

determination. Even before the California gold rush in the late 1840s, the Santa Fe Trail became the first path in advance of the Western frontier. With the rush, stage traffic from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe came into regular operation in 1849, with a monthly stage-mail to Salt Lake City the same year. In 1858, John Butterfield got a federal contract to carry mail overland from Memphis and St Louis to California, thus enabling him to run a twice-weekly stage through Preston, El Paso, and Yuma to the Pacific Coast, taking twenty-five days. The Russell, Major & Waddell Company pioneered other routes and by the early 1860s it annually carried 75,000 oxen in 6,250 wagons in the freight business alone. By 1860 Russell's Pony Express, conducted on relays of horseback riders, carried mail from St Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in ten days. This ruined the firm, however, and it ended up in the hands of Wells Fargo, which controlled much of the routing until the transcontinental railroads.<sup>188</sup>

In the meantime, Samuel Morse (1791-1872), originally an artist—which was why he was in Rome when a papal guard knocked his hat off and made him fanatically anti-Catholic—and professor of design in New York College, conceived the idea of an electric telegraph in 1832 and built a practical machine in 1837. He had to pester Congress before it appropriated \$30,000 for a Washington-Baltimore line, opened in 1844. It was first used that spring to transmit news from the Whig and Democratic conventions, which met in Baltimore, to the capital. Then a private company was formed and moved in, opening its first line in 1846. Ezra Cornell (1807-74) was the organizing genius who formed the Western Union Telegraph Company (chartered 1856) and took the first line through to California in 1861—thus killing the Pony Express stone dead—and generating huge profits used to found Cornell University, which opened in 1868. A little belatedly, the railroads learned the value to them of the telegraph line and helped to finance its extensions running alongside their tracks.<sup>189</sup> Thereafter the telegraph quickly became an indispensable tool of government, commerce, and many kinds of social communication, with the Associated Press, originally the New York AP (1827), taking full advantage to coordinate news and disseminate it nationwide.<sup>190</sup> So, by the 1850s, the United States had an overall transportation system of great versatility and often of high density.

This transportation capacity, and the extraordinary powers of land-digestion shown by American settlers and farmers, combined to make

the United States ever greedy for more territory. The vast tracts of the Louisiana Purchase, the conquest of Florida by Jackson—all these were not enough. By the 1830s the notion that America was destined to absorb the whole of the West of the continent, as well as its core, was taking hold. This was a religious impulse as well as a nationalist and ideological one—a feeling that God, the republic, and democracy alike demanded that Americans press on west, to settle and civilize, republi-canize and democratize. In 1838 an extraordinary essay in the *Democratic Review*, entitled 'The Great Nation of Futurity,' set out the program:

The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles: to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High—the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere—its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens—and its congregation the Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling and owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood—of 'peace and goodwill among men'.<sup>191</sup>

The theme was taken up in Congress, especially in the 1840s, the Roaring Forties as they came to be called, certainly distinguished by the roaring of Americans for more lands to conquer. One congressman put it thus in 1845: 'This continent was intended by Providence as a vast theater on which to work out the grand experiment of Republican Government, under the auspices of the Anglo-Saxon race.'<sup>192</sup>

The actual term 'Manifest Destiny' was first used by John L. O'Sullivan in the *Democratic Review* of 1845, complaining of foreign interference and attempts aimed at 'limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.' Representative Duncan of Ohio said he feared federal government centralism, and the answer to this was expansion: 'To oppose the constant tendency to federal consolidation, I know of no better plan than to multiply States, and the further from the center of federal influence and attraction, the greater is our security.'<sup>193</sup> At the New Jersey State Democratic convention of 1844, Major Daveznac thapsodized on this theme: 'Land enough! land enough! Make way, I

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say, for the young American Buffalo—he has not yet got land enough! He wants more land as his cool shelter in summer—he wants more land for his beautiful pasture grounds. I tell you, we will give him Oregon for his summer shade, and the region of Texas as his winter pasture! (Applause.)<sup>94</sup>

