



# Eyes on the Pacific

## Objectives

1. Describe early attempts by the United States to expand in the Pacific.
2. List the reasons many Americans came to favor expansion.
3. Explain how the United States gained the territories of Samoa and Hawaii.
4. Describe how the United States protected its trading rights in China.

## Prepare to Read

### Reading Skill

**Ask Extension Questions** In discussing one central event, history books will often mention a related event. You may find yourself interested in the related event. Why did it happen? What made it important? How did it affect those involved? Framing questions in specific language will help you research to find the answers.

### Vocabulary Builder

#### High-Use Words

critic, p. 681

exclude, p. 684

#### Key Terms and People

Matthew C. Perry, p. 680

isolationism, p. 681

imperialism, p. 681

Frederick Jackson Turner, p. 682

Liliuokalani, p. 683

sphere of influence, p. 684

★ **Background Knowledge** You have seen how the United States extended its borders under the banner of Manifest Destiny. In this chapter, you will learn how the United States began to seek new opportunities overseas.

## Main Idea

The United States opened trade with Japan and purchased Alaska from Russia.

Japanese statuette of Commodore Perry



## The United States Looks Overseas

In the mid-1800s, the United States was ready to take on new challenges. It found new trading partners and acquired more land.

**Opening Japan to Trade** U.S. merchants longed to engage Japan in a profitable trade. However, for 250 years, Japan had blocked outside trade and barred foreigners from entering or leaving the country.

In 1853, a squadron of heavily armed U.S. warships, commanded by Commodore Matthew C. Perry, sailed into Tokyo Bay. Perry presented the Japanese with a letter from the President calling for Japan to grant trading rights to Americans. The Japanese were awed by Perry's powerful ships and menacing guns. When Perry returned in 1854, they signed a treaty opening Japan for trade.

Perry's visit had another important effect. Faced with the technology and power of the United States, the Japanese recognized their own weakness. They set out to transform their feudal society into an industrial nation that could compete in the modern world.

**Purchasing Alaska** In 1867, Alaska was a Russian colony. Russia told U.S. Secretary of State William Seward that it wanted to sell Alaska. Seward strongly favored U.S. expansion. He saw Alaska as a stepping stone for trade with Asia and the Pacific.

Alaska is twice the size of Texas. The United States purchased the territory for \$7.2 million, about 2 cents an acre. The purchase increased the area of the United States by almost one fifth.

Many Americans opposed the purchase. Some saw Alaska as a frozen wasteland—"Seward's Folly" or "Seward's Icebox." But the critics changed their tune when valuable discoveries of gold led to the Klondike and Alaska gold rushes of 1897–1898. Alaska, it turned out, was rich in an amazing array of resources.

**Checkpoint** How did the United States get Japan to open trade?

## The Expansionist Mood

Until the late 1800s, Americans heeded George Washington's advice to "steer clear of permanent alliances." The nation generally pursued a policy of **isolationism**—that is, avoiding involvement in other countries' affairs. Americans stood aside as the nations of Europe undertook a policy of **imperialism**—building empires by imposing political and economic control over peoples around the world.

In the late 1800s, however, a new spirit of expansionism gripped the nation. Americans debated a new sort of Manifest Destiny that would extend overseas. Supporters of expansion offered a variety of arguments for increased involvement in world affairs. These included promoting economic growth and spreading American values. A new view of history also encouraged expansionism.

### Seward's Folly



### Vocabulary Builder

**critic** (KRIHT ihk) *n.* someone who makes judgments about objects or actions

### Main Idea

In the late nineteenth century, the United States began to turn away from isolationism in a bid to acquire overseas territories.

### Reading Political Cartoons

#### Skills Activity

The cartoonist shows a Russian stranger offering to trade "bears, seals, icebergs," and more.

- Recognize Points of View** What is the cartoonist's opinion about the purchase of Alaska? What symbols does the cartoonist use to make the point?
- Apply Information** What did people learn about Alaska after 1898? How would you change the cartoon, based on that information?

