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South Carolina Press Opinions Toward the Spanish-American War and Territorial Annexation of 1898

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SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS OPINIONS TOWARD THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR AND TERRITORIAL ANNEXATION OF 1898

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
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Accepted by:
Dr. Paul Anderson, Committee Chair
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Dr. Rachel Moore
ABSTRACT

Historians have contested the origins and aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898 for over a century. Whether in pursuit of political, economic, or humanitarian goals, the nation entered the war with Spain enthusiastically and emerged victorious, with several new annexed territories in its possession. One of the most important factors to the success of the war was the overwhelming public support, driven largely by the popular press and the famous “yellow journalists” of the time. Despite being a brief war, historians have praised it as the event that united the North and South following the tensions of the Civil War and Reconstruction. This claim is drawn from the fact that both entry into the war and demands to annex Spain’s territories were shared by men across the nation. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate this claim of reunion. Through a case study approach, this thesis will examine and analyze the opinions of four South Carolina newspapers towards war and annexation. Common themes among the South Carolina papers will be highlighted in an attempt to assess the general sentiment of the state as well as to compare to national themes.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am forever grateful to my parents, Mary and Paul, who have taught me the value of dedication, hard work and pursuing my education, but most importantly for loving and supporting me through everything. To my sister, Dani, thank you for motivating me to achieve my greatest potential. Being your older sister and role model has taught me more about life than you will ever imagine. To my fiancée Thomas, you have been so patient and supportive in pushing me to work hard. Thank you for keeping me sane through it all and consistently reminding me that procrastination is my fatal flaw.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1898, America entered its first true overseas war, fighting in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean against Spain to aid the Spanish colonial territories in their struggles for independence. The hasty entry into the war, the overwhelming popular support, and the swift victory, along with the ideological undertones, mirrored the chaotic American time period during which the war occurred. Though the victory, favorable peace terms and intense patriotism that resulted from the war, reinforced the glory of the “American Dream,” marked by increasing power and progress, the propaganda surrounding the war indicated that the United States was in reality struggling to deal with both old and new social and political tensions in an attempt to define themselves as a nation.

The Spanish-American occurred in the midst of America’s “Gilded Age,” lasting from the late 1870s until the outbreak of the First World War, and described by Mark Twain as a nation plagued with extensive problems hidden under a “gold gilding” of economic growth and success. Throughout the 1870s and ‘80s, the spread of modernization and technology, and the rush to rebuild the nation following the Civil War established an economic boom and decreased the cost of living.\(^1\) The nation celebrated its high point in 1893 with the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Booths were set up to highlight America’s technological advancements, lively commercial markets,

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The entire world was captivated by American success, attracting waves of immigrants to seek their own personal success. Although Americans praised industrialization as proof of the nation’s rise to greatness, over time machines created problems: they displaced many workers from jobs, complicated the agricultural sector, led to the rise of large corporations, and ultimately hurt the economy from the resulting overproduction. As the majority of farmers and workers fell to poverty, others in the business sectors found immense success, leading to social and ethnic tensions.  

The chaotic nature of Gilded Age America culminated in the 1890s, ironically coined the “gay nineties” in much the same way that the Gilded Age received its name. The decade witnessed the Panic of 1893, which led to vast unemployment and rising social tension. The Presidential Election of 1896, which sought to ease the economic difficulties the nation was facing, brought a Republican administration back to power and elicited concerns among the Democrats across the nation. Despite the social ills and political tensions that escalated in the 1890s, many Americans remained optimistic and viewed the time as America’s golden age emphasizing the nation’s economic success, population growth, modernization and consumer-driven culture. The new religious revival that swept across the nation preached that America was God’s chosen country.

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4 Denovo et al., 95-97.
sparking intense pride and nationalism. Americans came to see themselves as exceptional and superior to their European counterparts economically, morally and democratically.

The chance to prove their strength came suddenly in 1898 when the United States embarked on a war with Spain. Arising out of the ongoing struggle for Cuban independence, Americans were rallied by humanitarian, economic, political, and patriotic causes to aid the Cuban rebels in expelling their Spanish oppressors. While attempting diplomatic solutions to end the rebellion, the USS Maine was sent to Havana to protect American interests. After its mysterious explosion in February, the American interest in fighting a war against Spain became personal. The slogan “Remember the Maine—To Hell with Spain!” appeared igniting sentiments of revenge and patriotism. American enthusiasm for the war was extreme and as a result of the strong united efforts, the war was won through quick, decisive victories. After four short months, America had successfully liberated the territories from Spanish rule and entered the twentieth century as a global powerhouse.

This optimistic view of the war carried on for decades following the event. Despite the brief argument that ensued over the United States acquiring territory from Spain through the Treaty of Paris, the nationalistic fervor stayed with generations of Americans hoping that if the nation united along its success, its tensions would disappear.

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The new territories were looked upon favorably as proof of the success of American democracy. However, there was no denying that America in 1898 looked suspiciously like an emerging imperialist power. Scholars began to look into the event deeper, questioning the political and social motives of the “Splendid Little War” as well as its aftermath. Some, realizing the ideological difficulties that would arise from an “American Empire” sought desperately to negate such claims, sticking to the belief that Americans were moral in their actions and the nation exceptional in its development. Others, dove harshly into the American past seeking to blame power hungry politicians, an immoral nation and sensationalistic journalists for leading the nation astray. After over a century of historical scholarship on the topic, causes and results of the War of 1898 still continue to puzzle historians.

One of the most perplexing aspects of the Spanish-American War is the American public and popular press. By the outbreak of war newspapers were mass-produced, cheap, easily accessible, and quite popular. As a result, it is easy to grasp the extent of influence that newspapers had on the public. Most notably, figures such as William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* became famous for the introduction of “yellow journalism” and their use of sensationalistic, patriotic and emotionally-driven articles to vigorously support the war. Historians have often credited, or blamed, the high-circulating “yellow” papers of New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco as the driving force behind a jingoistic nation and the ultimate cause of the war. While the articles they printed and the circulation figures they reached can indicate their popularity and influence, historian Bonnie Miller
points out that the yellow press did not dominate society. While she does not discredit the importance of such men as Hearst and Pulitzer and their newspapers, she argues that their significance lies not in creating public opinion but in “establishing important visual and discursive precedents” for the general press network as their reporting style came to influence to editors across the nation.\(^8\) Whether or not the American public and popular press was responsible for leading the nation directly into war, there is no doubt that its reaction to the issues influenced the nation’s course.\(^9\)

Covering the events of the war, newspapers found their place as the forum of choice for the public to spread information and debate opinions concerning both the war and imperialism. Through analyzing newspapers and their associated cartoons, historians can learn much about society at the time of the war by looking at how frequently war-related themes surfaced and in what manner they were presented. War coverage in newspapers across America demonstrated the intense patriotism seen throughout the nation, the belief in American exceptionalism, and the acceptance of national reunion, presenting a positive image of the nation as strong and unified. However, through debates over annexation, negative aspects of society appeared, highlighting the tensions of the Gilded Age and the 1890s. Americans debated the question of American Empire through factors including: economic costs and benefits to holding territories; the racial inferiority of the natives; the political dilemma of a democratic government holding colonial-like possessions; the Christian duty to civilize the world; and the American duty to liberated


the oppressed. Whether supporting or opposing the acquisition of new overseas territory, the question of annexation forced the nation to rethink its national identity. Ultimately, the positions supported in the press factored heavily upon American opinion toward annexation and the overwhelming national support by December of 1898 led the U.S. to acquire Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

Emerging out of these studies of public opinion and the popular press, claims have been made that the War of 1898 united Americans across all races, ethnicities and regions.\(^{10}\) However, when the war is put into historical context amidst the tensions of the 1890s, it is hard to accept that all Americans would find a common point to agree on. Though the fighting of the American Civil War ended in 1865, and the nation had embarked on a path to reconcile, the physical and emotional scars would last for years. The period of Reconstruction that followed, found the South under military occupation by the North as it attempted to “reconstruct” the South’s social and economic structure. However, the loss of the war, collapsed economic system, overturned race relations and new period of what was viewed as Northern oppression, left the South confused and resentful.\(^{11}\) Although the regions worked to reconcile their differences, they never truly reached a point of reunion. Often these scholars who make arguments in favor of the nation’s sectional reunion in 1898 tend to base their claims largely or entirely on Northern sources. While the yellow papers of the North had higher circulation numbers and were found in more populous areas, the question remains of whether other sources

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\(^{11}\) Malone and Rauch, 267-82.
throughout different regions of the nations were in agreement, thereby confirming that reunion had occurred. This thesis attempts to tackle the question of national unity and sectionalism in 1898 by taking a case study approach analyzing newspapers in the state of South Carolina.

The first chapter outlines the historiography that has been done on the Spanish-American War and American imperialism, tracing the general trends of historians looking at the causes and effects of the war. In looking at the historiography, one can grasp an understanding of how the war factored into the turmoil of the 1890s dealing with the economic, political and social concerns of nation. Further, one can trace how the territorial acquisitions of 1898 have been viewed throughout the twentieth century as American diplomatic policies have changed.

Building on the historiography, the second chapter provides a general overview of the origin, events and outcomes of the Spanish-American War. The chapter begins with the Cuban rebellion of 1895 and a discussion of the events that led up to the outbreak of war, touching briefly on the war itself. It continues on to detail the process of peace negotiations and the debate over American empire and imperial policy. The chapter further touches on the role of the popular press in spreading war information, highlighting in particular the efforts of the “yellow journalists.” Through looking at the popular press and the debate over imperialism, major themes stemming from the internal uneasiness of the nation at the time become visible.

Following an explanation of the war and general nation opinions, the third chapter looks specifically at the popular press in South Carolina form the months of June until
December. The *Anderson Intelligencer*, the *Charleston News and Courier*, the *Columbia State* and the *Rock Hill Herald* were chosen as a sample for the state based on a list of criteria including location, publication frequencies, and circulation numbers, among others. By analyzing the four newspapers, opinions of the papers on war and annexation were noted and compared to those of the nation at large. The most obvious difference between the South Carolina papers and the national papers is the lack of visual imagery. Whether the lack of political cartoons and drawings is due to financial reasoning, as these papers may have been unable to afford artists, or whether the papers simply did not see value in adding images, is uncertain. Nonetheless, they appear much less frequently than in other national papers. As a result, the conclusions of this thesis are drawn from textual analysis of newspaper articles. However, in order to demonstrate the conclusions of the thesis, a few select examples of visual imagery will be used to support the major themes of the text.

Concerning the outbreak of war, the South Carolina papers are spilt evenly between supporters and opponents of war. However, once the war began, all four united in their support of the war effort and strived to demonstrate their patriotism. Similar to general national sentiments, South Carolina papers expressed strong notions of patriotic support, belief in American exceptionalism and supremacy over others, and supported the idea of national reunion. Cartoons such as Figures 1 and 2 below, demonstrate the American belief in their racial, political and military superiority to natives as well as more established European nations.
However, Southern newspapers, along with supporting these common nationalistic trends, also strongly promoted the progress of the region and the successes of Southerners in the war. Beyond this, they were often critical of the North for not recognizing the deeds of the South and for looking down on the region, indicating that although the nation reunited along a common purpose, sectionalism certainly still existed.

Concerning annexation, the situation is more difficult to compare and contrast. Although the call for annexation was strong enough across the nation for the government to respond, opposition did exist. While proponents of keeping the Spanish territories

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argued that it was America’s duty as a civilized, Christian nation to spread its democratic ideals to less-civilized, opponents questioned whether the inferior races would be able to assimilate. Similarly, while proponents highlighted the economic benefits of acquiring access to new resources and markets, opponents questioned whether the costs of upholding territories would outweigh the benefits. Along with race, religion, national duty and economics, the debate over imperialism also touched on humanitarianism, American right, and politics.

In South Carolina, the question of annexation was fairly simple. Although at the offset of war, the papers were divided over their opinion toward holding territories, by the time of the peace treaty they agreed in opposition to annexation. Although the papers recognized that annexation could bring economic benefits, they questioned the cost of holding an empire, the morality in governing unwilling subjects and the assimilation abilities of foreign races. Although racial and cultural differences do not factor heavily into the articles in opposition to annexation, it surfaces in several images which depict the natives with dark skin, living as savages with bare necessities and sometimes in primitive poses, as seen in the figures below:
The opinions of South Carolina papers on annexation and imperialism are similar to the nation in the sense that sentiment varied by individual, having no connection to one’s political party, area of residence, gender or religion. However, the papers surveyed were unanimous in their opposition to annexation, while the general sentiment across the nation was in favor. Although it is unclear why South Carolina papers felt so strongly against annexation, it is worth further exploration into regional history as a factor.

15 “Manila and the Philippines,” Rock Hill Herald, June 1, 1898.
Although the papers of South Carolina seemed to differ slightly from the national sentiment on annexation, they found favor with the nation again through patriotic fervor in celebration of the war’s end. Peace jubilees were held nationwide to celebrate American power and resilience in the face of oppression and cruelty. The nation looked upon the new year and century to come with favor, cheering on the end of a century with its new status as protector of the oppressed and global powerhouse, as expressed in the figure below:

![Figure 5: “Uncle Sam’s Happy New Year”](image)

Figure 5: “Uncle Sam’s Happy New Year”

Although lives had been lost and much suffering had occurred throughout the century, and despite that fact that fears existed over the nation’s new international role, the nation clung to its patriotism and victory as proof that the troubling times were over.

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16 “Uncle Sam’s Happy New Year,” *Rock Hill Herald*, December 31, 1898.
CHAPTER ONE

ALTRUISM VERSUS EGOISM: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

One of the central themes of American historiography is that there is no American Empire. Most historians will admit, if pressed, that the United States once had an empire. They promptly insist that it was given away. But they also speak pertinently of American as a World Power.

--William Appleman Williams, 1955

In the early decades of American twentieth century literature, the Spanish-American War found little interest among scholars. The immense public support for it at the time along with the swift victory of the war led many scholars to see it as another stepping-stone in America’s “historical” path to greatness. The earliest works to appear were those composed by soldiers and journalists who had witnessed the war first hand and supported the illusion of the “Splendid Little War.”

Although early historians denounced these optimistic, inaccurate accounts, even their more scholarly works were latten with bias intending, above all else, to defend the nation. Up until the 1980s, historical works focused mainly on the causes of the war. These scholars were determined to prove that the United States was not seeking to mirror the British colonial path, arguing that the country either had imperialism thrust upon them or chose a unique,

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less oppressive form of colonialism with a moral purpose. Unfortunately this approach pushed aside two critical issues associated with the Spanish-American War: the emerging American empire and the developing national identity. Historians in the 1960s and ‘70s, affected by the wide Revisionist movement, began to question the traditional approach. However, it wasn’t until the 1980s that studies of the War undertook a dramatic turn. Present day historians are more accepting of the Spanish-American War as a venture in imperialism and American Empire. By seeing the war from new angles, only recently have the tensions of the 1890s become clearer and their impact on the present day United States better understood.

**Early Influential Imperialist Studies**

The 1890s were a turbulent time in the United States. Americans were facing economic crisis, labor strife, social tensions associated with immigration and increasing racial conflicts, continuing battles with Native Americans, and ever present political tensions that resulted in the Populist revolt. Historical scholarship both captured and reflected anxiety and flux. At the same time that the U.S. was undergoing crisis, historical scholarship was undergoing somewhat of a revolution as well. The nineteenth century gave rise to trends in historiography including an emphasis on utilizing primary sources.

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20 The acceptance of American imperialism was adopted slowly yet had become common among historians by the 1990s becoming the subjects of many works. This can be seen in works such as: Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Duke University Press: Durham, 1993); H.W. Brands, *Bound to Empire*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992); among others discussed later.
that detailed “hard” facts, the professionalization of history, and most importantly the nationalization of history. Scholars began shifting from global history to comparative and nation-centered history in the late nineteenth century, as a result of rising nationalism. For Americans in particular, there was an attempt to create a new nationalistic history following the Civil War either by demonstrating the distinctive features of the nation through internally focused works, or by depicting America as part of wider patterns of progress in comparison to “backwards” nations. 21

Early in the decade, Frederick Jackson Turner invigorated the American public with hope for the future yet also highlighted their fears of economic stagnation and cultural claustrophobia. His essay, “The Importance of the Frontier in American History” originally published in 1893, argued that American success and identity were tied directly to Westward expansion. Turner saw the Frontier as an essential environment that produced “true” Americans, men who had abandoned European customs and instead established original American ones. Frontiersmen were brave, strong, individualistic, less cultured, more informal, rugged, and democratic. 22 Turner’s thesis influenced historians for decades, largely reinforcing a congratulatory idea of American exceptionalism. Yet, the aspect that concerned Americans in the 1890s was Turner’s claim that this frontier had permanently closed. If it were true that the frontier had closed and expansion was at an end, then logically American progress and prosperity would wither as well. Despite the country’s traditional rejection of European colonialism and preference for

isolationism, a necessary factor in developing a unique national identity, Turner called for a vigorous foreign policy. His work helped instill the idea of overseas imperial expansion in the minds of many Americans as a path to find a “new frontier.”

