

The Spanish-American War

“A Splendid Little War”

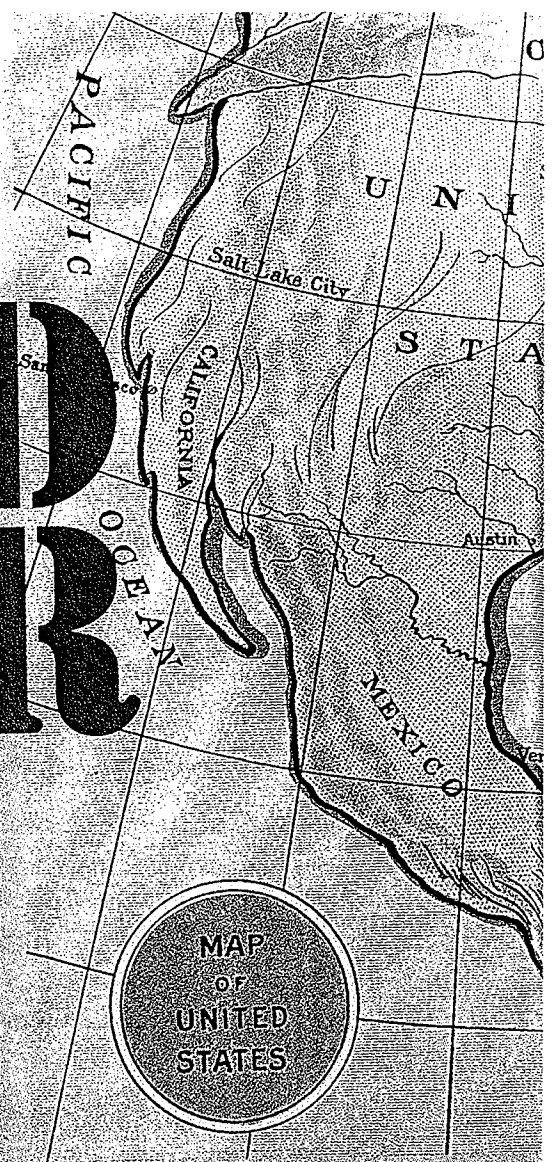
Name_____ Class Period_____



FROM COLONIAL NATION TO WORLD POWER

by Mike Weinstein

This cartoon depicts North and Central America in the profile of Uncle Sam (the United States) getting ready to "eat" Cuba. For some Americans, the best way to address the Cuban problem was simply to control the country.

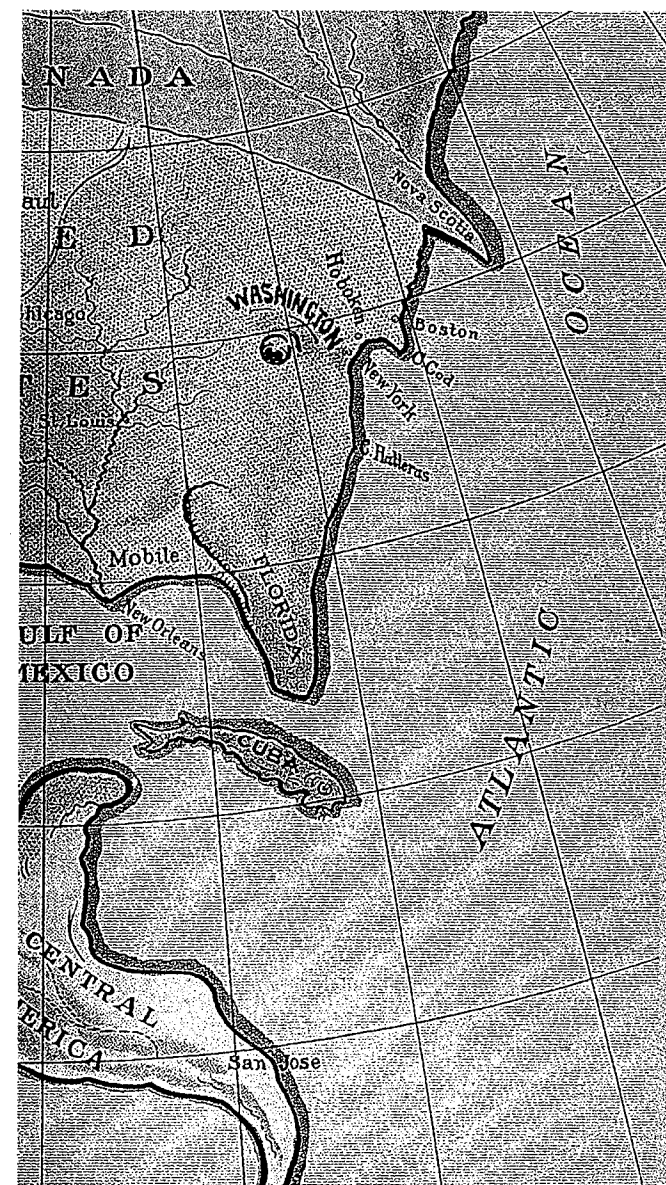


Beginning in 1907, a group of U.S. battleships, known as the Great White Fleet, sailed the globe for more than a year. Cheering crowds greeted the ships at ports all over the world. In Japan, schoolchildren waved American flags and even sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" in English.

