of the American settlers living there. Most of these settlers also were unhappy with Santa Anna's harsh rule. In 1830, Santa Anna had forbidden any more Americans to settle in Texas. Instead, he called on Mexicans to move there. He also declared that all enslaved Africans in Texas should be freed. This angered many Texas slaveholders. When Santa Anna ended Mexico's constitution, the Texas settlers lost all hope for a voice in their government. De Zavala urged the American settlers to refuse to obey Santa Anna. He and other Mexicans joined with the American settlers as they began their fight for independence in 1836.

Lorenzo de Zavala was one of the signers of Texas's declaration of independence. He also designed the new Lone Star flag of Texas. When Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836, de Zavala was elected vice-president of the Republic of Texas. He died later that same year.

**On the back of this sheet of paper or on another sheet, answer the following questions about the selection you have just read.**

1. What policies did de Zavala favor for Mexico?
2. Why do you think de Zavala was against Santa Anna's control of the Mexican government?
3. Why do you think de Zavala helped lead the fight for Texas independence?



**Mural in the Lobby of the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building, 1964.  
Artists: Peter Hurd and Peter Rogers. Austin, Texas.**