The Sinking of the USS Maine: A Turning Point in American Foreign Policy

Maria Sutton
Historical Paper
Senior Division
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On February 15, 1898, the USS Maine sank in Havana Harbor, Cuba. Two days later, the New York Journal’s headline’s screamed, “Destruction of the War Ship Maine Was The Work Of An Enemy!” thus inflaming American anger towards Spain (Crucible of Empire). According to historian Luis Perez, Cuba had always been considered a “strategic site in the Caribbean” (qtd. in Patterson 6). In fact, the United States had wanted to purchase the Spanish colony of Cuba as early as the 1850s. At the close of the nineteenth century, the United States’ economic power and specifically her financial investments in the island were growing while the Spanish empire was in decline. Cuban insurgents had been fighting a series of wars against the Spanish colonials since the 1870s. In 1895, Cuba was again fighting to break away from Spain. Atrocities committed by the Spanish against the Cubans caught the attention of sympathetic American newspapers. Spanish-American relations deteriorated, and the highly publicized and “suspicious” sinking of the USS Maine shattered all hopes of mending the relationship. While not the only cause, the sinking of the USS Maine catapulted the United States into the Spanish-American War, a turning point that ultimately resulted in America becoming a hegemonic nation.

By the late 1800s, the United States was poised to become a world power. Earlier, Europeans had dominated the world stage through overseas colonization. (Harpers Weekly) Nast illustrated “The Worlds’ Plunderers” in 1885 as Russia, Germany and Britain competed for domination of Asia and Africa (of Imperialism Political Cartoons). But, twenty years after the United States Civil War ended, its economy had evolved. “New or improved technologies. . . like electricity, railroads, and the telephone had led to national
markets that rewarded economics of scale” (Traxel 44). Thus, the rise of domestic industries, coupled with increased immigration, and popular ideologies encouraged Americans to expand continentally and eventually, internationally. American businesses were booming and looking for new outlets in overseas markets.

The rise of the United States as a world power derived from its gains in the world economy. Between 1870 and 1900 the U.S. share of world manufacturing production climbed from 23.3 to 30.1 % making it by far the supreme industrial nation. The U.S. economic growth rate (1870-1913) raced at 5 percent. In 1890 moreover, the U.S. ranked second (behind only Russia) in population. (Patterson 5)

Economic success inspired a sense of American pre-eminence. Utilizing the ideas of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority, preacher Josiah Strong rallied the American public to the cause of expansion. In 1885, Strong wrote in his essay, Our Country, that Anglo-Saxons were superior to all races and must evangelize the remainder of the world. Accordingly, “God was training the Anglo Saxon race for the final competition of races” (222). Strong further asserted that the result of a competition of races would be the “survival of the fittest.” This popular application of Charles Darwin’s theory centered on the belief that only the “fittest among nations" would survive (Social Darwinism and Racial Motives). Consequently, Americans like Strong believed that their nation’s virtues needed to be extended to other countries.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, so did the American frontier. In 1893, American historian Frederick Jackson Turner declared, “. . . four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of one hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone and with its going has closed the first period of American history.” Territorial growth was seen as an economic, political, and social opportunity—an American responsibility according to believers
in Manifest Destiny: the right to expand throughout North America. Some argued that it was the country's fate to expand outside the United States. With the close of the American frontier, historian Stephen Ambrose described a kind of national “panic.” He argued, “We [United States] had to find some new outlet for our energy, for our dynamic nature, for this coiled spring that was the United States. So there was an intellectual justification, rationalization'd [sic] be a better way to put it, for ‘Let's get our power overseas’” (qtd. in Crucible for Empire).