Such a journey would have been unthinkable a few years earlier. But in one decade, the United States had become a world

power and was now showing its strength. The Spanish-American War of 1898 was a factor in our country's status change. Described by an American diplomat as a "splendid little war," it lasted less than four months and cost very little to fight. Few American lives were lost in battle. And the results of the Spanish-American War were far-reaching.

As the victor, the United States acquired wide-ranging territories. Many Americans of that era prob-



the United States also took possession of Hawaii. The latter three island territories formed a chain of **way stations** between the West Coast of the United States and Asia.

New shipping technology made the acquisitions more important. Steam-powered vessels had replaced sailing ships. The old sailing ships could travel for months without stopping. The wind provided an unlimited supply of fuel. The new steamers, however, periodically needed to replenish their supply of coal for their boilers. Steamships also used complex machinery and needed access to repair shops. The Philippines, Guam, and Hawaii became stopping places for the steamers.

In addition, the route to Asia via the three territories was important to the United States for trading activities. In the decades before the Spanish-American War, the American economy boomed. Industry expanded, jobs multiplied, and wealth increased. Some

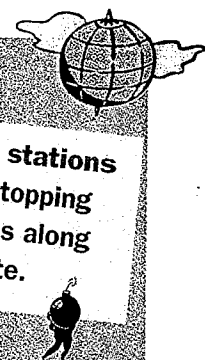
ably could not find these places on a map. It was their locations, however, that made them important. Control of these territories reflected the growing importance of sea power.

In the Caribbean Sea, just south of Florida, the United States gained a foothold in Cuba and acquired Puerto Rico. In addition, the Philippines and Guam, in the Pacific Ocean near Asia, came under American control. In an expansion-minded era,

A strong U.S. Navy was not the only result of the Spanish-American War. President William McKinley's actions during the war expanded the role and power of the U.S. presidency for future generations.



Way stations
are stopping
places along
a route.






Oregon to sail around the southern tip of South America to reach the East Coast of the United States (see the sidebar on page 18).

Powerful European countries, as well as Japan, were trying to seize parts of China for their own use. So, in 1899, the U.S. government proclaimed an “open door” policy in China. This called for equal trading in China for all countries.

The future canal also had to be protected, especially with the navies of foreign countries prowling the high seas. Ships would have to pass through the Caribbean Sea to reach the canal. Here was yet another reason for upgrading the American Navy.

But other nations were employing their navies to promote their interests in China and elsewhere. The United States needed a stronger navy to protect its trade. This led to a continuation of the modernization of the U.S. Navy that had begun about fifteen years before the Spanish-American War.

Unrecognized by much of the world in the late 1800s, the United States was outgrowing its position as “new kid on the block.” With the economy thriving and the population exploding, public opinion was favoring a bigger role in the world for the United States. The outcome of the Spanish-American War helped to put the world on notice that the United States was becoming a global power. 

Mike Weinstein is a freelance writer living in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Spoils are goods or property taken from a victim, especially after a military victory.



Commodore George Dewey's extraordinary success in the Philippines helped to establish the United States as a naval and international power.

This is a detailed black and white illustration of a newspaper masthead, specifically for "The World". The masthead is densely packed with information and decorative elements.
Circulation Statistics:
- Top left: "The World's Greatest Circulation Record!" followed by "1,011,068" and "Per Week-Day April Average."
- Middle left: "GAIN in One Year - 338,748"
- Bottom left: "XXXVII NO. 13,404."
- Center: "Circulation Books Open to All."
- Right side: "The World's Greatest Circulation Record!" followed by "1,011,068" and "Per Week-Day April Average."
- Far right: "GAIN in Three Years - 461,205"
Date and Location:
- Center: "NEW YORK, MONDAY, MAY 2, 1898."
Main Title:
- Across the middle: "DEWEY SMASHES SPAIN'S FLEET" in large, bold, serif capital letters.
Sub-headline:
- Below the main title: "-ADMIRAL MONTOJO. Great Naval Battle Between Asiatic Squadron and Spanish Warships Off Manila."
Decorative Elements:
- Above the date: A globe with a lighthouse beam shining from it.
- Above the main title: A small globe.
- Bottom left: A partial view of a globe.
- Bottom right: A portrait of a man with a beard, identified as "COMMODORE DEWEY."
Pricing:
- Bottom center: "PRICE [THE CITY IN CIRCULAR NEW YORK AND BOSTON] TWO CENTS OUTSIDE OF GREATER NEW YORK AND SPRING CITY AND ON TRAINS."

