

# The Effect of Religious Opposition on the Mexican-American War (1846-1848)

April L. Pickens  
*James Madison University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/madrush>



Part of the [History of Religion Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

April L. Pickens, "The Effect of Religious Opposition on the Mexican-American War (1846-1848)" (April 10, 2015). *MAD-RUSH Undergraduate Research Conference*. Paper 2.

<http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/madrush/2015/SocialMovements/2>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conference Proceedings at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in MAD-RUSH Undergraduate Research Conference by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [dc\\_admin@jmu.edu](mailto:dc_admin@jmu.edu).

**The Effect of Religious Opposition on the Mexican-American War  
(1846-1848)**

By April Pickens

Fall 2014, History 395: History Seminar

Taught by Dr. Arndt

**This work complies with the JMU Honor Code.**

*April Pickens*

In early 1848, President James K. Polk decided that the only way to satisfy the American public and to preserve the political careers of his administration and his party was to ratify the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and make peace with Mexico. This was a surprising position for him to take, because the same American people had elected him four years earlier in order for him to fulfill his goals of annexing Texas, acquiring California and Oregon, and claiming as much territory as the unstable new republic of Mexico was willing to relinquish. Most Americans in 1844, including Polk, believed that it was “Manifest Destiny” that the United States would eventually encompass all of North and Central America. Why, then, did the Polk administration suddenly find it so expedient to make peace with Mexico in 1848? The fact that public opinion had largely turned against the Mexican-American War was in part a strong testimony to the tireless work of a small core of Americans convinced from the outset that the war with Mexico was a violation of God’s law. Several common arguments against the war espoused by the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers, found their way into the language of most opposition groups, and were referenced frequently by politicians for and against the war. Even the “secular” opposition groups such as the abolitionists and American Peace Society had strong ties to these three Protestant denominations. Over the course of the two years that the Mexican-American War lasted, the constant attacks on its moral justification from the religious and “secular” publications and the unceasing petitions sent to Congress came to fruition in the form of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers had indirectly forced Polk and his administration to end the war.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Two useful sources for information on the Mexican-American War are Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) and John Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico 1846-1848* (New York: Random House, 1989). Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963) is the best work on Manifest Destiny. Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*

The Second Great Awakening did much to shape politics during this time period. This religious revival movement lasted from about 1790 to 1830 and transformed the way evangelical Protestants viewed their role in politics. Preachers began to place a greater emphasis on personal holiness and an earthly millennial kingdom. At the same time, the American political system was becoming more democratic, such that ordinary people had a greater say in who was elected and how the country was run. Consequently, evangelical leaders urged their congregations to participate in politics as a moral duty. If the millennium was possible here on earth, then Christians were responsible for electing leaders who would help bring this about. Also, if personal righteousness was so important, then one ought to vote for the most pious politician, not necessarily the one with the most practical and useful agenda. Because the religiously-awakened people had more power, politicians began to include currently-debated moral topics in their campaign agendas and claimed to be very pious. For instance, much of the 1844 election campaign consisted of promotions of or attacks on the character and motives of the two candidates. In this way, religious language and moral causes became more and more prominent in the political debates of the early and mid-nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

---

(Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), and Mark Noll, ed., *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), analyze the overlap of religion and politics in the nineteenth century. An excellent work on all types of American resistance to the war is John Schroeder, *Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973). Also, Samuel Eliot Morison, Frederick Merk, and Frank Freidel, *Dissent in Three American Wars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) provides more information on opposition. Clayton Ellsworth, "The American Churches and the Mexican War," *The American Historical Review* 45, no.2 (January, 1940), 301-326, accessed September 9, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1906279>, gives a thorough analysis of religious opposition. Amy Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), explains how resistance affected the war and the peace negotiations. Some of the best primary sources are the numerous newspapers and periodicals, including the *Boston Liberator*, *Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany*, *Friends' Weekly Intelligencer*, and *Advocate of Peace*. Good sources for the religious influence on political opposition to the war are the *Congressional Globe*, 29 Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> sessions as well as the memoirs and diaries of the politicians.

<sup>2</sup> This information comes largely from Carwardine's introduction, ix-xvii, and first chapter, 1-36; also 71-81.



The churches were affected as well. The same shift toward democratic participation appeared in church activities, and ordinary people with little or no theological training became preachers and religious leaders. But one of the most significant developments was the explosive growth of the religious press. Denominational papers, periodicals, and published sermons began to flood America and spread all sorts of new ideas and doctrines. This power over the public opinion later became very important in the campaign for peace during the Mexican-American War.<sup>3</sup>

But long before any campaign for peace arose, there was a campaign for war. Shortly before 1846, a hybrid political-religious idea grew out of the belief that the millennial kingdom was possible on earth. If the perfect Christian government was possible on earth now, then Christians ought to do their best to bring it about. They should spread the Christian empire of America, with its pure ideals of Protestantism and democracy, to the entire western hemisphere. In 1845, the editor John L. O'Sullivan crystalized this prevalent belief and called it "Manifest Destiny."<sup>4</sup> According to O'Sullivan,

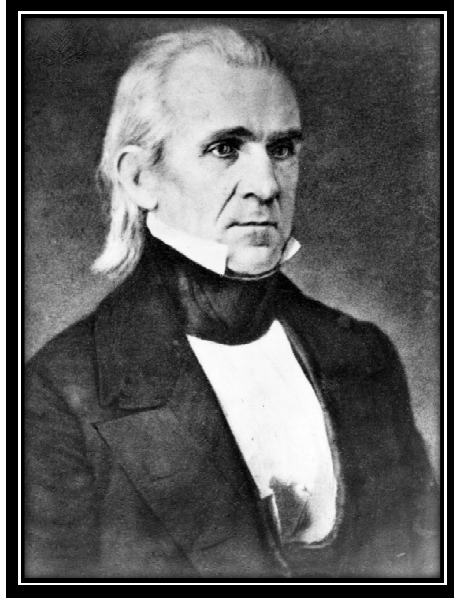
Why, were other reasoning wanting, in favor of now elevating this question of reception of Texas into the Union, out of the lower region of our past party dissensions, up to its proper level of high and broad nationality, it surely is to be found, found abundantly, in the manner in which other nations have undertaken to intrude themselves into it, between us and the proper parties to the case, in a spirit of hostile interference against us, for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 220-226.

<sup>4</sup> There were variations on the idea of Manifest Destiny. Some believed God had given the United States only North America from coast to coast. Others believed that eventually all of North, Central, and South America would belong to the States. For detailed explanations of this phrase and its origin, see Merk, 24, and Julius Pratt, "The Origin of 'Manifest Destiny,'" *The American Historical Review* 32, No. 4 (July, 1927): 795-798, accessed September 17, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1837859>.

<sup>5</sup> "Annexation," *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review (1837-1851)*, July 5, 1845, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/126367973?accountid=11667>.



Above left is a sketch of John O'Sullivan, the man who first used the term "Manifest Destiny." From the *Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest*, "John Louis O'Sullivan," accessed 15 Nov 2014, [http://quest.eb.com/#/search/309\\_2915408/1/309\\_2915408/cite](http://quest.eb.com/#/search/309_2915408/1/309_2915408/cite). Above right is President James K. Polk. *Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest*, "President James K Polk 1860," accessed 15 Nov 2014, [http://quest.eb.com/#/search/300\\_348719/1/300\\_348719/cite](http://quest.eb.com/#/search/300_348719/1/300_348719/cite).

This doctrine was so popular, that any presidential candidate who did not pledge to further America's "Manifest Destiny" immediately doomed his political career. In the 1844 presidential election, the very popular Whig politician Henry Clay lost to an obscure Democrat, James K. Polk, because Polk advocated Manifest Destiny and Clay did not. Polk's goals were to claim the Oregon Territory, annex Texas, acquire California, and wrest as much territory from Mexico as possible. And remarkably, during his single term as president Polk accomplished all of these goals with the exception that he was forced to settle for less of Mexico than he had hoped. If Polk was accomplishing exactly what the American voters had desired, why had they turned against him in such numbers by 1848? The answer lay largely in the anti-war campaigns of the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 23 and 63; Howe, 708; James K. Polk, *The Diary of James K. Polk: During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, edited by Milo Quaife, reprint (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1910), 1: 496-497. Polk says

When Polk took office in 1845, he inherited a delicate situation with regard to Texas and Mexico. After the Texans defeated the Mexicans at San Jacinto in 1836, captive Mexican General Santa Anna had signed the Treaties of Velasco promising Texas its independence and possession of Mexican territory down to the Rio Grande. But because both Texas and Mexico violated the conditions of the treaties, neither party definitively ratified them, and the Mexicans disputed both the boundary and the independence of Texas. But, assuming its independence, Texas voluntarily annexed itself to the United States during the administration of Polk's predecessor, President John Tyler. When he took office, Polk took steps to actualize this annexation, but in the process greatly offended Mexico. First, he sent General Zachary Taylor and his troops onto disputed territory between the Rivers Nueces and Rio Grande claimed by both Texas and Mexico, and only afterwards attempted to negotiate with Mexico by sending a known spy William Parrot and a brusque Congressman John Slidell to discuss the purchase of California and New Mexico in return for Mexican debts and a peaceful settlement of boundary issues with Mexico. The rather unstable Mexican government refused to negotiate. In response to this refusal, Polk began discussing with his cabinet a declaration of war.<sup>7</sup> Even before he learned of the Mexican attack on U.S. troops, Polk entered the following into his diary:

I expressed my opinion that we must take redress for the injuries done us into our own hands, that we had attempted to conciliate Mexico in vain, and had forborne until forbearance was no longer either a virtue or patriotic; and that in my opinion we must treat all nations, whether great or small, strong or weak, alike, and that we should take a

---

to his cabinet on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1846, that "As to the boundary which we should establish by a Treaty of Peace, I remarked that I preferred the 26° to any boundary North of it..."

