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Amy S. Greenberg

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Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire

The U.S.-Mexico War (1846–8) brought two centuries of dramatic territorial expansionism to a close, seemingly fulfilling America's Manifest Destiny. Or did it? As politicians schemed to annex new lands in Latin America and the Pacific, some Americans took expansionism into their own hands. Between 1848 and 1860, there was an epidemic of unsanctioned attacks by private American mercenaries (known as filibusters) throughout the Western Hemisphere. This book documents the potency of Manifest Destiny in the antebellum era and situates imperial lust in the context of social and economic transformations that were changing the meaning of manhood and womanhood in the United States. Easy victory over Mexico in 1848 led many American men to embrace both an aggressive vision of expansionism and an equally martial vision of manhood. Debates about the propriety of aggression abroad polarized the public at home, shaping antebellum presidential elections, foreign policies, gender relations, and, ultimately, the failure of sectional compromise before the Civil War.

Amy S. Greenberg is Associate Professor of History and Women's Studies at the Pennsylvania State University. She is also the author of *Cause for Alarm: The Volunteer Fire Department in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1998).

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The Pennsylvania State University



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For Rich and Jackson

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Frontmatter

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The reputations of the nineteenth century will one day be quoted, to prove its barbarism.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1850

Time will decide whether they were pirates and cutthroats, or heroes and patriots.

– Cora Montgomery, 1851

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Abbreviations Used in the Notes</i>	xv
Introduction	i
1 The “New Frontier” as Safety Valve: The Political and Social Context of Manifest Destiny, 1800–1860	18
<i>Enter the Filibusters</i>	27
<i>Political Repercussions and Responses in the Second Party System</i>	33
<i>Section, Class, and Race: The Horizontal Comradeship of Manifest Destiny</i>	40
<i>Filibustering as Seduction: Two Interpretations</i>	47
2 An American Central America: Boosters, Travelers, and the Persistence of Manifest Destiny	54
<i>Natural versus National Borders: Redrawing the Map</i>	59
<i>Manifest Destiny and the Traveler’s Encounter with Central America</i>	78
3 American Men Abroad: Sex and Violence in the Latin American Travelogue	88
<i>Race and Manifest Destiny</i>	91
<i>Looking at the Latin American Man</i>	96
<i>The Manly American</i>	106
<i>Looking at Latin American Women</i>	112
<i>The Irresistible American</i>	123
4 William Walker and the Regeneration of Martial Manhood	135
<i>Substance versus Trappings in the Construction of Manly Character</i>	139
<i>The Promise of Regeneration</i>	147
	vii

Cambridge University Press
0521840961 - Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire
Amy S. Greenberg
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	Contents
	<i>Restraint as a Virtue: Walker Condemned</i> 151
	<i>The Heroic Viking of Our Time: Walker Celebrated</i> 158
	<i>The Gray-Eyed Man Has Come</i> 165
5	The Irresistible Pirate: Narciso López and the Public Meeting 170
	<i>Martial Manhood Comes Home</i> 178
6	American Women Abroad 197
	<i>Manifest Domesticity in Latin America</i> 200
	<i>Removing White American Women from Latin America</i> 215
	<i>Female Filibusters? Lucy Holcombe and Cora Montgomery</i> 221
7	Manifest Destiny and Manly Missionaries: Expansionism in the Pacific 231
	<i>The Game Cock</i> 232
	<i>Health and Hula: Annexationists Consider Hawaii</i> 243
	<i>Missionary Work as (Anti) Expansionism: Restrained Manhood in Hawaii</i> 254
	<i>“Inevitable Consequences”: The Perry Expedition to Japan, 1852–1854</i> 261
	Conclusion: American Manhood and War, 1860 to the Present 269
	<i>Bibliography</i> 283
	<i>Index</i> 307

Illustrations

0.1	<i>American Progress</i>	<i>page 2</i>
1.1	Virtuous Harry	24
1.2	<i>Flight of the Mexican Army</i>	27
1.3	A War President	35
1.4	The “Ostend Doctrine”	37
1.5	A Serviceable Garment	39
2.1	Map of the United States and Central America	72
3.1	Market Place, Acapulco	104
3.2	The Way They Wait for “The Steamer”	108
3.3	“And I took deliberate aim. . . .”	110
3.4	Indian Girl of Subtiaba	120
3.5	Mother of the Tigers	121
3.6	Nicaraguan Convent	126
3.7	Bathing and Washing Corn	130
3.8	Nicaraguan Meat Market	132
4.1	William Walker Etching	144
4.2	Retreat from Massaya	153
4.3	Filibusters Reposing after Battle	155
4.4	Walker Portrait	168
5.1	Buccaneers’ Rendezvous	176
5.2	Great Navel Blockade	182
5.3	Narciso López	184
5.4	The Place Where López Landed	186
6.1	Mary Jane Megquier and Family	199
6.2	The Way They Cross the Isthmus	210
6.3	Bloomers and Cigars	213
6.4	Entrance to a Coffee Estate in Cuba	217
7.1	The Hula-Hula	247

Cambridge University Press
0521840961 - Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire
Amy S. Greenberg
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

x	<i>Illustrations</i>
7.2 The Hawaiian Man: 1772	250
7.3 The Hawaiian Man: 1852	251
7.4 Paddle Wheel Steamers and Sumo Wrestlers	266
8.1 U.S. Commercial and Geographical Relations, 1868	276

Cambridge University Press

0521840961 - Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire

Amy S. Greenberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

0521840961 - Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire

Amy S. Greenberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

0521840961 - Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire

Amy S. Greenberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xiii

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Abbreviations Used in the Notes

AH	Hawaii State Archives
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
BL	Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
DBR	<i>De Bow's Review</i>
HL	Manuscripts Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA
HNMM	<i>Harper's New Monthly Magazine</i>
JAH	<i>Journal of American History</i>
LOC	Library of Congress, Washington, DC
NEYR	<i>New Englander and Yale Review</i>
NYH	<i>New York Herald</i>
NYT	<i>New York Tribune</i>
PMM	<i>Putnam's Monthly Magazine</i>
SLM	<i>Southern Literary Messenger</i>
SQR	<i>Southern Quarterly Review</i>
USDR	<i>United States Magazine and Democratic Review</i>
WWP	Callender I. Fayssoux Collection of William Walker Papers, Latin American Collection, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

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