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War History.

The story of the Mexican War, recalled by events on the Texas frontier, is a familiar bit of history. One of its incidents, however, only recently has become known through the opening of the diary of President Polk to students. This diary shows that the ostensible grounds on which war was declared were shifted at the last minute by the President.

There had been friction between the United States and Mexico for several years. Property belonging to American citizens had been destroyed in the insurrections there and the payment of damage claims had fallen into arrears. In addition, Texas had become a fruitful source of trouble, and there was great indignation in the United States when Mexico declared that the annexation of Texas would be considered cause of war and suspended diplomatic relations.

Polk came into office at a time when each country was inflamed against the other. While the new President had been called the first "dark horse" of American politics, he was a forceful and aggressive character, narrow, but deter-

mined. He at once entered on a vigorous policy for settling the Mexican troubles. An envoy, John Slidell, was sent to Mexico to negotiate with the government and General Taylor, with 2000 men, was ordered to the Rio Grande. This move took Taylor into territory that was claimed alike by Texas and Mexico. It was fairly certain to be regarded by Mexico as an invasion. But Polk never doubted that the territory was rightfully Texan and he determined to take no chances.

Meanwhile, Mexican feeling was so high that the Mexican President had been obliged to refuse to receive the American envoy. When news of this reached Washington, Polk decided that it was time to act. Public irritation was extreme, the war spirit was aroused, and he felt that he would have the country with him.

On Saturday, May 9, 1846, the president called a cabinet meeting and went over with his advisers a message he intended to send to Congress on the following Monday, calling for war with Mexico on the ground that it had refused to pay just claims and that it had rejected the American envoy. All the members

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