<sup>7</sup> Mark Crawford, *Encyclopedia of the Mexican-American War*, (Santa-Barbara, California: ABC-Clio, 1999), xix; The Treaty of Velasco, May 14, 1836, accessed November 8, 2014, from <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/velasco-public-1.html>. Article 3 of this agreement signed by the Mexican President Santa Anna said that "The Mexican troops will evacuate the territory of Texas passing to the other side of the Rio Grande del Norte"; information accessed from the Texas government website on November 15, 2014, from <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/velasco-01.html#main-content> (including copies of both the public and secret Treaties of Velasco); Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 77; Howe, 734-735; Polk, *Diary*, 1:93.

bold and firm course towards Mexico. I first asked Mr. Buchanan his opinion. He concurred with me, and thought I [should] recommend a declaration of war.”<sup>8</sup>

On April 25, 1846, the Mexicans responded to a virtual American siege of Matamoros (which was indisputably on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande) by attacking General Taylor’s troops and killing sixteen of them. When he received the news of this attack, Polk requested that Congress declare war. According to him, “As the 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.” He asked Congress to “recognise [sic] the existence of the war, and to place at the disposition of the Executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor, and thus hastening the restoration of peace.” Polk’s administration only permitted Congress two hours of deliberation concerning the declaration of war, and one and a half of these hours consisted of reading the proposed declaration. Several Congressmen objected to this short time span, but in the end the war declaration passed in both the Senate and the House. On May 13, 1846, Polk signed the bill which Congress had ratified. The war had begun.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Polk, *Diary*, 1:354.

<sup>9</sup> From the conclusions drawn by Amy Greenberg in her book *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012), 23; *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 29<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 783, accessed November 1, 2014, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>; Howe, 740; Polk, *Diary*, 1:395.



A map showing the disputed territory into which General Taylor was sent. The line below the light lavender is the River Nueces, and the line below the dark lavender is the Rio Grande. Accessed November 1, 2014 from <http://users.humboldt.edu/ogayle/hist110/unit3/MexicanAmericanWar.html>.

This dubious beginning to the war engendered vehement opposition. But it was relatively disjointed, with no common purpose or plan of action to force Polk to end the war. Not until the religious leaders—particularly the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers—began their anti-war campaign did the opposition really come to the attention of the American policy makers. Because of the Second Great Awakening, religion already occupied a prominent place in the workings of politics. Admittedly, the leaders of most denominations (including Southern Baptists, Methodists, Old School Presbyterians and Catholics) exhorted Americans to obey and support their government either by enlisting in the army or funding it. But these denominations were not always convincing, especially when they glossed over the questionable circumstances in which the war had begun. Their arguments could not hold the public opinion in the face of the gory realities of war. Instead, Americans turned to the constant, whole-hearted condemnations

of the war advocated from day one by three denominations in particular, the Unitarians, the Congregationalists, and the Quakers or Friends.<sup>10</sup> Their preachers, newspapers, and other publications unanimously decried the war and urged Americans to demand that Congress make peace immediately. By the testimony of George Beckwith, himself a Congregationalist and also a member of the American Peace Society, the “religious press has...generally taken a firm, decided stand on the side of peace; and we trust that we shall not rely in vain upon its spontaneous, efficient seconding of our present endeavor to rally good men of all parties for the speedy termination of this war.” In the same article, Beckwith published a sample petition to Congress that he urged all good Americans to sign and send in to their leaders:

The undersigned, &c., painfully impressed with the sins and calamities inseparable from war in any case, deeply deploring especially the manifold evils already occasioned by the present war with Mexico, and dreading still more the evils which its continuance threatens to both the belligerent parties; regarding the sword as neither a christian [sic] nor a rational arbiter of right, and believing it incumbent particularly on christian [sic] Republics in such an age as this, to employ other and better means for the adjustment of their difficulties; respectfully but very earnestly petition your Honorable Bodies to use all your constitutional powers for a speedy termination of this war by withdrawing our troops within the limits of our own territory, and then settling the points in dispute either by negotiation [sic], or by some form of fair and honorable reference.

---

<sup>10</sup> For more information about the history and beliefs of these three denominations, see Robert Baird, *Religion in the United States of America* (1844, repr., New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969); Frank Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951); William Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier: 1783-1850, Volume III The Congregationalists: A Collection of Source Materials* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939); Conrad Wright, ed., *American Unitarianism: 1805-1865* (Boston: The Massachusetts Society and Northeastern University Press, 1989); Thomas Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); and Hugh Barber and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

The three denominations mentioned above made ceaseless appeals to the populace in their press, sent constant petitions to Congress, and instructed all other good Americans to do the same.<sup>11</sup>

Among the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers, there were several common arguments against the war. These same arguments found their way into the “secular” opposition, and were referenced frequently by leading politicians, either sincerely by anti-war politicians or mockingly by pro-war politicians. In both cases, the very fact that the politicians were familiar with these arguments testified to their prominence in American opinion. These arguments included a belief that all slavery was wrong and the Mexican War was waged for the purpose of extending slavery; a belief that all war was sinful; a belief that the Mexican-American War in particular was unjustifiable because of the manner in which it was begun and continued; a belief that Manifest Destiny was an erroneous doctrine; and a belief that the politicians backing the war had evil motives. Each of the three denominations, Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers, objected to the war for some or all of these reasons, and let their opinions be known through their preachers and publications.

Congregationalists were theological descendants of the first Puritans and still were centralized in and dominated the Northeast, including about 1,500 churches and 160,000 members. They opposed the war for four of the reasons listed above: they thought that all war was wrong, that the idea of Manifest Destiny was incorrect, that the institution of slavery was evil (and that the primary purpose of the Mexican war was to extend slave territory), and that Polk and his friends had provoked the war in very dubious circumstances. Or, to rephrase this

---

<sup>11</sup>Ellsworth, 302-308; George Beckwith, “Renewed Petitions for Peace with Mexico,” *Boston Recorder*, (November 4, 1847), accessed November 2, 2014, [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=D5DL4FXEMTQxNDE5MDIwNi4yMzY3Mzk6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4zNQ&p\\_action=doc&s\\_lastnonissuequeryname=11&d\\_viewref=search&p\\_queryname=11&p\\_docnum=2&toc=true&p\\_docref=v2:109E455E6E63DEA8@EANX-13E799890444CDD0@2395970-13E6A2F04A520378@1-13F088EC9C2D9951@Renewed%20Petitions%20for%20Peace%20with%20Mexico](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=D5DL4FXEMTQxNDE5MDIwNi4yMzY3Mzk6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4zNQ&p_action=doc&s_lastnonissuequeryname=11&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=11&p_docnum=2&toc=true&p_docref=v2:109E455E6E63DEA8@EANX-13E799890444CDD0@2395970-13E6A2F04A520378@1-13F088EC9C2D9951@Renewed%20Petitions%20for%20Peace%20with%20Mexico).

last belief, they thought that this *particular* war was especially wrong because it was without just cause.<sup>12</sup>

In an effort to persuade their flocks and the American people at large that the war was wrong and must be stopped, they flooded their copious religious newspapers and periodicals with arguments against the war. A writer for the *Oberlin Evangelist* makes use of two of the above arguments to condemn the war: extension of slavery and Manifest Destiny.

One day she [America] bemoans the ills and curses of slavery and her own bitter lot; anon she rocks the continent and immolates hecatombs of her brave sons in war, that she may seize on whole provinces, from which to chase away Liberty, and make room therein for more American Slavery! And many of the profound statesmen of our Union deem this the glorious mission of the American people! Our high destiny—in their view—is to withstand the free spirit of the age and rush to the rescue of Oppression. The foul spirit of servile oppression has few in all the earth to stand in her behalf, to push her claims, and enlarge her area; let Americans heed the summons and haste to her rescue!<sup>13</sup>

But some of the most vehement condemnations came from the sermons of Congregationalist preachers. Horace Bushnell, a Congregational minister, lecturer, and writer in Connecticut, attacked the war on one of the common platforms: the inherent wickedness of slavery. He said of the war,

if it was not purposely begun, many are visibly determined shall be, a war for the extension of slavery. It was no one political party, as some pretend, who made this war, but it was the whole southwest and west rather of all parties, instigated by a wild and riotous spirit of adventure, which no terms of reason or of chrisitan [sic] prudence and humanity could check. And if this war results, as probably it may, in the acquisition of a vast western territory, then is our great pasture ground of barbarism so much to be enlarged, the room to run wild extended, the chances of final anarchy and confusion multiplied.

---

<sup>12</sup>Baird, 507-508; Sweet, 3, 11.

<sup>13</sup>“From the Oberlin Evangelist. Merited Rebuke,” *Liberator* (December 31, 1847), accessed October 26, 2014, <http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/11C1A62EC0760AC0/0FA01CB257ABD8C6>.



Evidently, Bushnell was willing to suppose that Polk and his administration did not begin the war solely to extend slave-territory. But extension of slave territory would be the inevitable result of the war if the United States won and gained new territory.<sup>14</sup>

Another prominent Congregationalist, Rufus Clark, attacked the Mexican War in particular, on the grounds that it was unjust. Because there was no adequate cause for the war, it was not the patriotic duty of Americans to fight in it. In his discourse titled “What Is Patriotism?” Clark asserted that a patriotic man is not someone

who holds the lives of his fellow-citizens as of little value, who is ready, in a moment of caprice or ambition, to plunge a great people into the evils and horrors of war; who would have thousands of men and millions of treasure appropriated to carry on a contest, the causes of which are too delicate to admit of being too closely scrutinized. No; he is the man who, in settling difficulties with foreign nations, would resort to negotiation or arbitration, or at least, not lift the sword, until all other means of settlement and defence [sic] had failed. He would not expose to injury one of the millions of his countrymen, while it was within the bounds of possibility to avoid it.