O'Sullivan repeated his Manifest Destiny demand by predicting that it had to be fulfilled to accommodate 'that riot of growth in population which is destined, within a hundred years, to swell our numbers to the enormous population of *two hundred and fifty millions* (if not more),' a good guess, as it turned out.<sup>95</sup> An editorial in the *United States Journal*, October 15, 1845, asserted: 'It is a truth, which every man may see, if he will but look—that all the channels of communication—public and private, through the schoolroom, the pulpit and the press—are engrossed and occupied with *this one idea*, which all these forces are designed to disseminate—that we, the American people, are the most independent, intelligent, moral and happy people on the face of the earth.' This fact, and most Americans agreed it was a fact, gave ethical justification to the desire to expand the republic which promoted such happiness.

It should be added that an outspoken minority, especially among the churchgoers, opposed western expansion on social and moral grounds. After inspecting Louisville, the New England Unitarian minister James Freeman Clarke expressed alarm that, in the West, man was 'unbridled, undirected and ungoverned,' mothers encouraging their children to fight, women favoring dueling, judges gambling, while vice 'ate into the heart of social virtue.' Cornelius C. Felton of Harvard complained in 1842 that a population was growing up in the West 'with none of the restraints which fetter the characters of the working class in other countries.' Each man in the West considered himself 'a sovereign by indefeasible right and acknowledged no one as his better.'<sup>96</sup> But that was the New England view. In the South, these feelings were considered virtues, to be encouraged. Besides, the South had an additional reason for pushing West—to extend slavery and to found more slave states and so maintain the balance of power in Congress.

With the 49th parallel limiting American expansion to the North, the obvious way to get more land was to dismember Mexico. It had always been menaced by the United States. President Jefferson had claimed it up to the Rio Grande. Then America backed down to the Colorado River, and then to the Sabine, accepted as the frontier by Secretary of State Adams in 1819. But East Texas had already been

occupied by the same sort of national and racial oddities who congregated in Florida, and, while they still ruled these parts, the Spaniards had thought of giving up the East and concentrating on West Texas, where the ranching, which was what they most liked, was of high quality. In 1812, a filibuster group of Mexicans and Americans marched in from Louisiana, took San Antonio, and set up what they called the State of Texas. They were wiped out by a Spanish counterattack. A group of Bonapartist exiles set up another Texan republic in 1818, and a third proto-state was proclaimed by a group of Americans the next year. Galveston Island was a pirate base. Then an independent Mexican government, having thrown out the Spanish by force, took over and gradually asserted its authority.<sup>97</sup>

Some Americans in search of land cooperated with the new independent Mexican authorities. Moses Austin (1761-1821), born in Connecticut, moved to Missouri and then, having become a citizen of Spanish Louisiana, was allowed by the new Mexican government to found the Austin Colony, a huge block in the Colorado and Brazos basins, which he passed on to his son Stephen Fuller Austin (1793-1836). This colony consisted of prairies, woodlands, and river-bottom lands of just the kind American settlers liked. The land was allocated in ranches of square leagues, according to the Spanish custom, that is 4,428-acre blocks—much bigger units than you could get in the United States, and for lower prices. By 1830 Austin had settled more than 5,000 Americans on his lands. Importing slaves to work the land was technically unlawful because Mexico had abolished slavery in 1824, but in practice it was allowed.

Then in 1830 the Mexican government suddenly halted immigration, imposed customs duties, reorganized Texas into three departments and set up military forts and garrisons. By this time three-quarters of the 30,000 people in Texas (including slaves) were Americans, and the western margin of America to the north was beyond the Colorado and 250 miles west of the Sabine. So Texas, as part of Mexico, looked increasingly anomalous. Austin behaved like a loyal Mexican citizen, as long as this was feasible. If Mexico had been stable, things might have been different and its power survived. If the United States had been unstable, it might have been less acquisitive. But the historical fact is that Mexico was unstable and America was stable. Various transient Mexican governments made superficially brutal but intrinsically feeble attempts to impose their will and these merely had the effect of irritating the growing body of American settlers and dri-