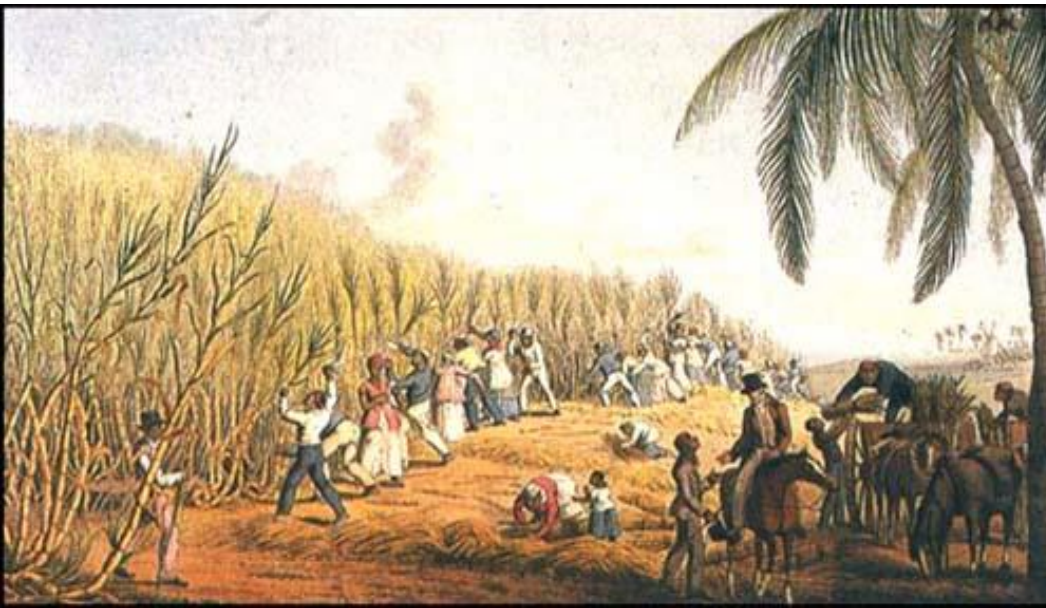


Spanish-American War Activity



1: Background

In 1890s, Spain still controlled Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Philippines. Lying only 90 miles off the coast of Florida, Cuba had long been of interest to the United States. American business invested in sugar plantations and mining in Cuba. At this point, nearly 90% of Cuban exports went to the U.S., which in turn provided Cuba with 35% of its imports. Spain had ceased to be at the center of Cuba's economy. In 1895, the Cuban began a rebellion against Spain. Americans were sympathetic to Cuba's struggle for independence, but were divided about how to help.



2: Yellow Journalism

Yellow Journalism means sensational, exaggerated reports. The Spanish American war is often referred to as the first “media war” as newspapers began using yellow journalism to report about the situation in Cuba.

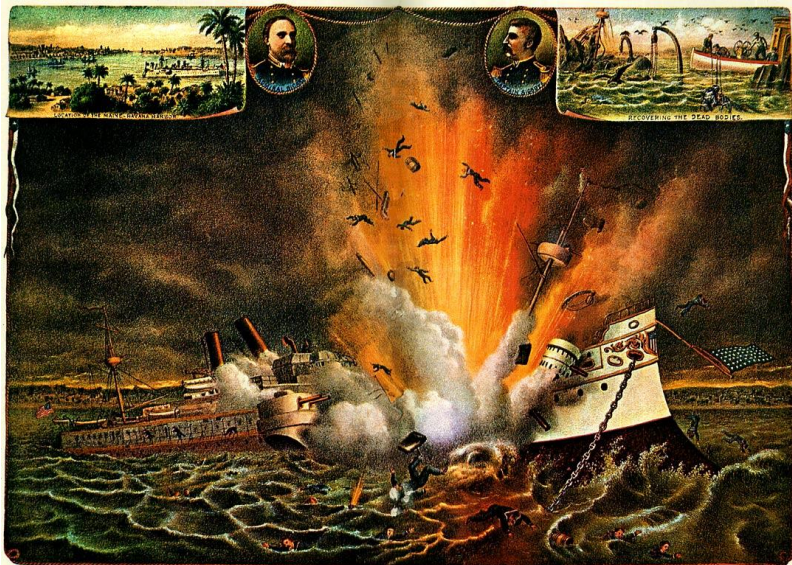
Before the Spanish-American War began, political cartoons and drawings depicting Spain as evil, Cuba as innocent, and President McKinley as a coward (for not intervening), helped rally sympathy for the Cuban people and fuel a pro-war feeling in America. Illustrations simplified the message that yellow journalists like William Randolph Hearst wanted his readers to buy—Cuba was helpless and the U.S. must intervene. It was a battle to sell the most newspapers between Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*.

