

1898
recruiting
poster ►



▲ Nameplate from the *Maine*'s wreckage

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Remember the *Maine*!

On February 15, 1898, an explosion ripped through the hull of the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor, in the Spanish colony of Cuba. More than 250 American sailors died. The incident ignited a furor as Americans clamored for war with Spain. In newspapers, speeches, and songs, patriots implored their fellow citizens to remember the *Maine*:

“And shall our country let it pass, this deed of foul intent?
And shall our country dare believe it was an accident? . . .
Come arm, we all, and let us teach a lesson to bold Spain.
We will avenge, by more than speech the destruction of the
Maine!”

—H. W. Petrie, lyrics from “The Wreck
of the *Maine*,” 1898

The Spanish-American War

Objectives

- Explain the causes of the Spanish-American War.
- Identify the major battles of the war.
- Describe the consequences of the war, including the debate over imperialism.

Terms and People

José Martí
William Randolph
Hearst
Yellow Press
jingoism

George Dewey
Emilio Aguinaldo
Rough Riders
Treaty of Paris

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects

Note the causes, key events, and effects of the Spanish-American War.

| Cause | | Spanish-American War | | Effect |
|-------|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| • | → | • Dewey destroys Spanish fleet | → | • U.S. acquires Philippines |
| • | | | | |

Why It Matters American power and economic interests around the world were growing. Still, the United States remained reluctant to risk war with other powers to acquire colonies. That changed, however, in 1898, when America went to war against Spain. The United States acquired colonies and became a world power. **Section Focus Question:** What were the causes and effects of the Spanish-American War?

Causes of the War

At the end of the nineteenth century, Spain was an imperial nation in decline. Its formerly vast empire had dwindled to a small number of possessions, including the Philippine Islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean islands of Puerto Rico and Cuba.

Cubans Rebel Against Spanish Rule By 1897, American entrepreneurs had invested \$50 million in sugar cane plantations and other ventures in Cuba, which lay just 90 miles off the Florida coast. These businessmen saw Cuba as a growing market for American products. However, the island was very unstable. Yearning for freedom, the Cubans repeatedly rebelled against Spanish rule.

In 1895, Cuban patriot **José Martí** launched a war for independence from Spain. With cries of “*Cuba Libre!*” (“Free Cuba!”), rebel fighters used guerrilla tactics of hit-and-run raids against Spanish forces. In response, Spanish General Valeriano Weyler devised a



Rebellion in Cuba

Spain sent 150,000 troops and one of its best generals, Valeriano Weyler, to smash the uprising. Here, rebel cavalry forces charge into battle. *What attitude do you think the artist had toward the rebels? How can you tell?*

plan to deprive the rebels of food and recruits. He herded the rural population into reconcentration camps, where tens of thousands died from disease and starvation. Meanwhile, the Cubans and Spanish destroyed American property.

Many Americans favored the Cubans, whose struggle for freedom and democracy reminded Americans of their own revolutionary heritage. The brutality of Spanish tactics intensified American affection and sympathy for the rebels. But other Americans, especially business people, were worried about U.S. economic interests in Cuba and hoped that Spain would quickly put down the rebellion.

The Yellow Press Inflames Opinion Rival newspaper publishers Joseph Pulitzer and **William Randolph Hearst** heightened the public's dislike of the Spanish government. Their publications were called the **Yellow Press** because they featured a popular comic-strip character called The Yellow Kid. To boost readership, Pulitzer's *New York World*, Hearst's *New York Journal*, and similar newspapers pasted sensational headlines and pictures on their front pages. Their stories exaggerated Spanish atrocities and compared Cuban rebels to the patriots of the American Revolution.

President William McKinley warned the Spanish to quickly establish peace, or the United States would take whatever steps it "should deem necessary to procure this result." Spain recalled General Weyler and offered the Cuban rebels some reforms. But the rebels insisted on independence, which Spain refused to grant. McKinley ordered the battleship *Maine* to Havana harbor to protect American citizens in Cuba.