Stated less obliquely, Clark was accusing Polk and the war supporters of recklessly sacrificing the lives of Americans “for their own aggrandizement.” No sufficient provocation existed to warrant this particular war, but rather, it was concocted by Polk.<sup>15</sup>

But the Congregationalists were neither alone nor the most vehement in their attacks on the war. By the testimony of supporters of the war and opponents alike, Unitarians were the most consistently outspoken anti-war religious group. The Unitarians used the same basic accusations against the war—that all war was wrong, that the Mexican war was not justified, that it was for the extension of slavery, and that the whole idea of America’s Manifest Destiny to

---

<sup>14</sup>E. Brooks Holifield, “Bushnell, Horace,” *American National Biography Online* (February 2000), accessed November 14, 2014, <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00219.html>; Horace Bushnell, *Barbarism the First Danger: A Discourse for Home Missions* (New York: Printed for the American Home Missionary Society, 1847), 20, accessed November 3, 2014, <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY103636477&srctp=a&ste=14>.

<sup>15</sup>Rufus Clark, “What Is Patriotism?” *Advocate of Peace*, (November and December, 1847), 122, accessed November 3, 2014, [https://archive.org/stream/jstor-27891055/27891055\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/jstor-27891055/27891055_djvu.txt).

expand was wrong. But they were even more vocal and determined in their opposition. As a result of the widespread splintering of denominations in the Second Great Awakening, the Unitarians had broken away from Congregationalists over doctrinal issues in 1825, but still held many of the same views, including the same opinion of the Mexican War.<sup>16</sup>

As with the Congregationalists, the Unitarians also used their many religious publications in their campaign against the war. Their *Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany* tried to argue against the war from a politically neutral stance. The writer of an article titled “The Mexican War” claimed that this particular war was not necessary. He first established some common ground with his audience by stating that “War is an evil, and every body [sic] knows it,” and “It produces and scatters abroad all other evils.” He did not deny that war was sometimes necessary, but “it can be justified on principles of morality or of sound policy only in extreme cases,—the most extreme cases.” The Mexican War, in his mind, was not such a case. He believed that all Americans should petition for its immediate termination because, no matter whose fault the war was, it was not unavoidable or necessary. In his words, “it did not grow out of circumstances creating a moral or political necessity.” Nor was it too late to end a war that had already begun. “That which ought not to be begun, unless an extreme case can be made out, should not be continued, unless the strongest reasons can be presented in justification of its continuance.” The author of this article then went on to explain why he believed that war itself was generally wrong; but his general appeal was that the Mexican War was not justified, because it was not a matter of extreme necessity or of national security.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Ellsworth, 315; Mead, 66, 179.

<sup>17</sup> G. S. E., “ART. VIII.—The Mexican War,” *Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany (1844-1857)* 44, no. 1 (January, 1848), 126-127, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/126064758?accountid=11667>.

But again, the most powerful advocates for ending the war were the Unitarian preachers. And among their anti-war preachers, the chief spokesman was Theodore Parker. Parker, a Massachusetts pastor, was originally a Congregationalist but sided with the Unitarians when the denomination split. His beliefs were extremely liberal, even more so than many of his fellow Unitarians, and he heavily emphasized political and social involvement for Christians. His criticism of the war arose primarily from a belief that all war was wrong and harmful to both the conquerors and the conquered. He claimed that war took men away from necessary labor back at home and taught them to murder. Parker also saw the Mexican conflict as a war of aggression by a stronger country against a weaker one, and a war for the primary purpose of extending the infamous institution of slavery. At an anti-war meeting in February 1847, he articulated these beliefs:<sup>18</sup>

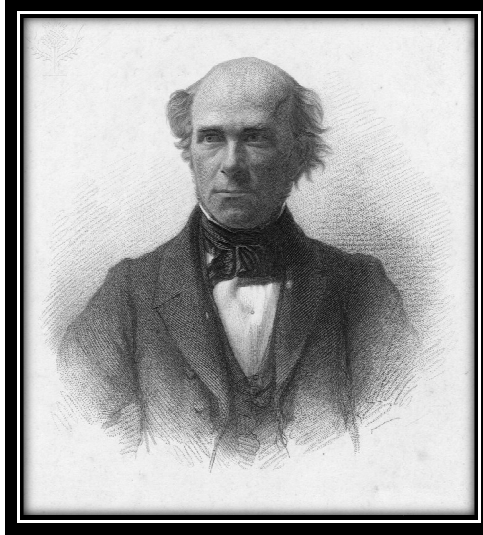
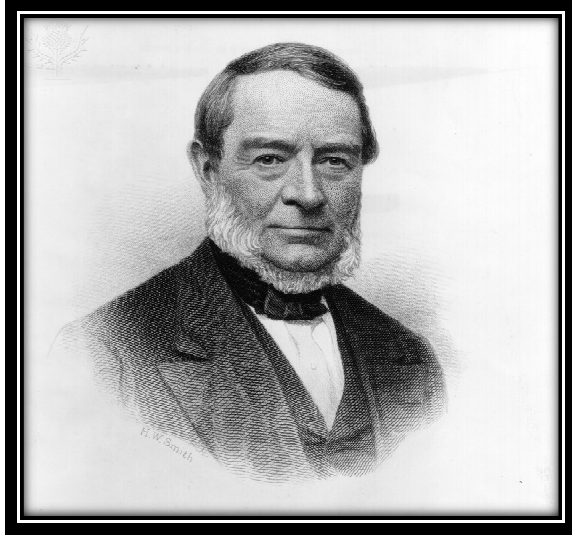
Men, needed to hew wood and honestly serve society, are marching about your streets; they are learning to kill men, men who never harmed us nor them; learning to kill their brothers. It is a mean and infamous war we are fighting. It is a great boy fighting a little one, and that little one feeble and sick. What makes it worse is, the little boy is in the right, and the big boy is in the wrong, and tells solemn lies to make his side seem right. He wants, besides, to make the small boy pay the expenses of the quarrel.

And later in the same speech, he stated that the war was waged “for a mean and infamous purpose, for the extension of slavery.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Schroeder, 113; Henry Warner Bowden, "Parker, Theodore," *American National Biography Online* (February 2000), accessed November 14, 2014 from <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01925.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Theodore Parker, "Speech Delivered at the Anti-war Meeting, in Faneuil Hall, February 4, 1847," *The Collected Works of Theodore Parker: Containing His Theological, Polemical, and Critical Writings, Sermons, Speeches, and Addresses, and Literary Miscellanies*, ed. Francis Cobbe, (London:Trübner & Co., 1863-1879), 4:32-33, accessed November 1, 2014, <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY105964560&srcht=a&ste=14>.



Above are portraits of two Unitarian ministers. On the left is Samuel J. May, one of the prominent Unitarian opponents of the war. *Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest*, "Samuel J. May," accessed November 15, 2014, from [http://quest.eb.com/#/search/309\\_2915505/1/309\\_2915505/cite](http://quest.eb.com/#/search/309_2915505/1/309_2915505/cite). On the right is Theodore Parker, from *Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest*, "Theodore Parker," accessed 14 Nov 2014, [http://quest.eb.com/#/search/115\\_860798/1/115\\_860798/cite](http://quest.eb.com/#/search/115_860798/1/115_860798/cite). Hulton Archive/ Getty Images/ Universal Images Group.

But Parker was not alone in castigating the Mexican War and its supporters. Samuel J. May, another Massachusetts Unitarian minister, was already an advocate of the many reform movements in America at that time, including the abolitionist (he worked closely with William Lloyd Garrison and helped found several abolitionist societies in New England in the 1830s), and the pacifist movements. Because of his abolitionist views, he opposed even the annexation of Texas because he feared it would become another slave state. In an anti-annexation meeting his anti-slavery motives against any territorial expansion became evident as he railed against the “disastrous compromise which was made by the framers of our Constitution,” (referring to the two-thirds compromise that perpetuated slavery).<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>Donald Yacovone, "May, Samuel Joseph," *American National Biography Online* (February 2000), accessed November 14, 2014, <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00454.html>; Samuel J. May, "Extract," *The Liberty Bell by Friends of Freedom (1839-1858)* (Jan 01, 1846): 73. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/90639646?accountid=11667>.

When the Mexican war began, May argued from a pacifist stance, claiming that the United States' entrance into such a war against "a sister republic" was the inevitable result of the active cultivation of a militia and a general glorification of the military, especially in the southern states. He deplored how willingly the United States sent volunteers and support into the war. Nor did May neglect to rebuke the churches (probably referring to those denominations who took ambiguous or pro-war stands). The churches, said May, failed to preach against war, which he defines as "human butchery."<sup>21</sup> In his words,

More than all, the religion of our country has favored the military. Too many of the professed ministers of the Prince of Peace have baptized 'the abomination of desolation' [meaning war, according to May] with their prayers, and have never explicitly condemned war. A few individuals indeed, of several of the sects, have borne a noble testimony against the savage custom. But the body of every religious denomination, (excepting the Quakers) have uniformly given their countenance to war. The utter inconsistency between fighting and the christian [sic] spirit, has not been faithfully pointed out, if indeed it has been clearly seen by many of our teachers of religion.—The fact that a man was a soldier has never been known to prevent his acceptance into any church as a christian [sic], (excepting the Quaker;) and not a few parents, accounted followers of Christ, have been eager to get their sons educated at West Point, or to obtain appointments for them in the army or navy, where their special duty would be to learn, and then hold themselves in readiness, at any time when called upon, to practise [sic] the horrid arts of *human butchery*.<sup>22</sup>

As can be seen from the above quote, May's pacifist doctrine sprang from a belief that murder and war were no different. He said that

a man commits as great a wrong in the sight of God, who murders his fellow being on the battle field, as if he murdered him on any other field; just as great a wrong when he fires the house of an enemy, as when he applies the torch to that of a neighbor; just as great a wrong if he helps to pillage the inhabitants, and ravish the women, of a town in Mexico, as if he should do, or countenance the same deeds in any town of New York. And we shall find, when our soldiers return to our midst again, that many of them will forget the distinction we have presumed to make.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Samuel J. May, "Reformatory," *Liberator (1831-1865)* 17, no. 51 (Dec 17, 1847): 204, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91187612?accountid=11667>.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>23</sup>May, "Reformatory," 204.