Complementing Turner’s ideas were those of Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mahan introduced the concept of “new navalism” in *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, which was published in two volumes in the early 1890s. Mahan referred to British history to demonstrate the relationship between global power and sea power, explaining that nations with superior navies would be more important and influential in the global sphere. Mahan similarly supported a vigorous foreign policy and pushed for the opening of new markets abroad. The government, he argued, needed to focus on improving its naval squadron, both for economic and defensive purposes. Additionally, it needed to establish a network of naval fueling bases and develop friendly relations with new trade partners. The influence of Mahan’s work on the Spanish-American War is clear in two ways. First, the U.S. viewed Spain’s possessions as potential naval bases to promote trade in both the Pacific and the Caribbean. Second, throughout the war emphasis was placed on naval actions. The navy was built up and sent out first as the primary line of defense.

The period during and immediately after the war did not result in a mass outpouring of scholarship. As the press had dominated the opinions of the nation during the war, it continued to do so in the years following as journalists published their personal accounts. Although somewhat unreliable as factual sources for historians today, works of

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23 Turner.
both journalists and soldiers coming out of the war indicate much about the American public at the time. Journalist Murat Halstead, for example, published *The Story of the Philippines, the Eldorado of the Orient* in 1898 based on his own experiences in the Philippines along with information from interviews he conducted. Although providing an account of war and discussing conditions in the Philippines, Halstead’s work does not touch base on the causes of war or questions surrounding imperialism.\(^{25}\) For the most part, the causes and effects of the war did not interest many Americans at the time as they seemed to be quite simple: the country entered the war to aid Cuba in its fight for independence and avenge the lives lost on the USS Maine. As Halstead stated,

> Six months ago, the Congress of the United States declared that in the name of humanity war should be waged in order to give the island of Cuba a stable and independent government. Magnificent patriotism of America. The people of the nation at once rose in the might…I state a broad, undeniable fact. The dominating, imperiling motive of the war in the depths of the national heart of America was the sentiment of humanity.\(^{26}\)

The American people went into war with good intentions and fully believed their government did as well. The assertions of “noble causes” stood for years without debate and were passed down in historical literature.\(^{27}\) Richard Titherington’s *A History of the Spanish-American War of 1898*, published in 1900, discredited journalists like Halstead for their “inaccurate and imperfect” accounts of the war. However, even works such as

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\(^{25}\) Halstead.

\(^{26}\) Ibid, 244-245.

\(^{27}\) Perez Jr., 39-41.
these, which were based on a wider variety of more reputable sources and presented a more factual portrayal of the war, similarly portrayed simple causes for the war and ignored the complex issue of annexation.  

Idealism, Realism and the Response to New Imperialism

During the 1930s and until around the time of the Cold War, as the “New Imperialism” was coming to an end, scholarly works on the War of 1898 began to surface more frequently. As a result of the World Wars, America came into more direct contact with colonialism witnessing foreign nations exploit their colonies for supplies to fight the wars, as well as watching waves of decolonization throughout Africa and Asia. Although the end of the Spanish American War slipped America back into an isolationist period, the nation resurfaced twice to enter the World Wars before reclaiming a strong global interventionist attitude. Throughout this time, the U.S. slowly adopted an outward anti-colonialism policy. However, the nation still faced the problem of its own questionable activities from the late nineteenth century and the War of 1898. Historians, politicians, and civilians of this time struggled to prove that America was never a true colonial power, although it had appeared that the U.S. had been participating in colonial-like activities. This issue of territorial acquisition inspired a few influential historians of the time to examine its causes and the support for the war, establishing the “idealist” historical view. Scholars during the Idealist Period were concerned with explaining and justifying this apparent changed nature in American foreign policy, including how and

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28 Titherington.
why the country appeared to have adopted “new imperialism” for a brief time. The
historiographical trends of the Idealist Period include emphasis on the role of government
in the acquisition, overturning claims of American “new imperialism” by promoting the
ideals of manifest destiny and new navalism, and exploring the domestic support.

Marcus Wilkerson’s early research began to explore the domestic side of the war.
His *Public Opinion of the Spanish-American War*, published in 1932, examined
newspapers from the time to argue that yellow journalism warped the public mind and
created mass pressure for war. He concluded that the support for the war came from a
genuine moral concern for Cuba and that this ultimately proved to be the main reason the
government got involved in Cuban affairs. However, this support was based, he noted, on
false or exaggerated, sensationalistic reports of Spanish brutality. Wilkerson explained,
“once started [war propaganda] gains momentum with success until truth and rational
thought are left stranded upon the reefs of discard and strife…”\(^{29}\) Newspapers portrayed
Cuba as in need of a savior, eliciting emotional responses in a public that saw war as an
opportunity for manifest destiny and the spread of Christianity.

Julius Pratt, following Wilkerson, further supported the influence of public
opinion in bringing the nation to war. Pratt demonstrated how politicians used the
military to carry out foreign policy but explained that these politicians were only
responding to the demands of the public. Expanding upon Wilkerson’s focus, Pratt
studied the opinions of businessmen specifically. He disproved the popular notion that
the business sector supported war in order to create potential new markets, instead

claiming that it was more concerned with domestic issues and feared war would disrupt the new economic growth emerging after the Panic of 1893. However, the voice of the business sector was overlooked against the immense popular support for the ideas of humanitarianism, manifest destiny and the “new navalism.” Pratt does point out that during the war American business realized the potential benefits that war could bring, including new resources, labor and markets, and slowly came to support the effort.\(^{30}\)

While Wilkerson and Pratt deemed that the overwhelming public calls for war were based on humanitarian demands and missionary zeal, other historians challenged this view of the public’s good intentions thus ushering in the “realist” historical view. Thomas A. Bailey published *The Man in the Street* in 1948, which approached American public opinion in a slightly more critical manner. Bailey suggested that although it is democratic for American public opinion to have influence, it is irresponsible for the public to exercise its power on matters it does not understand or truly care about.\(^{31}\) Bailey arrived at his conclusions after spending time researching newspapers, periodicals and the Congressional record. Bailey compared the “ignorant” opinions of the public to those of politicians, highlighting the differences in approaches to and belief about the subject. However, he did not distinguish between various groups of the public, nor did he investigate whether public opinion actually influenced men in positions of power.

Taking the Realist approach a step further, the works of Samuel Flagg Bemis in the 1930s and George F. Kennan in the 1950s highlighted the errors and corruption in

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both American domestic and foreign policy. The Spanish-American War and the acquisition of Spain’s territories, to them, was a betrayal of American democratic ideals and, as Bemis explains, “a great aberration” from the preferred policy of isolationism.\(^{32}\) Kennan supported this view, claiming the U.S. took a “moralistic-legalistic” approach to international relations, which misconstrued the importance of power relations between nations. Annexation, he claimed, was an irrational, irresponsible decision and a diversion for politicians to avoid domestic issues. Kennan supported Bemis’ argument that the U.S. should remain focused on its own hemisphere, further adding that Americans had not yet perfected internal politics and therefore, acting upon moralistic motives without regard to national interests would destroy the nation’s power.\(^{33}\) For Bemis and Kennan, the public played a role in bringing about war, yet the focus of these two historians is not on examining its role. Instead, they spend their works blaming the corrupt-minded public for demanding annexation and thereby bringing the nation into uneasy political territory.

In 1953 Robert Osgood published *Ideals and Self Interest*, which analyzed the Realist and Idealist approaches to diplomacy from 1898 until the 1940s. Osgood explained that idealists were emotional visionaries, concerned with long-term moral values, while realists were concerned with short-term interests and necessities validated by reason. In his own personal opinion, Osgood believed that a blend of these two approaches that would provide the most accurate telling of history; he concluded that America entered the war out of a combination of both “self-assertive egoism and


altruistic idealism.” However, once country realized it could not uphold it moral causes while at the same time fulfilling imperial responsibilities, it reverted back to isolated self-defense policies. Since the nation acted on moralistic impulse, it could not reconcile its ideals with its self-interest.  

The split between Realist and Idealist historians is reflective of the post war period. Prior to the wars, an application of “Realpolitik” or policy through power was widely accepted, as seen worldwide in colonial conquests. This idea resonated through to the Realist historians around the middle of the twentieth century who may have viewed imperialism in 1898 as immoral, yet supported it for its immediate benefits to the nation. Idealists on the other hand emerge as a result of President Woodrow Wilson’s “Moral Diplomacy.” Idealists favored the use of economic pressures and “soft power” instead of force to establish morally driven informal control over other countries. Although Idealism grew in appeal after WWI, during the Cold War in response to concerns over security and shifting international relations, Realism resurfaced emphasizing power politics and rational egoism, as seen in Kennan’s work.

Despite having different opinions on the coming of the war, the historians of “new imperialism” ultimately denied imperialistic intentions on behalf of the U.S. Although Bemis condemned a policy of annexation, he argued that it was a deviation from normal policy and very much an unplanned result of war. Similarly Osgood presented annexation as a “response” to war, not as a driving cause. Furthermore, these scholars emphasized many similar themes in their works: an innate national sense of manifest destiny, an

obsession with new navalism, and a focus on the national domestic sphere, which many portray as easily manipulated. The early period of historical interpretation has created a problem within the field that only recently has been tackled. Whatever their interpretations, the cautious approach of these historians removed America from studies of imperialism and even denied it was an “Imperialist” nation. This resulted not only in the lack of postcolonial studies of American history, but also in altering the approach to the War of 1898 throughout the rest of the century.

**New Left: “Wisconsin School” of Historical Interpretation**

By the mid-twentieth century, the historical profession grew in size and academic popularity with the emergence of the New Left, and Revisionist approaches to history. The 1960s were a turbulent time in American history, not just for the country itself, but for academics as well. The “New Left” refers to the movement of the 1960s and ‘70s associated with the anti-Vietnam War and protest groups of the time. In the field of history, New Left scholars challenged the top-down, politically obsessed interpretations of events. For diplomatic history, revisionism developed through the Wisconsin School of thought associated with Fred Harvey Harrington. Harrington, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, taught his students to be inductive, not theory driven, to question conventional wisdom, and to produce new approaches.35 He is credited with re-introducing the idea that domestic and foreign policies were inseparable and ultimately

driven by economics. Followers of this school interpreted imperialism by emphasizing growth through expansion, the importance of economic prosperity, and the need to secure markets. These concerns led to the belief in the Wisconsin School that in order for the U.S. to maintain its position as a world power, it needed to establish an informal economic empire through an aggressive foreign policy.

William A. Williams, who also taught at the University of Wisconsin during the late 1950s, emerged as one of the leading diplomatic revisionist historians of the decade. He published *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* in 1959 elaborating on the concept of economics further. In this work, Williams especially questioned Julius Pratt’s argument from the 1930s that businessmen were hesitant to go to war. Williams instead saw the business sector as aligning with government to pursue economic opportunities overseas; for him, this alliance was a conspiracy of corporate liberalism. American expansionism in 1898, he argued, was in fact deliberate, driven by the intentional pursuit of for both territorial and economic empire. Williams agreed with earlier claims concerning the role of public opinion, but argued Americans were motivated by desires for economic growth, not humanitarianism, as a result of the depression in the 1890s. Americans, he contended, believed war and overseas empire would expand opportunities and bring prosperity not just to the U.S., but to the territories annexed as well. For the most part, Williams fell in line with his predecessors’ general themes, since he accepted the role of the public as a driving force for war and denied any immoral reasons for empire; however, Williams did not spend ample time highlighting the moral concerns of the

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public, which he viewed as secondary motivators. In *The Roots of the Modern American Empire*, published in 1968, he built upon his previous work tracing the roots of imperialism to poor American farmers suffering during the 1890s who looked to new foreign markets to bring prosperity. He extended the discussion to the Populist Party as well, which supported the war based on the hopes that it would lead to the re-monetization of silver. In this sense, he argued, 1898 was a rational, self-conscious act and a “people’s” war.\(^37\)

Walter LaFeber, a student of both Harrington and Williams, began publishing his own revisionist works during the 1960s. In *The New Empire*, LaFeber completely rejected the notion that America entered the war for territorial acquisition. Instead he explained that the pre-Civil War obsession with manifest destiny continued but had shifted into economic expansion into markets, rather than over land. Like Williams, LaFeber disagreed with Pratt that business and government had different positions on war and expansion. He concluded that businessmen, government officials and elites united and popularized the idea of imperialism out of fear of falling behind European growth. LaFeber did not see America as isolated from the entire world and did not believe they should be; the U.S., he argued, should simply avoid involvement in European affairs.\(^38\)

Thomas J. McCormick, a colleague of LaFeber’s, built on the economic imperialist theory to demonstrate that America, which was coming out of its isolationist period, realized that the future of trade would be in Asia. McCormick’s work, *The China Market*:

America’s Quest for Informal Empire, tackled the changing U.S. opinion regarding what to do with Spain’s colonial possessions. In order to secure an economic and political presence in the world, he argued, war was necessary and planned by government and businessmen. Falling in line with Mahan, he believed that the government of 1898 desired Hawaii, Guam, Wake Island and the Philippines in order to establish naval bases overseas for national defense as well as to bring the U.S. into new markets.39

Scholars Ernest May and Richard Van Alstyne continued the economic argument, but approached it in a different manner. Ernest May examined the motivations for imperialism in his book Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power. Among other dynamics, May explored economics, humanitarianism, nationalism, and Social Darwinism, to assess how public concerns became policy. Although May noted that the potential for markets in Asia was of great interest to the nation, what is noteworthy about his work is the emphasis on Europe as a driving factor as well. May looked at the relationship between America and the European nations, particularly as they responded to America’s potential to be a world power in the 1890s. May further concluded that Britain’s success in colonialism made American overseas expansion attractive. He argued however that although America may have been on the rise as a global power, it was not seeking to prove it greatness as many European nations believed.40 Instead, the nation was responding practically to opportunities that presented

39 McCormick.
40 May, 266.
themselves and, as May explained, “was behaving as a great power was expected to—taking what it could and keeping it.”

Richard Van Alstyne also placed heavy emphasis on Europe, and Britain in particular, in motivating the U.S. toward imperialism. Van Alstyne’s *The Rising American Empire* traced American “empire building” through its colonial period in the eighteenth century, Westward expansion in the nineteenth century, and overseas conquest in the twentieth century. According to Van Alstyne, the colonial link between Britain and America was crucial in the outcome of the War of 1898. America desired equivalent power and prestige to that of Britain in the last decades of the century, which culminated in complete annexation of Spanish territories. For him, this experiment with imperialism was necessary for the U.S. to remember its opposition to British ways and commitment to democratic values. Ultimately Van Alstyne deemed the imperial policy of 1898 a mistake but a necessary one. In his opinion, the nation needed to actively engage in imperialism before it could truly oppose it as a policy. Since American learned from its mistake, he concluded, historians should refrain from criticizing the actions too harshly.

A unique work to emerge during this time period was Richard Hofstadter’s *The Paranoid Style in American Policy*. Hofstadter opened the door for works in social history surrounding the war by analyzing the domestic sphere of the nation. Published in response to the Cold War, he investigated the status of ideas and intellectualism in America. Hofstadter set out to discover why Americans craved war so enthusiastically.

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41 May, 263.
Largely ignoring political and military aspects, Hofstadter concluded that the 1890s were a time of “psychic crisis” in America resulting from internal frustrations including: economic depression, the rise of socialism, the Populist revolt, immigration, increased bureaucratization, the closing of the frontier and the Social Gospel Movement. The instability of the nation at the time, he argued, led to a period of “absent-mindedness” forcing the nation to return to a state of “rugged Americanness” based in power and strength.\(^\text{43}\) The War of 1898 then, in his own view, was simply the aggressive response to domestic frustrations. Hofstadter’s conclusions about America appear to be more reminiscent of studies in social psychology than history. However, the importance of his work in influencing the next wave of historiographical interpretation, with its focus more on social and domestic aspects of 1898, cannot be denied.

Other revisionist works appeared as well. Margaret Leech’s 1959 biography of William McKinley revoked the image of the President as weak, uninvolved, and opposed to war. She examined the personality traits that made McKinley popular with the American public in the mid-1890s as well as his political goals and his administration. Leech interpreted McKinley’s decision to seek diplomatic solutions with Spain as an extension of his proper and polite personality, not his outright opposition to war. She also argued that McKinley had to deal with an inefficient and temperamental cabinet, which made decisions hard to reach and his presidency look feeble and indecisive.\(^\text{44}\)

Robert Beisner’s *Twelve Against Empire* from 1968 explored the leading figures of the anti-imperialist movement and the movement’s internal workings. Beisner focused on the mugwump founders of the American Anti-Imperialist League, whom he categorized as older, intelligent, politically independent, wealthy, white Northerners. They made themselves a minority in the country, he added, by their outmoded outlook and harsh critiques of the nation. Ultimately however, Beisner praised the League for its beliefs and approaches, and his study provided the first fair analysis of the men who were opposed to the “Splendid Little War.” He grounded their failure in the late organization and lack of cohesion among members rather than the unpopularity of mugwumpism.\(^{45}\)

Although they were united in their opposition to annexing Spain’s territories, the reasons for their opposition varied too much for the League to have a significant impact.