Then, in February 1898, the *Journal* published a private letter written by Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, Spain's ambassador to Washington, D.C. The letter, stolen by Cuban rebels and leaked to Hearst, called McKinley a weak and stupid politician. Hearst published the letter under the sensational headline, "Worst Insult to the United States in Its History." The letter fueled American **jingoism**, or aggressive nationalism, and inflamed relations with Spain.

Vocabulary Builder

stipulate—(STIH-p yuh layt) *v.* to include specifically in the terms of an agreement

Spanish misrule of Cuba and the sinking of the USS *Maine* moved the nation toward war with Spain. ▼

The Maine Blows Up Soon after the *Journal* published de Lôme's letter, the *Maine* exploded in Havana harbor. Of the 350 officers and crew on board at the time, 266 died. The Yellow Press promptly accused Spain of blowing up the battleship. One *Journal* headline even declared: "War? Sure!"

But President McKinley did not ask Congress to declare war just yet. Instead, he ordered a special naval board of inquiry to investigate the cause of the explosion. On March 28, 1898, the board concluded that a mine had destroyed the battleship. Years later, follow-up investigations raised doubts about the naval board's findings, but, at the time, most people blamed Spain.

The Nation Goes to War War fever gripped the nation. In newspapers, speeches, and songs, patriotic Americans implored their fellow citizens to "Remember the *Maine*!" In response to American demands, Spain agreed to abolish the reconcentration camps and make other concessions, but it was too little too late. On April 11, 1898, McKinley asked Congress for the authority to use force against Spain to end the fighting in Cuba "in the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of endangered American interests."

Eight days later, Congress enacted four resolutions that amounted to a declaration of war on Spain. The fourth resolution—the Teller Amendment—stipulated that the United States had no intention of annexing Cuba. The navy quickly blockaded Cuban ports, and McKinley called for more than 100,000 volunteers to join the army. In response, Spain declared war on the United States.

✓ **Checkpoint** Why did Americans object to Spanish actions in Cuba?

INFOGRAPHIC

To War!

THE COMING OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Three circumstances came together to sweep the United States into war in 1898: Two New York newspapers, *The New York World* and the *New York Journal*, were competing for bigger readership. Cubans were rebelling against Spain, and the United States was immersed in the spirit of imperialism.

When Cuban rebels burned plantations and blew up trains, Spain responded with brutal measures. The *Journal* and the *World* inflamed American public opinion—and increased their sales—by printing tabloid headlines about Spanish atrocities. Then, shortly after the U.S. government dispatched the USS *Maine* to Cuba to protect American interests, the ship exploded in Havana harbor. Americans clamored for war.



American Troops Battle the Spanish

Americans responded enthusiastically to the war. About 200,000 men enlisted in the army, up from the 25,000 that enlisted at the beginning of 1898. In early May, as the United States Army prepared to attack, Americans heard news of a great naval victory over Spain. But, surprisingly, the victory was not in Cuba. Rather, it was in the Pacific Ocean, on the opposite side of the world.

Dewey Takes the Philippines On May 1, 1898, Commodore **George Dewey** steamed his squadron of vessels into Manila Bay, in the Spanish-held Philippines. The Americans completely surprised the Spanish fleet that was stationed in the bay. Upon issuing the order to “fire when ready,” Dewey watched his ships quickly destroy the Spanish force. While no American died during the naval battle, nearly 400 Spanish sailors lost their lives. Americans gleefully received news of the victory and proclaimed Dewey a hero.

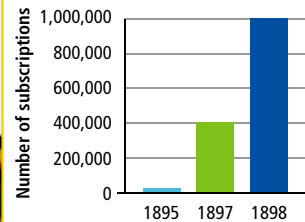
While Dewey was winning an astounding victory over the Spanish navy, Filipino nationalists led by **Emilio Aguinaldo** (ahg ee NAHL doh) were defeating the Spanish army. Like the Cubans, the Filipinos were fighting for freedom from Spain. In August, after some 15,000 U.S. soldiers had landed on the islands, Spanish troops surrendered to the United States.