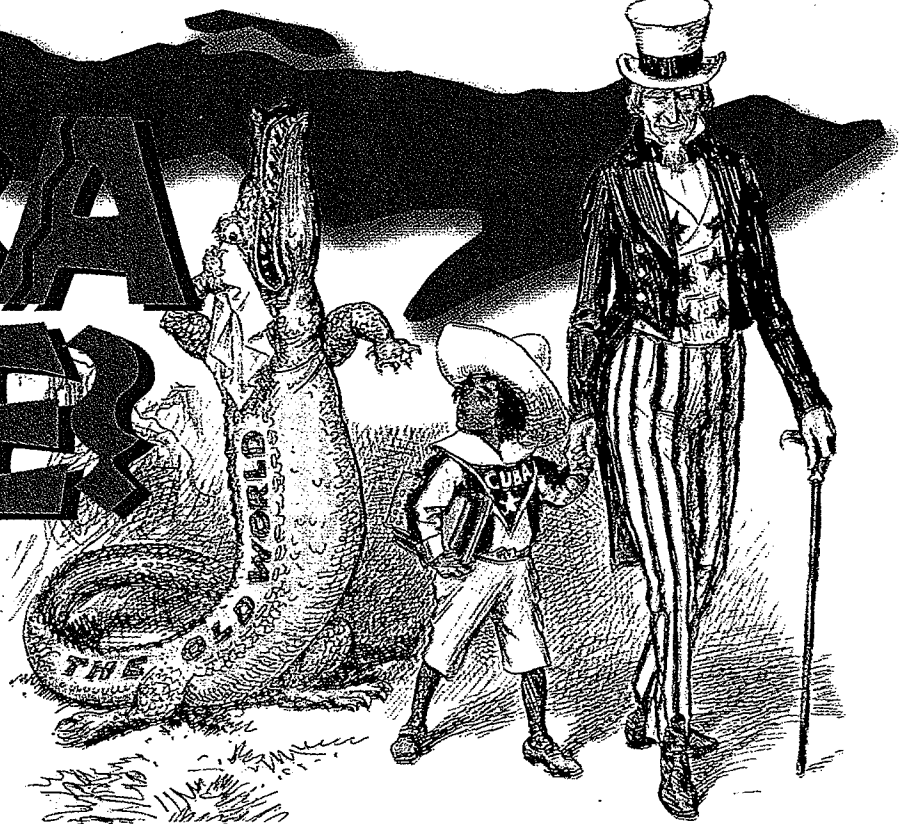
CUBA LIBRE

by Elizabeth Cazden

Americans have referred to the Spanish-American War as a “splendid little war.” But Cubans call it the “War of Independence” or the “War of 1895–1898.” Streets and parks in Cuba still display the statues and names of the war’s national heroes. To Cubans, the war was a historic fight for political, social, and economic independence.

Cuba became a Spanish colony shortly after Christopher Columbus’s first visit there in 1492. Spanish boats carrying gold from Mexico and South America stopped in Havana. They picked up supplies there before crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Europe.

Wealthy Spaniards owned Cuba’s cattle ranches and sugar and tobacco plantations. They brought slaves from Africa to work on the plantations. The military and government officials also were Spanish. Some of their



In this 1901 cartoon, Cuba is portrayed as a young child who needs advice. Uncle Sam (the United States) is leading Cuba away from the dangers of the Old World (Spain), which is represented by a crocodile.

children stayed in Cuba instead of going back to Spain. Known as **criollos**, they thought of themselves more as Cuban than as Spanish. Although most territories in Central and South America had become independent nations by 1825, Cuba remained a Spanish colony.

In the 1800s, Cuba gradually increased its trade with the United States, which was closer geographically than Spain. American businessmen invested in Cuban sugar mills, railroads, and electric utilities. Cuba sold its sugar in the United States and bought food and manufac-

Criollos is the Spanish term for Creoles, who are people of European descent born in Spanish or French American colonies.



Annex means to incorporate one country or territory into another (larger) one.



tured goods from American companies. Many Cubans visited the United States, and some attended American colleges.

Some American politicians and Cuban reformers proposed that the United States **annex** Cuba. Other Cubans wanted an independent country. Still others preferred to stay part of

the Spanish empire but have more control over their own affairs. Some wanted to abolish slavery. Spain considered selling Cuba to the United States, but the two countries could not agree on terms.