**Cultural Revisionist Studies**

Following the introduction of new academic social sciences during the New Left era, historians researching the Spanish-American War in the late 1970s began to apply concepts of culture, race and gender. Tracing in the footsteps of the highly criticized Hofstadter, they re-examined the driving forces for war by looking at the domestic sphere of the era. Beyond this, they also began to consider the cultural implications of victory and annexation for both the natives of the new American possessions and the American people themselves.

Emily Rosenberg is credited with setting off this second revisionist period with the 1982 publication of *Spreading the American Dream*. Rosenberg argued that American expansionism was driven by “liberal-developmentalism” which she characterized via three aspects: belief in the supremacy of the country’s political development; faith in private enterprise and the free market; and strong support of the government’s role as an international promoter of American business.\(^{46}\) Liberal-developmentalism was the vehicle by which the country was able to modernize, but more importantly it served as the method through which the nation exported its culture. Rosenberg’s work expanded upon older notions that government and economics played critical roles in the war and imperialism, yet it introduced cultural factors as an explanation of how American came to control the world today. She explained,

> Whether Americans favored formal territorial colonialism or simply an expansion of private economic and cultural ties (sometimes called neocolonialism), most believed in America’s superiority and the urgent need to spread its products and messages to the world.\(^{47}\)

What made Rosenberg’s work unique was her approach to the subject under the assumption that America, at the time of the book’s publishing, was an international powerhouse. She explained that interest in the rise of the present day “corporate state” began in the 1960s and sparked a “silent revolution” in historical studies. She intended to

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\(^{47}\) Ibid, 62.
bring together the ideas that had surfaced across the field, along with her own research, to relate cultural and economic trends in expansion, stemming from the War of 1898.48

Another crucial work was Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease’s *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Kaplan and Pearse’s edited collection of essays appeared in the early 1990s and explored the concept of “empire” in American culture. The various contributors examined what Americans at the turn of the century though about empires and imperial conquest, and how these ideas shaped American identity. This was one of the first major works to try to link American foreign relations to the beliefs and understandings of domestic identity. While on the one hand, America was trying to secure a solid international image and position of power, concerning the domestic sphere, Americans were struggling to define themselves. In the first half of the book, essays investigated how national identity emerged through Western expansion, exploring the changing concept of “foreign” in reaction to race, nationality and gender. In the second half of the book, essays looked at the American response to imperialism and in particular the “cultural Americanism” that grew out of anti-imperialism.49

Following this, Gail Bederman and Kristin Hoganson were two of the first scholars to study the war using gender as a tool. Bederman’s *Manliness and Civilization* was groundbreaking in the way it examined the shifting gender roles and concepts in America at the turn of the century. Using published works, personal diaries and public actions of such notable figures as Ida B. Wells, G. Stanley Hall, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Theodore Roosevelt, Bederman’s work explored specifically the “crisis of

48 Rosenberg, 235.
49 Kaplan and Pease.
masculinity” which grew out of financial and social insecurities. As a result of the “crisis,” the Spanish-American War and subsequent territorial acquisition became the arena for American males seeking a primitively aggressive adventure. The nation that emerged was a white, male-dominated, global powerhouse in the twentieth century. In this, Bederman seemed to indicate a relationship between white supremacy and white male dominance. Following in this argument, Kristen Hoganson’s *Fighting for American Manhood* investigated the same “crisis” in the development of gender roles in America. Connecting politics and governance in general to the male gender, she argued that the country’s morals and beliefs had been shaped by the traditional values of the male identity. She, like Bederman, argued that the Spanish-American War thus became a playing field for men to assert and act out their hyper-masculinity in response to tensions in the 1890s.

Louis A. Perez’s *The War of 1898*, which appeared at the centennial anniversary of the war, explored the factors of ethnicity and memory. His work was both a scholarly look into how America and Cuba experienced the war and a historiographical investigation of how both countries remembered the war. Perez argued that although the war was centered on Cuba, Cuba has been strangely misrepresented and neglected in American studies. He explained, “that Cuban independence was neither the objective of the intervention or the outcome of the war has not found a place in U.S.

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Further he condemned the idea that American intervention was desired by Cubans as an “inference” by historians to support the “proposition of a U.S. war in behalf of Cuban independence, as an act of idealism and altruism.” By analyzing the works done by earlier historians, Perez observed how differently America and the former Spanish territories saw the war and imperialist actions. Of particular interest to him was the denial of imperialism in America and subsequent export of American culture to the islands in an attempt to benefit the natives.

Present Day Historiographical Approaches

Following the centennial anniversary in 1998, interest in the Spanish-American War and its aftermath spiked. Many historians followed their revisionist predecessors in producing smaller scale, more focused works on the cultural factors surrounding the war. Matthew Jacobson, for example, explores the themes of religion, race and ethnicity in Barbarian Virtues, in which he examines the interactions between Americans and foreigners through immigration at home and imperialism abroad. He argues that in order to be successful in the Christianizing, modernizing and civilizing missions at the turn of the century, it was necessary for America to portray its “barbarian virtues,” such as manliness, vigor and savage audacity, before it could present its “uplifting virtues.” He notes the irony in America’s desire to be seen as the redeemer nation and a haven for the

52 Perez Jr., The War of 1898, 36.
53 Ibid, 51.
oppressed, while at the same time fearing the entry of foreign races into the United States and viewing foreign races abroad as unfit for self-governance.\textsuperscript{54}

The majority of these recent works can be divided into two categories. Historians in the first category take a very narrow, specific look into one factor of race, religion, or ethnicity. A good example of this approach is Perez’s \textit{On Becoming Cuban} (2007). Exploring the relationship between Cuba and the United States, Perez notes how contact with the U.S. shaped Cuban identity from 1860-1960, most notably through the spread of American culture and modernity. Perez bases his argument on his examination of non-traditional, interpretative sources such as music, fictional works and oral histories.\textsuperscript{55}

The 2011 book, \textit{God’s Arbiters} by Susan Harris is another example of a narrowly focused work. Harris looks specifically at the annexation of the Philippines and relies heavily on the writings of Mark Twain throughout her works to explore the concepts of national identity and global responsibility. She uses Twain’s writings to demonstrate the close relationship between Protestant theology and liberal democratic ideals to argue how interdependent religion and government at the turn of the century. \textit{God’s Arbiters}, drawing ideas from Max Weber’s \textit{The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism}, presents an image of America as subtly, controlled by a Protestant worldview that upheld morality, the belief in a racial hierarchy and democratic ideals. To highlight her

argument, she contends that Americans believed the sacred liberty of free trade was established during the Reformation and protected by liberal government.  

Eric Love’s *Race Over Empire* uses government documents, manuscripts, memoirs, and newspapers to explore racism and the public debate surrounding annexation and assimilation of non-whites into America in 1898. His work provides a unique look into the various aspects of American racism as it developed at home and was applied abroad. Love explains,

> The annexation of the Philippines is the culminating event in the historical literature on race and American imperialism in the late nineteenth century… in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, imperialist exploitation of the dominant racial ideologies of the period—social Darwinism, Anglo-Saxonism, and the “white man’s burden”—helped to bring about the ratification of the Treaty of Paris and the seizure of a vast bi-oceanic empire.

Although Americans at the time preferred to absorb the territories into the United States instead of holding them as colonial possessions, they feared the chaos that would ensure if uncivilized, dark-skinned foreigners were given American rights and citizenship. However, Love points out that Americans were easily swayed in favor of “accidental” imperialism, such as that of the Spanish-America War, so long as it did not disrupt the white privilege in the racial hierarchy. Although he focuses primarily on the American

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attitude toward the Filipinos, Love demonstrates the extent to which varying racist notions permeated the nation at the time.\footnote{Love.}

Works falling into the second category tend to be much broader and all-encompassing, looking at the political, economic and cultural factors together to provide a more complete story of the event. These historians look at both the motivation for American actions as well as the implications of these actions, and hope to provide a more truthful and critical approach to American imperialism. Bonnie Miller’s recent work \textit{From Liberation to Conquest} (2011) explores the popular culture surrounding the Spanish-American War. By examining newspapers, motion pictures, re-enactments, cartoons, posters, music and more, she traces the rising public interest in the war, the presentation and development of war causes, and the effect of the war on the nation’s identity.\footnote{Miller.} In her study of popular culture, she notes the portrayal of economic and political interests that spurred patriotic fervor. However, she also observes the racial and gender undertones, which she sees as evident of a white, male-dominated and somewhat oppressive society. Her work builds on the idea of popular support for the war by further investigating the major themes that presented themselves and grabbed public attention. For example, Miller notes the vilification of Spain, depiction of Cuba as the damsel in distress, and the presentation of Uncle Sam as the hero of the oppressed as keys to the success of sensationalistic journalism in shaping public opinion.
Future Works and Filling in the Gaps

Despite a long historiography, the nature of American imperialism is not as clear as scholars would like it to be. Today, there is still no consensus as to the causes, intentions, and ultimate consequences of American actions in 1898, or whether the War of 1898 even resulted in an American Empire. The answer is largely dependent on the individual’s interpretation of several questions: what defines empire? How did the U.S. view its international role at the time? How did America justify its actions given the nation’s morals and beliefs?

Despite these debates and questions, progress has been made in the field. Historians have broken down the boundary that once was “American Exceptionalism,” which has allowed them to argue that 1898 was in fact an experiment in imperialism. Accepting imperialism has opened up the path for future comparative studies of American rule in its “colonies” with colonial powerhouses such as England, France, Spain and Portugal. The field of American Postcolonial studies is just now beginning to take hold and looks to be promising in years to come. Emerging alongside this is the emphasis on studying American rule in the territories themselves, which has begun with Louis Perez’s efforts to bring attention to Cuba and has continued in recent efforts to highlight the struggle in the Philippines.  

event and the former Spanish territories have yet to explore the importance of the war on their own national development.

There is also further potential in studying the Spanish-American War as it played out in America. Scholars have examined race and gender but there is no work devoted to the experience of immigrants during the war. Of particular interest would be the experiences and opinions of those of Spanish descent, being the “enemy” race, as well as those of German descent, who supported Spain in the war and actively worked against American annexation. Further, there is a lack of understanding as to how the war was received in different regions of the nation. When works use the phrase “the American public,” they typically reference the entire American public with no distinction among groups with their own internal dynamics and unique pressures. Some argue that the war reinstated Protestant white supremacy and reunited the North and South following the Civil War and Reconstruction period. However, there is yet to be any significant work looking specifically at how the War of 1898 was viewed in the South and whether it altered life there. Regional opinions of this area are of particular interest since the South was a kind of imperial region within the nation in which white supremacy rested formally in institutions, laws, and custom and informally in history, memory and identity. Case studies articles have been published looking at specific states and groups noting their opinions toward war, but these articles primarily focus on the roles of different individuals in the war. They can be used in comparisons to draw conclusions about the
opinions of different regions, ethnicities and even religious groups, but they do not make such claims themselves.61

The purpose of this thesis is to address the gap of scholarly work on regional public opinion of the Spanish-American War and its imperialistic aftermath. It takes a case study approach and uses newspaper sources from the state of South Carolina to compare public opinion concerning war and annexation in a southern state to that of the nation in general. The research will be used to tackle questions of whether the War of 1898 did in fact unite northerners and southerners in nationalistic fervor and end sectionalism. An attempt will also be made to assess the impact of the war on life in the South as a result of new ideas regarding nationalism and race.

CHAPTER TWO

THE “SPLENDID LITTLE WAR” OF 1898

In 1898 we could not help being brought face to face with the problem of war with Spain.
All we could decide was whether we should shrink like cowards from the contest, or enter into it as beseemed a brave and high-spirited people; and once in, whether failure or success shown crown our banners. So it is now, we cannot avoid the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, All we can decide is whether we shall meet them in a way that will redound to the national credit, or whether we shall make of our dealings with these new problems a dark and shameful pages in our history.

--Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, April 1899

The last decade of the nineteenth century was one of the most crucial times for the development of the United States both internally and externally. As the global sphere was coping with the effects of modernization and changing national identities, America faced its own question of identity, struggling to define itself politically, morally, ethnically and racially. The challenges of the decade came to a head in 1898. The nation found itself in the midst of war and at the forefront of global power. However, emerging out of isolationism did not come without difficulties. Americans, caught in a whirlwind of super-patriotism, became preoccupied with involving themselves in foreign relations and exporting “exceptional” American ideals, which temporarily pushed aside the escalating internal tensions. Despite the outward appearance of power and unity, the nation was forced to figure out what victory over Spain and acquisition of new territories would mean for its future. Scholars have debated the causes and results of the war from

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numerous angles, applying present day economic, political and even social theories to the actions of the nation. Much that can be learned from studying the war can provide insight into how America emerged as it did, as this was the first war in which the nation involved itself in global power affairs and experimented with colonial-like rule.

**Early Interest in Foreign Affairs**

Amidst the confusion of the 1890s, several factors began to instigate discussion over America’s role in global power relations, which would play a role in bringing the nation to war later in the decade. First, under a new religious revival, Americans became actively involved in wiping out social ills through religious reforms called “missions.” Missions at home tackled the “Seven Great Perils” including immigration, Catholicism, the future of public schools, Mormonism, socialism, the extreme disparities of individual wealth and urbanization. Soon enough, missionaries turned their outlooks abroad, emphasizing the need to educate and uplift the uncivilized groups around the world.⁶³ According to historian Edward Blum, “Missionaries described peoples of Asia, South America, and Africa as ignorant children or subhuman demons who desperately needed American ‘civilization,’ which was shorthand for Protestant Christianity, consumer capitalism, and racial hierarchies,” thereby encouraging economic and state expansion.⁶⁴

Similarly, as a result of several periods of troubling financial times, the nation had been expanding across the continent and experimenting with new markets. Americans had been involved in trade relations with the Hawaiian Islands since the early 1830s.

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⁶³ Ayers, 162; Edwards, 174-78, 230.
⁶⁴ Blum, 212.
Although politicians had expressed interest in absorbing them into the Union, the opposition to overseas expansion prevented this idea from becoming a serious topic. In 1893, the Hawaiian situation escalated when a group of American planters and powerful locals overthrew the monarchy and established a provisional government.\(^{65}\) Despite having little support from the natives, the new government drafted a petition calling for annexation of the islands in which American would assume debts, compensate the queen and place restrictions on immigration.\(^{66}\) A bitter debate soon broke out between supporters of the annexation proposal, who focused on the economic benefits, and opponents, who were concerned over the effects that the Hawaiian race, culture and religion would have on the American nation.\(^{67}\) The treaty found immense support in Congress, who viewed opponents as un-patriotic for preventing the growth of the nation.\(^{68}\) Despite this, President Cleveland rejected the treaty, comparing the proposed control of Hawaii to the former American situation under Britain:

A man of true honor protects the unwritten word which binds his conscience more scrupulously, if possible, than he does the bond a breach of which subjects him to legal liabilities; and the United States in aiming to maintain itself as one of the

\(^{66}\) Love, 73-7.
\(^{67}\) Ibid, 86-8, 102-8.
most enlightened of nations, would do its citizens gross injustice if it applied to its international relations any other than a high standard of honor and morality…

Although religious revival brought Americans into contact with foreign cultures and the question of Hawaii introduced the first debate over American empire, the interest in overseas intervention ended as quickly as it began as the nation fell into economic depression a few months later.

The Panic of 1893 and the Election of 1896, forced the nation to refocus its attention on internal affairs. Within a year, the depression left an estimated five hundred banks and sixteen thousands businesses bankrupt, with the nation reaching 20 percent unemployment and farm prices crashing. The Presidential Election in 1896 focused on repairing the economic situation. The Democrats and Populists centered in the South supported William Jennings Bryan, who ran on the moralistic, anti-trust, pro-silver platform. His opponent, backed by the Republicans centered in the North, was William McKinley who appealed to business and the professional classes. McKinley’s ultimate victory led to the downfall of the Populist Party and established a deeper divide between Republicans and Democrats, who accused the victors of fraud. The South in particular grew aggravated, feeling as though they would be subjected to four more years of having their farmers suffer and their voices silenced. Both the depression of 1893 and the

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70 Love, 80.
71 Foner, 606.
political tensions resulting from the election would later arise as arguments both for and against overseas expansion as new events unfolded, thus becoming two subsequent factors into the question of America’s role in global affairs.

**Origins of the Spanish-American War**

On February 24, 1895, the War for Cuban Independence began in the small village of Baire in Southern Cuba. Cubans had staged numerous rebellions in the past, yet recent economic changes increased the rates of poverty and provided local groups with new motivation. The 1895 rebellion spread like none before it, largely due to the organizational skills of José Martí and the military leadership of Máximo Gómez. After a year, a second uprising emerged in the Philippines presenting Spain with a two-front rebellion and indicating to the U.S. that the fall of Spain would come in the near future.

