

A National Eulogy

By Pete Clark

During the late 18th Century a rebellion in North America gathered energy and evolved into a war for independence. Using guerrilla tactics as well as major battles, the colonists successfully ended the war in 1781 with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia in October of that year. Rid of the expense of British taxes and the expense and inconvenience of housing British troops, the colonial leaders set about creating a great experiment in political science. They chose to create a government of the people, by the people, for the people, surpassing the democratic efforts of ancient Greece.

After winning its independence from Mexico in 1836, Texas became the 28th state to join the Union. In 1845 Manifest Destiny came into being as the driving philosophy behind the country's expansion. It was the Manifest Destiny of the United States to spread across the continent from shore to shore and from Canada to Mexico, the costs and the methods used not mattering. The young nation wanted to grow and dominate all that came under its control. Manifest Destiny insured the indigenous people would continue to be slaughtered, making way for European Americans to replace them.

With defeat in the war of 1848, Mexico ceded land that became the states California, Nevada, Utah and part of the states Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. The northern boundary of Oregon Territory, now the states Washington and Oregon, was settled through negotiation in 1846. The country expanded across the continent using various trails named for their destinations, such as the Santa Fe Trail. Later came the first transcontinental telegraph and later after the Civil War a transcontinental railroad.

Much less progress would have been made with settlement and industry without incentives put in place by the government. The intensity of the Civil War threatened American Democracy but Abraham Lincoln guided the country through the dangers to civil liberty and slaves were freed, remaining second class citizens, but more than three-fifths of a person.

The Spanish American War in 1898 made the United States a world power and with the occupation of the Philippines, a colonial power. The United States is still a colonial power with possessions in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean whose residents have local, but no national voting rights.

We have survived two world wars, a Forgotten War, the invasion of a golf course and years of senseless war in the Middle East. We are still free and have made much progress in the area of civil rights. Do not get comfortable. We have a greedy, vicious President who is surrounding himself with sycophants, set on bullying everyone and stripping away our heritage of freedom and nullifying the Constitution. Don't look for much help from the sitting Congress. It is dominated by the Right, who wish to move the country back to the days of the Robber Barons of the late 19th Century.

In the near future we may have to say, "Rest in peace Uncle Sam. It was a valiant undertaking that failed."