However, economics were not the only motives for America's interest in expansion. Three years before Turner's “Frontier Thesis,” Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, published his highly esteemed, The Influence of Sea Power on History, which stressed the importance of a strong navy. Mahan saw foreign colonies as opportunities for naval bases and coaling stations. Specifically, Cuba and the Hawaiian Islands were perfect opportunities for such bases because of their ideal geographical locations. He believed that "Ships that thus sail to and fro’ must have safe ports to which to return. . . ." Moreover, although the United States was not at war, "... far sightedness is needed for adequate military preparation, especially in these days" (26). He was adamant that the United States should also take control of the Philippines in order to have a navy stretch across two oceans. This would be an advantage over European competitors, spread American influence world-wide, and increase the navy's ability to protect America’s international interests.

In the late 1800s, America's attention fixed on nearby Cuba, rich in sugar and tobacco plantations, many of which were already owned by American businessmen. American expansionists believed that ownership of Cuba would strengthen American trade and defense. Many Americans believed if their country had the power to take over Cuba, it should do so because it was stronger and more “civilized.” Helping the Cubans was America’s moral
responsibility (Zimmerman 21). In some ways this was a continuation of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which forbade European interference in the Western Hemisphere. Americans believed that they were obligated to continue the practice of the Monroe Doctrine, to protect Cuba from Spanish oppression, and to have influence in the Caribbean.

By 1894, Cuban-American economic ties were strong. According to Jose Hernandez, in *The World of 1898: The Spanish American War*: “In 1894, nearly 90 percent of Cuba’s exports went to the United States which in turn provided Cuba with 38 percent of its imports. That same year Spain took only 6 percent of Cuba’s exports. Clearly Spain had ceased to be Cuba’s economic metropolis.”

The Cuban Insurrection of 1895 began in response to Spanish repeal of Cubans’ constitutional rights. Jose Marti, a Cuban exile, led the revolution. Despite sending 220,285 soldiers to Cuba, the Spanish were unable to stop the insurrection (Hernandez). Spanish General Valariano Weyler was given command of Cuba and the task of ending the revolution. Weyler instituted his "Reconcentration Plan," converting towns into concentration camps, allowing the remainder of the country to deteriorate. Innocent Cubans were forced to live in dilapidated buildings with little food and practically no medical attention. Thousands of citizens, mostly women and children, died of hunger and disease.

In his April 20th report to Congress, President William McKinley lamented the conditions in Cuba, "Our people have beheld a community reduced to comparative want, its lucrative commerce virtually paralyzed, its exceptional productiveness diminished, its fields laid waste, its mills in ruins, and its people perishing by tens of thousands from hunger and destitution" (3). Popular publications like *Puck* portrayed the tension as a “Cuban Melodrama” with the United States as the “dashing hero,” Spain as the “dastardly villain” and Cuba as the
“damsel in distress” (Dewey 129). Newspaper reports informed Americans of such “injustices,” increasing sympathy for the islanders and hatred for the Spaniards. The New York Journal described Weyler as “a fiendish despot, a brute, a devastator of haciendas, pitiless, cold, and exterminator of men. There is nothing to prevent his carnal brain from inventing torture and infamies of bloody debauchery” (qtd. in Crucible of Empire). The reports of harsh treatment of the Cubans at the hands of Weyler sent America into an uproar. President McKinley told Congress, "In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization. . . the war in Cuba must stop" (13). Despite his initial unwillingness to interfere with Spanish relations, President William McKinley gave into pressure from the American public in defense of what historian Warren Zimmerman called, a “human rights situation” (21). McKinley issued Spain an ultimatum: Either replace Weyler and take steps to end the insurrection, or the United States would intervene.

Spain complied and granted Cubans some autonomy, but the damage was already done. In early February 1898, William Randolph’s Hearst’s newspaper, the New York Journal published an intercepted note from the Spanish Ambassador Enrique Dupuy de Lome. The headlines read, “Greatest Insult Ever to America: Spanish Insult Our President.” De Lome inflamed readers by writing, “McKinley is weak and catering to the rabble, and, besides a low politician who desires to leave a door open to the jingoism of his party” (qtd. in Crucible of Empire). De Lome resigned, but the relationship between Spain and the United States deteriorated rapidly. Following a series of revolts in Havana, by 1898, President McKinley ordered the USS Maine, a second-class battleship, to Havana Harbor to protect American interests. President McKinley believed that deployment of the USS Maine would keep America out of conflict with Spain. Instead, this decision catapulted the nation into one of the most influential wars in America's history.