Spain was quick to suppress action in the Philippines, sending reinforcements to drive the rebels into the mountains, bribing the leaders to control locals, and promising reforms. The situation in Cuba was much different, however. There, Spanish leaders sent General Valeriano Weyler and 200,000 Spanish troops in February of 1896 to handle the resistance. Upon arrival, Weyler divided the islands into war zones and implemented a harsh rule. His men evacuated the major cities and relocated civilians to “reconcentradós,” or internment camps. Following this, troops destroyed the homes and infrastructure of recently evacuated areas, slaughtered livestock, and burned croplands so

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75 Titherington, 129.
76 Ibid, 46.
as to rob the rebels of potential supply bases. 77 Many of Weyler’s actions were driven by the American support for Cuba Libre as Weyler looked upon America with disfavor. Ironically, in spite of the small American support for the rebels, the general public did not find interest in the affair until Weyler’s arrival, as under him, the conditions in Cuba worsened and crimes against civilians became explicit.

William McKinley, the President-elect at the time, was known to be a stern leader, a good listener, and in general a peacekeeper; he voiced his pro-Cuban sympathies but also expressed his anti-war views. Possessing little knowledge and experience in foreign relations, it was assumed McKinley would not seek intervention, despite the nation’s obsession with Cuba. 78 However, he could not ignore the influx of reports of the suffering of the civilian population or the outrageously high death toll numbers under Weyler, who was also known as “the Butcher.” 79 Beginning in May of 1897, McKinley started the Central Cuban Relief Commission to purchase relief supplies for Cuba. Unfortunately, the Commission disbanded by the end of the year with little to show for its efforts. While some Spanish aid existed on the island to provide for suffering civilians, it was limited at best due to Spain’s financial troubles. 80 Spain quickly grew outraged over the American media’s criticism of their governing abilities and charges of their responsibility for the conditions in Cuba. Yet, even foreign nations such as England and France condemned Spain and questioned the hesitancy of American intervention. 81 In a surprising turn of events in early fall of 1897, an Italian anarchist assassinated the

77 Edgerton, 43-6.
78 Offner, 37-42.
79 Edgerton, 46-7.
80 Offner, 60, 93; Titherington, 13.
81 Offner, 51-60.
Spanish Prime Minister, bringing in a new liberal government under Práxedes Mateo Sagasta. Sagasta quickly recalled Weyler and attempted to reconcile with the rebels by granting limited autonomous home-rule. The new government also promised to protect civilians but asked the U.S. to withdraw all of its aid efforts in order for the Spanish to reassert their control over the island.82

Just as changes in administration and policy seemed to bode well for Spain, the Cisneros Affair surfaced in American media, reinvigorating Cuba Libre support. In the late summer of 1896, Spanish troops arrested Evangeline Cosio y Cisneros, a young Cuban woman, for the attempted murder of a local leader. She made headlines when the New York Journal’s owner and editor, William Randolph Hearst, caught wind of the incident and petitioned for her release. The paper’s stories made the young girl famous, turning her into a martyr for the independence cause. After his petition for her release failed, Hearst sent reporter Karl Decker to Cuba to break her free from her jail cell. Although the event was slightly exaggerated in the Journal for sales, it reinvigorated the Cuban independence cause and prompted the backing from American women as demonstrated in headlines by Hearst: “More Than Ten Thousand Women In All Parts of the United States Sign the Petition for the Release of Miss Cisneros.”83

The importance of the year 1898 for America, Cuba and Spain became clear quickly. On January 18, the new autonomous government in Cuba took over. In less than two weeks, riots broke out in Havana led by pro-Spanish, anti-American loyalists

82 Offner, 68-71.
opposing the new Cuban-led government. American newspapers falsely reported that the mobs attacked American citizens and claimed the new regime in Spain had no control over the island. Little too had been done by either Sagasta or the officials in Cuba during this brief transition period to alleviate the misery of civilians. While American politicians didn’t necessarily want to see an independent Cuba, feeling the island was too unstable to be left on its own, many believed that Cuba could not remain under Spanish control and were wary of the country falling under the wrong sphere of influence. In response to these concerns, on January 24th, the U.S. government dispatched the USS Maine armored cruiser to dock in the Havana harbor.

On February 9th, Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, the Spanish Ambassador to the U.S., wrote a personal letter to a Spanish news editor condemning McKinley as a weak leader and mocking Sagasta’s policy of Cuban autonomy and trade talks with the US. The letter was stolen, leaked to Hearst and published in his Journal, outraged Americans as it portrayed their President and nation negatively. Furthermore, it raised suspicions about Spanish intentions. Five short days later on February 15th, a quiet and peaceful morning, the USS Maine exploded. As described by Titherington,

…without a moment’s warning, from deep down in the bowels of the vessel there came a shock and roar of a tremendous explosions…instantly transforming the entire forward part of the Maine into a shattered wreck, scattering debris over

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84 Perez Jr., The War of 1898, 13.
85 Offner, 94-112; Thomas, 196-200.
86 Offner, 116-21; Titherington, 66-7;
other vessels…breaking windows and extinguishing lights along the water front…blazing fiercely and sinking fast…\(^{87}\)

Americans were in disbelief. Hearst immediately placed blame on Spain, referring to the suspicious *de Lome Letter* once again. However, some were hesitant to accept this conclusion for it seemed to make little sense for Spain to attack American property. Spanish officials, determined to prove their innocence, offered the U.S. full access to the scene, which struck many as “over-willingness” and prompted more suspicious.\(^{88}\) The President established a naval commission of four officers to investigate the incident. The men spent twenty-three days in Havana and delivered their final report to the President on March 21\(^{89}\). While the commission denied that Spain was directly involved, it concluded that a submarine mine likely went off and that this ignited a second internal explosion, which caused the majority of the damage. The President held onto the report for a week before delivering it to Congress knowing the U.S. was not yet prepared to enter a war.\(^{89}\) Even while waiting for the commission’s report, Congress passed the Fifty Million Bill on March 9\(^{th}\) in preparation for war.\(^{90}\) As a result, journalists called into question McKinley’s character, arguing that he was intentionally suppressing information and ignoring the plight of the Cubans.\(^{91}\) A total of 260 American lives were lost with the *Maine’s* explosion and the country demanded reparations.

Throughout March, McKinley explored every possible diplomatic solution. He sent an ultimatum to Spain on March 29\(^{th}\) demanding an end to the reconcentradós and

\(^{87}\) Titherington, 67-8.
\(^{88}\) Offner, 125-27.
\(^{89}\) Titherington, 71-6.
\(^{90}\) Edgerton, 50-1.
\(^{91}\) Thomas, 224-27.
the signing of an armistice which stipulated that the U.S. would intervene if progress had not been made by October. Spain rejected McKinley’s proposal but the President believed they only did so because it challenged their status as an international power.\textsuperscript{92} After delaying twice his decision, McKinley finally delivered his war message to Congress on April 11\textsuperscript{th}, concluding that Spain was incapable of handling the situation and that American intervention was necessary.\textsuperscript{93} On April 19\textsuperscript{th}, Congress passed a joint resolution, the Teller Amendment, which prevented the U.S. from interfering with Cuban sovereignty, recognized Cuban independence, and granted the President power to use military force.\textsuperscript{94} The resolution gave Spain three days to respond. On April 21st, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs ended diplomatic relations with the U.S. and the nation responded with a naval blockade of Havana. On April 23\textsuperscript{rd}, Spain officially declared war and the U.S. declaration followed two days after.\textsuperscript{95} War fever immediately captivated the nation with businessmen, politicians, aristocrats and even anti-imperialist labor unionists rushing to volunteer. The first call for volunteers produced almost one million men although only 115,000 were selected and sent to training camps. America, highly unprepared for war, was forced to be selective in recruitment and harsh in its training of regiments.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{92} Offner, 145-57.  
\textsuperscript{93} Arthur S. Link and William M. Leary Jr., eds., “President McKinley’s Message to Congress regarding the Situation in Cuba, April 11, 1898,” 16-22.  
\textsuperscript{95} Titherington, 93-4, 122.  
\textsuperscript{96} Edgerton, 52-6.
The Spanish-American War

Admiral George Dewey led America into its first battle with a victory over the Spanish at the Battle of Manila Bay in the early morning of May 1\textsuperscript{st}. Dewey reported in his autobiography that he received orders from Navy Secretary John Long on April 25\textsuperscript{th} to “proceed at once to the Philippine islands” and “use utmost endeavor” to secure the main island.\textsuperscript{97} Spanish fire was hasty and inaccurate and by nightfall, the American victory was secured. The overwhelming American response shocked even the Admiral, who explained, “After all, we were away from the main theatre of war…not until many weeks later, when the mail began to arrive, did I fully realize how the victory had electrified the whole United States.”\textsuperscript{98} The American victory ended talk of further European intervention in Cuba and demonstrated the strength of the American navy to the world.\textsuperscript{99} Alfred Mahan’s conclusion that sea power would bring world power motivated the nation to pursue naval warfare and Admiral Dewey himself became an overnight hero to the public, the symbol of American strength and potential.

On June 10\textsuperscript{th}, the first group of marines landed at Guantánamo Bay, followed by reinforcements at the end of the month. By July, American forces had landed near Santiago, Daiquiry and Siboney in Cuba and had destroyed Cervera’s fleet in the naval Battle of Santiago.\textsuperscript{100} As fighting ensued, the cultural differences between Americans and Cubans quickly became a problem. While the Americans preferred to carry out hasty, head-on attacks based on bravery and brute force, the Cubans favored guerillas tactics,

\textsuperscript{98} Dewey, 229, 237.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, 212-29.
\textsuperscript{100} Edgerton, 84; Perez Jr., \textit{The War of 1898}, 21; Titherington, 157.
relying on stealth and knowledge of the terrain. Americans, assuming the tactical
differences were a result of the natives’ non-white race, desired to utilize Cubans only as
scouts and skirmishers, something they believed was better suited to the Cubans’ inferior
talents. Yet, the natives often refused, feeling it was a waste of their time and an insult to
their abilities. However, though the rebels may have challenged American authority and
carried out their own operations, ultimately, they needed American help and made
concessions. ¹⁰¹

The racial aspect used to criticize the Cubans is ironic considering how important
black soldiers were in the Cuban campaigns. The involvement of black soldiers is easily
overlooked in a war as short and decisive as this one, especially at a time in America
when racial tensions were so high. ¹⁰² Being the first war since emancipation, colored men
were eager to volunteer and prove their loyalty to the nation, therefore the “propaganda
about fighting a war to free ‘our little brown brothers,’ the Cubans, Puerto Ricans and
Filipinos suffering under the yoke of the despotic Spanish, struck a responsive chord
among Afro-Americans.”¹⁰³ Involvement in the war spurred great pride among the black
communities and prompted optimism for the future, yet it also highlighted the challenges
that racial differences still presented in America. In a letter to the Cleveland Gazette in
May of 1898, one soldier black wrote,

¹⁰¹ Edgerton, 69-70; Thomas, 352.
¹⁰² For more information on the role of African-American troops in the Spanish-American War, refer to:
Gail Buckley, American Patriots: The Story of Blacks in the Military from the Revolution to Desert Storm
(New York, NY: Random House, 2001); Robert W. Mullen, Blacks in America's Wars: The Shift in
¹⁰³ Mullen, 35.
Talk about fighting and freeing poor Cuba and of Spain’s brutality; of Cuba’s murdered thousands and starving reconcentradós. Is America any better than Spain? Has she not subjects in her very midst who are murdered daily without a trial of judge or jury? Has she not subjects in her own borders whose children are half-fed and half-clothed because their father’s skin is black…

Despite concerns such as these, blacks were overcome by patriotic fervor and their sense of duty to serve their country and volunteered for service. Regretfully, despite their determination to fight for their nation and a just cause, black soldiers throughout the war were mistreated and often denied the ability to rise in the ranks as whites believed that blacks lacked the necessary discipline and leadership abilities to become officers.

Only for a brief time period did black troops receive their moments of honor and fame. The first of July, which saw the Battles of El Caney, San Juan Hill, and Kettle Hill, has become one of the most famous movements in the war. The widely reproduced image of the “Charge Up San Juan Hill” popularized the courage and sense of adventure embodied in the Rough Riders. What has been less widely acknowledged throughout history was the role that the Buffalo Soldiers played in securing these victories by saving the Rough Riders, who were pinned down by heavy Spanish fire.

Theodore Roosevelt humbly praised their efforts, noting in an interview afterwards,

…their aim was splendid, their coolness was superb, and their courage aroused the admiration of their comrades. Their advance was greeted with wild cheers.

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105 Ibid, 9-17, 45.
106 Edgerton, 73
from the white regiments, and with answering shouts they pressed onward over
the trenches they had taken close in pursuit of the retreating enemy. The war has
not shown greater heroism…\footnote{Edgerton, 74.}  

Upon returning home, black soldiers faced prejudice and mistreatment once again
following their brief moment of glory. For example, one group of black soldiers given the
task of transporting Spanish POWs from Florida to Georgia were attacked by whites
while the prisoners they were transporting were offered food and flowers. Historian
Robert Edgerton explained that “no matter how heroic he might have been in battle, a
black soldier was not allowed to act as the jailer of white in the South.”\footnote{Ibid, 82-3.}

By the end of July, with American forces stationed across Cuba, troops pressed on
to seize Guam, Wake Island and Puerto Rico. The Puerto Ricans welcomed the
Americans who captured the island quickly and easily.\footnote{Titherington 338-47.} Guam on the other hand put up
some resistance, as the native elite on the island disliked the arrogance and rude behavior
of American troops. Although they petitioned for the return of Spain, the military power
of the U.S. kept the island secured.\footnote{Edgerton, 116-17.}

Although capture of these islands made news at home, the American public
preferred to hear about victories in Cuba and the Philippines or discuss the Hawaiian
question, which resurfaced again. Hawaii, though not part of the Spanish-American War,
was seen as important to American interests in the Pacific. In 1897, McKinley himself
reintroduced Hawaiian annexation as a Congressional debate topic. The desire to annex

\footnote{107 Edgerton, 74.}
\footnote{108 Ibid, 82-3.}
\footnote{109 Titherington 338-47.}
\footnote{110 Edgerton, 116-17.}
the islands came from the perception of international threats, as both Britain and Japan were actively pursuing interests on the islands. The debate over Hawaii continued for nearly a year as members of Congress argued that overseas territories would potentially make the nation vulnerable to outside attack and that the Hawaiians were not racially fit to be Americans.\textsuperscript{111} As the war carried on however, the cause of Hawaiian annexation received a boost from excited feelings of patriotism and the House of Representatives passed the resolution on June 15\textsuperscript{th} with the Senate following on July 6\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{112}

After the question of Hawaii passed, the nation moved on to a new concern. American interests going into the war included seeking Cuba’s independence and obtaining coaling stations in a few areas while allowing Spain to retain control of its other territories. Following Dewey’s victory in Manila, however, the idea of keeping a larger part of the Philippines gained sway. By this point, the Cuban crisis had clearly demonstrated the cruelty and oppression of Spanish rulers and therefore, the U.S. reasoned that to leave the Philippines under Spanish control would be inhumane. The problem that arose was that if the islands came under American control, the nation would take on an imperialistic nature. Although the U.S. had just annexed Hawaii, many viewed the two situations as vastly different. Americans believed that Hawaii was within the U.S.’s sphere of influence, and therefore the Monroe Doctrine and manifest destiny justified their actions. On the other hand, taking the Philippines seemed to many to be a radical departure from America’s oft-stated policy.\textsuperscript{113} Although appearing to be based on

\textsuperscript{111} Love, 128-35.
\textsuperscript{112} Edgerton, 29; Love, 148-56.
\textsuperscript{113} Love, 160-61.
geographically unsound logic, the diverging opinions were likely due to economic reasoning and the American attempt to protect interests in Hawaii.

