

# Summary: New Territories

## The Nation Expands

In 1867, the United States was recovering from the Civil War. Russia offered to sell its colony of Alaska to the United States. William Seward was the Secretary of State. He convinced Congress to buy Alaska from Russia. Most Americans thought the idea was foolish. They changed their minds when gold was found near Alaska in 1896. Not many people found gold, but they found other valuable resources. Buying Alaska no longer seemed foolish.

In the late 1700s, Americans sailed to Hawaii. They grew pineapple and sugar cane on large plantations. By the late 1800s, Americans owned most of the land and businesses. Hawaiians were unhappy about the Americans' power. Queen Liliuokalani wanted her people to have the land. Americans in Hawaii revolted against her. They asked to join the United States. In 1898, Hawaii became a territory of the United States. Some people thought the United States had started a policy of imperialism.

## The Spanish-American War

In the 1890s, Spain had colonies in Cuba and Puerto Rico. It also controlled Guam and the Philippine Islands. In 1895, Cubans revolted against Spain. American newspapers wrote shocking stories about Spain's cruelty to Cuba. The stories were not all true, but people believed them. In 1898, newspapers blamed Spain for blowing up an American ship in Cuba. The United States declared war on Spain.

Theodore Roosevelt led volunteers called the Rough Riders. With African American soldiers called Buffalo Soldiers, they won the battle of San Juan Hill. The U.S. Navy destroyed Spanish ships in Cuba. Spain gave Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam to the United States. After the war, Theodore Roosevelt became President. He wanted to cut a canal across the isthmus of Panama. Panama was part of the nation of Colombia. Roosevelt helped Panama gain its independence. It took 10 years to build the Panama canal. It opened in 1914. Trade increased and shipping was faster between the east and west coasts.

### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**imperialism** *noun*, when nations gain colonies to build empires

**isthmus** *noun*, a narrow strip of land with water on two sides

### After You Read

**REVIEW** How did Alaska and Hawaii become United States territories? Circle the words that tell the answer.

**REVIEW** Where did most of the fighting take place in the Spanish-American War? Underline the name of the battle Roosevelt won.