"Beneath the veneer of official courtesy the Spanish and Americans at Havana eyed each other
warily. Both sides sought to avoid incidents" (Rickover 38). McKinley hoped that the presence of the ship would calm the Cuban rebels and protect American citizens and interests. Admiral George Dewey was optimistic, declaring, "Though President McKinley was still confident that war could be averted, active naval measures had already begun, so far as navy-yard work upon ships and initial inquiries with regard to the purchase of war material were concerned" (179).

The *Maine*, captained by Charles Sigsbee, carried 354 United States Navy men, ready to serve their country (Rickover 5). The massive ship arrived in Havana Harbor on January 5 and stayed without incident for a month. However, at 9:40 PM on February 15, 1898, there was a thunderous explosion in the harbor. The *USS Maine* sank. Two hundred sixty-six of the 354 men were killed; others lay wounded and dying on the shore (25). McKinley immediately ordered an investigation. Led by Captain Will T. Sampson, and assisted by Lieutenant Commander Adolph Marix, Captain French E. Chadwick, and Lieutenant Commander William P. Potter, the investigation concluded that the sinking could have been caused by negligence, an internal explosion, or an external mine. Captain Sigsbee was found innocent due to his precautionary measures (25).

Spontaneous combustion was a somewhat common occurrence on battleships at the time. It was caused by "coal that was exposed to air, oxidiz[ing], and burn[ing] at 180 degrees. If the heat was transferred to a magazine, it could explode" (*Our Maine Mystery*). The evidence did not support the conclusion that an internal explosion caused the catastrophe. Divers confirmed that the plates on the bottom of the ship were pushed inwards, suggesting a mine explosion rather than internal combustion. Also, the ship's keel was pressed up in the shape of a “V,” and there was a large hole in the floor of the Havana Harbor. The investigators highly doubted that a spontaneous combustion alone could have caused that much damage (Rickover 62). Also,
surviving sailors that were aboard the ship reported hearing two explosions, "bursting, rending, and . . . largely metallic in character" (Sigsbee 63). This testimony did not coincide with the theory of spontaneous combustion, because there would only have been one blast, whereas a mine could have been detonated and sparked another explosion in the magazines of the ship. However, according eyewitness reports, there was not a large amount of water thrust into the air as is typical with an underwater bomb. And there were no dead fish in the harbor- a classic sign of an underwater explosion (Rickover 63). With so much mystery surrounding the explosion, analysts needed help coming to a decision about the cause.

The investigators called on the counsel of Commander George Converse, a torpedo expert. However, he was unable to confirm the cause of the accident. At the end of the investigation, General Sampson declared that the USS Maine had been hit by a mine, which caused a second explosion in the magazines, but the blame could not be placed on a specific party (Rickover 75). While the court may have come to a decision after lengthy deliberation, the American public had already formed an opinion, Spain was guilty.

Just days after the explosion, the American public was bombarded with newspaper accounts with incriminating headlines: "Crisis at Hand!" "Spanish Treachery!" "Call to Duty!" that stirred patriotism and pushed the country over the edge and into war (Crucible of Empire). "When the people lifted their heads from the weight of the sorrow and indignation upon the shock of that terrible catastrophe in Havana Harbor, their cry was: 'Vengeance upon a treacherous foe!' Honor to our martyred dead!" (Through the War by Camera 23). A popular slogan, “Remember the Maine, to Hell with Spain!” illustrated an eagerness to go to war. Soon, those war-mongering “jingos” would get their wish.
Public opinion was influenced by the press, especially “Yellow Journalism,” a budding newspaper technique that utilized large headlines, front-page illustrations, and sensationalized political cartoons to arouse Americans' interest and manipulate their opinions towards war. The two main proponents of Yellow Journalism were William Randolph Hearst, the owner of the *New York Journal*, and Joseph Pulitzer, the owner of *The New York World*. They used their newspapers to affect hawkish public opinion. In fact, they were at war with each other. As the two top newspaper companies of the time, Hearst and Pulitzer competed to outsell one another. Their influence was far-reaching.