Rebellions in the Philippines seemed to follow the same course as in Cuba: they arose every so often yet continually failed. While the Spanish troops drove the rebels into the mountains in 1896, the resistance persisted both underground and in exile. When the Americans defeated the Spanish in May and pressed on into the island, rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo returned to Manila to negotiate with the Americans.\(^{114}\) In late May, the U.S. Consul E. Spencer Pratt called a meeting between Aguinaldo and U.S. representatives and they agreed to cooperate. Later on, Aguinaldo asserted that the U.S. promised to aid the Filipino rebels in seeking their independence.\(^{115}\) Although there is no record of the conversation, the U.S. did not hold itself to any promise that may have been in support of Filipino independence and instead pursued its own interests. In secret negotiations with Spanish forces on the island, the two nations agreed to stage an elaborate American victory and Spanish surrender. The intention was to bring a swift end to the fighting on the main island of Luzon with as few casualties as possible and prevent Filipino participation in the downfall of Spanish troops. In turn, this would save Spain’s reputation, secure America a claim over the future of the islands and deny the Filipinos an opportunity to obtain independence.\(^{116}\)

\(^{114}\) Edgerton, 93-6
\(^{115}\) Titherington, 356.
Peace Treaty, Negotiations and Aftermath of the War

Already by May, the war appeared headed for certain American victory, as Spain was now dealing with financing a war on top of inflation, economic depression and foreign trade troubles, problems that antedated their declaration of war. By early July, only the question of peace negotiation demands remained with the armistice coming in early August. Interestingly the Cubans, whom the war had originally been fought for, were kept in the dark during the drafting and final signing of the armistice.117 The Cuban question did not matter any more to America since Spain had given up fighting for it along with Puerto Rico. Instead, a new “battle” emerged over the Philippines. Originally the U.S. promised Spain that it would retain control over the Philippines as long as they provided the U.S. with a naval base in Manila. However, the demands of the public changed in June since Americans believed Dewey’s hard won victory entitled the nation to keep its “prize.” Further, they argued, the islands would find more favor under the democratic governance of the Americans as opposed to the cruel Spanish.118 The Paris Peace Conference began on October 1st. By the end of the month, America was reveling in victory at the national Philadelphia Peace Jubilee. The celebrations, coupled with McKinley’s famous dream of Christian Imperialism, set the tone for the annexation of the Philippines.119 The Treaty of Paris was signed on December 10th, with Spain ceding Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba to the U.S. and the U.S. purchasing control of the Philippines for $20 million. Following the signing of the treaty, the U.S. placed both

117 Offner, 198-201, 222.
119 Love, 166.
Puerto Rico and Guam under military control. In 1900, the Foraker Act gave Puerto Rico a civil government to voice their concerns, though total control was still in the hands of the Americans. By the 1950s, both Guam and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico remained unincorporated U.S. territories with civil governments.\textsuperscript{120} Cuba also fell under U.S. military control to ensure stabilization and preparation for self-government. Officials used the Teller Amendment against the island claiming it required total pacification before independence, which entailed more than just an end to hostilities. Occupation of Cuba began in January and lasted for two years before the Platt Amendment of 1901 provided limited independence.\textsuperscript{121}

The situation in the Philippines played out much differently though. Upon arrival in June, the U.S. military began establishing informal governing control. By August, the War Department stated its mission as, “…to protect the property and persons of all people within the limits of Manila and its environments” requiring that “…the ‘insurgents and all others must recognize the military occupation and authority of the United States.”\textsuperscript{122} The rebels however, did not comply. By November of 1898, they had announced the Filipino Declaration of Independence, which established a new government and ratified a constitution. On December 21\textsuperscript{st}, after the purchase of the islands, President McKinley issued the “Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation” which affirmed U.S. control and gave the military power to enforce “lawful rule” and disband rebels. McKinley acknowledged the need to establish a strong government but also

\textsuperscript{120} Edgerton, 114-15, 141-42.
\textsuperscript{121} Perez Jr., 29-35.
\textsuperscript{122} Linn, 26.
understood the importance of gaining favor with the natives. Therefore the military
would also be tasked with overseeing reform projects in education, law enforcement and
public works.\textsuperscript{123} By early February, as Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris and negated
the amendment for Philippine independence, tensions on the island escalated and the
Philippine-American War broke out. This bloody conflict lasted three years and saw
numerous atrocities including the deaths of around 4,000 Americans, 20,000 rebels and
200,000 civilians.\textsuperscript{124} American control remained over the islands for decades before self-
government was approved in 1934 and official independence came in 1946.

The Role of the Popular Press in the War and the Debate over American Empire

One of the most important aspects of the Spanish-American War was the resulting
debate over imperialism and American empire. For historians, the role of imperialism
affected all parts of the war including the causes, events and peace negotiations. Whether
or not imperialism was the intention of the war is difficult to discern. However, it is clear
that American felt strongly about the issue. The largest support for annexation came from
those seeking out the economic benefits that the territories could offer. Despite this, a
large opposition to annexation surfaced based on political, economic, moral and racial
reasoning. Americans were uncomfortable with acquiring colonial responsibilities similar
to Europe since they believed their nation was fundamentally different. Ironically, many
European countries found themselves in the midst of similar debates over their own

\textsuperscript{123} Linn, 21-31.
colonial policies. Throughout the war and peace negotiations, the popular press played a large role both in keeping the nation informed and providing a forum for discussion. Leading up and especially following explosion of the Maine. The popular press played a large role in creating and spreading patriotic fervor.

After the outbreak of the Cuban War for Independence, Hearst, of the New York Journal, along with Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the New York World, became highly influential individuals upon the American public in creating pro-war sentiments across the nation. They employed correspondents to travel overseas and report on first-hand news. As the new half-tone process of 1897 improved printing abilities, they also hired artists and photographers to bring events to life visually. As a result, the popularity, and possible influence, of the press became enormous. Although newspapers and “public opinion” may not be entirely to blame for the war, the benefit to studying these cultural outlets is in examining what was being portrayed to the public in terms of themes and information, and attempting to determine how people responded.\textsuperscript{125} Historian Bonnie Miller explains, “Although the impact of this cultural production on audiences is difficult to measure, the material effects are clearly evident in the countless ways in which war-related themes became a part of the American home life and consumer choices.”\textsuperscript{126}

Between 1880 and 1920, newspaper sales in America reached their peak. By the mid 1890s, when both Hearst and Pulitzer came onto the scene, the popularity of newspapers grew with the introduction of the cheap, mass-produced, tabloid-style papers known as the “penny press” alongside the new style of reporting known as “yellow

\textsuperscript{125} Secunda and Morgan, 14-9.
\textsuperscript{126} Miller, 111.
journalism.” The term yellow originated from the Yellow Kid cartoon character of the 1890s that appeared in Pulitzer’s World wearing a yellow colored smock. After Hearst struck a deal with the artist to leave the World and begin working for the Journal, an intense rivalry emerged between the two men to outsell each other, often by publishing sensationalistic stories.127 Hearst used sensationalism to aggressively promote the Cuba Libra cause, most notably with the Cisneros affair and the de Lome Letter.128 From the start of the revolution to the end of the war, rarely did a day pass without an article on the situation in Cuba.129 Readers of the World and Journal, whose combined circulation was over 2.25 million, were flooded with information. Aside from these two newspapers, the nation had over 6,000 other newspapers. The majority of these were local papers, published less frequently, and did not report on the war as often or in as sensational a manner. However, editors of these papers often reprinted the patriotic and emotionally charged articles from larger papers and hence, the war spirit spread.130

The portrayal of the Cuban crisis in the American press was very one-sided. There were three major players in these accounts: Spain, the villain; Cuba, the victim; and the United States, the hero. Often in political cartoons, artists portrayed Cuba as female, fulfilling the damsel-in-distress “chivalric paradigm,” with Spain, depicted as a tall, burly, brutal man either physically or sexually abusing her. Along with imagery, journalists reported on the starvation, disease and cruelty, which they claimed Spanish

128 Wilkerson, 84-91.
129 Secunda and Morgan, 13.
authorities inflicted upon civilians, in order to present Cuba as being in need of protection. Uncle Sam became the face of the American nation, representing the country’s authority, its sense of responsibility and its hard-working ethic. Artists were careful never to portray the United States as a motherly figure, as this would suggest passivity and make the nation look too nurturing. Even Lady Liberty was stripped of her feminine qualities.\textsuperscript{131} The intention of these cartoons was ultimately to encourage a patriotic view and outward support of the nation through simplifying the situation. To a large extent this worked, appealing particularly to male sensibilities. As some suggested that men had become soft and over-civilized, they believed war would help reaffirm the “American Man” as powerful, aggressive, courageous and loyal. Such sentiments skyrocketed following the explosion of the \textit{Maine}, uniting Americans across all ethnicities.\textsuperscript{132}

Following the \textit{Maine}, Hearst and Pulitzer pointed blame at Spain, utilizing emotional language and patriotic images to highlight the catastrophe and rally the public. Although many followed suit, a large majority of newspapers chose to remain neutral in their accusations until further proof surfaced.\textsuperscript{133} Nonetheless, even if the explosion in itself did not sway all in favor of war, the great loss of American life affected the entire nation, as seen in the popular expression, “Remember the Maine—To Hell With Spain!” The \textit{Maine} became the new justification for war and the point at which war became inevitable.\textsuperscript{134} Motion pictures and traveling shows reenacted the explosion, memorial

\textsuperscript{131} Miller, 19-27, 206.
\textsuperscript{132} Hoganson, “The Importance of Manhood in the Congressional Debate Over War,” 124-37.
\textsuperscript{133} Miller, 56-63.
\textsuperscript{134} Perez Jr., \textit{The War of 1898}, 59-63.
services were dedicated to the victims, and the slogan “Remember the Maine!” found its way onto gum wrappers, matchbook covers, paperweights, dinnerware, collectable spoons and even pins to. People no longer viewed war as the nation overstepping its bounds and seeking imperialism, but rather as a proper response to an external threat.¹³⁵

Dewey’s victory at Manila Bay, the Rough Riders at San Juan Heights and the Battle of Santiago de Cuba became other high points for popular culture. The nation was obsessed with this “triumphant militarism.” Re-enactments of these events sold out across the nation, photographs and paintings of battle scenes proliferated, and the Rough Riders became the subject of fiction and theater. Musicians did their part to support the war with songs like “For the Boys Who Have Gone to Set Cuba Free,” and “We Are Coming with Old Glory.”¹³⁶ Businesses as well adopted something similar to the notion of the “practical patriotism” they renamed their products after war heroes and decorated their buildings in war themes to increase sales.¹³⁷ Similarly, the “Dewey Society” was born encouraging towns, streets, songs, consumer goods and even children to be named after the Admiral.

As the war played out and the idea of annexation emerged, opinions towards the imperialism and of American empire were openly debated in the press. The future of the Philippine islands brought the question of empire to a head, tackling issues such as religious duty, economic impacts, the nature of American politics, and race. More

¹³⁵ Miller, 72-6.
¹³⁶ Perez Jr., The War of 1898, 24.
¹³⁷ The concept of practical patriotism is developed by Leslie DeBauche in her book Reel Patriotism: The Movies and World War I (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997) to describe how businesses during the First World War utilized demonstrations of patriotism to both show their support for the nation and increase sales, thereby making patriotism “practical”; Miller, 92-102.
importantly, the concerns surrounding imperialism and empire played a large role in redefining American national identity as the public argued contested the nature of the nation and its role in world politics.

The call for imperialism had strong support. Americans were overwhelmed by their victories in war and felt opposed to the idea that they would be forced to give up territories they had fought hard to win. However, islands such as the Philippines were viewed as more than just “prizes” of war. The public believed that they had rescued the natives from their cruel fate and therefore, it was the now America’s responsibility to look after them.\(^{138}\) Natives were often depicted as child-like to insinuate their need of protection. This, along with attempts to make a spectacle of Filipino culture at traveling circuses and world fairs, made imperialism appear to be a liberating action instead of a conquering one.\(^{139}\) Similarly, many Filipinos looked as imperialism positively at first. They idolized the United States and believed that living under its guidance would be a way for their nation to modernize and grow, which further spurred the cause in America. What the press neglected to mention was that Filipinos opposed the militaristic ruling style of the Americans and their cultural overload.\(^{140}\) Either way, the perceived desire for annexation on the part of the natives, along with the view of annexation as a demonstration of the nation’s humanitarian side, led many to support the cause.

Religion also played a role in the debate over the Philippines. Americans believed that the U.S. was God’s chosen nation and therefore it had the duty of spreading Christian

\(^{138}\) Love, 168-72.
\(^{139}\) Miller, 225-28.
\(^{140}\) Harris, 183.
doctrine and morals.\textsuperscript{141} McKinley himself had his original position swayed by religion. In late October, after dreaming about a Christian empire that included the entire Philippines, he decided it was America’s duty to take hold of the islands and uplift them by providing divine guidance.\textsuperscript{142} Protestant theology, much like the media, colored the public’s views of the natives. Spanish missionaries had previously Christianized the Philippines, but for many, the fact that the islands practiced Catholicism, which they viewed negatively, confirmed their unfitness for self-government.\textsuperscript{143} Americans thus came to believe that the Philippines would not be ready for independence until they had become more “civilized” politically, economically, socially and religiously, based upon the American model. What they didn’t seem to comprehend at the time was that their own nation had not achieved this utopian style unity.\textsuperscript{144} This complex Christian thinking grew out of the turbulent 1890s. Americans, in an effort to deal with, or perhaps ignore, their own internal struggles, turned to missionary zeal and humanitarian efforts around the world. Many believed it was their duty as a superior Christian nation to protect the oppressed of the world. This idea was later epitomized in Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem, “The White Man’s Burden,” composed in February of 1899.\textsuperscript{145}

American leaders also viewed their imperialistic outlook as unique from that of European colonialism in that it sought overseas commercial development established

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{141} Harris, 21.
\textsuperscript{142} Love, 166.
\textsuperscript{143} Blum, 224
\textsuperscript{144} Harris, 67, 101-2.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 129, 148-52.
\end{footnotes}
under a system of democratic, moral guidance.\textsuperscript{146} The support of \textit{National Geographic Magazine} and professional scholars had a noteworthy impact on the more educated, wealthy upper and upper-middle classes.\textsuperscript{147} \textit{National Geographic} emphasized the benefit of new overseas markets in that they would provide an outlet for the excess capitalistic “energy” stemming from the U.S.’ superior economic abilities. Farmers, fearing another depression and the problems of surplus, were especially eager for new foreign markets. As European powers dominated Africa, South America and much of Asia, the U.S. turned their aspirations towards China, and the Philippines were seen as a key stepping stone along the way. As an extra bonus the natives had the potential to provide cheap, abundant labor and control of the islands would give the U.S. access to resources and crops including gold, copper, iron, coal, rice, corn, tobacco, fruits, nuts, and spices.\textsuperscript{148} Beyond what America stood to gain economically, pro-imperial advocates proclaimed that it was the duty of superior nations to help others move “from savagery into barbarism, thence into civilization, and finally into enlightenment.” This, they suggested was the nation’s newly discovered, economic-based “Strong Man’s Burden.”\textsuperscript{149}

On the other side of the imperialism debate were those opposed to annexation. Although the country initially went to war to fight for Cuban independence, as tensions with the rebel soldiers and the potential for annexation increased, the press began to

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\textsuperscript{147} It is noted that the Spanish-American War, being the first true overseas war for America resulted in an increasing public interest in the field of geography, giving the magazine influence over the public. Tuason, 35-9.

\textsuperscript{148} Edgerton, 155-56.

\textsuperscript{149} Tuason, 39-44.
\end{flushleft}
depict the natives in a negative manner, emphasizing their chaotic and uncivilized nature. Cartoons portrayed darker skinned natives as primitive, irresponsible and uncivilized, an idea quickly embraced by the Jim Crow white supremacists in particular.\textsuperscript{150} Southerners however, though they supported the war and ideas about racial hierarchy, did not necessarily favor annexing Spain’s territories. For example, Marion Butler, a Populist senator from North Carolina, supported American intervention of the war in early 1898 but he never swayed from his opposition to annexation. Butler, and the entire Populist Party in fact, felt a European-style imperial policy would destroy free-government in America and instead argued that the nation should focus on its internal problems before absorbing any external ones.\textsuperscript{151} Senators John McLaurin and Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina also opposed annexation. McLaurin openly criticized the imperialism policy as hypocritical since blacks were given freedom yet their close kin, the Filipinos, who were more “white,” would be denied rights.\textsuperscript{152} Similarly, Tillman believed that a general racial hierarchy existed and that the superior or dominant race maintained itself by means of “survival of the fittest.” Naturally for Tillman, among others, it was whites who were at the top of this hierarchy. He therefore did not see non-white populations as capable of self-government nor did he feel it was the role of America to intervene when they could not even control their own non-whites.\textsuperscript{153}

Racial depictions of Filipinos flooded the news when talks began of annexing the islands. Early in the war Aguinaldo was portrayed as an ally and a strong leader. After

\textsuperscript{150} Bouvier, “Imaging a Nation: US Political Cartoons and the War of 1898,” 104-13; Miller, 142-49. 
\textsuperscript{151} Hunt, 135-36, 157. 
\textsuperscript{152} Love, 190-91. 
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, 263.
declaring the independence of the Philippine Republic in mid-July, these portrayals changed however. At first, cartoonists gave him a degenerative, Asian look utilizing American anti-Chinese and Japanese sentiments to destroy his popular reception. Filipinos also developed more Africanized features as artists gave them darker skin, larger lips, ethnic-style hair and they were depicted in primitive poses. Relations with natives were discouraged through depictions of women as unkept and articles claiming that only a weak, corrupted man would mix with them.\textsuperscript{154} Newspapers reported practices of witchcraft, idol worship, devil dance and cannibalism to discourage imperialism on the basis that Filipinos were too different from Americans culturally, being more animalistic than human-like.\textsuperscript{155}

Along with race, some Americans opposed annexation on the grounds of political and moral reasoning. Many congressmen felt a colonial policy would be unconstitutional and had the potential to disrupt the American political system. Others argued that the Philippine case was “exceptional,” allowing the government to bypass the Constitution, but felt that it was morally wrong to impose rule on another country without its consent. Some even added a racial component, fearing the natives would be incapable of assimilating or would destroy American politics if given the right to vote.\textsuperscript{156} Furthermore, African Americans found themselves torn between desiring to support the government and morally opposing annexation. Black soldiers in particular came to feel a sense of fraternity amongst the darker skinned Filipinos. They argued that it was colored soldiers,

\textsuperscript{154} Miller, 196-205.  
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 224.  
\textsuperscript{156} Love, 186-89.
not whites, who carried a burden, being forced to suppress enemy action and carry out colonial-style rule upon people they sympathized with. Some could not bare to mistreat natives or grew angry over racism in the military and abandoned their post to join the rebel fight against America.\textsuperscript{157}

Although Americans opposed to anti-imperialism appeared to rely on more of a variety of more intellectually sound arguments, they could not compete against the popularity of those supporting annexation. Even the formally established Anti-Imperialist League had but little impact on the American public. Emerging in the summer of 1898, the League, centered in Boston, was composed primarily of older, moderate, elite white men including members from political, academic, working class, activist, and professional backgrounds. Ultimately, having a diverse outreach proved to be a benefit in spreading their ideas, yet the inability of members to unite led to an unsuccessful attempt to prevent annexation and a swift downfall within a few years.\textsuperscript{158} The League was perhaps too removed from the sentiments of the general public and therefore was unable to influence opinions. Americans ultimately viewed annexation as an extension of their own prosperity and directly connected to patriotism. As they were attempting to define themselves in relation to their nation, many did not consider the real questions surrounding annexation, viewing the issue through a limited scope and desiring above all else to promote the growth of their exceptional nation.