This last ominous warning revealed May's fear that the war was turning men into criminals who would commit the same atrocities against their fellow Americans as they learned to commit against the Mexicans.

But besides his anti-slavery and anti-war convictions, Samuel J. May also considered the particular war with Mexico “unnecessary, unrighteous, atrocious...” He claimed that the United States had no righteous path to take in this war except to recall all troops from Mexico and “confess before God and the whole world that we have done a grievous wrong, and make what amends we may to bleeding Mexico.” And May even made a subtle attack on Manifest Destiny in his sermon. If America's mission was to spread liberty and democracy, then why was it “holding three millions of our people in abject slavery, and trying to perpetuate the curse, and to extend its blighting influence”? How would Mexico see the United States as a dispenser of liberty if “We have wrested from her a fair portion of her domain, and given it up to slaveholders”? The United States had “sent our armies to desolate her fields, batter down her cities, menace even her hallowed capital—we have butchered her citizens, burnt up their houses, and ravished their women.” Was this, asked May, the democracy and Protestantism with which the United States hoped to bless the rest of the world?<sup>24</sup>

Because of the association between religion and politics, May saw it as the duty of all true Christians to petition and persuade their government to end such an atrocious war. He knew that it would be difficult to persuade Congress to do this, but he urged his audience to “do all you can to induce our government to repent. Memorialize Congress. Remonstrate with the President. If you do not move them, in the way they should go, you will at least have the consciousness of having done your duty—of having done what you could to stay in its course this horrid war...”

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

In this same speech, May praised those politicians who took a stand against the war, including Henry Clay. According to May, Clay's resolutions against the war "present by far the most explicit and most just views that have hitherto been given by any of our distinguished politicians."<sup>25</sup>

Although the Quakers (or Society of Friends) had no fiery spokesmen, they were a crucial force in the opposition both because of their repeated appeals to the American public and more importantly because of their constant petitions sent to Congress and politicians. Just recently in the 1820s, some branches of the Quakers had become extremely involved in the wave of reform movements including abolition and nonresistance (which was basically pacifism). Because they did not believe in ordained ministers, the Quakers did not have prominent speakers. But they sent numerous petitions to Congress and used their publications to urge the American populace to do the same. The common themes in their anti-war arguments were that slavery was wrong and the Mexican war was intended to spread slavery, and that all war is evil.<sup>26</sup>

To prove the inherent wickedness of war, Quakers pointed to the atrocities committed in the Mexican War. They called it "a barbarous contest with a neighboring nation." Like Samuel May of the Unitarians, the Quakers saw no difference between murder and war. They claimed that there was no distinction between how an individual should act and how a nation should behave. In their own words, war was "wholesale murders and national quarrels."<sup>27</sup>

Their publications contained numerous appeals to the average American to petition the government for a cessation of hostilities. In the *Friends' Weekly Intelligencer*, the Quakers

---

<sup>25</sup> May, "Reformatory," 204.

<sup>26</sup> Hamm, 13, 35, 38-45, 86; *Cong. Globe*, 29 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 781, 950; Barber, 4, 7-8; Ellsworth, 317.

<sup>27</sup> "A Few Words about the War," *The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal (1827-1906)* (November 21, 1846), 71, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91231238?accountid=11667>.

noted how their constant petitions had achieved an effect: "...we hear from prominent political leaders open condemnation of the origin [sic] and purposes of the war, and the expression of strong desires that it shall be brought to a speedy close..." They went on to note how the American people were taking action as well: "Parties are rapidly forming on the issue of the continuance or cessation of hostilities, and the present session of Congress is looked to with deep interest by all classes."<sup>28</sup>

The Quakers also frequently published excerpts from others' speeches against the war, including those of politicians. In the following from *The Friend*, J. G. Giddings of the House of Representatives was primarily speaking against the enormous expenses of the Mexican War. But he added that "The effect which this war is destined to exert on the morals of our people is far more to be deplored than its effect upon property." Giddings went on to detail the horrors inherent in all wars (which validated the Quaker belief that war itself was wrong). Nor did the representative neglect to mention the unjust beginning to the war: "Our troops had invaded Mexico." In this way, by publishing the eloquent speeches of others, the Quakers filled the gap left by their own lack of prominent speakers and made known their adamant disapproval of the Mexican War.<sup>29</sup>

Although these three denominations were not alone in decrying the Mexican War, they were so intertwined with all of the other opposition groups that their influence is undeniable. Frequently, those who masterminded the "non-religious" opposition had close ties with these denominations, or were even Unitarian and Congregationalist ministers. The arguments that the

---

<sup>28</sup> "Article 1 -- no Title." *Friends' Weekly Intelligencer (1844-1853)* 4, no. 37 (Dec 11, 1847): 293. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91274522?accountid=11667>.

<sup>29</sup> "Mexican War. Speech of J. G. Giddings," *The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal*, January 30, 1847, 146, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91229266?accountid=11667>.



“secular” groups used against the war were largely identical to the religious. The abolitionists did not support the war because of their conviction that slavery was evil. They too believed the entire Mexican War was a scheme by Polk and his southern co-conspirators to add vast new slave states. The Unitarian minister Samuel J. May was deeply involved in this cause, and was a friend of the vehement abolitionist leader and editor of the Boston *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison. The primary reason most abolitionists came from the Northeast was the strong presence of religious sects (like the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers) who considered slavery morally wrong.

But among the “secular” opposition, the American Peace Society was most directly influenced by the religious denominations. This group, founded in 1828 by William Ladd for the purpose of uniting several smaller pacifist organizations and anti-war evangelicals, believed that all war was sinful, hurtful, and unnecessary. A prominent member of the society, Jonathan P. Blanchard, said, “To be sure, according to the New Testament, war—at least such a war—is forbidden by Christ, is a violation of the law of God, a rebellion against his authority...” Blanchard was heavily influenced by the Congregationalists and their various reform movements (including their anti-slavery views) while attending Middlebury College in Vermont, and later became a Congregationalist minister. Not only did the American Peace Society share some of the same spokesmen as the anti-war religious denominations, but they also engaged in the same tactic of sending petitions to Congress. Summarizing their beliefs in a proposed petition to Congress, they said that they “regard[ed] the sword as neither a christian [sic] nor a rational arbiter of right, and believing it incumbent particularly on christian Republics in such an age as this, to employ other and better means for the adjustment of their difficulties.” Some sections of

the American Peace Society even urged complete disarmament of the United States. But all unconditionally urged the cessation of hostilities with Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

Another prominent religious figure who was also a member of the American Peace Society was George C. Beckwith, a Congregationalist. He expressed the Society's views on the war in an article of an 1847 edition of the *Boston Recorder*. He urged all Americans "especially to those who are also professed followers of the Prince of peace"<sup>31</sup> to send petitions to the soon-to-assemble Congress for the "speedy termination of this war." He did not want to condemn how it began, but said that "every one should, as all good men must, desire most fervently to see this work of carnage and devastation, of crime and misery, brought to an immediate close." He said that in the war "enough of blood has been shed, enough of property wasted, enough of suffering inflicted, enough of lamentation and woe spread among the families of these sister Republics. Religion, humanity, patriotism, all unite in demanding immediate peace..." In short, he argued that the war should be stopped because of the deaths, theft, and suffering. He also added that the "unnatural conflict" would bring "irreparable injury" to both countries and "deep

---

<sup>30</sup>*Encyclopedia of World Biography*, 2nd ed., (Detroit: Gale, 2004), s.v. "William Ladd," 9:149, accessed November 22, 2014, [http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3404703670&v=2.1&u=viva\\_jmu&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=1e5011c763846cca0700c7577de00a35](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3404703670&v=2.1&u=viva_jmu&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=1e5011c763846cca0700c7577de00a35); Blanchard, "Responsibility"; Richard S. Taylor, "Blanchard, Jonathan," *American National Biography Online* (February 2000), accessed November 15, 2014 from <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00143.html>; Beckwith, "Renewed Petitions"; Merle Curti, *The American Peace Crusade 1815-1860*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1929), 42, 48, 225.