By 1868, many Cubans were complaining about high taxes and corrupt Spanish officials. That year, a Creole planter, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, started an armed rebellion. Led by generals Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, their army was made up of landowners, students, poor whites, and freed slaves. The rebel group captured much of Oriente, Cuba's eastern province. But it ran out of money

and could not get recognition from the United States. The Spanish Army kept control of western Cuba, including Havana. Known as the Ten Years' War, the rebellion ended in a **truce**, with Spain in control. Gómez and Maceo went into **exile**.

Another Cuban in exile was José Martí. In 1869, as a high

Dressed in an authentic costume, a Cuban freedom fighter reenactor at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Tampa, Florida, prepares to shoot his period rifle.

A truce is a temporary end of hostilities.

To be in exile means to be forced to live outside one's own country.



school student in Havana, he had founded a pro-independence newspaper. He was arrested, imprisoned, and transported to Spain. Forced to live outside his country, Martí made Central America and New York his home for more than twenty years. He wrote many articles and stories for North American and Latin American newspapers. Martí's poetry and essays conveyed his vision of a strong and prosperous multiracial Cuban people. Martí also organized support for Cuba's independence movement. Wealthy exiles and Cuban cigar workers in New York and Florida contributed money to his cause.

By 1895, many Cubans had taken up the cry "¡Cuba Libre!" (Free Cuba!) Martí, Gómez, and Maceo planned a new rebellion against Spain. They landed in southeastern Cuba in May 1895. Within a few weeks, Martí was killed by a Spanish ambush. He is still honored in Cuba as the inspiration and **martyr** for the cause of independence.

Spain sent 200,000 soldiers to stop the Cubans. But the rebels' Liberation Army grew. By the end of 1897, it controlled much of the Cuban countryside. Some



landowners feared that independence from Spain would bring social unrest or redistribution of property. They urged the United States to intervene to protect public order.

U.S. forces landed in eastern Cuba in June 1898, but they had trouble working with the Cubans. Many of the Cuban soldiers were poor *negros* (blacks of African descent) or *mulatos* (people with both Spanish and African heritage). Some American officers had more respect for their Spanish opponents.

General Calixto García, a veteran of the Ten Years' War, led the Cuban forces in southeastern Cuba. They helped the Americans capture the heights above the city of Santiago de Cuba. The victorious American troops entered the city on July 17, 1898. Fearing rioting, however, they excluded the Cuban troops from their celebration. García refused to enter the city without his men. He wrote an angry protest letter to the American general. García's army then headed north and defeated Spanish forces in two provincial towns.

American officers later banned a Cuban celebration in Havana


**General
Máximo Gómez
helped lead
one of the
initial rebel-
lions against
Spain in 1868.**

**A martyr is
someone who
accepts death
or suffering to
uphold a cause
or belief.**



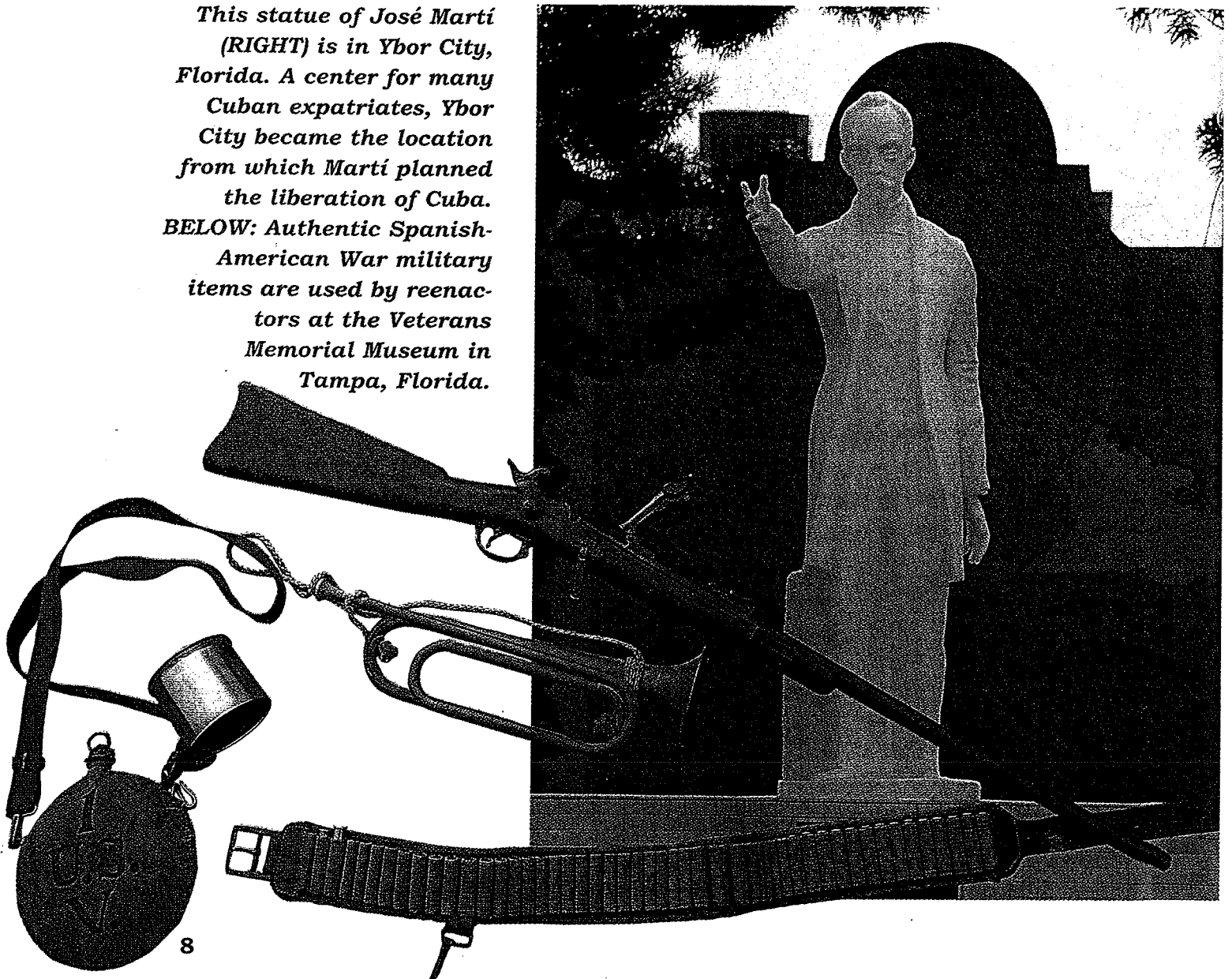
that was planned in honor of the last Spanish troop withdrawal. The final peace negotiations took place in Paris, France, with no Cubans present.