\textsuperscript{157} Blum, 241-42; Edgerton, 99; Gatewood Jr., 14, 242-43. 
The war loosely resulted in the emergence of an American Empire, however it was not viewed this way at the time. Although the policy of imperialism through expansion found a fairly strong opposition force, the general public still acknowledged that annexing the islands would bring the nation some benefits. Once annexation occurred, crowds cheered about their nation’s great power and looked positively toward the future. After the nation had demonstrated its abilities, Americans could safely argue that they were exceptional in their motivations and liberators of the world, allowing the U.S. to slowly return to a policy of isolation until for the next nineteen years.
CHAPTER THREE

SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC REACTION TO THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR
AND ANNEXATION

The Southern people do not read newspapers as generally as those of the north. This is
not, however, an unmixed evil, for the newspapers of this section, quite independent of
the favor of the lower strata of society, can maintain a uniform level of sanity and
cleanliness. People of the sort who in New York demand Sunday sheets full of puerility
and putridity are rarely newspaper readers in southern cities.

---Columbia State, 1898

The South Carolina Press: A Case Study

In order to examine the sentiment of Southerners during the War of 1898 and
compare it to the general national sentiment, the state of South Carolina has been chosen
as a representative case study. South Carolina was chosen due to the availability of
resources, the proximity of Charleston to the Cuban affair, its unique history due to
involvement in the Civil War, and the state’s connection to Senator Benjamin Tillman.
Tillman, born in the South Carolina Piedmont in 1847, is famous among Spanish-
American War historians for his harsh tone, bold opinions and strong anti-imperialist
views stemming from his belief in white supremacy.

While historians often place emphasis on Tillman as a racist, his importance in the
War of 1898 extends beyond the factor of race. Tillman had a strong interest in naval
affairs resulting from the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan in the 1890s. During the 1890s,
he served on the Senate Naval Committee, later becoming its Chairman in 1913. He
continuously worked through the Senate to establish battleship-manufacturing plants and

159 Columbia State, November 29, 1898.
160 See: Edwards, 260-61; Harris, 148-50; Jacobson, 229-47; Love, 190-192; Miller, 177, 215.
promoted a general expansion of the navy, especially once war with Spain became likely. Historians often overlook the fact that Tillman strongly supported war in 1897 and 1898 because he believed that it would expand the navy and demonstrate American power. They often tend to overlook his opposition to annexation based on the opinion that subjugating unwilling peoples was unethical, instead focusing on his argument that incorporating foreign races would contaminate the nation, which built off of his racist upbringing.

Although scholars do not attempt to extrapolate Tillman’s views on the war and annexation to the state of South Carolina in general, it is indisputable that Tillman was a highly influential man in many manners. His opinions were clearly accepted in the state, evident in his election and re-elections, serving as Governor from 1890 until 1894 and Senator from 1895 until 1918. Tillman found support outside of South Carolina as well though, being frequently requested as a speaker at events in North Carolina and Georgia in particular. Taking into account these unique factors of the state, the opinions of the South Carolina public toward the war and annexation will be documented through an examination of several newspapers. Despite Tillman being strongly in favor of war and opposed to annexation, the newspapers of South Carolina indicate that the public was mixed in their opinion of war and annexation at first, but soon fell to support the war and oppose annexation. For the purpose of this thesis, only the Anderson Intelligencer, the Charleston News and Courier, the Columbia State, and the Rock Hill Herald were

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162 Simkins, 352.
163 *Rock Hill Herald*, October 29, 1898.
analyzed in depth. However, opinions toward war and annexation from other South Carolina newspapers surfaced through the process of researching both primary and secondary sources. The chart below details the various newspapers, their political affiliations and their opinions toward war and annexation. Although only the four surveyed newspapers will be referenced throughout the chapter, the opinions of the other newspapers were useful in attempting to draw more broad conclusions about the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
<th>Pro-War?</th>
<th>Pro-Imperialism?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson Intelligencer*</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston News and Courier*</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesterfield Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia State*</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes → No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florence Daily Times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville Christian Advocate</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenville News</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning Times</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Hill Herald*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spartanburg Herald</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: South Carolina Newspapers and Opinions Toward the War of 1898
(* Indicates the newspapers surveyed in the thesis)

The first paper selected was the *Intelligencer* of Anderson, South Carolina. Anderson is located in Anderson County in the northwestern Piedmont section of the state. At the turn of the century, the county was the fourth largest in South Carolina out of forty-six total, boasting nearly 55,000 residents. The area was settled by white farmers in the eighteenth century and developed into an important agricultural region for corn and

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cotton production. In 1833, the village of Anderson emerged from the “Old Pendleton District,” centered around a small building that functioned as the government seat. The village of Anderson did not see much development until later in the century when construction began on major town buildings and textile mills.\textsuperscript{165}

The town’s growth benefitted from three major factors: education, electricity, and textile mills. In 1889, Clemson College was founded in the nearby town of Calhoun as the result of Tillman’s longstanding efforts to establish an agricultural school in the state for farmers. After Thomas Green Clemson passed away, leaving his Pickens estate and $80,000, Tillman’s school was built with him on the board of trustees, bringing a new flow of people and commerce to the region.\textsuperscript{166} Although Anderson prospered from proximity to the college, of more importance to its growth was the introduction of electricity and its subsequent benefit to local mills. William Whitner revolutionized the town’s future in 1895 with his long-distance transmission system for hydroelectric power. Anderson became known as the “Electric City,” the first city in the United States to receive a continuous supply of electricity and the first city to have an electric-powered cotton gin.\textsuperscript{167} Electricity helped not only the local industries, but the press as well. In 1860, editors and publishers James A. Hoyt and John C.C. Featherstone established the \textit{Anderson Intelligencer} as a weekly paper dedicated to covering politics, agriculture and society, with an emphasis on local news. Although Hoyt and Featherstone set out to

\textsuperscript{165} National Register of Historic Places, Anderson Downtown Historic District, Anderson, Anderson County, South Carolina, National Register #79002372.
\textsuperscript{166} Simkins, 120.
conduct their paper in a politically independent manner, it possessed strong undertones of Democratic leanings as well as anti-Northern views. In 1877, Edward B. Murray, the former editor of the unsuccessful *Anderson Conservator*, took over as the new editor and ran the paper in much the same fashion as his predecessors, using it to promote the Democratic Party as well as his own political ventures.¹⁶⁸ In order to focus on his own political career, Murray sold the paper in 1890 to J. Fleetwood Clinkscales and Charles C. Langston, who would remain editors and publishers until 1911.¹⁶⁹ As editors, Clinkscales and Langston were not as pronounced in their political tones and instead emphasized religion and morals. By the time of the Spanish-American War, the *Anderson Intelligencer* was composed of eight pages total and published weekly on Wednesdays for a subscription cost of $1.50. In 1898 the circulation averaged 1,000 readers per issue, which marked decrease of nearly fifty percent from 1896.¹⁷⁰

Charleston was chosen as the second sample for the state of South Carolina. Being a hub of national and international commerce, Charleston would likely have more sources to rely on and a more frequent influx of information as it was in constant contact with other port cities such as Baltimore, Boston, and New York. Furthermore, by the turn of the century Charleston County remained the largest in the state with nearly 88,000 residents, and the port city itself stood ranked by population as first in the state and 68th¹⁷⁰

in the nation with nearly 55,000 residents.\textsuperscript{171} The \textit{News and Courier} paper was chosen to represent Charleston. The \textit{Courier} is South Carolina’s oldest daily newspaper, having been founded in 1803.\textsuperscript{172} Over the years, the paper changed its name and editors numerous times. In the early 1870s, the \textit{Courier} came under the ownership of Francis W. Dawson and Bartholomew R. Riordan. Dawson, who served as the primary editor, transformed the paper into one of the first sources of “modern journalism” in the state with its emphasis on editorials of an intellectual, moderate tone, its promotion of industrial development, and its dedication to the fight against city corruption.\textsuperscript{173} Their efforts resulted in the \textit{Courier} becoming the largest circulating newspaper in the city, and therefore the entire state. In 1889, after Riordan left the paper and Dawson met an untimely death, Rudolph Siegling took over as President of the News and Courier Co., succeeded in 1894 by James Simmons as owner and James Calvin Hemphill as editor.\textsuperscript{174}

Though by no means a man of the people, Hemphill was well known and respected throughout Charleston society and had good relations with local officials. He maintained Dawson’s emphasis on editorial style reporting, yet his writings were marked with “oratorical and literary flavor,” a far stretch from Dawson’s more down-to-earth style. In general, Hemphill made the paper much more moderate, especially in politics, for which he was often criticized. Though the paper had a long tradition of opposing

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{172} Charles R. Rowe, \textit{Pages of History: 200 Years of the Post and Courier} (Charleston, SC: Evening Post Publishing Co, 2003), 1-2.
  \item \textsuperscript{174} Rowe, 51-7, 76-9.
\end{itemize}
Tillman’s political ventures, after he received the Democratic nomination for governor, the decision was made to support his election in order to prevent a fragmentation in the party. Hemphill saw greater advantage in focusing his efforts on the future of Charleston’s industrial development rather than what he considered “old topics.” When the war broke out in 1898, the News and Courier was composed of eight pages daily, with a special Sunday edition of sixteen pages, for a subscription cost of $10. The paper’s average circulation in 1898 was slightly over 3,000, marking a decrease of nearly sixty percent since 1894.175

Functioning as both a companion and rival to the News and Courier was the Columbia State paper, making it the third choice for South Carolina. The city of Columbia lies in the center of the state in Richland County. Despite being a smaller city than Charleston at the time, its status was enhanced because it was the state’s capital. Richland County was the seventh largest in the state by the turn of the century with nearly 45,000 residents, the city of Columbia itself counting for over half of that number. Although possessing fewer residents than Charleston, Columbia by the 1890s was growing much faster.176 To represent Columbia, the State newspaper was chosen, being a fairly new, popular and controversial paper during the 1890s. The State began in 1891 under Narciso Gener Gonzales and the story of the paper is much the story of Gonzales himself.

175 Rowell, 963.
Born in South Carolina in 1858, Gonzales came from a long line of prominent, educated members of the planter class on his mother’s side. However, his father, Ambrosio José, was a Cuban revolutionary living in exile in the United States where he worked to organize and gain support for the cause of Cuban independence. After Gonzales’ mother died at a young age, he and his older brother Ambrose began working as railroad agents and telegraph operators to support the family while their father was traveling.\textsuperscript{177} Through this venture, Gonzales entered the local political scene as a news transmitter to rural South Carolina. The brothers began publishing a small paper, \textit{The Palmetto}, available only at Gonzales’ station, which reported on local news and market information for farmers. As a result of this small publication, Gonzales was hired as the Columbia correspondent for the \textit{News and Courier}.\textsuperscript{178} His daily column in the paper, marked by his own strong opinions and bold conclusions concerning local affairs, made Gonzales a well-known name statewide.\textsuperscript{179} Gonzales and Dawson grew apart toward the end of the 1880s due to Gonzales’ opinionated journalistic style and stubborn nature, eliminating his chances to become the paper’s next editor. Once Hemphill took over and decided to support Tillman’s campaign for Governor in 1890, Gonzales left the paper.\textsuperscript{180}

\textit{The State} began in 1891 as a daily newspaper to function as Gonzales’ forum for anti-Tillman politics. Though a supporter of the Democratic Party, he was unusual in that he did not strictly adhere to party policy and was in fact often very critical of it. Gonzales

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{178} Jones, \textit{Stormy Petrel}, 47-59.
\textsuperscript{180} Jones, \textit{Stormy Petrel}, 123-35.
\end{flushleft}
was seen as a progressive conservative and his paper took on a position much the same.\textsuperscript{181} During the 1890s, \textit{The State} became a family-run paper with his brothers Ambrose and William joining the staff, to critics thus giving it “aristocratic” tone out of touch with rural South Carolina.\textsuperscript{182} Truthfully, the paper found immense popularity in its fight against city corruption, defense of education, and the promotion of worker’s rights and industrial progress. The paper emerged at the turn of the century as the most preferred in Columbia, while others such as the \textit{Register} folded due to financial trouble.\textsuperscript{183} At the outbreak of war, all three brothers joined the effort. After Gonzales left for Cuba in May, E. J. Watson took over as temporary editor, remaining in frequent contact with Gonzales and striving to continue the paper in his fashion.\textsuperscript{184} At the time of the war, \textit{The State} was composed of eight pages and published daily for a subscription cost of $8.50. Its subscription numbers remained steady between 3,000 and 3,500 throughout the decade.\textsuperscript{185}

To serve as the final selection, the \textit{Rock Hill Herald} was chosen. The town of Rock Hill, in York County, is advantageous due to its location in the upper-middle region of the state and its proximity to Charlotte, North Carolina. By the turn of the century York County ranked as the eight largest in the state with nearly 41,000 residents.\textsuperscript{186} The Rock Hill area, however, was slow to develop, allowing it to maintain a small town atmosphere, yet benefit from nearby industry and technologies. Originating in 1852,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, 66, 137-42. \\
\textsuperscript{182} Latimer Jr., 13, 23. \\
\textsuperscript{183} Jones, “Narcisco Gener Gonzales,” 84; Jones, \textit{Stormy Petrel}, 249-52; Latimer Jr., 9, 21-8. \\
\textsuperscript{184} Jones, \textit{Stormy Petrel}, 228; Latimer Jr., 45. \\
\textsuperscript{185} Rowell, 965. \\
\textsuperscript{186} Forstall.
\end{flushright}
Rock Hill did not officially become a town until 1870 and by the turn of the century held only a quarter of the county’s population. In state history, the town would be the location of the first Ku Klux Klan organization in 1868, as well as being the first to enact prohibition in 1881, giving it a strict, traditional, Christian atmosphere.\footnote{Rock Hill Elks, “Rock Hill Area History: Reconstruction and the 1880s and 90’s,” Rock Hill Elks Lodge, accessed April 7, 2014, http://www.rockhillelks.org/history/histtoc.htm; York County Library, “York County History - an Introduction,” YC History, April 7, 2014, accessed April 7, 2014, http://www.ychistory.org/ychistoryintro.php.}

One of the most notable townsmen of the late nineteenth century was James Morrow Ivy, who arrived in 1869 and was referred to later as the “Father of Rock Hill.” Upon his arrival, Ivy took on the role of town warden and private banker, funded the building of the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, founded the Rock Hill Cotton Factory, and established the Ivy & Fewell Department Store. Despite the economic growth Ivy brought in, the town in general remained poor, rural and agricultural.\footnote{Ron Allman, “South Carolina Newspapers,” SCPress.org, accessed April 7, 2014, http://web.archive.org/web/19980131170426/www.scpress.org/newshistory.htm; J. Tracy Power, \textit{South Carolina Historical Markers in York County, 1936-Present} (SC Department of Archives and History, 2009), 4, 8, 10, accessed April 7, 2014, http://cityofrockhill.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1279.} Nevertheless, the residents were ambitious. In 1893 locals passed a referendum for a $60,000 bond and thirty acres of land to bring Winthrop College to the town, which opened in 1895 with 300 students. Winthrop functioned as the women’s only counterpart to Clemson College, having in common Ben Tillman as its founder.\footnote{Simkins, 179-181.}

In 1874, Ivy purchased the remnants of a collapsed newspaper and renamed it the \textit{Rock Hill Herald}, beginning publication in 1876. The paper carried a strong Democratic leaning and reported frequently on industrial affairs.\footnote{Allman.} After Ivy died in the 1880s,
Joseph J. Hull, the current editor, purchased managerial rights to the paper. A former resident of Charlotte, Hull moved to Rock Hill in the early 1880s. There, he would serve as mayor for two years, alderman-at-large for twelve years, a member of the Rock Hill Library Association, which founded the county’s library in 1884, and as the founder of the area’s first public school in 1888.\footnote{Allman; Ruth Byers and Anne Harper, \textit{A History of the York County Library: 1884-1984} (Rock Hill, SC: York County Library, 1984), accessed April 7, 2014, http://www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/public/york/centennial/index.html.} As editor and manager, Hull maintained the paper’s strong Democratic political leanings, advocated for industry and market growth, and promoted religious morals. Overall, his efforts increased circulation numbers by twenty percent to the highest ever by the end of the century.\footnote{Allman.} At the outbreak of the war in 1898, the \textit{Rock Hill Herald} was composed of four pages total, published twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays for a subscription cost of $2 and reached an average of 1,000 readers.\footnote{Rowell, 969.}