<sup>31</sup> The title "Prince of Peace" is the name that Isaiah gives to Christ in Isaiah 9:6-7. In this passage, Isaiah says, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end." (*English Standard Version*) In using this name for Christ, Beckwith interpreted this passage to mean that Christ had come to establish peace on earth now, rather than in a future millennial kingdom.

lasting disgrace to the cause of free, popular government which they chiefly represent before the world.”<sup>32</sup>

Having painted such a gory picture of the Mexican War, Beckwith then claimed that a united resistance would eventually force the hand of President Polk and Congress. He said that if popular opinion was united against the war, then “the men at the helm of the State, whose business it is, would soon find a way to get peace.”<sup>33</sup>

The main arguments of the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers became so prevalent that the pro-war popular press found it necessary to publish extensive rebuttals to the evangelicals’ attacks on the war. In New York’s *Plattsburg Republican*, the writer of an article titled “Whig Opposition to the War” made reference to at least two of the major arguments advanced by the religious denominations. When he mentioned that the Whig editor of the *Burlington Free Press*, “*cantingly and hypocritically alleges that it is a Presidential war for slavery and nothing else,*” he referenced the common attacks that Polk started the war, and that the object of the war was to extend slave territory.<sup>34</sup>

In light of the prominent role religion played after the Second Great Awakening, and the common arguments found in both the religious and “secular” opposition groups, one can conclude that the opposition was driven primarily by the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers. A cursory glance at the sequence of outward events leading to the Treaty of Guadalupe

---

<sup>32</sup> Beckwith, “Renewed Petitions.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> “Whig Opposition To The War,” New York *Plattsburgh Republican* (April 24, 1847), accessed November 16, 2014, [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=N5CX57ELMTQxNjE0Mzg1Ny45NTQ0MzE6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4zNA&p\\_action=doc&s\\_lastnonissuequeryname=15&d\\_viewref=search&p\\_queryname=15&p\\_docnum=15&p\\_docref=v2:134048CBC59A89A9@EANX-1341A2600730F528@2395776-13418E4912D82860@1-13807053CCCC839B@Whig%20Opposition%20To%20The%20War](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=N5CX57ELMTQxNjE0Mzg1Ny45NTQ0MzE6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4zNA&p_action=doc&s_lastnonissuequeryname=15&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=15&p_docnum=15&p_docref=v2:134048CBC59A89A9@EANX-1341A2600730F528@2395776-13418E4912D82860@1-13807053CCCC839B@Whig%20Opposition%20To%20The%20War).

Hidalgo gives little insight into the role of the opposition. But a closer examination of the thoughts and motives of the politicians at work reveals an underlying theme of wariness at the growing popular discontent with the war.

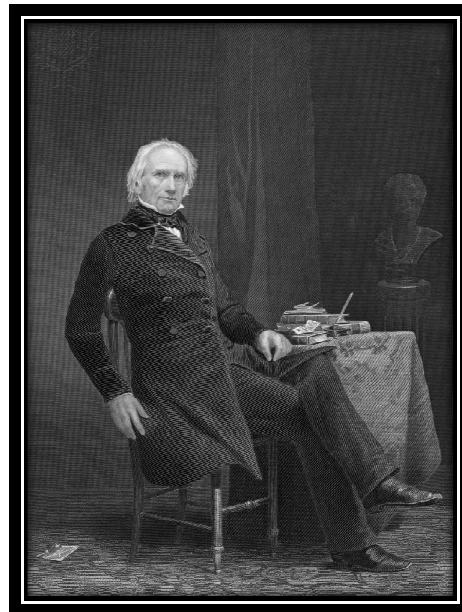
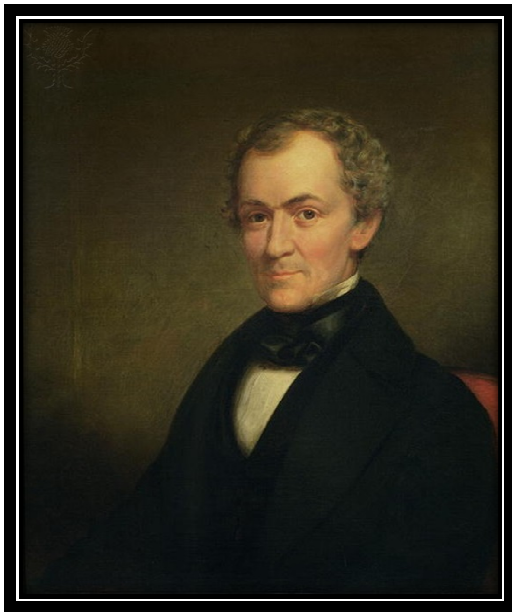
In 1847, Polk asked his Secretary of State James Buchanan to take a treaty down to the Mexican government. Buchanan refused, but suggested instead the chief clerk of the State Department, Nicholas P. Trist, who had formerly held the posts of U.S. consul to Havana, Cuba, member of the State Department under President Andrew Jackson. On April 15, 1847, Trist was sent to the Mexican government with a treaty offering \$20,000,000 in return for New Mexico, California, and a right-of-way across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. When Trist began *negotiating* with the Mexican government (his orders were to offer the treaty if the Mexicans *sought* it), President Polk ordered that Trist be recalled on October 2, 1847.<sup>35</sup> But both the Mexicans and Trist knew that it was the opportune time to conclude a peace treaty, and both feared that the United States might absorb the entire Mexican country if the war continued. Trist ignored his recall and on February 2, 1848, in the village of Guadalupe Hidalgo near Mexico City, he and representatives Don Luis Gonzaga Cuevas, Don Bernardo Cuoto, and Don Miguel Atristain from the Mexican President José Manuel Peña y Peña signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. When Polk received intelligence of the Treaty, he was not happy. But, remarkably, he decided to acknowledge it and urged Congress to ratify it. This proved surprisingly difficult, given the prevalence of war-weariness in the Senate and House. They initially objected to the treaty for a variety of reasons, but finally, on March 10, 1848, Congress ratified a slightly modified Treaty of

---

<sup>35</sup>The recall was sent in a letter dated October 6, 1847, through the Secretary of the State Department, James Buchanan. In this letter, Trist was told to “bring [any] Treaty with you to the United States for the consideration of the President” but if no such treaty had been concluded, then Trist was to “immediately suspend” negotiations with the Mexican government. James Buchanan, *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, edited by John Moore, (1908-1911; repr. New York: Antiquarian Press LTD, 1960), 7:425-427.

Guadalupe Hidalgo. The modified treaty was sent back to Mexico, and the Mexican government accepted it on May 25, 1848. When the treaty took effect on May 30, the war was over.<sup>36</sup>

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo granted to the United States Texas to the Rio Grande, Upper California, and New Mexico. These territories (about 500,000 square miles in all) correspond to modern-day California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. In return, the Mexicans received \$15,000,000 (equivalent to \$457,000,000 in today's currency) and a repeal of any claims of debts owed to the United States.<sup>37</sup>



**Above left is a portrait of Nicholas P. Trist, the man who defied Polk's recall and concluded the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican-American War.** *Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest*, "Portrait of Nicholas Philip Trist (1800-74), 1852 (oil on canvas) ," accessed November 15, 2014, [http://quest.eb.com/#/search/108\\_4086600/1/108\\_4086600/cite](http://quest.eb.com/#/search/108_4086600/1/108_4086600/cite). New York Historical Society/ Bridgeman Art Library/ Universal Images Group. **On the right is Henry Clay, the Whig politician who lost to Polk in the 1844 Presidential race, and later opposed the war very effectively.** *Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest*, "Henry Clay," accessed November 22, 2014, [http://quest.eb.com/#/search/115\\_862960/1/115\\_862960/cite](http://quest.eb.com/#/search/115_862960/1/115_862960/cite).

<sup>36</sup>Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 238-240, 260-261. Willard Carl Klunder, "Trist, Nicholas Philip," *American National Biography Online* (February 2000), accessed November 15, 2014, <http://www.anb.org/articles/03/03-00500.html>; Crawford, 278; Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, as accessed November 14, 2014, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=975>; Crawford, 312.

<sup>37</sup>The price was calculated using <http://www.measuringworth.com/>; Crawford, 128.

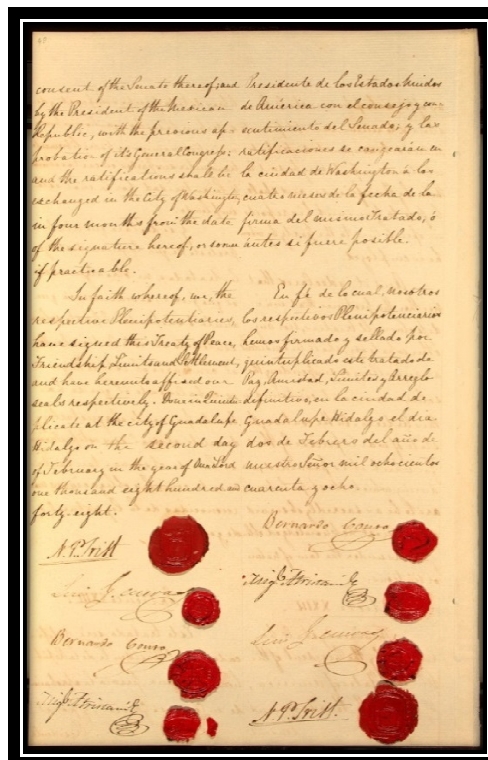
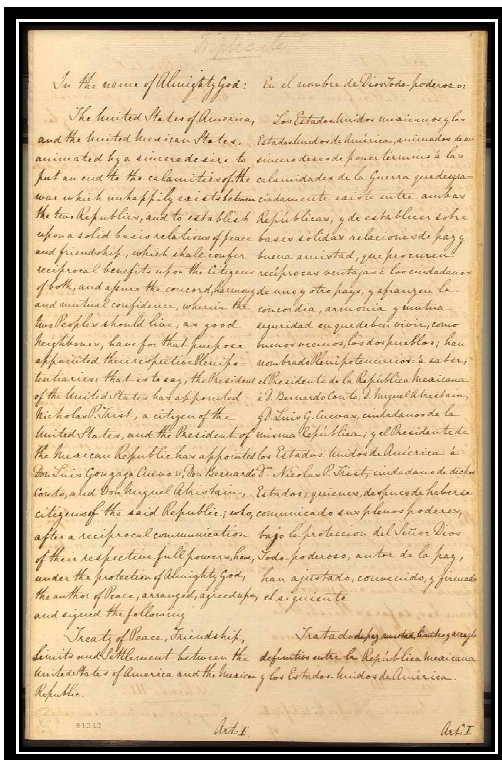


Above is the *Mapa de los Estados Unidos De Mejico*, published in New York in 1847 by John Disturnell. This was the official negotiation map used to set the new boundaries mentioned in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Accessed November 14, 2014 from [http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~228~20030:Mapa-de-los-Estados-Unidos-De-Mejic?sort=Pub\\_List\\_No\\_InitialSort%2CPub\\_Date%2CPub\\_List\\_No%2CSeries\\_No&qvq=q:mexican%2Bwar;sort:Pub\\_List\\_No\\_InitialSort%2CPub\\_Date%2CPub\\_List\\_No%2CSeries\\_No;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=9&trs=127](http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~228~20030:Mapa-de-los-Estados-Unidos-De-Mejic?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No&qvq=q:mexican%2Bwar;sort:Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=9&trs=127).





