

# Time Machine (1845): Manifest Destiny and annexing California and Texas

By John O'Sullivan, United States Magazine and Democratic Review, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.05.16

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The 1872 painting by John Gast "Spirit of the Frontier" shows "Manifest Destiny," the belief that the United States should expand from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. It portrayed settlers moving west, guided by Columbia who symbolizes America and is dressed in a Roman toga to represent classical republicanism and aided by technology like railways and the telegraph. John Gast

*Newsela Editor's Note: This essay appeared in the July-August 1845 edition of the United States Magazine and Democratic Review under the title "Annexation." The editor, John O'Sullivan, coined the term "Manifest Destiny." That phrase supported the U.S. taking of western land. It was also in part responsible for the removal of Native Americans from those lands. Its use of language is typical of newspapers of the time.*

It is now time to end the fight against the Annexation of Texas. All of the angry conversations about this question must stop. We know it may be a condition of our freedom that we must always be struggling over something that divides our government

parties. But in regard to Texas, the parties have been through enough. It is time for our love of country to win out. If this cannot be done, it is at least time for us to use our common sense, and accept the unavoidable and the unchangeable.

### **Welcome To The Family**

Texas is now ours. Already, before these words are written, her Congress has ratified our invitation to join the Union and adapted her laws to our national laws. She is no longer to us a geographical space — a certain mix of coast, plain, mountain, valley, forest and stream. She is no longer to us a simple country on the map. She comes within the dear and holy designation of our country.

It is time then that all should stop treating her like a foreigner. We should stop criticizing everything connected with her rise. We should stop opposing the steps necessary for her rise to be completed and dismiss words of unwelcome. There has been enough of all this. It has had its fitting day during the period when it unfortunately became one of the leading topics of party division and presidential campaigning. But that period has passed. With it, let its bigotry and its strong feelings, its disagreements and its denunciations, pass away too.

The next time Congress meets, the representatives of the new young state of Texas will take their places in our halls of national legislation. They will be side by side with those of the original Thirteen Colonies. Let their welcome into "the family" be kindly and cheerful. This befits such an occasion.

### **A Right Of Independence**

Other nations have wrongly tried to join our talks about Texas. Their goal has been to decrease our power. They seek to limit our greatness and check the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent. The land was allotted by God for the free growth of our people, who multiply by the millions every year.

It is wholly untrue that the annexation was at the expense of justice. The independence of Texas was complete and unconditional. It was an independence, not only in fact, but of right. We never felt a duty toward Mexico to hold back from reclaiming our province. If Texas became populated with Americans, it was by no plan of our government. It was on the express invitation of Mexico herself.

### **A Step Closer To California Joining The Union**

California probably will be the next to fall away from its loose connection with Mexico. Backward and distracted, Mexico never can exert any real governmental authority over California. The failings of Mexico and the distance of California must make their relationship one of near independence. Only by forbidding immigration and stunting its

growth would Mexico keep control. But then it would be a military state. This is no government in the legitimate sense of the term. In the case of California this is now impossible. The Anglo-Saxon foot is already on its borders.

The French, then, should stop speaking of balances of power on the American Continent. There is no growth in Spanish America! Whatever population growth there might be in the British Canadas, is only for their own early ending of their colonial relationship with far-off Britain, across the Atlantic Ocean. This will soon be followed by annexation.

Up to 300 million Americans are destined to gather beneath the flutter of the stripes and stars, in the quickly approaching year of the Lord 1945!

**Quiz**

1 Read the following sentence from the section "A Right Of Independence".

"It is wholly untrue that the annexation was at the expense of justice."

What can be concluded from this sentence?

- (A) There were no laws to manage the annexation process.
- (B) Many people disagreed with the way the annexation took place.
- (C) The U.S. government was not involved in Texas' independence.
- (D) Mexico's government knew that annexation was going to happen.

2 Which sentence from the section "Welcome To The Family" BEST explains why the author wrote that people should accept the annexation?

- (A) She comes within the dear and holy designation of our country.
- (B) It is time then that all should stop treating her like a foreigner.
- (C) There has been enough of all this.
- (D) Let their welcome into "the family" be kindly and cheerful.

3 Read the second paragraph from the section "Welcome To The Family".

*It is time then that all should stop treating her like a foreigner. We should stop criticizing everything connected with her rise. We should stop opposing the steps necessary for her rise to be completed and dismiss words of unwelcome. There has been enough of all this. It has had its fitting day during the period when it unfortunately became one of the leading topics of party division and presidential campaigning. But that period has passed. With it, let its bigotry and its strong feelings, its disagreements and its denunciations, pass away too.*

How does the paragraph help to develop the idea that people need to accept Texas' annexation?

- (A) by emphasizing that too much time has already been spent disagreeing on this issue
- (B) by highlighting how many people were opposed to annexation
- (C) by demonstrating how Texas will fit in with the rest of the United States
- (D) by thoroughly explaining the role annexation played in the previous election

- 4 How is the structure of the section "A Right Of Independence" different from the structure of the section "A Step Closer To California Joining The Union"?
- (A) The first section is organized chronologically, and the second section is organized by problem and solution.
  - (B) The first section is structured as a counterargument and response, and the second section is organized by cause and effect.
  - (C) The first section is organized by compare and contrast, and the second section is structured as problem and solution.
  - (D) The first section is structured as a comparison between two things, and the second section is organized chronologically.