The sample of newspapers covers each of the major geographical areas of the state, giving attention to both coastal and inland towns as well as both large and small towns. The papers have a range of publication frequencies and circulation numbers. Thus the information presented within the articles, as well as the paper’s opinions on the information will be used to interpret positions concerning the War of 1898. It is important to note, however, that the use of newspapers as sources of public opinion poses both advantages and disadvantages to historians. Newspapers provide a detailed record of events that occurred at the time on a regular basis, sometimes through first-hand accounts. They indicate what information was deemed important enough to relay to the
public in the articles they put forth and in deciding which facts to include or omit, as well as where to place the information in the paper. In some matters, reporting honestly and utilizing credible sources was important, while in others emotion appeal had more draw for readers. Either way, as a consumer good, newspapers had to stimulate interest in information in order to make sales.\(^{194}\) To this extent it can be argued that newspapers created public opinion. On the other hand, newspapers must cater to the interests of the public or risk losing sales, requiring an understanding of their audiences and regular adjustment of approaches. To this extent, newspapers can also reflect public opinion.\(^{195}\)

“Progress of the War”: June through December of 1898

As the Cuban Revolution of 1895 came to pass, Gonzales of The State found himself enthralled by Cuban affairs, likely due to his family’s connections with the revolutionary ideals of the country. Gonzales began coverage of the events early and vigorously pursued the interventionist cause. The state of South Carolina however, did not match his enthusiasm.\(^{196}\) At the outbreak of war, the general sentiment seemed to


\(^{195}\) Copeland, 117; Secunda and Morgan, 2-3.

support the cause of Cuban liberation, yet opposed the idea of sudden intervention. In 1898 South Carolina was by no means ready to provide troops or supplies for war. Industry was still relatively small, farmers were preparing for the spring harvest, and the state militia functioned more as a police force than as soldiers ready for battle. Moreover, the region in general felt divided about the war. Some were propelled by the humanitarian cause, while others emphasized the prospect of economic opportunities in war. However, the majority approached intervention with caution. Blacks in South Carolina opposed the war as a “white man’s war” arguing that while oppression still existed at home, they would not fight against it abroad. A study of Southern Methodist Newspapers from 1973 similarly noted that religious organizations, though supporting Cuban relief efforts, strongly opposed war. Farmers and businessmen feared wasteful spending on war would harm the economy and disrupt Southern trade and industry. Others were worried that a build up of military forces would lead to the adoption of a centralized militarized government, eliciting memories of Reconstruction.

The state’s dispute over war was mimicked in the rivalry between the State and the News and Courier. After the State’s long support of the cause, the Courier

199 Bailey Jr., 196.
200 Shankman, 93-5.
201 Ayers, 258; Bailey Jr., 196-98; McWilliams, 49, 140-41.
proclaimed its anti-war position announcing that war was “unnecessary.” An angry
Gonzales responded that anyone in opposed to the war was unpatriotic and a “disgrace to
South Carolina.” Patriotism and duty would soon become valuable tools for swaying
public opinion, leading many in the state and region to support the war once it was
declared. Patriotism in the 1890s focused less on specific values and more on general
principles, the emphasis being “commitment to a cause more than on the cause itself.”
According to historian Nina Silber, the war allowed the North and South to reconnect
through feelings of pride, as the nation realized that defending its honor on the
international scene was more important at the turn of the century than defending regional
honor. Though the nation may have united, however, regional differences could never
truly be removed from patriotism.

From the time of the outbreak of war up until peace, South Carolina newspapers
reported on the general course of the war, presenting news gathered either from
Associated Press newsgathering or from other, larger and more prominent newspapers
that had traveling correspondents on scene. Both the *Courier* and the *State* had an
additional source in their own informal war correspondents. August Kohn of the *Courier
was assigned to accompany the South Carolina 1st Regiment through its war duties.
Though the regiment was never actually deployed, Kohn reported on training programs,
the conditions of the local camps, the movement of troops and the morale of the soldiers.

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204 Silber, 162, 178.
The *State* relied on correspondences from both Gonzales and reporter William Banks, who were both stationed in Cuba.\(^{205}\)

Being the larger and more frequently published papers, the *State* and the *Courier* had the ability to devote more space to war coverage and presented detailed, day-to-day updates of information for their readers. War coverage dominated the front pages of both papers, as well as the *Courier*’s special Sunday extra, which indicated that perhaps the editors recognized the importance of these events. On the other hand, the *Courier* explicitly noted that the public in mid-June had become more interested in the progress of the war than in any local or state matters, reinforcing its focus on war.\(^{206}\)

For the *Herald* and the *Intelligencer*, the situation was perhaps more difficult. Being semi-weekly and weekly, respectively, the editors of these papers had to determine what events over the course of the weeks were worthy of publishing for their smaller, more rural audiences. The demands of the public could likely have affected the papers, yet the location and size of these towns, along with the lack of published letters to the editors, make determining public opinion a challenge. Hull of the *Herald*, who was in favor of the war from the beginning, considered the war a important event and devoted ample space to its coverage. Along with war news, the majority of the paper was composed of local news, detailing information about farming, market prices, business ventures, politics and various educational, religious and social matters. Clinkscales and Langston, on the other hand, who opposed the war, did not give much space to the war-related issues until its outbreak. The explosion of the *Maine*, an event that riveted the

\(^{205}\) Floyd, 32-5.

\(^{206}\) “Hear Them for Their Causes,” *Charleston News and Courier*, June 18, 1898.
nation and received front-page coverage across South Carolina, was mentioned on two out of a total of fifty-six pages printed in the two months following the event. War coverage increased from May until August and the paper emphasized its patriotism, but even during these months, the editors made sure not to lose any more space than necessary from what they considered more pressing local concerns.

One of the more important methods to determining public opinion is analyzing the type of material presented to the readers and the common themes seen throughout. In general, the most frequent coverage of the war contained simple, straightforward information about the progress of the war, yet through these articles the themes of national patriotism, religion, and sectionalism become apparent.

The popular press coverage of the Spanish-America War across the nation was portrayed with a sense of confidence and pride as events proceeded in a positive manner. The press in South Carolina in 1898 embodied this idea of a confident, victorious people through demonstrations of patriotism and nationalism as Americans began to celebrate the greatness of their nation and came to adopt the view of its superiority to others. In this manner, the opinions of South Carolinians matched those of the nation, praising the United States in their own ways yet also reprinting articles from newspapers across the nation. The *Herald* is persistent in expressing its patriotism. Articles reprinted from the *Chicago-Times Herald* in particular explain that Americans fought to “teach the world a lesson in freedom,” and express the courage and free will of the American soldier who “does no go to war at the command of his government. He commands his government to
go to war.”\textsuperscript{207} Patriotism is indicated most clearly in reports on public celebrations including speeches, public events, state fairs and peace jubilees. The \textit{Columbia State} in particular gives ample space to reporting on speeches of McKinley, Bryan, and other known politicians that celebrate the nation being “fortunate in the virtue of our people and in the valor of our soldiers.”\textsuperscript{208} It also covers the nearby South Carolina state fair in November reporting on the success of Henry J. Pain’s pyrotechnic “Battle of Manila” reenactment and the enthusiastic response of the public.\textsuperscript{209}

Although American newspapers enjoyed presenting their national pride by praising the nation’s actions, they also frequently compared the nation to others in order to demonstrate that the United States matched or exceeded the greatness of European powers. Since Spain was the enemy in 1898, the first task set out by the press was to prove American superiority over the Spanish. South Carolina papers reported that the American soldier outmatched the Spanish physically being taller, heavier, and more muscular as well as being morally superior, having been raised in a free country.\textsuperscript{210} This nationalistic feeling even extended as far as newspapers claiming that other nations could not resist speaking “in the highest terms” about American soldiers. The \textit{Herald} quoted the military leader of Turkey as saying “…I regard the American troops as wonders not to be accounted for by any military theories.”\textsuperscript{211} The American soldier and national political doctrine gave the nation as a whole a clear advantage over Spain. Even Britain,

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\textsuperscript{209} “With Pain at Manila,” \textit{Columbia State}, November 16, 1898.
who criticized the American war department’s slow decision-making and lack of coordination early in the war, the Courier noted, acknowledged the country’s impressive military force and international power. Americans believed they were capable of winning the war because they were motivated by just causes. Although it was labeled a war for humanity and Cuban independence, there was a personal interest in the outcome since the nation had been wronged by Spain itself. The State defended the spirit of vengeance, explaining, “‘Remember the Maine!’ is the war cry. Everyman feels it, every gun roars it, every shot whistles it, every flag signals it. It is the root and branch of the whole thing.”

To further defend the cause and promote American greatness, papers such as the State and the Courier devoted time to highlighting Spain’s financial instability and military weakness. A June editorial from the Intelligencer pointed out that Spain was clearly “disillusioned” in believing it could use its inferior navy to take back American-conquered lands. In some circumstances, a more critical approach was taken emphasizing the inherent evils of the Spanish ethnicity, the Herald reporting on their work as spies and murderers.

Often intertwined with patriotism is the notion that the successes of the war were driven by a higher power. Articles in the late summer in both the Intelligencer and the Herald connected Spain’s misdeeds against humanity to the work of the devil within her government, and called upon America to respond to the “martyrdom of the men of the

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212 “America and Her Army,” Charleston News and Courier, November 20, 1898.
213 “Remember the Maine!,” Columbia State, July 4, 1898.
215 Anderson Intelligencer, June 1, 1898.
216 “Four Boys in Blue Killed,” Rock Hill Herald, June 15, 1898; “Said That They Poisoned the Fish in the Manila Harbor,” Columbia State, June 1, 1898; “Spanish Spies at Work,” Rock Hill Herald, June 1, 1898.
Maine,” led by the “hand of a great and just God.” to punish Spain. McKinley was quoted as similarly thanking God for guiding the nation to her victories. Though some intellectuals protested the use of religion to explain the war, journalists reasoned that Americans did not believe God had abandoned Spain; they simply recognized that their prosperity was entirely dependent on God’s will and that victory was a divine signal that the fight for humanity was just and therefore must continue.

As Southern papers carried on the national trend of expressing their patriotism, they also devoted time to asserting their own state pride. Each of the papers reported regularly on the movement and activities of the 1st South Carolina regiment, as well as the conditions of their trainings grounds at Camp Ellerbe outside of Columbia and Camp Thomas at Chickamauga Park in Georgia. To encourage support for the troops and in hopes of filling the ranks of volunteers, the papers often took time to report on the praises of the South Carolina’s soldiers. The *Courier* introduced a reoccurring segment during the war entitled “Praise for Our Troops” focusing on the soldiers’ national recognition and their good deeds. Articles from correspondent Kohn were also run in both the *Courier* and the *Herald* noting how well received the South Carolina troops were within the military. While reporting positively on the actions of the South Carolina troops as well as the American troops overseas may merely represent the national pride of the newspapers, sometimes these positive expressions of national loyalties gave way to more negative sectional ones.

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One of the common themes concerning nationalism and sectionalism seen in the South Carolina news coverage is that of sectional reunion. Newspapers of the state and nation accepted and promoted this. The *Intelligencer* reprinted the following statement from the *Chicago Times-Herald* with its full support,

> The bonds of national unity that are sealed by the blood of the blue and grey in the struggle for Cuban liberty can never be severed. The sentiment of the people is with the President when he declares that the war with Spain has already served a useful purpose in wiping out all the sectional lines of the struggle for the Union…

An editorial two weeks later further expressed the notion of reunion by stating, “a great burden has been lifted, and, in spite of war and its portents, the whole nation stands in the sunlight, reunited and animated by a single patriotic purpose.”

Both the *Courier* and the *State* actively promoted the idea of reunion as well. The *Courier* reprinted an article from the *Marshfield Wisconsin Times*, which reported that their Northern soldiers were well received in Charleston, and concluded that sectional tensions were officially in the past. Within the article, a letter from Charleston native J. Adger Smith to the mayor of West Superior, Wisconsin is printed in which Smith explained,

> We warmly appreciate your gratitude, and heartily appreciate your earnest wish for a closer bond of union between your people and ours. It was worth all this war

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220 *Anderson Intelligencer*, August 3, 1898.
221 *Anderson Intelligencer*, August 17, 1898.
has cost in money and in infinitely more precious lives if it will result in the cementing together forever the different sections of this great country.  

The *State* further pointed out that even Admiral Dewey was proud of his nation’s greatest accomplishment saying, in a comment exuberated across the nation, “In the heat of danger there is no south, no north, but one united country. May we never hear sectionalism again.” The papers of South Carolina all praised the army for adopting the “Rebel Yell” and “playing ‘Yankee Doodle’ and ‘Dixie’ indiscriminately” as proof that the North and South had united.

By the reports of the news and actions of the nation, it would seem true that national reunion had in fact occurred, however, the extreme sectional emphasis also seen throughout the papers should not be ignored. The newspapers surveyed across the state all demonstrated similar concerns over the South receiving the recognition it deserved from the North. In order to do this, some articles took a direct, critical stance on sectional issues by condemning the nation for its continued suppression of the South. A Beaufort correspondent to the *Courier* in June highlighted his concerns in an article entitled “Glory, Gore and Taxes.” He professed that the South had a duty to fight that it must fulfill, despite the fact that it had been “dragged” into the war by the North and had little to gain from the venture except an exploitation of its men and money. Later in the war, the *Herald* published an article detailing an interview with Tillman in which the Senator

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223 “Dewey the Man,” *Columbia State*, August 11, 1898.  
similarly expressed mistrust in the Northern government, which he believed used race and politics to manipulate the South, reaffirming that “blood is thicker than water.”

Despite concerns such as these, many men still volunteered to serve and carried out the duties asked of them. The troops, their families and even the popular press of the state eagerly awaited the day of their departure for Cuba. By July and August of 1898, after dozens of rescinded reports about the future of the South Carolina regiment had surfaced, the press grew irritated. The Courier voiced its opposition against the sectionalism found in the army accusing the Northern leaders of discrimination. Although a few Southern born men made it to Cuba, over seventy percent of its total volunteers remaining stateside. The Courier explained that the men were eager to fight and had trained hard, but found themselves “left in the cold,” evident of the presence of sectional lines in the army.

The accusation of preference toward the North caught fire among Southern editors and soon articles emerged criticizing the North. The papers in particular attacked Secretary of War Algers in early August after he announced his intention to relocate troops stationed in Southern camps to Northern ones. He noted the prevalence of disease, overcrowded facilities, and lack of sanitary measures as unacceptable for American troops. The South Carolina papers fired back that conditions were equal to those in North and that the root of the problem was the ill-trained officers, claiming Algers was more

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227 Bailey Jr., 191.
interested in tarnishing the image of the region than protecting the troops.\textsuperscript{229} Interestingly, this attack on Southern camps was reminiscent of tensions leftover from the Civil War during which POW camps in the South grew overcrowded and short on resources, leading to rampant disease. Whether Algiers intended to insinuate that little had changed in the region or that the South was still inferior to the North, it is clear that these South Carolinian newspapers saw the criticisms of training camps as a direct threat to the capabilities and progress of the region.\textsuperscript{230}

Historian Nina Silber explained that Northerners and Southerners approached reunion in different manners as the North wanted to move beyond the events of the past and unite on present glories, while the South wanted to unite through honoring the suffering of the past and praising the obstacles that had been overcome.\textsuperscript{231} The rest of the nation misinterpreted this form of “Southern patriotism” as being the South’s inability to let go of past issues. As a result, many Southerners resorted to defending their history. Both the \textit{Courier} and the \textit{Intelligencer} noted the overwhelming presence of Northern-born high-ranking navy officers, and interpreted this as a result of the Civil War when Southerners left the navy as their states seceded. Although not necessarily criticizing the North, these articles indicated the insecurities in the region. They raise questions as to

\textsuperscript{230} For more information on POW camps in the Civil War, refer to: Benjamin G. Cloyd, \textit{Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory} (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2010); Charles W. Sanders Jr., \textit{While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War} (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).
\textsuperscript{231} Silber, 162-65.
why the editors felt it necessary to explain the reason their region lacked ranking officers, yet also defensively add that “heroic” Southerners were in fact present in the navy.  

Beyond the criticisms of the north and defense of the past, the newspapers of South Carolina also devoted efforts toward praising the current standing of the region to prove that they belonged in the Union. Editors took advantage of the current war to highlight the activities of Southerners. The Courier corrected an article from the New York World discussing the first raising of the American flag in Cuba. The Courier explained that the 1st Battalion of Marines from Brooklyn were in fact the second group to raise the flag following South Carolina’s own Lieutenant Victor Blue. The paper exclaimed that “The South is the War” as proven by its men performing their national duties and leading the front lines.  

The paper further pointed out that although some Northern papers were recognizing the great deeds of Southern men, “we have to remind our mollified contemporaries that it does not go far enough.”  

Other articles simply sought to promote the South on its own describing it as “Not Dead Nor Dying” and as “synonymous with hope,” emerging from its past defeat as a stronger, more courageous, and more determined group of individuals.  