A map of the territory that the United States acquired from Mexico by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Accessed November 1, 2014 from <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/mex-war/mex-war-map.jpg>.



Above are the first and last pages of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The last page includes the signatures of Nicholas Trist and the Mexican representatives. Accessed November 14, 2014 from <http://www.loc.gov/r/hispanic/ghtreaty/>.

Why, when he could have rejected the treaty and continued a war that was looking more and more favorable to the United States, did the adamant expansionist James K. Polk decide to settle for such a relatively lenient peace treaty with Mexico? Yes, Trist had formed the treaty within Polk's initial stipulations, even acquiring the desired territory for less than the allowed sum of twenty million. But if the war had continued, the United States would likely have conquered all of Mexico. The only satisfactory explanation for President Polk's apparent change of heart lies in the unpopularity of the war. The most pressing issue on Polk's mind in early 1848 was probably the next election. Polk knew that American popular opinion had turned against the war, and largely against him and his political allies as the perpetrators of the war; and he knew that American opinion would decide the next election. In his diary, he explained his reasons for accepting the treaty as follows:

...the treaty conformed on the main question of limits & boundary to the instructions given to Mr. Trist in April last; and that though, if the treaty was now to be made, I should demand more territory, perhaps to make the Sierra Madra [sic] the line, yet it was doubtful whether this could be ever obtained by the consent of Mexico. I looked, too, to the consequences of its rejection. A majority of one branch of Congress is opposed to my administration; they have falsely charged that the war was brought on and is continued by me with a view to the conquest of Mexico; and if I were now to reject a Treaty made upon my own terms, as authorized in April last, with the unanimous approbation of the Cabinet, the probability is that Congress would not grant either men or money to prosecute the war...Should the opponents of my administration succeed in carrying the next Presidential election, the great probability is that the country would loose [sic] all the advantages secured by this Treaty...if I were now to reject my own terms, as offered in April last, I did not see how it was possible for my administration to be sustained.<sup>38</sup>

In other words, Polk still desired the maximum territorial acquisition from Mexico. But he realized that the war had become so unpopular that neither Congress nor the American people would support it any longer if they perceived Polk's unwillingness to accept such a reasonable peace as that of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

---

<sup>38</sup> Polk, *Diary*, 3:347-348.



The leading politicians had turned against the war partly because they could not ignore the flood of petitions to Congress and the ocean of publications decrying the war, driven to some degree by the religious opposition. And President Polk, in turn, could not ignore the vehement opposition of Congress. In other words, Polk had no choice but to accept the treaty and end the war. As U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton phrased it,

The treaty was a fortunate event for the United States, and for the administration which had made it. The war had disappointed the calculation on which it began. Instead of brief, cheap, and bloodless, it had become long, costly, and sanguinary: instead of getting a peace through the restoration of Santa Anna, that formidable chieftain had to be vanquished and expelled, before negotiations could be commenced with those who would always have been outraged by the aggressive and defiant manner in which Texas had been incorporated. Great discontent was breaking out at home. The Congress elections were going against the administration, and the aspirants for the presidency in the cabinet were struck with terror at the view of the great military reputations which were growing up. Peace was the only escape from so many dangers, and it was gladly seized upon to terminate a war which had disappointed all calculations, and the very successes of which were becoming alarming.<sup>39</sup>

Here, Benton acknowledges the prominent role that American opinion played in drawing the war to a close. To continue the war would have been too dangerous for Polk.

From the speeches and writings of the politicians, it becomes apparent that the opposition was both strong and convincing. In the Senate and the House, and even in Polk's own speeches, the prominent anti-war arguments and the general popular discontent with the war are constantly mentioned.

The Whig party especially took a stand against the war. Their reasons for this opposition varied, but many of them corresponded to those of the evangelicals. In an article mocking the

---

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Benton, *Thirty Years' View: Or, A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850, Chiefly Taken from the Congress Debates, the Private Papers of General Jackson, and the Speeches of Ex-Senator Benton, with His Actual View of the Men and Affairs ; with Historical Notes and Illustrations, and Some Notices of Eminent Deceased Contemporaries / by a Senator of Thirty Years*, (1856; repr., New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), 2:710.

United States' "Manifest Destiny," the prominent *Richmond Whig* accused "A strong power, in the neighborhood of a weak one" of "persuad[ing] itself, that it is its 'manifest destiny' to overwhelm it, as the robber thinks it his 'manifest destiny to plunder ALL who want the spirit or the strength to defend their own." The author proceeded to call this idea wicked, by saying that "How far this doctrine may be consistent with the principles of Christianity,...it is hardly worth while to enquire [sic]." To prove his point, he compared the United States to several godless nations of the past (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon) who attacked and conquered weaker nations, but whom "the Almighty always trampled under foot..." afterwards.<sup>40</sup> They were not anti-war in general; they said that the war of 1812 was justified by Britain's "black and almost interminable catalogue of wrongs and outrages...finally forced us to appeal to the sword."<sup>41</sup> But they objected to the Mexican War in particular because it was "begun unconstitutionally by our own President."<sup>42</sup>

One of the most prominent Whigs, Henry Clay who had lost the Presidential election to Polk three years earlier, gave what was probably one of the most influential anti-war speeches. In Lexington, Kentucky, in 1847, Clay said that the Mexican War was "no war of defence [sic], but one unnecessary and of offensive aggression." It was Clay's opinion that

the immediate occasion of hostilities between the two republics arose out of the order of the President of the United States for the removal of the army under the command of General Taylor, from its position at Corpus Christi to a point opposite to Matamoras, on

---

<sup>40</sup> "The 'Manifest Destiny,'" *Richmond Whig*, July 30, 1847, accessed November 22, 2014, [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=S59C4ERCMTQxNjY3MjExMi41NDYxODM6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4xMA&p\\_action=doc&s\\_lastnonissuequeryname=3&d\\_viewref=search&p\\_queryname=3&p\\_docnum=1&p\\_docref=v2:11AF27CD20F95E5F@EANX-139CD5BA89543EA0@2395873-139A85EB9CE677D0@3-13A57E10D77B3645@The%20%22Manifest%20Destiny.%22](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=S59C4ERCMTQxNjY3MjExMi41NDYxODM6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4xMA&p_action=doc&s_lastnonissuequeryname=3&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=3&p_docnum=1&p_docref=v2:11AF27CD20F95E5F@EANX-139CD5BA89543EA0@2395873-139A85EB9CE677D0@3-13A57E10D77B3645@The%20%22Manifest%20Destiny.%22).

<sup>41</sup> "Indemnity!" *Richmond Whig*, December 31, 1847, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/13A428486B8B250F/OFA01CB257ABD8C6>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

the East bank of the Rio Bravo [Rio Grande], within territory claimed by both Republics...

Clay cast the goals of the war into doubt as well, by saying that even the Whigs in office “ha[d] lent too ready a facility to it, without careful examination into the objects of the war.” He claimed that the war was prosecuted “for the purpose of conquering and annexing Mexico, in all its boundless extent, to the United States.” And in his concluding exhortations, Clay especially desired that his audience resolve “to disavow, in the most positive manner, any desire, on our part, to acquire any foreign territory whatever, for the purpose of introducing slavery into it.” A war of aggression, with wrong causes, waged to extend slavery—this was the same image of the Mexican War that the Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers had been painting since the war began.<sup>43</sup>

Among the senators, several speeches showed strong opposition to any annexation of territory. Senator Daniel Webster attacked the motives of the war makers in a speech to the Senate in 1847:

...we are in the midst of a war, not waged at home in defence [sic] of our soil, but waged a thousand miles off, and in the heart of the territories of another government. Of that war no one yet sees the end, and no one counts the cost. It is not denied that this war is now prosecuted for the acquisition of territory; at least, if any deny it, others admit it, and all know it to be true.

He did not want more land because he believed it would become an “extension of slave territory.”<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Henry Clay, “Speech in Lexington, KY, November 13, 1847,” *The Papers of Henry Clay*, vol. 10, *Candidate, Compromiser, Elder Statesman: January 1, 1844-June 29, 1852*, eds. Melba Hay and Carol Reardon (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 364, 372, 375.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel Webster, “The Mexican War: Remarks in the Senate of the United States, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1847, on the Bill commonly called the ‘Three Million Bill,’” in *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster in Eighteen Volumes: National Edition, Illustrated with Portraits and Plates* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1903), 9:254.

Another senator, Thomas Corwin of Ohio, in his February 11, 1847 speech in the Senate, made reference to the common belief that President Polk provoked the entire war:

I found it written in that message, Mr. President, that this war was not sought nor forced upon Mexico *by the people* of the United States. I shall make no question of history or the truth of history with my master the commander-in-chief, upon that particular proposition. On the contrary, I could verify every word that he thus utters. Sir, I know that the *people* of the United States, neither sought nor forced Mexico into this war, and yet I know that the President of the United States, with the command of your standing army, did seek that war, and that *he* forced war upon Mexico. I am not about to afflict the Senate with a detail of testimony on that point. I will simply state facts which few I trust will be found to deny.”<sup>45</sup>

Many representatives also advocated the anti-war arguments, including most notably Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. Lincoln agreed with the opposition’s view that Polk started the war by invading Mexican territory (the disputed strip between the Rivers Nueces and Rio Grande). In his famous “Spot Resolutions,” Lincoln demanded that Polk prove that Mexico had actually shed American blood on *American* soil. According to the testimony of the religious publications themselves, many politicians were turning against the war and taking a stand for their beliefs.<sup>46</sup>

As one Quaker publication phrased it,

...we hear from prominent political leaders open condemnation of the orgin [sic] and purposes of the war, and the expression of strong desires that it shall be brought to a speedy close by the withdrawal of the United States forces within their own territory.

