

Summary: The Nation Expands

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Through the 1800s, the United States gained new land in western North America. In 1867, the United States bought Alaska from Russia. Alaska was rich in fish, forests, and minerals. In 1912, Alaska became a U.S. territory. Hawaii became the next U.S. territory. In the late 1800s, American settlers owned most of the sugar and pineapple plantations and land in Hawaii. The Hawaiian ruler, Queen Liliuokalani, wanted power and land returned to her people. The American settlers in Hawaii forced the queen from power in 1893. Then they asked to join the United States. In 1898, Hawaii became a U.S. territory.

The Spanish-American War

Some American leaders believed in imperialism. They wanted more land and colonies. The nation would gain more land after the Spanish-American War. In 1895, the Spanish colony of Cuba revolted against Spain. American newspapers wrote stories about how Spain treated Cubans cruelly during the revolt. These stories were yellow journalism because they were shocking and not always true.

In February 1898, the U.S. Navy ship *Maine* exploded in a Cuban harbor. Americans blamed Spain, and Congress declared war on Spain. In August 1898, Spain surrendered and agreed to give Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam to the United States. These countries became territories of the United States. Cuba became independent.

Building the Panama Canal

President Theodore Roosevelt wanted to build a canal to link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. A canal would shorten the trip from the east coast to the west coast. This would save time and money. The best place for the canal was at the Isthmus of Panama, the narrowest point in Central America. Panama was part of the nation of Colombia. Colombia did not want to sell Panama. Roosevelt helped Panama win independence from Colombia. The new leaders of Panama let the United States build the canal. The Panama Canal opened in 1914.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

imperialism *noun*, when nations build empires by adding colonies

yellow journalism *noun*, a kind of writing that exaggerates news to shock and attract readers

isthmus *noun*, a narrow strip of land with water on both sides that links two larger pieces of land



After You Read

REVIEW How did Alaska become a U.S. territory? Underline the words that tell the answer.

REVIEW What was the effect of the explosion of the *Maine*? Draw a box around the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW Why did the United States build the Panama Canal? Circle two sentences that tell the answer.