The *New York Journal* exceeded 1,600,000 and it remained well over 1,250,000 during the war. . . The influence of the New York newspapers upon the nation at large was very great. *The World, Journal, Sun* and *Herald*, all with special correspondents in Cuba, sold their news service to papers outside the city. . . Furthermore, since all the leading New York newspapers [such as the *Brooklyn Eagle*]. . . were members of the Associated Press, their news was available for transmission to other member papers. (Wisan 46)

*The New York World* and *The New York Journal* sensationalized stories and even went so far as to fabricate articles in order to sell newspapers. Captain Sigsbee commented: "... We had no censorship in the United States; . . . each person applied their own criticism to what he saw and read in the papers" (Sigsbee 125). Even the President buckled under media pressure.

Despite his reluctance to go to war, McKinley knew conflict with Spain was inevitable and he prepared for the war that would change America's international standing forever (Traxel 113-115). Upon the President's request, Congress passed a $50 million grant for defense against the Spanish. The United States Navy was ready for battle. Still seething over the *Maine*, thousands of men volunteered to fight for their country and the liberation of the Cubans and
others in the Spanish possessions. Admiral George Dewey took the Philippines in the Battle of Manila Bay, Captain Henry Glass swept over Guam, and Undersecretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt gained fame leading his “Rough Riders” in the “charge” of San Juan Hill.

While Ambassador, at the time, John Hay called it, “a splendid little war,” beginning April 25, 1898, and ending with an armistice on August 12, 1898, it had significant consequences, with thousands dead, industries ruined, Spanish-owned colonies unstable, and Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba under American control. The French acted as a mediator between the two countries when they met in Paris on December 10, 1898 to sign the Treaty of Paris, giving the United States Cuba, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The Philippines were later purchased for $20,000,000. The fighting may have come to an end, but America's problems were only beginning.

Although the war was over, America still debated how to handle their new territories and the nation’s entrance onto the world stage. Signed in December, 1898, the Treaty of Paris was not ratified by the Senate until February 6, 1899. The United States had promised the Filipinos freedom after the war, but instead continued to hold on to their country. In response, the Filipinos, led by General Emilio Aguinaldo, revolted against the United States. It was a bloody two-year war which was arguably worse than the Spanish-American War. Unlike the Yellow Journalism that preceded the Spanish-American War, the atrocities in the Philippine War were censored (Crucible of Empire). Despite their calls for independence, America did not relinquish control over the Philippians until after World War II.

The Spanish-American War allowed the United States to attain the status of an imperialistic nation with an empire. Under the pre-war Teller Amendment, the United States gave Cuba its independence. However, in February, 1901, Congress passed the Platt Amendment
which allowed the United States "the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty." This Amendment included a provision for a naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which the United States maintains today.

In April, 1900, President McKinley signed the Foraker Act, which installed United States federal laws in Puerto Rico and eventually granted American citizenship to residents. The hope for all of these countries was "...the establishment of a stable government, capable of maintaining order and observing its international obligations, insuring peace and tranquility and the security of its citizens..." and eventually America stabilized the islands (McKinley 13).

