



U. S. History: From the Colonial Period to 1877

Dr. Edrene S. McKay ■ (479) 855-6836 ■ Email: esmnet@cox-internet.com

14.1 MANIFEST DESTINY

<p>MANIFEST DESTINY Westward Expansion</p>	<p>Until the 1840s, the overwhelming majority of Americans lived east of the Mississippi River. The revolutions in markets and transportation, the swelling population, and a booming economy helped to initiate a WESTWARD MOVEMENT from the 1840s. Settlers effectively grabbed the West by moving on their own and then demanding protection from the federal government.</p>
<p>Defined: U.S. destined by God to expand its boundaries over the entire North American continent</p>	<p>MANIFEST DESTINY was the idea that the United States was DESTINED BY GOD AND HISTORY TO EXPAND its boundaries OVER THE VAST NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT and, in the process, bring to other cultures and peoples the benefits of American democracy and the free-labor-ideal.</p>
	<p>Coined by New York journalist John L. O’Sullivan in 1845, the term spread rapidly throughout the nation. In an attempt to explain America’s thirst for expansion, and to present a defense for America’s claim to new territories he wrote:</p>
	<p><i>.... the right of our manifest destiny to over spread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and... self government entrusted to us. It is right such as that of the tree to the space of air and the earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth.</i></p>
	<p>Manifest Destiny soon became the rallying cry throughout America. The notion of Manifest Destiny was PUBLICIZED IN THE PAPERS and was advertised by politicians throughout the nation. It became the TORCH THAT LIT THE WAY FOR AMERICAN EXPANSION.</p>
<p>Historical Perspective</p>	<p>The idea of Manifest Destiny was not new. The philosophy sailed with CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS across the Atlantic. It resided in the spirits of the JAMESTOWN COLONISTS and it landed at Plymouth Rock with the PILGRIMS. It also traveled with the fire and brimstone PREACHERS during the Great Awakening and built the first national road.</p>
<p>COMPONENTS OF THE IDEA Religious Influence</p>	<p>The notion of Manifest Destiny had many components, each serving people in different ways. To some, Manifest Destiny was based on the idea that America had a future that was DESTINED BY GOD TO EXPAND ITS BORDERS, with no limit to area or country. All the traveling and expansion were part of the spirit of Manifest Destiny, a belief that it was God’s will that Americans spread over the entire continent, and to control and populate the country as they see fit. Many expansionists conceived God as having the power to sustain and guide human destiny. It was white man’s burden to conquer and Christianize the land. For example, the Puritan notion of establishing a "CITY ON A HILL" was eventually SECULARIZED into Manifest Destiny –a sort of materialistic, religious, utopian destiny.</p>
<p>Sense of Mission</p>	<p>While some were driven by what they considered God’s will, others saw Manifest Destiny as the HISTORICAL INEVITABILITY of American domination of North America from sea to sea. It was an ALTRUISTIC way to extend American liberty to new realms. With a SENSE OF MISSION, people were tempted by the boundless tracts and sparsely settled land lying just beyond the borders of their country.</p>
<p>National Security</p>	<p>There was also a renewed fear that the SECURITY of the United States might be impaired by foreign intervention in areas along its borders. The easiest way to conquer those fears was to conquer land beyond its borders and expand American territories.</p>

<p>The Dark Side</p>	<p>While the positive side of Manifest Destiny was a surge of enthusiasm and energy for pushing West, the NEGATIVE SIDE was the belief that the white man had the RIGHT TO DESTROY anything and anyone (namely INDIANS) who got in the way. Tracing the path of Manifest Destiny across the West would highlight MASS DESTRUCTION OF TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS, CONFINEMENT OF INDIANS TO RESERVATIONS, and full blown GENOCIDE. The dark side of Manifest Destiny revealed the white man's belief that his settlement of the land and civilization of its native peoples was preordained.</p> <p>The arrogance that flowed from the Manifest Destiny philosophy was exemplified when Albert T. Beveridge rose before the U.S. Senate and announced:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-admiration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns... He has made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savages and senile peoples. Theodore Roosevelt, John Cabot Lodge, and John Hay, each in turn, endorsed with a strong sense of certainty the view that the Anglo-Saxon [Americans] was destined to rule the world. Such views expressed in the 19th century and in the early 20th century continues to ring true in the minds of many non-Indian property owners. The superiority of the "white race" is the foundation on which the Anti-Indian Movement organizers and right-wing helpers rest their efforts to dismember Indian tribes.</i></p>
<p>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</p>	<p>Explore one or more of the following websites and share what you have learned about America's expansionist policies:</p> <p>Manifest Destiny http://www.pbs.org/kenan/usmexicanwar/dialogues/prelude/manifest/manifestdestiny.html</p> <p>Contemporary Reference to Manifest Destiny http://www.makethemaccountable.com/podvin/more/021001_ManifestDestiny.htm</p> <p>Manifest Destiny: America and the New Israel http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/joshua/manifest.html</p> <p>Promised Land and Land Theft http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/joshua/may7180.stm</p>