Many Cubans felt that the United States had stolen their victory. After establishing a military government in Cuba and disbanding the Cuban army, the United States occupied the island until 1902. Cuba then officially became independent.

But the United States insisted that Cuba accept the Platt Amendment, which allowed U.S. intervention in Cuba to ensure stability and property rights. The United States continued to dominate Cuba's political, economic, and cultural affairs until the Cuban Revolution of 1959. 

Elizabeth Cazden lives in Manchester, New Hampshire. She visited Cuba in 1993 and 1998.

This statue of José Martí (RIGHT) is in Ybor City, Florida. A center for many Cuban expatriates, Ybor City became the location from which Martí planned the liberation of Cuba. BELOW: Authentic Spanish-American War military items are used by reenactors at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Tampa, Florida.



"Cuba Libre"

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Spain did not want to lose control of the island of Cuba.

2. How was America involved with Cuba?

3. List 5 options that were being considered about Cuba's relationship with America.
(not complete sentences)

4. What was the result of the Ten Years' War?

5. How did Jose Marti support the fight for Cuban independence?

6. What does Cuba Libre! Mean?

7. Why did landowners in Cuba ask the United States to get involved?

8. Describe two reasons why there were some negative feelings between the Cuban and American soldiers.

9. Why did many Cubans feel like the United States stole their victory?

10. What was the Platt Amendment? (You can also find information about this in your textbook).

FIGHTING MEN ROUGH RIDERS & BUFFALO SOLDIERS

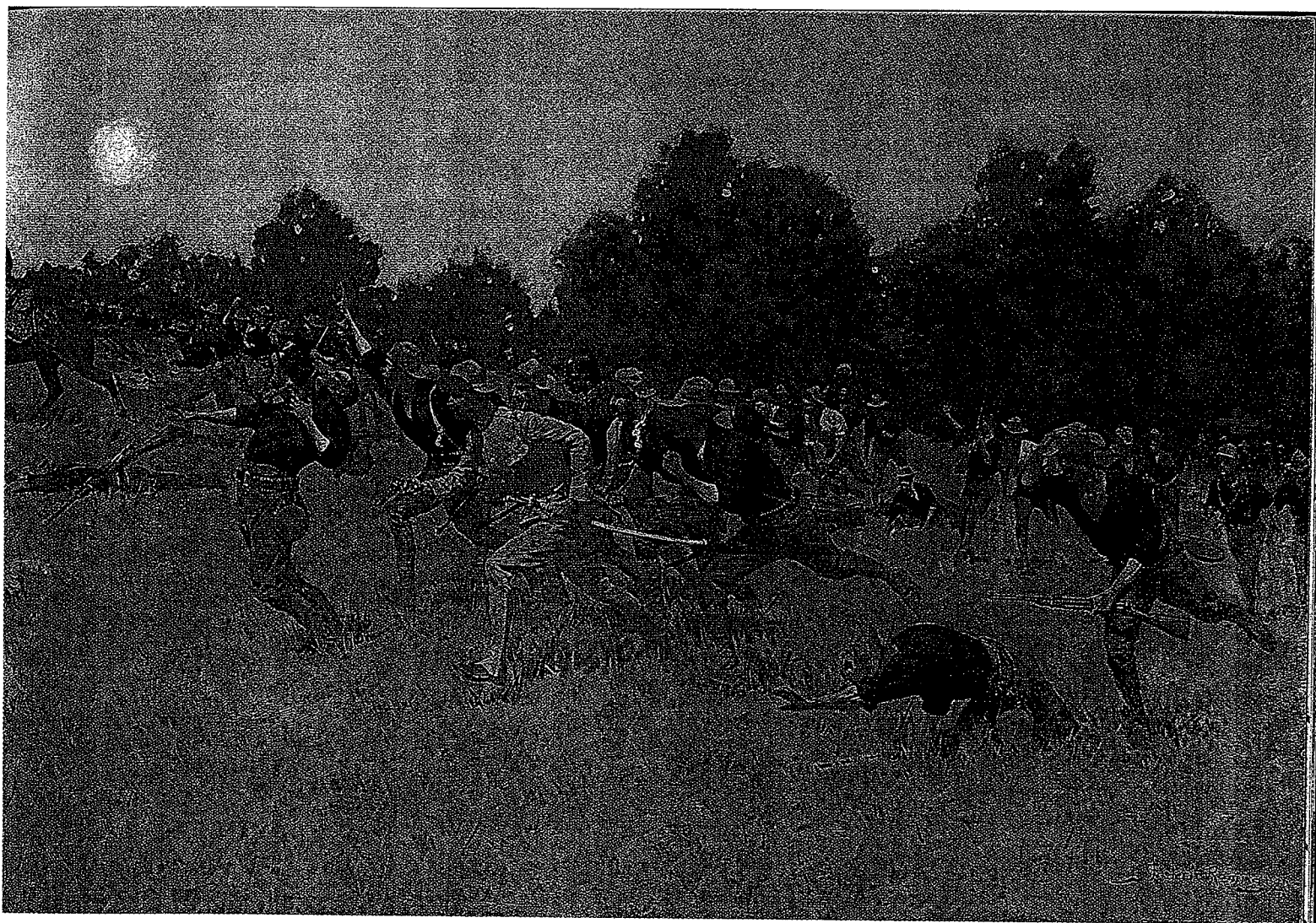
by Mitchell Yockelson



When the Spanish-American War began on April 21, 1898, the U.S. Army was at its lowest level of strength since the Civil War. Decreases in the War Department's budget had brought the number of officers and enlisted men down to twenty-eight thousand. There were not enough troops to fight a war.

