Great Man Theory

Assumptions
Leaders are born and not made.
Great leaders will arise when there is a great need.

Description
Early research on leadership was based on the study of people who were already great leaders. These people were often from the aristocracy, as few from lower classes had the opportunity to lead. This contributed to the notion that leadership had something to do with breeding.
The idea of the Great Man also strayed into the mythic domain, with notions that in times of need, a Great Man would arise, almost by magic. This was easy to verify, by pointing to people such as Eisenhower and Churchill, let alone those further back along the timeline, even to Jesus, Moses, Mohammed and the Buddah.

Discussion
Gender issues were not on the table when the ‘Great Man’ theory was proposed. Most leaders were male and the thought of a Great Woman was generally in areas other than leadership. Most researchers were also male, and concerns about androcentric bias were a long way from being realized.

See also
Trait Theory