

Divine Providence

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What is manifest destiny? According to the Oxford dictionary “ is the 19th -century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the U.S. throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable” (Oxford). The first person who used the term "Manifest Destiny" was John L. O'Sullivan a columnist and editor from *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*. “He coined the phrase in 1845 to represent a set of ideals present in the United States at that time. These ideals included: the notion of westward expansionism, a belief in American exceptionalism, a sense of entitlement to the North American continent, and a religious/moral obligation to spread American democracy”.

The first time that O’Sullivan used the phrase it did not cause a big impact on society but, the second time it was used it became history. He used it in one of his essays, on December 27, 1845, he wrote, “And that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.”(StarInternet) On this phrase he states that they (the country) have the right to conquer the lands in which slavery or poverty is imposed. God has given them the power and the permission to do whatever they have to, to expand its territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and even to South America.

O'Sullivan's original conception of Manifest Destiny was not a call for territorial expansion by force. He believed that if the providence wanted they would conquer all the territory without the help of the military. That would happen by immigration of Anglos to those regions and eventually they would have the power to conquer it. O'Sullivan disapproved the fact that Polk wanted to conquer Texas by using force, although he came to believe that the outcome would be beneficial to both countries. Everything started back in 1845 when President James K. Polk was elected. One of his goals was to expand the Nation by conquering the states of Oregon, Arizona, California, part of New Mexico and the country of Texas. The state of Oregon was claimed by the U.S. and Great Britain. President Polk started negotiations with Great Britain and in 1847 Oregon was part of the Union. The story of Texas is very different. To be able to obtain the country the U.S. had to go to war.

“The Mexican War between the United States and Mexico began with a Mexican attack on American troops along the southern border of Texas on Apr. 25, 1846. Fighting ended when U.S. Gen. Winfield Scott occupied Mexico City on Sept. 14, 1847; a few months later a peace treaty was signed (Feb. 2, 1848) at Guadalupe Hidalgo. In addition to recognizing the U.S. annexation of Texas defeated Mexico ceded California and, New Mexico (including all the present-day states of the Southwest) to the United States.” (Castillo) The Mexican-American war ended on 2 February 1848 when the United States signed the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

This document up to this date it is enforced by both countries. As a result of the treaty, the United States acquired more than 500,000 square miles of valuable territory and emerged as a world power in the late nineteenth century. Because the U.S. won the war they dictated the terms of settlement. The treaty established a pattern of political and military inequality between the two countries, and this lopsided relationship has stalked Mexican-U.S. relations ever since. "The treaty in draft form was brought to Mexico by Nicholas P. Trist, the U.S. peace commissioner, in the summer of 1847. In its basic form it called for the cession of Alta and Baja California and New Mexico, the right of transit across the Tehuantepec isthmus, and the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas. In exchange the United States would pay up to \$20 million to Mexico and assume up to \$3 million in U.S. citizens' claims against Mexico. In subsequent negotiations the demand for Baja California and the right of transit were dropped" (Castillo). On his own initiative, Trist offered an indemnity of \$15 million, judging that this would gain acceptance for the treaty among those who felt that the United States had already paid enough in "blood and treasure."

Ultimately, the Mexican war has been attributed to the American belief in "Manifest Destiny" a term coined by John O'Sullivan, an American journalist, one hostilities had begun, and best defined by Walt Whitman, the Poet of Democracy, as the "great mission of peopling the new World with a noble race" (Gonzales). That ideology led to a bloody war between the U.S. and Mexico. Some people believe that the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is a humiliation to all the people that fought for that land. Mexico sold big part of its territory at a low price, I don't know if at that time Mexico did not know that the land that they were selling (really cheap) could later on be an important part of the economy. However, I also believe that land does not make a difference between a poor or a rich country, definitively it help but it does not make the difference. Mexican people would never know what would happened if they had never lost that territory. The only thing they can do is work their land and do not regret about their past.

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