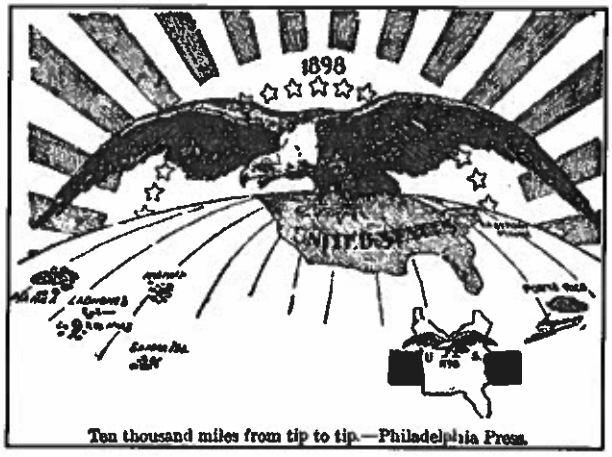
American Imperialism

From Sea to shining sea... and beyond!



Ten thousand miles from tip to tip.—Philadelphia Press.

What is Imperialism?

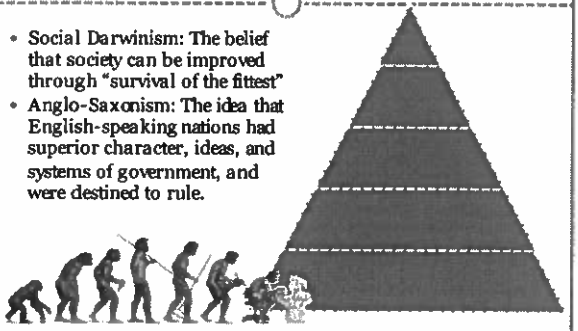
- **Imperialism: The economic and political control of a weaker nation by a stronger nation.**

America Turns Outward

- **Factors fueling American imperialism:**
  - Economic expansion – new markets and investment opportunities
  - Social Darwinism and Anglo-Saxonism – looking to improve the lives of "heathens"
  - Competition with industrialized nations – wanted to prove our strength

SOCIAL DARWINISM and ANGLO-SAXONISM

- Social Darwinism: The belief that society can be improved through "survival of the fittest"
- Anglo-Saxonism: The idea that English-speaking nations had superior character, ideas, and systems of government, and were destined to rule.



I Like this! I Dislike this!

- Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power on History* – said that they key to a nation's power is through its naval power.
- Mark Twain – *The War Prayer;* A scathing indictment of war, and particularly of blind patriotic (jingoism) and religious fervor as motivations for war.

White Man's Burden

- White Man's Burden: A belief that white people have an obligation to rule over, and impose their culture upon people from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Imperialists understood the phrase "white man's burden" to justify imperialism as a noble enterprise.
- The slogan was placed on products that aimed to promote cleanliness, purity, health, and wealth.

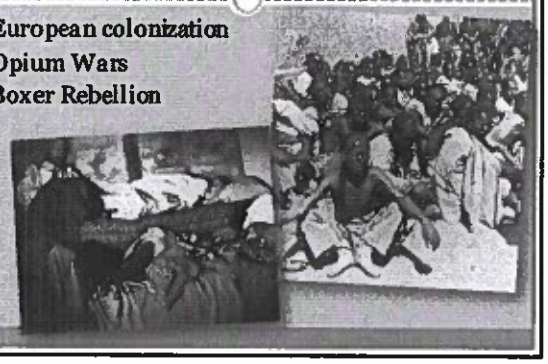
America In the Pacific

Expansion in the Pacific

- Commodore Matthew C. Perry led four American warships to Japan to convince them to trade with the US
  - Japan was impressed by the technology and firepower
  - Began updating their own technology to compete with the West
- America would go on to annex a number of islands in the Pacific
  - Annex: to incorporate a territory into the domain of a city, country, or state.

Growing Issues in China

- European colonization
- Opium Wars
- Boxer Rebellion

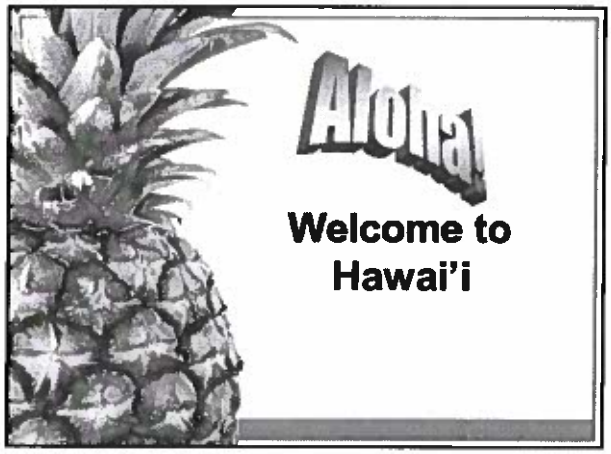


Open Door Policy

- The United States long demanded an Open Door Policy for trading in China, in order to prevent other powers from carving up China among them. But France, Russia, Britain, and Japan bit off pieces for themselves by annexation or by establishing spheres of influence, where they exercised economic privileges.
- As its rivals made gains, the United States feared it would be excluded from all trade in China.
- The Open Door Policy: Stated that all European nations, and the United States, could trade freely with China.

Samoa

- Samoan culture was vastly different from European American traditions and needed "reform"
- The islands were to be a refueling point for cargo ships.
- The U.S. acquired the islands in 1899.



- The Committee of Safety made their move
  - Called the USMarines to "protect Americans" on the island
  - Their militia took over government buildings and offices.
  - The Queen was placed under house arrest
- Lili'uokalani sent a desperate plea to Congress, but was forced to surrender a few weeks later.
- Grover Cleveland refused to annexation because of the way it had been taken
- McKinley would annex Hawaii in 1898