Now equipped with overseas territories, naval bases, and trade connections, the United States sought greater contact with the “Orient” and China. Josiah Strong described the Orient as:

Like the star in the East that guided the three kings with their treasures westward until at length they stood sill over the cradle of young Christ, so the star of the empire, rising in the East, has ever beckoned the wealth and power of the nations westward, until today it stands still over the cradle of the young empire of the West, to which the nations are bringing their offerings. (42-3)

In the aftermath of America’s acquisition of the Philippines, the United States looked to China for trade. Hoping to stop European powers from violating China’s sovereignty and dominating her trade, Secretary of State John Hay issued the first of several Open Door Notes on September 6, 1899 which gave all countries an equal share of trade in the new market while promoting American self-interest. The United States had not only gained political standing, but also respect from European countries.
The mystery of the *USS Maine* explosion was the subject of an 1976 investigation by Admiral Hyman Rickover. In an article excerpt, “Better Late Than Never?” he concluded:

In all probability, the *Maine* was destroyed by an accident which occurred inside the ship. Since the accident could have been prevented, it is proper to ask what would have happened if the *Maine* had not exploded. The answer to this question is difficult, for it depends on an assessment of the relations between the United States and Spain before the ship sailed for Havana. If war between the two countries was inevitable before the *Maine* left for the Cuban capital, the destruction of the battleship and the efforts to determine the cause of the disaster are only interesting footnotes to history.

Was the explosion of the *USS Maine* the most important cause of the conflict between the United States and Spain? Was this event the turning point in American foreign policy in 1898?

Dr. Harold Damerow, Professor of Government and History argues that the United States “was becoming the Colossus of the North” in the decades after the Civil War. He added, “The Spanish American War of 1898 was the turning point in the evolution of American imperialism and Great Power behavior. While nominally aimed at aiding a Cuban independence movement, it was clearly an effort to enhance American power at the expense of the declining Spanish empire."

By the turn of the century, America had risen to become a significant player on the world stage. The Spanish–American War contributed to this transition, along with the expansionist impulse, Cuban conflicts, Yellow Journalism, and a globalist Manifest Destiny. But most significantly, the sinking of the *USS Maine* excited the citizens into a war that would change American history. The nation went into the Spanish-American War with blind enthusiasm and
rage, but came out with responsibilities as a new world power, all set off by the explosion of the USS Maine.
Bibliography

Secondary Sources:

"Better Late than Never?: Rickover Clears Spain of the Maine Explosion." History Matters. n.p., n.d. Web. 10 May 2013. I used this source to learn specifically about the investigation prior to the USS Maine's explosion. I found this site helpful because it included details about Spain's response and actions during the investigation.


This website is extremely useful because it includes an interactive timeline, links to movies, music, pictures, etc. It offers summaries and analysis of The Spanish-American War and the Maine. It focuses heavily on Yellow Journalism, and the effects of it on American culture. Mrs. Markham recommended it.


This source is very helpful because it is a visual presentation, and allows me to physically see the effects of the Maine on Americans. The movie explains the time period and the disaster of the Maine in common language, making it easier to understand the complex issues surrounding the disaster.

Damerow, Harold E., Dr. "US Foreign Policy." Dr. Damerow. Union County College, n.d. Web. 10 May 2013. I used this source to gain knowledge of American affairs prior to the Spanish-American war in order to compare them to their affairs after and analyze the differences. Dr. Damerow is a very knowledgeable college profesors and i trust his information to be accurate.
This book separates the Spanish-American War into topics, each one with a condensed description. This is a nice resource to have because if I need information on a specific topic, I can quickly look it up in this book instead of searching for it in others.


I used this website to learn more about one of the major figures of the century. I also used the cite because I knew that PBS is a credible site.


I used this source to gain a deeper understanding of the difficulties Cuba faced and the Spanish-American relations that hinged on the island. I knew this would be a credible source of information because it comes from the Library of Congress.


Unlike my other sources, this book focuses on the views of important political figures, such as William McKinley and Grover Cleveland, pertaining to the Spanish-American War. I will be able to learn who wanted war and who did not and how the decision was made to begin the war with Spain.


This book focuses more on the Spanish-American War and its battles. Compared to my other sources, this book will give me a more in-depth understanding of the fighting during the War.
This cartoon was extremely beneficial to my understanding of expansion during the turn of the century. It gave me a visual of what was occurring, allowing me to see the movement instead of reading about it on a page.