To increase the number of soldiers, President William McKinley called for state volunteers. More than 125,000 men

joined National Guard and militia units. The War Department also ordered three volunteer cavalry regiments to serve. One of these units was the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, known as the Rough Riders. The regiment was commanded by a former Army medical officer, Leonard Wood. Theodore Roosevelt, who most recently had served as assistant secretary of the Navy, was Wood's second in command. He was considered by many to be the



American artist Frederic Remington offered this dramatic view of the charge of the Rough Riders up Kettle Hill.

true leader of the unit.

The Rough Riders received quite a bit of exposure in the newspapers and through word of mouth. Their reputation drew a mix of wealthy easterners, cowboys, athletes, and American Indians to the unit. Because of their popularity, the Rough Riders exceeded their limit of men. Many recruits were turned away.

Most of the Army and other volunteer regiments trained at camps in the Southeast. This was done to get the men used to

the warm and humid climate they would encounter in Cuba. The Rough Riders, however, trained in San Antonio, Texas.

Four regiments of black soldiers were among those sent to the South for training. Many of these men were former slaves who had served during the Civil War. After that war, they had protected settlers in the West during the Indian Wars. These African American soldiers had been called "buffalo soldiers" by the Indians, who thought their dark hair

resembled bison fur. The buffalo soldiers were part of the U.S. Army. Their regiments were commanded by white officers.

The experiences of the buffalo soldiers in the South were not always positive. Instances of harassment by white soldiers and fights between white and black soldiers were not uncommon. In Tampa, Florida, where the troops waited for transportation to Cuba, some local residents treated the soldiers as second-class citizens.