---

<sup>45</sup>“Speech of Mr. Corwin, of Ohio. In Senate of the United States, Feb.11, 1847,” *Ohio State Journal*, March 3,1847, accessed November 22, 2014, [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=J64I59JNMTQxNjY4MDUxNC43NzczNjM6MT0xNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4xMA&p\\_action=doc&s\\_lastnonissuequeryname=5&d\\_viewref=search&p\\_queryname=5&p\\_docnum=1&p\\_docref=v2:11D54F9E35685711@EANX-11F36DFD6ACF3698@2395724-11F36DFDA53256C0@1-11F36DFEC9944928@Speech%20of%20Mr.%20Corwin%2C%20of%20Ohio.%20In%20Senate%20of%20the%20United%20States%2C%20Fee.11%2C%201847](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=J64I59JNMTQxNjY4MDUxNC43NzczNjM6MT0xNDoxMzQuMTI2LjlxNC4xMA&p_action=doc&s_lastnonissuequeryname=5&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=5&p_docnum=1&p_docref=v2:11D54F9E35685711@EANX-11F36DFD6ACF3698@2395724-11F36DFDA53256C0@1-11F36DFEC9944928@Speech%20of%20Mr.%20Corwin%2C%20of%20Ohio.%20In%20Senate%20of%20the%20United%20States%2C%20Fee.11%2C%201847).

<sup>46</sup>Abraham Lincoln, Printed Resolution and Preamble on Mexican War: “**Spot Resolutions**,” December 22, 1847, (transcribed and annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois), accessed November 2, 2014, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d0007000\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d0007000))).

Parties are rapidly forming on the issue of the continuance or cessation of hostilities, and the present session of Congress is looked to with deep interest by all classes.<sup>47</sup>

But the most important effect of the religious opposition and its arguments was undoubtedly the fact that the President himself could no longer ignore them. In an address to Congress he felt it necessary to justify the war, and defend it against constant attacks. “This is rendered the more necessary,” he said, “because of the misapprehensions which have to some extent prevailed as to its origin and true character.” (These were precisely two of the areas constantly disparaged by the evangelicals and the other opposition groups.) He claimed that the war was entirely Mexico’s fault, saying that “The existing war with Mexico was neither desired nor provoked by the United States,” and that “Mexico, in violation of solemn treaty stipulations, and of every other principle of justice recognised [sic] by civilized nations, commenced hostilities; and thus, by her own act, forced the war upon us.” He was aware of the common accusation that by advancing General Taylor and his troops to the Rio Grande, Polk had provoked Mexico into defending themselves. Instead, he asserted that the United States “had ample cause of war against Mexico...”<sup>48</sup>

It is evident from this speech that the public opinion had indeed changed. During the 1812 War, said Polk, there was hardly any popular resentment and “No difference of opinion upon the subject is believed to have existed in Congress at that time”; but now, during the Mexican War, there had arisen a massive movement of opposition. “The war has been represented as unjust and unnecessary, and as one of aggression on our part upon a weak and injured enemy. Such erroneous views, though entertained by but few, have been widely and

---

<sup>47</sup> "Article 1 -- no Title," *Friends' Weekly Intelligencer (1844-1853)*, December 11, 1847, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91274522?accountid=11667>.

<sup>48</sup> *Congressional Globe*, 29<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, “Message of the President of the United States,” <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llcg&fileName=018/llcg018.db&recNum=608>.

extensively circulated, not only at home, but have been spread throughout Mexico and the whole world.” These “few” were most likely the religious sects and those whom they had influenced by these same ideas that the war was “unjust and unnecessary.” The reference to overseas could be a result of the zealous work of the American Peace Society, who had close links to their English counterparts.<sup>49</sup>

Even in Polk’s diary, he admits the power of the opposition, particularly the press. The occasional financial arguments brought forward to persuade the people to demand cessation of fighting were, according to Polk, the work of “the Whig party and leading presses” in order to “produce a panic in the money market and thereby, if possible, to break down the Treasury, and thus compel the inglorious withdrawal of our army from Mexico.”<sup>50</sup>

Clearly, Polk never agreed with the opposition. In a speech to Congress explaining Trist’s mission, he stated that he would not make a peace treaty that granted the United States no land because “if sanctioned, [it] would be a public acknowledgement that our country was wrong, and that the war declared by Congress with extraordinary unanimity was unjust, and should be abandoned; an admission unfounded in fact, and degrading to the national character.” But because popular opinion played such a prominent role in political decisions, Polk was forced to yield some ground in his dream of territorial expansion and conclude a relatively lenient treaty with Mexico. Although the primary reasons for accepting a peace with Mexico were most likely that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo granted California and Texas and might preserve a chance

---

<sup>49</sup> *Cong. Globe*, “Message of the President of the United States.”

<sup>50</sup> Polk, *Diary*, 3:322.

for Democratic elections, anti-war opposition largely fanned by these religious groups played an enormous role.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup>James Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902*, (1897; repr., New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903) 4:538.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

*Advocate of Peace*, 1846 and 1847. Accessed November 3, 2014,  
[https://archive.org/stream/jstor-27891055/27891055\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/jstor-27891055/27891055_djvu.txt).

This was the official publication of the American Peace Society. It also ran articles by Congregationalists, who were themselves frequently members of the society.

Beckwith, George. "Renewed Petitions for Peace with Mexico." *Boston Recorder*. November 4, 1847. Accessed November 2, 2014. [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=D5DL4FXEMTQxNDE5MDIwNi4yMzY3Mzk6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjIxNC4zNQ&p\\_action=doc&s\\_1astnonissuequeryname=11&d\\_viewref=search&p\\_queryname=11&p\\_docnum=2&toc=true&p\\_docref=v2:109E455E6E63DEA8@EANX-13E799890444CDD0@2395970-13E6A2F04A520378@1-13F088EC9C2D9951@Renewed%20Petitions%20for%20Peace%20with%20Mexico](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=D5DL4FXEMTQxNDE5MDIwNi4yMzY3Mzk6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjIxNC4zNQ&p_action=doc&s_1astnonissuequeryname=11&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=11&p_docnum=2&toc=true&p_docref=v2:109E455E6E63DEA8@EANX-13E799890444CDD0@2395970-13E6A2F04A520378@1-13F088EC9C2D9951@Renewed%20Petitions%20for%20Peace%20with%20Mexico)

This provides an excellent cross-section of Congregational and American Peace Society views on the war. It is basically an appeal to the American people to end an evil war.

Benton, Thomas. *Thirty Years' View : or, A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850, Chiefly Taken from the Congress Debates, the Private Papers of General Jackson, and the Speeches of Ex-Senator Benton, with His Actual View of the Men and Affairs ; with Historical Notes and Illustrations, and Some Notices of Eminent Deceased Contemporaries / by a Senator of Thirty Years*. 2 vols. 1856. Reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968.

Reflecting back on the Mexican-American War from a time not too far removed, Benton provides an analysis of the motives of the American leaders. Although biased, Senator Benton was in the heart of the political wrangling before and after the war, and in a good position to observe other politicians.

*Boston Liberator*, 1847. Accessed October 26, 2014,  
<http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/11C1A62EC0760AC0/0FA01CB257ABD8C6>.

This was a prominent abolitionist paper run by William Lloyd Garrison. This paper ran articles against the Mexican War, objecting to the inevitable extension of slavery. It also occasionally ran articles by the anti-war religious leaders, such as Samuel J. May.

Buchanan, James. *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*. Edited by John Moore. 1908-1911. Reprint, New York: Antiquarian Press LTD, 1960. Vol. 7.

As secretary of state, Buchanan's correspondence provides excellent verification of historical details, as far as events, dates, and occasionally motives.



Bushnell, Horace. *Barbarism the First Danger: A Discourse for Home Missions*. New York: Printed for the American Home Missionary Society, 1847. Accessed November 3, 2014, <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY103636477&srchtp=a&ste=14>

*Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany*, 1848. Accessed November 2, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/126064758?accountid=11667>. This was primarily a Unitarian publication, and frequently ran the articles and resolutions of the prominent anti-war spokesman of the denomination.

Clay, Henry. *The Papers of Henry Clay*. Vol. 10, *Candidate, Compromiser, Elder Statesman: January 1, 1844-June 29, 1852*. Edited by Melba Hay and Carol Reardon. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991. This collection contains the valuable sentiments of the Whig spokesman concerning the war, especially his famous speech at Lexington, Kentucky.

*Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal*, 1846. Accessed November 2, 2014. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91231238?accountid=11667>. This is a Quaker publication that ran articles against the war.

*The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal*, 1847. Accessed November 22, 2014. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91229266?accountid=11667>.

*Friends' Weekly Intelligencer*, 1847. Accessed November 17, 2014. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91274522?accountid=11667>. This was another of the main Quaker newspapers arguing for immediate cessation of hostilities with Mexico.

*Liberator*, 1847. Accessed October 26, 2014. <http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/11C1A62EC0760AC0/0FA01CB257ABD8C6>. This was a strongly abolitionist newspaper run from Boston, Massachusetts by the abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison. The paper occasionally ran reprints of articles from the anti-war religious publications.

*Liberty Bell by Friends of Freedom*, 1846. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/90639646?accountid=11667>. This was a regularly published abolitionist booklet that ran the arguments of Samuel J. May against the Mexican War.