Patterson, Thomas G. "US Intervention in the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War."

*Magazine of History* 1998: 5-9. Print. This magazine provided me with a substantial amount of statistics that were vital to my understanding of my topic on a grander scale. I also found the source's outline of the time period to be very helpful. After reading it I was able to better understand the chronology of events and appreciate their intertwining relationships. I am also very comfortable with the credibility of the magazine because it was written by Thomas G Patterson, a very well-renowned historian.


This book provides a nice synopsis of the sinking of the *Maine*, and will be a good basis for information. It also provides numerous pictures, charts, and drawings of the ship. Because of this information, I will know the *Maine* from the inside-out and will better understand the disaster and the damage it caused.


In his book, Rosenfeld told the story of the *Maine* and the Spanish-American War based solely on newspaper articles of the time. This allows me to see the War from the newspaper's point of view and to explore what type of media the American public was reading at the time. The media is a very powerful influence on popular opinion and is

*Remembering the Maine* is very focused on the build of the ship and the actual sinking of the vessel. This source is extremely reliable because it was reviewed and edited by Harold D. Langley, the Curator of Naval History from the National Museum of Naval History, Michael J. Crawford (Early History Branch), and Mark L. Hayes from the Department of the Navy.

"Social Darwinism and Radical Motives." *Modern America*. N.p., 26 Apr. 2007. Web. 9 May 2013. I used this source to gain specific knowledge on Social Darwinism and its effect on America. Having a source completely dedicated to one aspect of my paper helped me understand it more clearly because of the detail that was given.


This site was an extremely helpful source because it provided me with maps, bios, lengthy descriptions of every aspect of the war, rosters, diaries, etc. It was an invaluable plethora of information that I relied on heavily throughout my research.


1898 is focused on the affect the War had on America. It first describes the "American way" before the war and then describes the changes the *Maine* and the war had on American culture. The source is reliable because the author, David Traxel, has a Ph.D. in History and is an associate professor at the University of Sciences in Philadelphia.

This website provides a brief overview of Yellow Journalism, explaining what it was and the effect it had on America. This is valuable information because Yellow Journalism was a very important media influence on America and will be a large part of my project. Also, the website is reliable because it is a government site.


This website was recommended to me by a teacher, and for that reason I know the information is valid. I used the site to gain the opinion of a scholar of history on the subject. I needed to explore the thoughts of those of my own time as well as those of the twentieth century.


While this book gives a detailed description of the Spanish-American War, I am mainly interested in a section titled: "Causes of the Declaration of War." It focuses on the events surrounding (and sparked by) the sinking of the Maine and how these events led to the declaration of War against Spain. This is crucial information for my research.


This book elaborated on the circulation and success of such newspapers as the New York Times and the New York Journal. This aided in my understanding of the large effect the Press had on Americans at the time.


The Fate of the Maine includes pictures of the wreckage, a list and pictures of the men aboard, and the Maine's travel log. This information will help me better understand the men on the ship and their activities.
Primary Sources:


This book is covered in Yellow Journalism from front to back. Every page displays political cartoons of the age, and through them I obtained a better understanding of the Yellow Press and its strategies. I was able to see the actual cartoons that pushed Americans into war some 100 years ago and understand why they had such an effect on the American people.


This newspaper showed me a good example of Yellow Journalism at work, with the large headline and hooking titles. It showed me what Yellow Journalism was like in that time.


This song showed me just how much of an effect the sinking of the USS Maine had on the American People. It gave me insight on the patriotism and kinship that formed prior to the tragedy.

This newspaper also aided in my understanding of the effect of the Yellow Press on Americans. I saw and felt the power behind the worlds in the articles, and was able to better express that sense manipulative power into my paper.


