

Extranjeros and Expansion: Student Activity Sheet

From today, it can be difficult to imagine a time when the fate of North America was in question. Much of what is now the United States was part of Mexico, not to mention the territory of Indigenous cultures. The mid-1800s marked massive expansion of the United States. While some Mexican citizens resisted U.S. expansion into their lands, others welcomed it. Regardless, all Mexicans in the region absorbed by the United States were guaranteed the rights of U.S. citizens according to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. But, things rarely worked out that way. In this activity, you'll examine how particular individuals and communities responded to international borders changing around them.

1. In small groups, view at least two of the following clips. In each clip you will follow the story of a particular historical figure. You may need to view the clip more than once to gather all the information.
2. Once your group has organized its information, present the story to the rest of the class.
3. Complete the reflection questions.

Each group chooses two of the following:

- **Mariano Vallejo** and the absorption of California
- **Juan Seguín** and the Texas revolts for independence
- **Apolinaria Lorenzana** and the disbanding of the California missions
- **Las Gorras Blancas**, Miguel Antonio Otero and the arrival of the U.S. rail-agriculture economy to New Mexico

1.) Document where and when the historical figure(s) lived and what their life was like in Mexico before U.S. expansion:

NAME	LOCATION	TIME FRAME	STATUS/ACTIVITY BEFORE U.S. EXPANSION

2.) Next, consider U.S. expansion into the regions you selected above. Focusing on your historical figures, detail some of the actions and events that caused Mexicans to become “foreigners in their own lands”? What tactics did U.S. arrivals use to transform lands and social orders of what was Mexico?

LOCATION	TIME FRAME	EVENTS, TACTICS & ATTITUDES DIRECTED AT THE RESIDENT MEXICAN POPULATION

3.) Mexican Americans reacted to U.S. expansion in different ways. How did the individuals you selected respond? What did they do and how did their lives change?

NAME	LOCATION	DATE	RESPONSE/STATUS AFTER U.S.EXPANSION

Reflection Questions:

- Consider the individuals you selected. What did U.S. expansion mean for them personally? Were they able to preserve their status, property and rights? If so, how? If not, what happened to them and how did they respond?
- A combination of attitudes, economic strategies and brute force were used to erode Mexican rights and social structures in California and Texas. What are some examples of these different tactics?
- Compare the experience of California and Texas with that of New Mexico. How was the experience of U.S. expansion different there?
- Often, traditional views of U.S. history look westward and move from East to West. What other perspectives and issues surface when we examine this history from the Western perspective of the Mexicans of California, New Mexico and Texas? Did the arrival of the United States necessarily mean the arrival of the brand of equality and democracy that are associated with it? Why or why not?
- When land transferred from the control of Mexico to the United States, there were certainly implications for the Mexican elite. But what communities – which have been on these lands longest of all – are subjugated under both Mexican and U.S. regimes? If the Mexican elite suffered during expansion, what do you think was the implication for the mestizo and Indian communities?
- There is a Chicano (Mexican American) saying: “We didn’t cross the border. The border crossed us.” What does this mean and how does it relate to your research? Cite examples of people and events to support your explanation.