Intelligencer proudly reprinted an article from the Pittsburgh Post, which said,  

The South has a right to be proud of itself in war and in peace. President McKinley praised the valor of Southern soldiers, and commended them for their

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233 “The South is the War,” Charleston News and Courier, June 15, 1898.
234 “The South and the War,” Charleston News and Courier, June 18, 1898.
235 “Men of the South and Their Needs,” Columbia State, August 14, 1898; “Not Dead Nor Dying,” Columbia State, June 21, 1898.
reason and discipline in peace, saying that from no Southern soldier had come complaints.²³⁶

As this article indicated, there was an assumption on the part of the North that Southerners and Southern soldiers would be difficult to handle, resulting in the necessity to express their surprise and appreciation of the good behavior. For the Intelligencer, it was important to highlight this as proof of the South being deprived of proper recognition. The papers subsequently tried to prove the worth of the South through noting its industrial growth and untapped potential. Headlines such as “The Development of the Southland,” “Story of Progress All Over the South,” “The South’s Wonderful Growth” and “The Busy South” attended to the growth of industry, the success of business, the abundant resources, the increase of investments, and the prosperity to come in the future of the region.²³⁷ This emphasis on hope and prosperity is synonymous with the “New South creed” that emerged following the Civil War. Historian Paul Gaston, in his book The New South Creed, describes the myths, beliefs, and ideas that came about in the South as an attempt to deal with its failures and frustrations. The South believed that through industrialization and scientific agriculture, the region could regain its former glory and therefore, the New South creed was born. It intended to inspire faith in the abilities of the region and emphasize how far the region had already come in industrial growth, in reconciliation with the North, and in racial harmony.²³⁸

²³⁶ Anderson Intelligencer, October 19, 1898.
“Is this a Mongrel Nation?”: South Carolinians on Annexation

The debate over annexation entered American society with the question of the Hawaii. The *Courier* and the *State* covered the Hawaiian topic in a fair amount on opposing sides. The *Courier* argued against the annexation, the “great crime,” stating that although the islands had abundant resources, annexation would not change the current course of trade with the islands, therefore presenting no justification for annexation. The *State* on the other hand favored annexation, claiming that since the natives desired it, the United States could only benefit from spreading its reach outward. Though not given much attention until the final decision, annexation was met with positive reception in both the *Herald* and the *Intelligencer*, which expressed enthusiasm over the anxiously awaited “acquirement of such rich and valuable territory.”

The Hawaiian annexation gave life to the debate over the futures of Cuba, Puerto Rico and most notably, the Philippines. Concerning the surveyed papers, only the *State* expressed “true” support for annexation of the territories. Although originally claiming neutrality on the issue, other newspapers across the state detected its pro-imperialists leanings as early as mid-June. Articles did not outright support annexation but

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243 “As to the Herald,” *Columbia State*, June 17, 1898.
condemned the actions of anti-imperialists and other vocal extremists for using Washington’s farewell address, the Monroe Doctrine, and even historical accounts of imperial conquest out of context. In late July, the paper began taking a more critical approach toward Filipinos as being unfit for rule and promoted a policy of “Get it; Keep it” concerning Spanish territories. As the State saw it, the United States was responsible for doing whatever necessary to prevent the natives from falling back under Spanish oppression. The editor blatantly dismissed any concerns over expansion and stated that “almost no intelligent journals oppose the acquisition,” indicating that imperialism was the general sentiment of the “intelligent” portion of the nation.

In truth, what the State really supported instead of colonial-like annexation was statehood for Cuba and a protectorate for the Philippines. However, these stances did not become evident until November after McKinley expressed desire to annex and hold both Cuba and the Philippines with willingness to pay for them. A clear change of opinion, from supporting annexation to opposing it, surfaced with articles claiming the US had taken “A Step in the Dark.” As the paper understood the situation, “If the Filipinos wished annexation as the Hawaiians and Puerto Ricans did, and were content to remain in tutelage under our rule, we would have no objection to the full assumption of American sovereignty in the Philippines.”

244 “Harmon on Acquisition,” Columbia State, July 14, 1898; “Washington’s Farewell,” Columbia State, June 28, 1898.
247 “A Step in the Dark,” Columbia State, November 29, 1898.
annexation, “By What Right?” could the nation assume sovereignty over them?248 The State frequently warned that taking the islands would likely lead to a bloody, costly war with the natives.249

The Intelligencer originally promoted keeping only the territory that Dewey had conquered, yet put little effort into pushing the cause. Once it became clear that more than coaling stations and conquered land would be demanded and that the increasingly unruly natives would not accept the new owners peacefully, the Intelligencer switched to oppose annexation completely. By August, the paper was condemning annexation on the basis of the Philippines being too “remote” and “barbaric,” warning that if the natives refused to recognize American control then the “United States is in for trouble.”250

The Courier opposed annexation from the beginning and expressed its opinions, yet true to its fashion, the paper’s desire to not test the waters allowed it to inform from a neutral position at first. In the same week the paper referred to annexation as territories destined to be “gobbled up by greedy Uncle Sam,” then ironically presented the American and native desires for annexation in a more positive manner.251 By late July, the paper’s anti-imperialist stance began to surface. Concerning imperial policy the paper opined that “surely the American people have forgotten the God of their father and have gone wandering after strange idols when ‘imperialism’ is announced as the policy of

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249 “The American Demands Considered,” Columbia State, November 22, 1898.
250 Anderson Intelligencer, August 10, 1898; Anderson Intelligencer, December 7, 1898.
the party in power.”\textsuperscript{252} It noted the difficulties that would arise from ruling over a mixed country of natives who desired to be free, which would involve the expansion of the military and use of force to suppress civilians. An October article explained that “when we are asked, hereafter, how we justify our conduct toward a weak neighbors of Porto Rico and Hawaii, we can make but one answer: We disregard their rights and deprive them of their liberty…”\textsuperscript{253} In November, the paper published a letter from the Anti-Imperialist League in Boston followed by an editorial urging locals to follow suit and write their own opposition letters to Congress. “A true republic of freemen,” it argued, “must rest upon the principles that all of its citizens are equal under the law, that a government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed, and that there must be no taxation without representation.”\textsuperscript{254}

The \textit{Herald} is the only paper that maintained a strong opposition to annexation throughout the entire war. In June, it warned the nation to not become too self-confident from its victories and “enter upon a mission to seize and posses the earth.” In November, the paper expressed concerns over how the nations of the world would view and respond to American conquest and whether the resistance of the natives would lead to further war.\textsuperscript{255} Throughout the peace negotiations, The \textit{Herald} acknowledged the potential of the islands and ran articles with positive tones discussing the culture of the natives, their love

\textsuperscript{255} \textit{Rock Hill Herald}, June 1, 1898; “American Demands Accepted,” \textit{Rock Hill Herald}, November 30, 1898.
for Aguinaldo, and their desires to be free.\textsuperscript{256} Articles in the \textit{Herald} were typically either reprints or short, simple expressions of opinions indicating that perhaps its editor, unlike those of the \textit{State} or \textit{Courier}, either did not feel the need to explain his own anti-imperialist opinions, or did not desire to complicate the matter for his readers.

Even among the South Carolina newspapers, the question over annexing territories took on a certain complexity, the major factors being race and economics. Neither political affiliations nor religious motivation seemed to be frequently reoccurring themes, yet they did surface. The \textit{Herald} was often critical of McKinley and the Republican Party, explaining that “Patriotism will have no reward in Billy McKinley’s war” as the government will only officially recognize the heroic deeds of members of its own party.\textsuperscript{257} Further, it argued that the premises of territories being incapable of self-government would not hold up when the American nation itself had yet to perfect the process.\textsuperscript{258} The \textit{Courier} expressed similar ideas in an editorial calling the Republican administration’s decision that Filipino natives were incapable of self-government one of the “worst errors” ever made.\textsuperscript{259} Religion surfaced as well in the newspapers functioning as an argument against annexation. The \textit{Courier} questioned how a Christian nation could fight a war for humanity that ultimately results in the oppression of humanity through

\textsuperscript{257} “How Politics Control in this War,” \textit{Rock Hill Herald}, July 13, 1898.
\textsuperscript{258} “When this Country Will be Involved in Perpetual War,” \textit{Rock Hill Herald}, November 26, 1898.
\textsuperscript{259} \textit{Charleston News and Courier}, October 25, 1898.
forced annexation. It argued that Christian duty is not “conquest, rapine, devastation and revenge” but to bring an end to any war which preaches these ideas.\textsuperscript{260}

As early as June of 1898, the characteristics of these foreign races seemed to interest newspapers, yet in South Carolina, there is no agreement, even within newspapers themselves, on how to present the natives. In a June article in the \textit{Herald}, Filipinos were described as being both a “dwarfed race of Negritos…seem[ing] to be descendants of aborigines” and “dirty, pagan tribes,” yet at the same time were described as amiable, hospitable, spirited and hard workers.\textsuperscript{261} This mixed presentation was common and the depiction of the natives often depended on the intention of the article. Natives found a more favorable description in articles advocating for annexation while those advocating against it exaggerated their so-called characteristics. For South Carolina newspapers, race generally acted as a factor against annexation. The lack of civilization in the Philippines concerned some Southerners who worried that various races were hard to unite and unwilling to recognize the authority of a white ruler. Therefore, they argued, this would present difficulties for annexation.\textsuperscript{262} Along with this concern, they worried that certain races, especially the Chinese, Japanese and Malays of the Philippines, were “devoid of all high instincts and wholly dominated by deceit and treachery.”\textsuperscript{263}

A further argument centered around racial tensions already present in the United States. Southerners claimed to know the problems that would arise if the nation forcibly

\textsuperscript{261} “Manila and the Philippines,” \textit{Rock Hill Herald}, June 1, 1898.
\textsuperscript{263} \textit{Columbia State}, July 23, 1898.
took in unwilling inferior races. Tillmanites in particular saw “danger in incorporating more people of inferior blood into the citizenship of the United States” and strongly opposed annexation.\(^{264}\) Even following the final cessation of Spanish territory to the United States, papers such as the *Intelligencer* continued to ask, “Was it wise, is it wise, to add these problems, inseparable from the incoming of these new Asiatic, South Sea and West Indian ‘Americans,’ to our present problem?” Such sentiments, they argued, indicated that the race of the newly acquired subjects would multiply current race problems. Interestingly, this fear of “mongrelization” was not new to the people of South Carolina. Senator John C. Calhoun from South Carolina opposed the Mexican-American War of 1846 to 1848 on the basis that Mexicans were too dissimilar to Americans and their incorporation would undermine the political institution.\(^{265}\) Ironically, though this position seems fitting for Southerners, the *Courier* denounced the region’s opposition to annexation on the basis of race. After Senator Hale from Maine stated that Southerners would be upset over annexation since adding new races to the nation would worsen the race problem, the *Courier* retorted,

…we fail altogether to see why the people of the South should be particularly concerned…we can afford, surly, to be indifferent to any and all racial aspects of the Philippine question…we do not understand, in short, why the Philippine Islanders should give us any more trouble in race lines than the Chinese, Indians,

\(^{264}\) “Is This a Mongrel Nation?,” *Charleston News and Courier*, June 28, 1898; “White Supremacy Urged by Williams,” *Columbia State*, December 21, 1898.

\(^{265}\) For more information on Calhoun and the Mexican-American War, refer to: Ernest M. Lander Jr., *Reluctant Imperialists: Calhoun, the South Carolinians, and the Mexican War* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).
or Hawaiians, however much trouble they might give the Republican party and the General Government.\textsuperscript{266}

Although the \textit{Courier} attempted to remove race as a factor from the annexation question, it is not clear whether they do so out of true belief that race did not factor in, or whether it was an attempt solely to defy the claims of the North.

Economics heavily factored into the debate. One of the early concerns of the war was its monetary cost. Once it became clear that in order to aid Spain’s territories, Americans would need to temporarily occupy the islands to help establish new institutions, the American press began presenting the economic imperialism in a favorable manner. At first, economic factors boosted to the annexation cause. Though South Carolina newspapers never agreed on support of full annexation, the majority did recognize that annexation of at least a portion of the islands would not be without its benefits. The \textit{Intelligencer} explained that Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines had the potential to determine America’s future greatness as these islands would be the next major center of commerce.\textsuperscript{267} Articles frequently covered the abundant resources found across the islands such as sugar, coffee, fruits, tobacco and gold, which would benefit Americans.\textsuperscript{268} “Charleston merchants and manufacturers,” the \textit{Intelligencer} claimed, “are going to rake in the dollars hand over fist as soon as a declaration of peace throws open

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\item[266] “Senator Hale on the Philippine Question,” \textit{Charleston News and Courier}, December 7, 1898.
\item[267] “From the Seat of War,” \textit{Anderson Intelligencer}, June 29, 1898
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the Philippines, Cuba and Porto Rico to their goods.”269 However, annexation would not only benefit the United States. The inferior nations as well, they argued, would be taught a more advanced system of manufacturing and trade, thereby boosting their own economies, a result of conquests throughout history.270

Americans feared that if they did not take hold of the opportunity in front of them, one of their economic rivals would. There was a growing international opposition to America acquiring the Philippines coming particularly from Germany, whose objections were supported by Russia, Spain and France.271 South Carolina papers frequently reported on the current stance of Germany, assessing its threat level and denouncing the power of the European states to make claims over the islands. Americans were so outraged by outside interest in the islands that the Courier explained, “Whatever may be the aims of the Germany policy, the mere threat of interference in the Philippines would be likely to arouse in the United Stated an irresistible sentiment in favor of annexation.”272

By late November, after hostilities had ended and peace negotiations had progressed, a twist of events led the two pro-imperialist South Carolina newspapers to abandon their positions. In an attempt to secure the islands, the government offered to maintain an “open door” trade policy in the Philippines and to compensate Spain for the islands. Whether they supported the idea of annexation or not, no South Carolina paper

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269 “Trade with the West Indies,” Charleston News and Courier, August 9, 1898; “Uncle Sam’s New Markets,” Anderson Intelligencer, October 19, 1898; “The War and Trade,” Columbia State, August 14, 1898.
272 “Germany’s Attitude,” Rock Hill Herald, June 18, 1898; “Ourselves as Others See Us,” Charleston News and Courier, June 20, 1898.
advocated it once it became clear that the nation would gain no advantage form the new territory. The State and the Courier criticized the government as being swept up in a dream of conquest. They claimed that the policy of open door trade abandoned the principles of America’s economic policy, as well the traditions of its government.273 Further, the Herald denounced McKinley’s willingness to pay any sum of money for the islands, noting of a number of senators opposed it as well. However, the Herald had always maintained that a colonial policy would cost the nation more to maintain than any colonial possession was worth.274 The Intelligencer agreed, explaining, “We think it would be a bad bargain were Spain to pay us $20,000,000 to keep the islands.”275 The total cost of war, along with expanding the army and navy and paying to maintain a colonial government on top of paying for the territories was simply too much.

Conclusions

For the state of South Carolina, there does not seem to be a correlation between city size and newspaper coverage or opinions toward the events. The papers from both Anderson and Charleston took strong anti-war stances while the papers from Columbia and Rock Hill took strong pro-war stances, yet all four eventually felt to a patriotic need to support the effort and responded to demands for news updates. This indicates that for South Carolina, geographic location and population density did not factor into the opinions of the newspaper editors toward war. Similarly, while there were varying

275 Anderson Intelligencer, November 23, 1898.
opinions over America’s imperial policy toward the different territories in question, all four papers by late 1898 were in agreement in their opposition to annexing the Philippines. Considering that each of the papers was of Democratic leaning, it can also be discounted that politics swayed the opinions of South Carolinians.

As compared to the nation as a whole, the overall conclusion is that the documented opinions of the South Carolina papers were in line with those of the nation over supporting the war. As part of the understanding of national pride and duty, the newspapers supported their nation and strove to demonstrate its greatness regardless of whether or not they agreed with the calls for humanitarian protection or vengeance against Spain. In this matter, the country had united. Yet, the claims that the war ended all sectionalism and completely reunited the nation should be approached with caution. The war gave both the North and South a temporary common enemy and purpose, but it did not eliminate tensions.

The comparison between the Southern and national views on imperialism proves to be more difficult. Although the four papers surveyed came to an agreement against annexing the Philippines, it cannot be claimed with certainty that this represented the views either of the entire state of South Carolina or of the region in general. As if suggesting the problems facing the Anti-Imperialist League, opposition to annexation varied drastically by the territory in consideration, the chronological point in the war, and the individual justifications applied to the circumstance. As a result, the conclusion is that South Carolina was not in line with the nation concerning opinions on annexation, which was generally favored. Some articles referenced indicate that the unique history of the
South concerning racial tensions with African-Americans, and its experiences with slavery, subjugation in the Civil War, and Reconstruction, factored into the Southern views. However, to make this conclusion with certainty further research is required. Another point of uncertainty is whether Southerners were expressing their true sentiments or whether they were acting in a specific manner to illicit a response from the North. While it is clear that the war affected regional and racial relations in the United States as a whole and in the South in particular, it is hard to determine whether this was a direct result of the war or if other factors played a role. These matters require further research on the region.
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