In addition to experiencing racism, the buffalo soldiers had to deal with limited supplies. The War Department barely had enough arms and uniforms for the veteran regiments. New soldiers had to make do with old supplies. The new supplies that had been ordered failed to reach Florida before most of the troops left for overseas duty. Some of the men were forced to wear heavy wool uniforms. These were

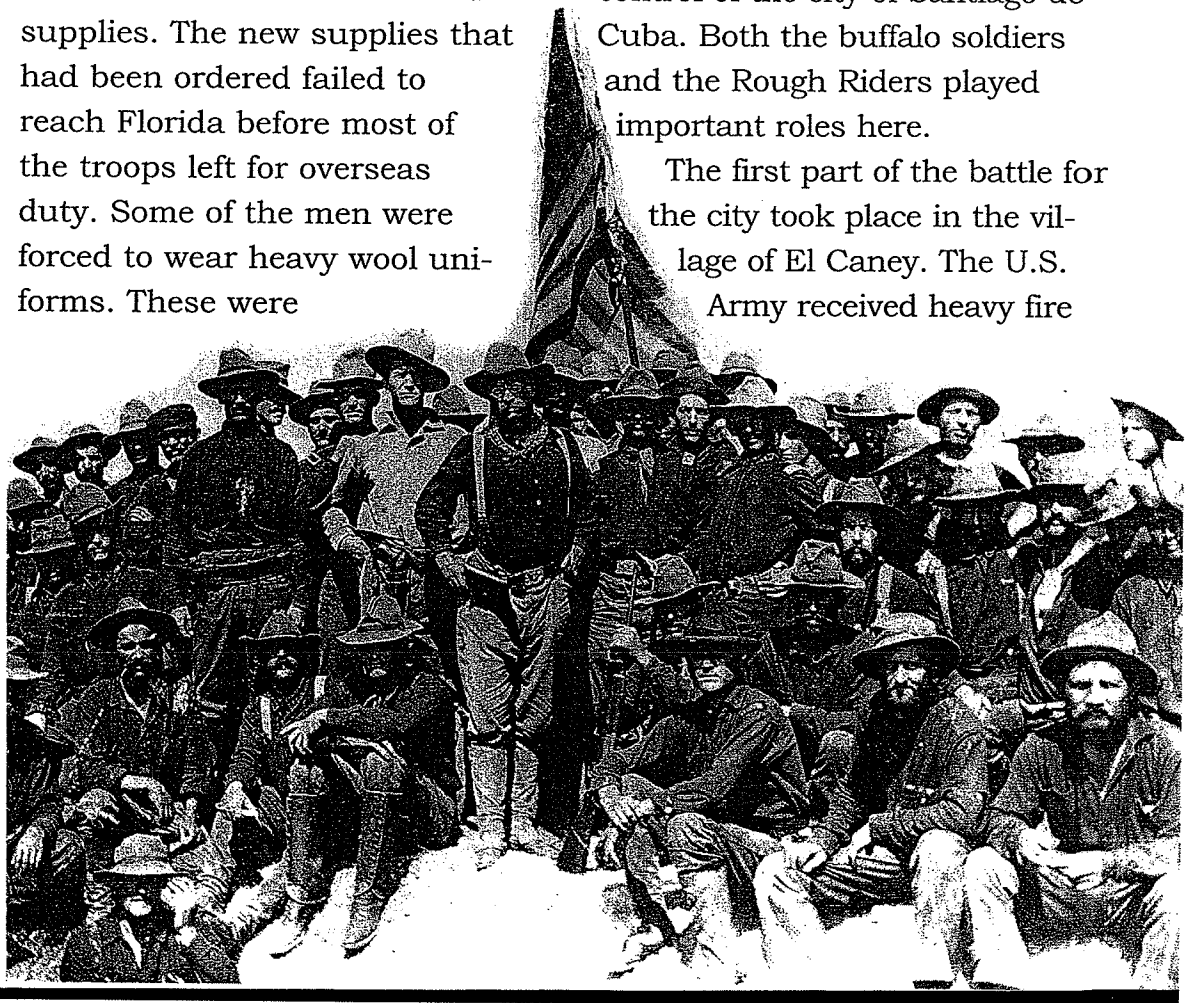
very uncomfortable in the tropical conditions of Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico.

