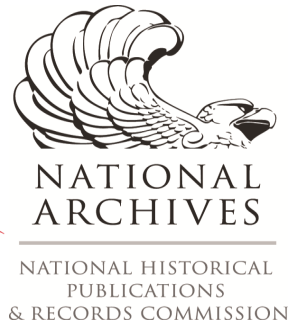


Title: James K. Polk and the Annexation of Texas

Creator: Educator in Tennessee



Standards

8.53: Identify the major events and impact of James K. Polk's presidency, including the **annexation of Texas** and the settlement of the Oregon boundary.

Materials

- Graphic Organizer
- Primary Sources

Primary Sources

1. "Inaugural Address of James K. Polk": <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll43/id/2>

Two versions of this source have been provided at the end of this document: a true transcription of an excerpt from the article, and an adapted transcription that standardizes spelling and grammar, as well as simplifying the language used.

2. "Polk vs. Wool or the Harry-Cane, 1844": <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll43/id/9/rec/9>
3. "Resolution in relation to the Texas annexation": <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/1865>

Activity Instructions:

- Allow students to read primary sources. A true transcription and adapted transcription have been provided, either may be used for this activity.
- Then, have students fill out the graphic organizer.

Examine
sources

the primary
related to

What are the key points of President Polk's address? What does he say about expanding westward (annexing Texas)? Cite evidence from the text.

Analyze the political cartoon. What does it show?

Read the resolution. How does the state of Ohio feel about annexing Texas? How do you know? Cite evidence from the text.

Transcript of excerpt of “Inaugural Address of James K. Polk”: Located in Newspapers on Microfilm.

If the more aged and experienced men who have filled the office of President of the United States, even in the infancy of the Republic, distrusted their ability to discharge the duties of that exalted station, what ought not to be the apprehensions of one so much younger and less endowed, now that our domain extends from ocean to ocean, that our people have so greatly increased in numbers; and at a time when so great diversity of opinion prevails in regard to the principles and policy which should characterize the administration of our Government? Well may the boldest fear, and the wisest tremble, when incurring responsibilities on which may depend our country's peace and prosperity, and, in some degree, the hopes and happiness of the whole human family...

The constitution itself, plainly written as it is, the safeguard of our federative compact, the offspring of concession and compromise, binding together in the bonds of peace and union this great and increasing family of free and independent States, will be the chart by which I shall be directed...