U.S. Forces Win in Cuba Meanwhile, American troops landed in Cuba in June 1898. U.S. Marines captured Guantánamo Bay, and a force of 17,000 soldiers under U.S. Army General William Shafter stormed ashore east of Santiago.

In spite of their excitement for the war, the troops faced deplorable conditions. They were poorly trained and supplied. As they assembled for duty around

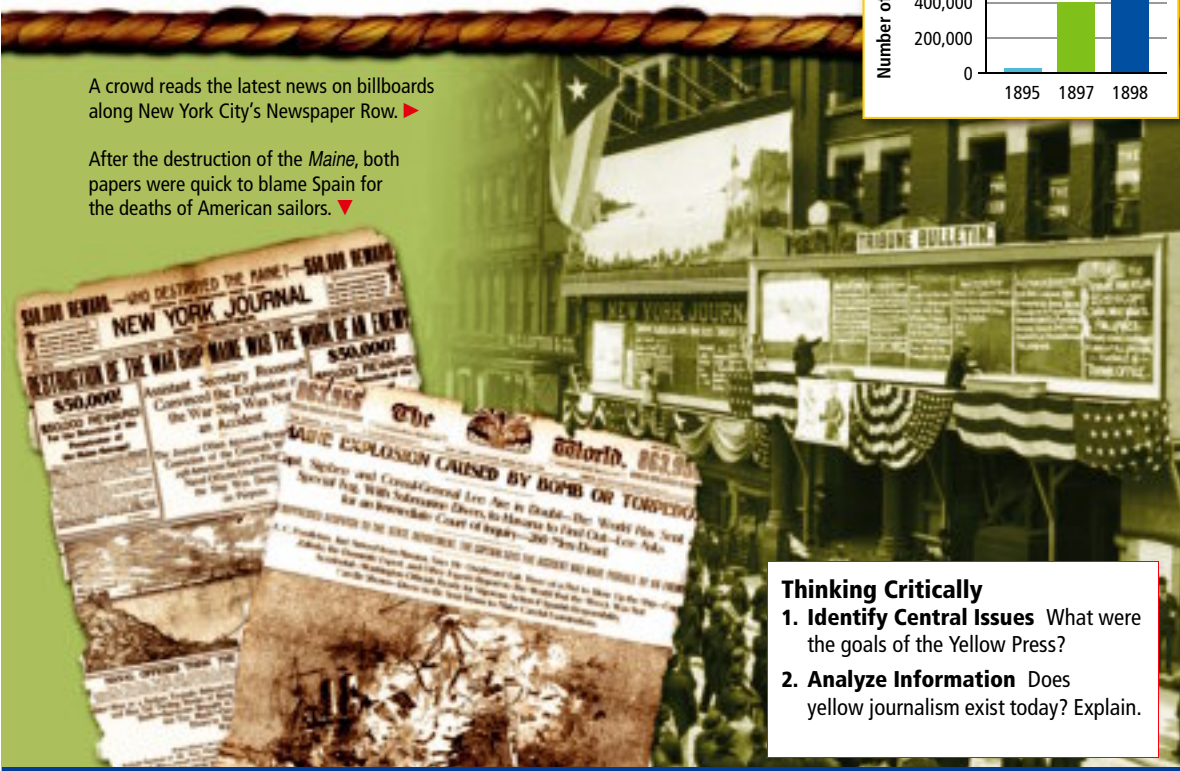
With each new headline, the Yellow Press sold more papers to Americans angry with Spain. ▼

New York Journal Sales



A crowd reads the latest news on billboards along New York City's Newspaper Row. ▶

After the destruction of the *Maine*, both papers were quick to blame Spain for the deaths of American sailors. ▼



Thinking Critically

- 1. Identify Central Issues** What were the goals of the Yellow Press?
- 2. Analyze Information** Does yellow journalism exist today? Explain.

Vocabulary Builder

obsolete—(ahb suh LEET) *adj.* no longer in use or practice; out of date

Tampa, Florida, the soldiers were issued obsolete weapons and heavy wool uniforms that were unsuitable for Cuba's tropical climate. Corrupt and inefficient officials provided the men with rotting and contaminated food.

