

Manifest Destiny #1

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1 Why did Americans think they were so special?

From the wording used in the text, it appears the American's of the time thought of themselves as the nation of *progress, individual freedom, of universal enfranchisement*. They believed that America was the work of God, and that America has been chosen for a mission, that only we can put an end to the tyranny of kings, as opposed to other nations who are *shut out from the live-giving of truth*. Americans believed their nation was destined to be the greatest nation of the future, and their expansion was justified as a work of God.

At the time, almost no nation had defended against a monarchy, and gained independence against a power such as Britain. High on their horses, the Americans didn't think of expansion as much more.

2 Are you surprised by the reasons that O'Sullivan gives for expansion?

By modern standards, I am surprised. O'Sullivan's reasoning for expansion cannot be proven, as it depends on God and religious ideals. He says our expansion and annexation of Texas is just the fulfillment of the Manifest Destiny, and that the opposition is *hampering our power, [and] limiting our greatness*.

On top of this, O'Sullivan is contradicting himself and spreading inaccurate information. He mentions that our country is based on individual freedom, yet we still have slaves. He said that we have universal enfranchisement, yet the only people who could vote at the time were white men.

In the modern day and age, we don't justify reasoning through religious ideals, rather we back

it up with debate, science, and facts. Had a similar piece of text been submitted to a newspaper or other work, it would be rejected immediately.

However, by the standards back then, this isn't very surprising. In the 1800's science and debate was close to nonexistent, and statements were based on either religious ideals or opinions given by journalists and officials. People thought that America was the nation created by god, and everyone followed this religious mindset back then

3 This theory that Americans are special is called "American Exceptionalism." It's this idea that America has had such a unique history and has become so powerful that there's something really special about it. What do you think about this theory? Is it still present today? Explain why/why not

This issue is very much still present today, although to a lesser extent. Every time an election nears, or a national event occurs, many justify their rash actions through "Patriotism". Rather than back up statements with logic, many people base it off of inaccurate, opinionated news sources, as well as religious ideals, similar to the mindset described earlier.