

4-2007

## **Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire By Amy S. Greenberg (review)**

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### **Recommended Citation**

Grytz, Gerhard, "Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire By Amy S. Greenberg (review)" (2007). *History Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 29.  
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*Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire.* By Amy S. Greenberg. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pg. 342. Acknowledgments, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0521840961. \$75.00, cloth. ISBN 0521600804. \$25.99, paper.)

Amy Greenberg's study *Manifest Manhood* provides an intriguing new interpretation of the meaning of Manifest Destiny and the discourse of American expansionism during the middle part of the nineteenth century. Reversing commonly held historical interpretations, Greenberg convincingly shows that Manifest Destiny continued to hold its appeal to Americans after the Mexican-American War. Proponents of aggressive expansionism viewed the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Central America as the "new frontiers" in need of conquering. Between the conclusion of the Mexican-American War and the outbreak of the Civil War, the practice of filibustering, the invasion of foreign territory by private American mercenaries without official government approval, rose to epidemic proportions.

Based on the investigation of an array of written documents, letters, journals, political cartoons, and newspapers, Greenberg analyzes the meaning of Manifest Destiny for American men and women during the 1840s and 1850s in the context of gender. She contends that radical changes in American society, economy, and culture during the 1830s and 1840s challenged ideals and practices of manhood and womanhood, and that the discussions over territorial expansion in the following decade provided the discourse in and through which these gender roles could be reformulated. During these times of domestic change, according to Greenberg, competing models of manhood appealed to American men and the discussion over expansionism "provided one important stage on which [the] battle [between the competing ideals] was waged" (p. 14). By the time the Mexican-American War concluded, two major ideals of masculinity had evolved: "restrained manhood and martial manhood" (p. 11). The restrained men, guided by morality, reliability, and bravery, staunchly supported female domesticity and opposed aggressive expansionism. Men subscribing to this mode of manhood wanted to fulfill America's Manifest Destiny through peaceful means by spreading allegedly superior American social, cultural, and religious institutions. In contrast, martial men, the precursors of the "manly man" of the turn-of-the-century "primitive masculinity," rejected the moral standards of restrained men and supported forceful expansionism. They were in particular drawn to the expansionist agenda and discourse of the Democratic Party. These martial men were on the forefront of supporting the further forceful expansion of the United States in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific, and they dominated the defense of filibustering expeditions into these regions.

*Manifest Manhood* eloquently makes the case that aggressive expansionism in the decades prior to the Civil War, exemplified by numerous filibustering expeditions, was partly driven by domestic discourses of the appropriate roles of American men and women in a changing national environment. Manifest Destiny was gendered and a martial vision of manhood began to dominate its implementation. Greenberg's study greatly enhances our understanding of the dynamics behind American expansionism during the nineteenth century and should become a standard feature on the reading lists of university courses dealing with the topics

of American imperialism and Manifest Destiny. Furthermore, Greenberg's current work opens the door to a more detailed analysis of how gender and the discourses of American manhood and womanhood prevented a peaceful compromise in the sectional conflict leading up to the Civil War.

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*A Texas Patriot on Trial in Mexico: José Antonio Navarro and the Texan Santa Fe Expedition.*

Translated and annotated by Andrés Reséndez. (Dallas: Library of Texas, William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University, 2005. Pp. 170. Bilingual: English-Spanish. Preface, note on orthography, illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 1929531109. \$60.00, cloth.)

Among the many services rendered by José Antonio Navarro to his native land over a long and active life, none is more honored in Texas today than the steadfast loyalty he exhibited as he faced the death penalty for treason to Mexico. Captured with the doomed Texan Santa Fe Expedition in 1841, Navarro faced incriminating evidence that seemed overwhelming. He had signed the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836, and he had entered New Mexico with an enterprise intended to turn that province into an extension of the rebel Texas Republic.

The Library of Texas is to be congratulated for deviating from its practice of producing expertly edited new editions of classic Texas books to publish this remarkable collection of documents concerning Navarro's trial for treason. Andrés Reséndez, who demonstrates his own expertise in editing this volume, realized upon first seeing these papers in Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library that they contained "dramatic proceedings that raised moving and profound questions about Navarro's loyalty" (p. ix). Most importantly for Reséndez, author of the superb *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), Navarro's plight was emblematic of the "conflicting loyalties and wrenching dilemmas" (p. xiii) faced by thousands of people along the shifting borders between Mexico, the Texas Republic, and the United States—perhaps nowhere more poignantly than in Navarro's beloved San Antonio de Béxar.

There are some surprises for most readers in this book. Reséndez proves through his deft analysis of the complex record of the trial, the sentencing, and the subsequent appeals that the leaders of the Mexican government, most notably President Antonio López de Santa Anna and Minister of War José María Tornel, were determined that the death sentence handed down by Navarro's initial court-martial in Mexico City be carried out. He was saved from the firing squad, not by the grace of the dictator, but by a convoluted military justice system that insisted that the Supreme Military Court's commutation of Navarro's sentence to indefinite incarceration could not be overturned, even as a furious Tornel suspended the judges responsible for this decision.

As illuminating as these newly published documents are, however, the story is incomplete. The key decision from the Supreme Military Court, only small portions of which appear in other parts of the record, is missing from the Beinecke's