



Manifest Destinies: America's Westward Expansion and the Road to the Civil War

Steven E. Woodworth

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A sweeping history of the 1840s, *Manifest Destinies* captures the enormous sense of possibility that inspired America's growth and shows how the acquisition of western territories forced the nation to come to grips with the deep fault line that would bring war in the near future.

Steven E. Woodworth gives us a portrait of America at its most vibrant and expansive. It was a decade in which the nation significantly enlarged its boundaries, taking Texas, New Mexico, California, and the Pacific Northwest; William Henry Harrison ran the first modern populist campaign, focusing on entertaining voters rather than on discussing issues; prospectors headed west to search for gold; Joseph Smith founded a new religion; railroads and telegraph lines connected the country's disparate populations as never before.

When the 1840s dawned, Americans were feeling optimistic about the future: the population was growing, economic conditions were improving, and peace had reigned for nearly thirty years. A hopeful nation looked to the West, where vast areas of unsettled land seemed to promise prosperity to anyone resourceful enough to take advantage. And yet political tensions roiled below the surface; as the country took on new lands, slavery emerged as an irreconcilable source of disagreement between North and South, and secession reared its head for the first time.

Rich in detail and full of dramatic events and fascinating characters, *Manifest Destinies* is an absorbing and highly entertaining account of a crucial decade that forged a young nation's character and destiny.

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