General Shafter's army consisted of state National Guard units and regular army units, including the African American Ninth and Tenth Cavalry regiments from the western frontier. Another cavalry unit was organized and commanded by the future President Theodore Roosevelt. His **Rough Riders** consisted of rugged westerners and upper-class easterners who relished what Roosevelt called the "strenuous life."

The Rough Riders and Roosevelt gained fame for the role they played in the battles for Kettle and San Juan hills outside Santiago, Cuba. Joined by African American soldiers from the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries, the Riders stormed up those hills to secure high ground surrounding Santiago. One war correspondent described a charge of the African American soldiers:

Primary Source

"[T]hey followed their leader up the terrible hill from whose crest the desperate Spaniards poured down a deadly fire of shell and musketry. They never faltered. . . . [T]heir aim was splendid, their coolness was superb. . . . The war had not shown greater heroism."

—War correspondent, 1898

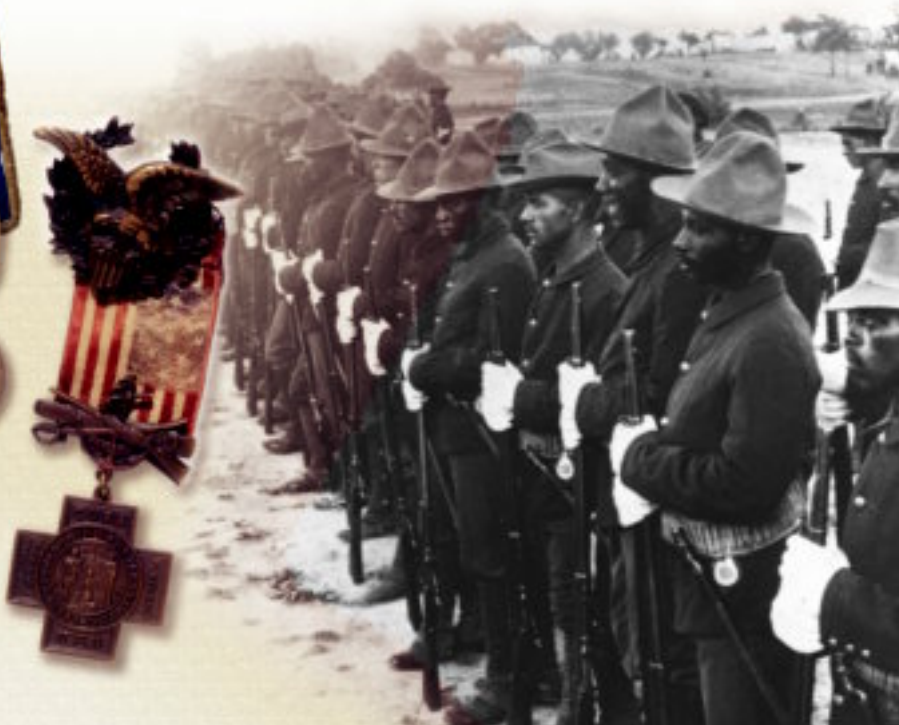
Two days after the battle of San Juan Hill, the Spanish navy made a desperate attempt to escape from Santiago's harbor. U.S. forces, which had blockaded the harbor, destroyed the Spanish fleet as it tried to break out. Surrounded, outnumbered, and dispirited, Spanish forces in Santiago surrendered. Although a few battles followed when U.S. forces occupied the island of Puerto Rico, another Spanish

▼ Regimental flag carried by African American soldiers



African Americans Serve Their Country

African American soldiers of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry regiments stand at attention after fighting the Spanish in Cuba. The medals above were won by Augustus L. Reed, an African American officer in the United States Navy.



The Spanish-American War, 1898



Map Skills The Spanish-American War was fought on two fronts on opposite sides of the world. The United States won a quick victory over Spain.

- 1. Locate:** (a) Havana, (b) Puerto Rico, (c) Hong Kong, (d) the Philippines

- 2. Regions** Identify the two different regions of the world in which the war was fought.