Hearst understood that a war with Cuba would not only sell his papers, but also move him into a position of national prominence. From Cuba, Hearst's star reporters wrote stories designed to tug at the heartstrings of Americans. Horrific tales described the situation in Cuba—female prisoners, executions, valiant rebels fighting, and starving women and children figured in many of the stories that filled the newspapers.

But it was the sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor that gave Hearst his big story—war. After the sinking of the Maine, the Hearst newspapers, with no evidence, unequivocally blamed the Spanish, and soon U.S. public opinion demanded intervention.

3: Causes of U.S. Involvement

1. Yellow Journalism
 2. DeLome Letter: Hearst's *New York Journal* published a leaked letter in which the chief Spanish diplomat in Washington, Enrique Duby de Lome, described President McKinley as "weak" and a "petty politician." Hearst publicized the DeLome letter under the screaming headline: "WORST INSULT TO THE UNITED STATES IN ITS HISTORY."
 3. Feb. 1898—USS Maine (U.S. battleship) exploded in the Havana, Cuba harbor.
 - Reasons unknown, yet Spain was blamed via yellow journalism
- April 1898—U.S. declared on Spain



4: Yellow Journalism Cartoons

1

Maine Sailors
MURDERED by Spain



The Spanish Brute

3

WHAT WILL HE DO?

President McKinley

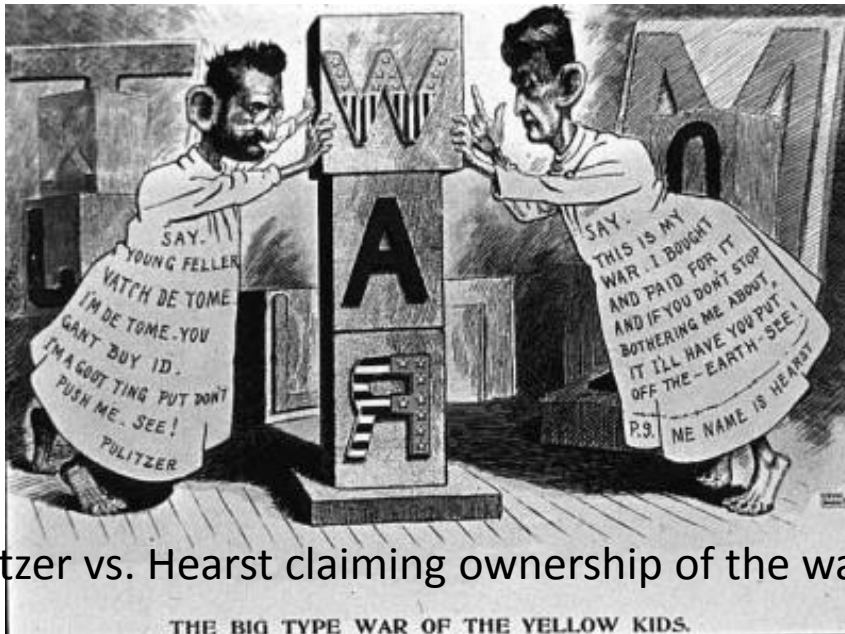
The Philippines



The eyes of the world are upon him.

—Minneapolis Tribune

2



Pulitzer vs. Hearst claiming ownership of the war.

6: Spanish-American War Events

- Much of it was fought in the Philippine Islands:
 - U.S. Commodore George Dewey won a quick victory in the Philippines.
 - Filipinos wanted freedom from Spain and assumed that the U.S. would grant it to them.
- In Cuba:
 - Theodore Roosevelt led his Rough Riders, a group of volunteer cavalry, into battle in Cuba.
 - The U.S. won the decisive Battle of San Juan Hill.



7: Results of War

- The war ended August 1898, lasting only 15 weeks. Americans called it “the splendid little war.”
- At the end of this war, the U.S. is now a major player in world events.
- Treaty of Paris
 1. U.S. obtained Guam and Puerto Rico
 2. Cuba becomes independent but with ties to the U.S.
 3. U.S. paid Spain \$20 million for Philippines
 - Philippines wanted to be independent
 - 1899—Filipino rebels attacked U.S. troops
 - War lasted almost 3 years