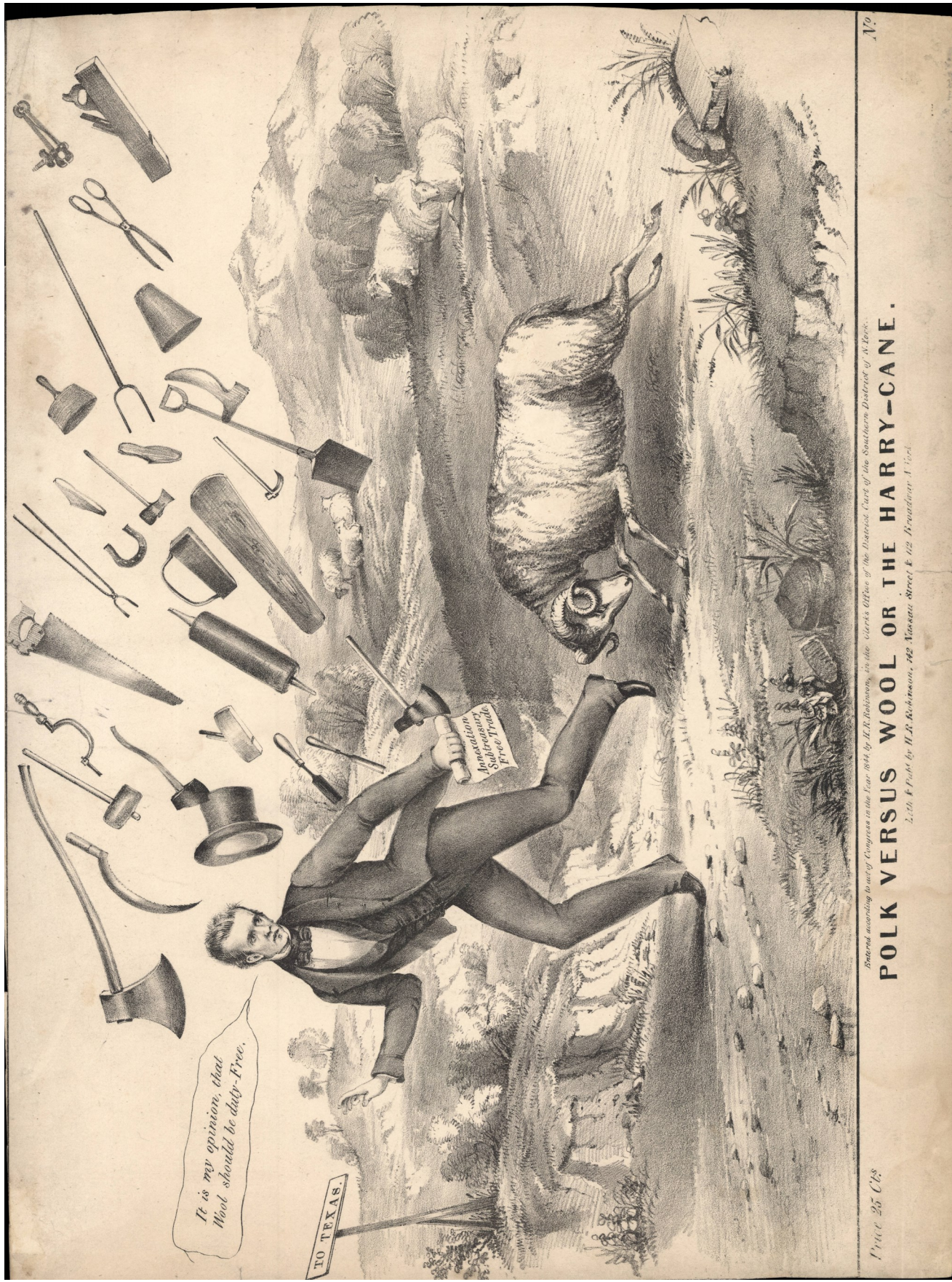
I regard the question of Annexation as belonging exclusively to the United States and Texas. They are independent powers, competent to contract; and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them, or to take exceptions to their re-union. Foreign powers do not seem to appreciate the true character of our government. Our Union is a confederation of Independent States, whose policy is peace with each other and all the world. To enlarge its limits, is to extend to the dominion of peace over additional territories and increasing millions. The world has nothing to fear from military ambition in our government. While the chief magistrate and the popular branch of Congress are elected for short terms by the suffrages of those millions who must, in their own persons, bear all the burdens and miseries of war, our government cannot be otherwise than pacific. Foreign powers should, therefore, look on the annexation of Texas to the U. States, not as the conquest of a nation seeking to extend her dominions by arms and violence, but as the peaceful acquisition of a territory once her own, by adding another member to our confederation, with consent of that member— thereby diminishing the chances of war; and opening to them new and ever-increasing markets for their products.

Adapted Transcript of excerpt of “Inaugural Address of James K. Polk”: Located in
Newspapers on Microfilm.

If the older and more experienced men who have served as President of the United States, even at the beginning of our country, were not confident in their ability as President, what should a younger and less experienced president worry about? Now that our country is so much larger and there is more diversity in thought and opinion, what should characterize our government?

The constitution itself is the product of concession and compromise. Through peace, the constitution joins together the free and independent states of this country. It is the guide by which I will lead.

I believe that the issue of annexing Texas belongs only to the United States and Texas. Texas is independent and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them or take exception to them rejoining the United States. Foreign nations do not seem to understand our government. Our Union is a confederation of independent states, whose policy is peace with each other and the world. The rest of the world has nothing to be afraid of from our military and its ambition. Other nations should look on the annexation of Texas to the United States not as the violent conquest of a nation through war, but as the peaceful acquisition of a territory once its own. They should see this as the United States adding another member to its confederation, with consent of that member, therefore lessening chances of war and opening them to new markets for their products.



"Polk vs. Wool or the Harry-Cane, 1844"

Located in Library Photograph Collection, Oversize.

[A COPY.]

RESOLUTION

IN RELATION TO THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS TO THE UNION.

THE subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States having been presented to the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, by numerous petitions, and by a report of a committee of one branch of the Legislature, the following resolutions were submitted by said committee for their definite action and concurrence:

Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That in the name and on behalf of the People of the State of Ohio, we do hereby SOLEMNLY PROTEST against the annexation of Texas to the Union of these United States.

And be it further resolved, That the Governor be requested to transmit to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and to the Governors of each of the States, a copy of the foregoing Resolution, with a statement of the votes by which it was passed in each branch of the Legislature.

C. ANTHONY,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

GEORGE J. SMITH,

Speaker of the Senate.

FEBRUARY 23D, 1838.

Secretary of State's Office,

COLUMBUS, OHIO, FEBRUARY 24, 1838.

I hereby certify the foregoing Resolution to be a true copy of the original roll on file in this department.

CARTER B. HARLAN,

Secretary of State.

"Resolution in relation to the Texas annexation"

Located in Governor Newton Cannon Papers 1835-1839.