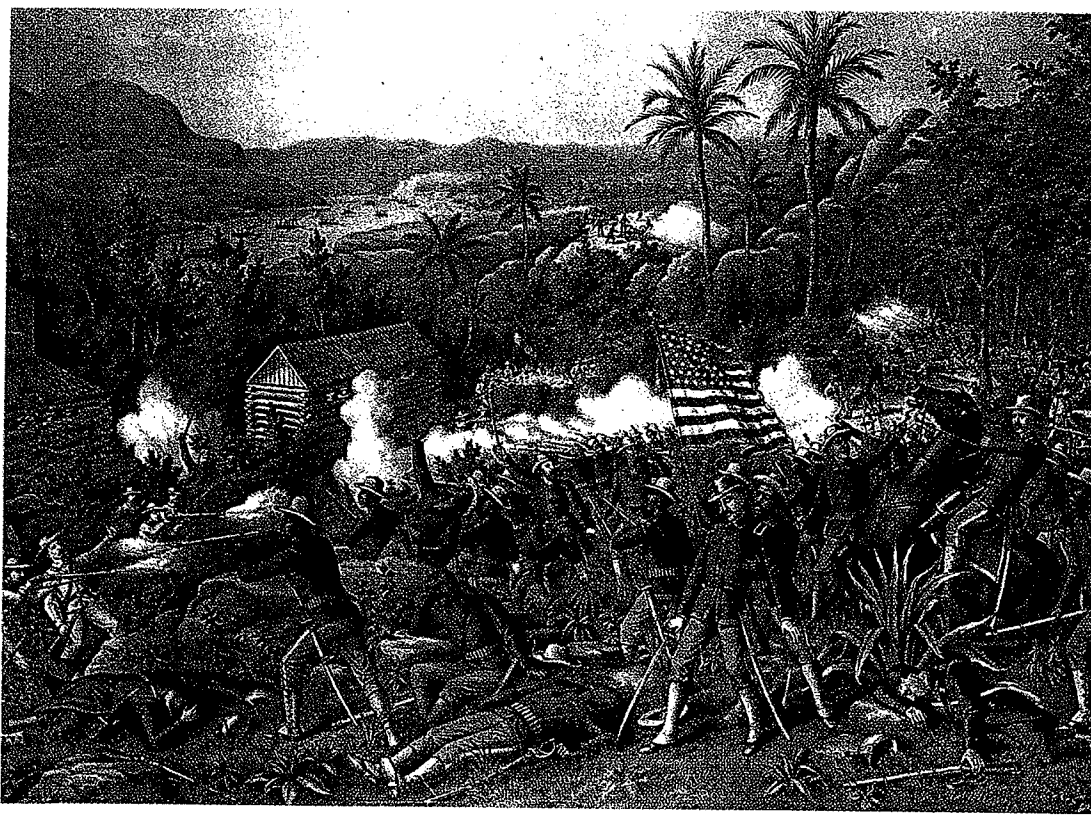
A shortage of weapons also was a concern. The rifles issued to some of the new recruits used an old black-powder cartridge. The new standard-issue rifle fired a smokeless powder. The Rough Riders were the exception to these problems. Using Roosevelt's political connections, they were able to get tropical uniforms and smokeless model rifles.

By June 10, 1898, the first U.S. Marines landed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Later that month, additional U.S. forces arrived. The Rough Riders were among them. The most important goal of these troops was to gain control of the city of Santiago de Cuba. Both the buffalo soldiers and the Rough Riders played important roles here.

The first part of the battle for the city took place in the village of El Caney. The U.S. Army received heavy fire

Theodore Roosevelt (standing in the middle, with glasses) poses with members of the Rough Riders after their charge up Kettle Hill. The war gave Roosevelt national attention. By 1901, he was president of the United States.






Although they look to be fighting alongside their fellow cavalrymen, the title of this print describes the buffalo soldiers as “supporting” the Rough Riders in this battle.

from the Spanish troops. But the buffalo soldiers of the 25th Infantry were able to break through and force the enemy to surrender.

When the fight on San Juan Heights took place, confusion developed among the regiments. White troops and black troops became mixed with each other. Roosevelt took charge of the chaos. He ordered a charge up Kettle Hill, one of the two hills (the other was San Juan Hill) that made up San Juan Heights.

Debate still exists about which regiment actually reached the hill’s summit first. The Rough Riders were given most of the credit for driving the Spanish from the Heights. Roosevelt was popular and had strong support from newspapers such as the *New York Journal* and the *New*

York World. Various accounts by the battle’s participants, however, claim that other regiments reached the top first.

Both the buffalo soldiers and the Rough Riders made important contributions during the Spanish-American War. The buffalo soldiers also proved that they could fight as bravely as white soldiers. Five buffalo soldiers from the 10th Cavalry received the Medal of Honor for bravery. No members of the Rough Riders received similar honors. It was the Rough Riders, however, who received the most praise for the successful defeat of the Spanish Army. 

Mitchell Yockelson is a reference archivist specializing in War Department agency records at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C.

“Fighting Men: Rough Riders & Buffalo Soldiers”

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences

1. How did President McKinley increase the size of the Army?

- ## 2. Who were the Rough Riders?

3. Who were the “buffalo soldiers?”

4. Describe at least two problems the buffalo soldiers faced.

5. What were two advantages the Rough Riders had over the buffalo soldiers? Why?

6. What was the goal of the American soldiers when they first landed in Cuba in June, 1898?

7. How did Theodore Roosevelt gain fame in the Spanish American war?

8. Why do you think the Rough Riders are more famous than the buffalo soldiers?