

# Jane cazneau

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Jane McManus Storm Cazneau was a shadowy figure on the margins of United States foreign policy in the mid-nineteenth century. A journalist for expansionist publications such as the United States Magazine and Democratic Review, she deserves a place in the pantheon of the "Young Americans" (p. 96) who pushed for a U. S. commercial empire. But how big a place? Linda Hudson would like us to believe a very big place indeed, yet the evidence remains fragmentary. Many things about Jane Storm Cazneau remain unclear. Hudson posits a Native American grandmother, although there is no solid evidence of this. Her first marriage apparently dissolved, but there is no divorce record. She may or may not have had an affair with Aaron Burr, an early mentor. Hudson's most significant claim is that Jane Storm is the journalist who coined the phrase "manifest destiny" (pp. 60-62). Hudson argues that later historians have simply assumed that John O'Sullivan wrote the Democratic Review's many unsigned editorials. But Hudson's computer analysis (Appendix B) of O'Sullivan's and Storm's signed works shows that the grammatical errors in the famous editorial that first contained the phrase exhibit a much closer correlation with those commonly made by Storm than with those made by O'Sullivan. What is certain is that she migrated to pre-revolutionary Texas and speculated in land grants and immigration schemes. Writing under the pen name "Montgomery" (later, "Cora Montgomery"), Storm became a regular correspondent of Moses Y. Beach's New York Sun. When war broke out, Storm accompanied Beach and his daughter on a covert peace mission to Mexico in late 1846. The Beach mission has long been clouded with uncertainty about its purposes and accomplishments, and so Storm's role in it is similarly in doubt. Nonetheless, she was clearly an

important element, as neither of the Beaches knew Spanish and President James K. Polk had a private interview with her after her return. After the war, Storm continued to favor U. S. expansion into Latin America and the Caribbean, especially through annexation. Although Hudson maintains that Storm was not a strong proponent of " All Mexico" during the U. S.-Mexican War, some have credited her with leading the movement. She had contact with Cuban, Mexican, and Nicaraguan filibustering groups. She married diplomat Williams L. Cazneau in 1849 after a long acquaintance but still worked as a journalist for numerous publications, wrote about her travels, and remained active in Democratic Party politics. She secured a diplomatic mission to the Dominican Republic for her husband and worked with him to gain U. S. access to Samana Bay. Jane Storm Cazneau died in a shipwreck during a storm at sea in 1878. Many questions about her activities and the extent of her influence remain unanswered. Barring the emergence of new documentary collections, Hudson's biography is the most complete picture of her life we are likely to have. As such it is a useful addition to the literature on nineteenth-century U. S. expansionism.