Lincoln, Abraham. "Printed Resolution and Preamble on Mexican War: 'Spot Resolutions.'" December 22, 1847. *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*. Transcribed and annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. Accessed November 2, 2014. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d0007000\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d0007000))). Lincoln's Spot Resolutions show the existence of disapproval of the war within the House of Representatives. In particular, this speech attacked Polk's claim that Mexico had attacked the United States on United States' soil.

*Ohio State Journal*, published as *Weekly Ohio State Journal*, 1847.

This newspaper printed several anti-war speeches of U. S. senators.

*Plattsburgh Republican*, 1847. Plattsburgh, New York. Accessed November 16, 2014.

[http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX&p\\_theme=ahnp&p\\_nbid=N5CX57ELMTQxNjE0Mzg1Ny45NTQ0MzE6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjIxNC4zNA&p\\_action=doc&s\\_la stnonissuequeryname=15&d\\_viewref=search&p\\_queryname=15&p\\_docnum=15&p\\_docref=v2:134048CBC59A89A9@EANX-1341A2600730F528@2395776-13418E4912D82860@1-13807053CCCC839B@Whig%20Opposition%20To%20The%20War](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=N5CX57ELMTQxNjE0Mzg1Ny45NTQ0MzE6MToxNDoxMzQuMTI2LjIxNC4zNA&p_action=doc&s_la stnonissuequeryname=15&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=15&p_docnum=15&p_docref=v2:134048CBC59A89A9@EANX-1341A2600730F528@2395776-13418E4912D82860@1-13807053CCCC839B@Whig%20Opposition%20To%20The%20War).

Although for the war itself, this secular newspaper analyzed the motives of Whigs who opposed the war.

Polk, James K. *The Diary of James K. Polk: During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*. Edited by Milo Quaife. 4 vols. Reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1910.

Although obviously biased in Polk's favor, his diary does provide confirmation for some of the historical dates, and occasional insights into his motives (though the latter are surprisingly rare).

----- "Third Annual Message." *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902*. Collected by James Richardson. 1897. Reprint, New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903. Vol. 4.

This source provides the official statements of Polk regarding the war, and the American discontent with it.

Parker, Theodore. *The Collected Works of Theodore Parker: Containing His Theological, Polemical, and Critical Writings, Sermons, Speeches, and Addresses, and Literary Miscellanies*. 14 volumes. Edited by Francis Cobbe. London: Trübner & Co., 1863-1879. Accessed November 1, 2014,

<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY105964560&srchtp=a&ste=14>  
This collection contains extensive sections detailing Parker's views on the war, which views also represented the Unitarian stance.

*Richmond Whig*, 1847. Accessed October 26, 2014.

<http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/13A428486B8B250F/0FA01CB257ABD8C6>.

One of the most prominent Whig newspapers, it frequently published the Whig stance on the war.

Texas State Library and Archives Commission. "Treaties of Velasco." May 14, 1836. Accessed November 8, 2014. <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/velasco-public-1.html>. These treaties provide information on the confusing state of affairs between Texas and Mexico at the time of Polk's presidency.

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=975>.

The treaty simply provides the details of what America obtained and Mexico obtained in exchange.

*United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, 1845, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/126367973?accountid=11667>.

This was the paper edited by John O'Sullivan, who first used the term "Manifest Destiny" to refer to the doctrine of God-ordained American expansionism.

US Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 29<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1845-1846. Accessed November 17, 2014. <http://memory.loc.gov>.

This record of speeches given in Congress provides an excellent source of the opinions and disputed issues among the leading politicians. It includes numerous documents relating to the Mexican War.

US Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 29<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1846-1847. Accessed November 17, 2014. <http://memory.loc.gov>.

Same as the above.

Webster, Daniel. *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster in Eighteen Volumes: National Edition, Illustrated with Portraits and Plates*. 18 vols. Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1903.

This collection contains several relevant letters and speeches by this anti-war senator, who was a very vocal opponent of the war.

## **Secondary Sources:**

### **Monographs:**

Baird, Robert. *Religion in the United States of America*. Reprint, New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969.

This detailed analysis of the beliefs and distribution of religious groups (primarily Protestant) in the United States was actually published two years before the war, in 1844. As such, it provides a very up-to-date view of the denominations of interest.

Barber, Hugh, and J. William Frost. *The Quakers*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.

This is another good source on the Quakers.

Carwardine, Richard. *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1997.

Carwardine's book gives a superb analysis of the role that religion played in politics after the Second Great Awakening.

Curti, Merle. *The American Peace Crusade 1815-1860*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1929.

This concise but thorough little book provides an overview of the activities of the American Peace Society, and its sister society in the United Kingdom. It is useful for tracking the overlap with the Congregationalist leaders.

Eisenhower, John. *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico 1846-1848*. New York: Random House, 1989.

Although primarily focused on the actual sequence of events in the Mexican-American War, Eisenhower's book also provides a summary of the American opposition. The book is mostly useful as an accessible reference for double-checking time frames and events.

Greenberg, Amy. *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Although heavily biased against the war, Greenberg does follow the progress of American resistance throughout the war and shows to some degree how effective it was. She also details the lives of several prominent individuals of the war.

Hamm, Thomas. *The Quakers in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

As the title implies, this book is all about the various groups of American Quakers. It provides an overview of their history and beliefs.

Hatch, Nathan. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

This is a good source on the connection between Protestantism and politics during the nineteenth century.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Howe provides extensive context to the war, and a good synthesis of actions and the motivations of various groups and politicians for and against the war.

Mead, Frank. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951.

This brief, encyclopedic book gives basic sketches of the history and beliefs of Christian denominations in the United States. It provides scant overviews of Congregationalism, Unitarianism, and Quakerism.

Merk, Frederick. *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

Merk gives an excellent history and analysis of American Manifest Destiny, and tracks its influence on the Mexican-American War as well as on other American expansionist efforts.

Morison, Samuel, Frederick Merk, and Frank Freidel. *Dissent in Three American Wars*.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970. This booklet is a collection of three lectures by prominent scholars. Although not very thorough, Merk's essay in this booklet gives a good overview of all forms of resistance to the Mexican-American War.

Noll, Mark, ed. *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

This collection of secondary works by other authors gives an overview of the affects of religion on politics after the Second Great Awakening.

Schroeder, John. *Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973.

This is probably THE most useful analysis of American opposition to the Mexican War. Schroeder superbly organized this book into chapters on each type of dissent, including political, abolitionist, pacifist, and religious.

Sweet, William. *Religion on the American Frontier: 1783-1850*. Vol. 3, *The Congregationalists*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939.

This book gives further information concerning the Congregationalists, their history, and their beliefs.

Wright, Conrad, ed. *American Unitarianism: 1805-1865*. Boston: The Massachusetts Society and Northeastern University Press, 1989.

Wright provides a good overview of the Unitarians starting with their slow detachment from the Congregationalists, all the way through the time period on which my paper focuses.

### **Journal Articles:**

Ellsworth, Clayton. "The American Churches and the Mexican War." *The American Historical Review* 45, No. 2 (January, 1940): 301-326. Accessed September 22, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1906279>.

Ellsworth details the views of all Christian denominations during the Mexican-American War. This article describes all of the churches for and against the war. The excellent sections on Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers were very useful.

Pratt, Julius. "The Origin of 'Manifest Destiny.'" *The American Historical Review* 32, No. 4 (July, 1927): 795-798. Accessed September 17, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1837859>.

This very brief article defends a hypothesis of first use of the phrase 'Manifest Destiny' by John L. O'Sullivan in 1845.

### **Dissertations and Theses:**

Schroeder, John. "To Give 'Aid and Comfort': American Opposition to the Mexican War, 1846-1848." PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1971. Accessed October 22, 2014. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/302543346?accountid=11667>.

Although I did not use much of the actual body of this extensive dissertation, the bibliography was an invaluable resource to locate both primary and secondary documents relating to my topic. ☺

**Other Secondary Sources:**

Crawford, Mark. *Encyclopedia of the Mexican-American War*. Santa-Barbara, California: ABC-Clio, 1999.

Greenberg, Amy. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Although apparently intended as a teaching tool, this booklet nevertheless provides an excellent summary of Greenberg's own conclusions drawn from the primary documents of individuals during the war.

Texas State Library and Archives Commission. "Treaties of Velasco." Last revised August 31, 2011. Accessed November 15, 2014.  
<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/velasco-01.html#main-content>.  
This brief article explains the delicate political situation that existed between Mexico and Texas when Polk sent General Zachary Taylor onto the disputed land.

*Encyclopedia of World Biography*. 2nd ed. Detroit: Gale, 2004. Accessed November 22, 2014.  
[http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3404703670&v=2.1&u=viva\\_jmu&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=1e5011c763846cca0700c7577de00a35](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3404703670&v=2.1&u=viva_jmu&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=1e5011c763846cca0700c7577de00a35).  
This encyclopedia provided a brief article on the founder of the American Peace Society, William Ladd, and some of the founders motivations.

**Each of the following brief articles from an online encyclopedia provides biographical information for the anti-war individuals mentioned:**

Bowden, Henry Warner. S.v. "Parker, Theodore." *American National Biography Online*. 2000. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01925.html>.

Holifield, E. Brooks. S.v. "Bushnell, Horace." *American National Biography Online*. 2000. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00219.html>.

Klunder, Willard Carl. S.v. "Trist, Nicholas Philip." *American National Biography Online*. 2000. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.anb.org/articles/03/03-00500.html>.

Taylor, Richard S. S.v. "Blanchard, Jonathan." *American National Biography Online*. 2000. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00143.html>.

Yacovone, Donald. S.v. "May, Samuel Joseph." *American National Biography Online*. 2000. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00454.html>.