I believe that this newspaper is the quintessential example of Yellow Journalism at its finest. It sensationalizes the conflict between the United States and Spain. It utilized words such as "crisis" and "treachery" to excite and scare the American public. I thought it was an exceptional source, and it taught me a great deal about the Yellow Press.


This cartoon was very powerful because it showed a sickly mother distressed as she held her dying child. I found this cartoon painful to observe, and I understood why so many Americans rallied to help the Cubans after seeing comics such as this.


This book contains many comics from both the New York Journal and the New York World. It showed me the rivalry between Hearst and Pulitzer and give me an appreciation for their craft as competing salesmen.


This book was especially helpful because it was written by war-hero General George Dewey himself. I learned what the war was like through his first-hand accounts. I found
his insight very valuable because I was able to learn about the Spanish American War from one of the most actively involved men of the time.


This book taught me all that I needed to know about American imperialism. I thought it was very thorough and easy to understand. It was one of the major sources I used to comprehend America's process of expansion.


This book gave me insight to the battles and aftermath of the Spanish American war. I appreciated it because it was an easy, quick read, but was also very thorough and gave me a true sense of how the war unfolded.


This song showed me how truly admired General Dewey was in the United States. Americans came together to celebrate Dewey's accomplishments, and I understood the sense of unity Americans had formed in response to the war.


This book was very helpful because it had a tremendous impact on America's foreign policy and was one of the driving forces that pushed America into becoming an imperialistic nation. Reading the book was beneficial to my understanding of America's reasons for imperialism and the effect new territories had on the United States.

I thought that it was beneficial to include a newspaper other than that of Hears and Pulitzer in my research to fully comprehend the Press' coverage of the Spanish American War. It allowed me to see other newspapers' perspectives and strategies concerning the war.

McKinley, William. "By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation."


This source allowed me to read what the President wrote and to hear what the American people heard when war was first waged. It is also a very reliable source because it was published by the government itself.


This source was very helpful because it provided a short synopsis of the Spanish American War and was illustrated with actual pictures taken by war correspondents in Cuba. The "art-folio" itself was being sold, at the time, to raise money for a memorial for the men who died in the USS Maine.

This site provided me with factual information about the explosion of the Maine. The site was informational and reliable because it is sponsored by the University of Delaware.


This book was actually written by The Captain of the *USS Maine*. He includes his own personal experiences and descriptions of the ship, its crew, and the sinking. He includes layouts of the ship, pictures of the crew and vessel, reports, and even the death records of the men on board. His perspective gives me tremendous insight into the *Maine*'s disaster and the men involved.


This book was helpful to my research because Josiah Strong was one of the influential thinkers of the time and a great influence on American imperialism, and I was able to learn his opinions through the book. I was able to better understand his message and appreciate the effect it had on the American public.


This is an account of a Spanish soldier on the Battle for El Caney. It was important for me to read this because it gave me "the enemy's" perspective. I was able to understand the other side of the war through his testimony. It was refreshing to see the war through non-American eyes.


This source allowed me to read first-hand President McKinley's opinions and observations on the situation in Cuba and the prospect of war. I found the report useful because it gave me insight into the mind of the leader of the country and also summarized his reasoning to intervene in Cuba.


This source provided me with much information about the Navy's approach to the war. I found the maps that it provided especially helpful to my understanding of the strategic portion of the battles.


This cartoon showed a Cuban man in a ball and chain being forced to work. This was a successful attempt by the newspapers to gain sympathy for the Cuban people by showing the Americans the viscous practices of Spanish General Weyler. I found the cartoon helpful because it too helped me understand the manipulation of the American public.
Zimmerman, Warren. "First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power." Interview by Brian Lamb. Booknotes. C-SPAN, 2013. Web. 10 May 2013. I found this interview beneficial because Zimmerman discusses the issue of human rights, a theme I found lacking in many of my various other sources. Also, much of my material was written either during the time period or several decades ago. It was nice to be able to delve into the mind and opinions of a modern-day historian. Also, C-SPAN is an extremely reliable source.