- 3. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think more Americans died from sickness and disease than in battle?

possession, the fighting had come to an end. Although almost 3,000 Americans died during the war, only around 380 died in combat. Disease, especially malaria and yellow fever, caused most of the deaths.

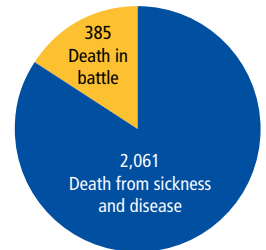
- ✓ Checkpoint** How did the Rough Riders and African American cavalry units contribute to the war effort?

Effects of the War

Secretary of State John Hay referred to the conflict with Spain as a “splendid little war” because of the ease and thoroughness of America’s victory. Although the war may have been “splendid,” it created a new dilemma for Americans: What should the United States do with Spain’s former possessions?

The Treaty of Paris Signed by Spain and the United States in December 1898, the **Treaty of Paris** officially ended the war. Spain gave up control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific island of Guam. It also sold the Philippines to the United States for \$20 million.

Causes of American Deaths in the Spanish-American War



SOURCE: Historical Statistics of the United States

The Teller Amendment, passed by Congress when it declared war on Spain, prevented the United States from taking possession of Cuba. The amendment did not, however, apply to the Philippines. Americans disagreed over whether to grant the Philippines independence or take full control of the Pacific nation.

Americans Debate Imperialism In an 1899 interview, President McKinley explained, “We could not give [the Philippines] back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable.” He believed that America had no choice but to “take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize . . . them.” McKinley’s imperialist supporters presented similar reasons for maintaining control of the Philippines. They argued that the United States had a responsibility to govern the Filipinos. They reasoned that the islands represented a valuable stepping stone to trade in China. They warned that if the United States gave up the Philippines, other nations would take control of them.

Anti-imperialists, including William Jennings Bryan and Mark Twain, rejected these arguments. In 1899, a large group of anti-imperialists formed the American Anti-Imperialist League. The league condemned imperialism as a crime and attacked it as “open disloyalty to the distinctive principles of our government.”

The debate between imperialists and anti-imperialists reached its climax in the U.S. Senate, where senators had to consider ratifying the Treaty of Paris. In February 1899, the Senate voted 57 to 27 in favor of the treaty. By a single “yes” ballot, the vote met the two-thirds majority necessary to ratify the treaty.

America Assumes a New Role in the World In 1900, William Jennings Bryan ran against William McKinley for the presidency. To bolster his chances of winning reelection, the Republican McKinley named Theodore Roosevelt, the “hero of San Juan Hill,” as his vice-presidential running mate. Emphasizing the overwhelming U.S. victory over Spain, McKinley soundly defeated Bryan. The President’s reelection signaled America’s continuing faith in his imperialist policies.

As a result of the Spanish-American War, the United States had an empire and a new stature in world affairs. The war marked a turning point in the history of American foreign policy.



Checkpoint Why did American leaders think it was important to keep the Philippines?

SECTION

2 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-0506

Comprehension

- 1. Terms and People** What do the following terms and people have in common?
 - José Martí
 - William Randolph Hearst
 - Yellow Press
 - jingoism

- 2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:**
Identify Causes and Effects Use your cause-and-effect chart to answer the Section Focus Question: What were the causes and effects of the Spanish-American War?

Writing About History

- 3. Quick Write: Gather Details** When you write a narrative essay, you often need to gather details about your topic. Suppose that you want to write a narrative diary entry as a witness to the destruction of the USS *Maine*. Conduct research to find descriptions of the explosion and illustrations of the event from newspapers of the time. You may want to research particular newspapers such as the *New York World* and the *New York Journal*.

Critical Thinking

- 4. Draw Conclusions** Do you think the United States would have gone to war with Spain without the explosion of the *Maine*? Why or why not?
- 5. Identify Points of View** Who might agree with John Hay’s opinion that the Spanish-American War was a “splendid little war”? Who might disagree? Why?
- 6. Summarize** What were the principal issues dividing imperialists and anti-imperialists?