## Cause and Effect

### CAUSES

- Western frontier closes.
- European nations acquire overseas colonies and compete for resources and markets.
- U.S. industry needs to acquire raw materials and to find new markets in which to sell its products.
- Some in the United States want to spread American culture and values to other parts of the world.

## U.S. OVERSEAS EXPANSION

### EFFECTS

- U.S. Navy grows in size and power.
- United States gains control of territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific.
- The United States issues Open Door Policy, which allows all nations to trade with China.
- U.S. builds Panama Canal.
- United States sends troops to Latin American nations to protect its interests.

### Reading a Chart

#### Skills Activity

American expansionists wanted an overseas empire. By 1900, they had achieved their goal.

- (a) **Read a Chart** Which causes listed on the chart relate to benefits for the U.S. economy?
- (b) **Apply Information** How was a strong navy related to the expansionists' goals?

**The Turner Thesis** In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner put forth the thesis, or idea, that the western frontier had defined American history. Westward movement, he said, had built individualism and democratic values. Turner concluded:

“And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.”

—Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*

Today, few historians accept Turner's thesis. But the idea of a closing frontier influenced expansionists such as Theodore Roosevelt. Overseas expansion, they said, was the new frontier that would help the nation renew its vitality and strength.

**Promoting Economic Growth** The United States had a powerful industrial economy. It produced far more than Americans would buy. U.S. leaders watched nervously as European powers seized land in Africa and Asia. If the United States did not act soon, it might be shut out of global markets and denied raw materials.

A top supporter of expansion was Alfred T. Mahan, naval captain and author. Mahan said that future U.S. prosperity depended on building up trade. The key to strong trade, he argued, was a powerful navy that would control the world's sea lanes and thus protect U.S. access to foreign markets.



### Ask Extension Questions

Isolationism and expansionism each had their advantages and disadvantages for the United States. Suggest a possible research question that builds on this topic.

**Spreading American Values** In the late 1800s, many Americans believed that Americans of the “Anglo-Saxon race” were superior to “lesser races” in other nations. Therefore, the argument went, Americans had a divine duty to spread Christian values and western civilization around the world.

✓ **Checkpoint** What arguments did expansionists make?

## Gaining Footholds in the Pacific

Supporters of expansion expressed interest in various Pacific islands. They saw them as essential for expanding U.S. influence and trade.

**Rivalry for Samoa** U.S. steamship companies and missionaries fanned interest in Samoa, a chain of islands in the South Pacific. The steamship companies and the U.S. Navy wanted to set up coaling stations, where ships could stock up on coal.

Britain and Germany also wanted Samoa. Armed conflict loomed in 1889, as Britain, Germany, and the United States all sent warships to Samoa. But fighting was averted when a typhoon struck, disabling or destroying most of the warships. Ten years later, in 1899, the United States and Germany divided the islands of Samoa between them. The people of Samoa, however, had no say in the matter.

**Interest in Hawaii** Expansionists also eyed Hawaii, a group of islands in the North Pacific. The islands have great natural beauty, sunshine, beaches, and rolling surf. But beauty was secondary. Located between Asia and the United States, Hawaii could serve as a “military and commercial outpost in the Pacific.”

The first people to settle Hawaii arrived by canoe from other islands in the Pacific around the 600s. They lived undisturbed until 1778, when Captain James Cook, an English explorer, arrived.

In 1820, the first American missionaries came, hoping to convert Hawaiians to Christianity. Later, other Americans acquired land and set up huge sugar plantations.

As the sugar industry in Hawaii grew, so did the power of American planters. In 1887, planters forced the Hawaiian king, Kalakaua, to accept a new constitution that gave them great influence.

When Kalakaua died in 1891, his sister Liliuokalani (lih lee oo oh kah LAH nee) succeeded him. The new queen was a strong advocate of Hawaiian independence. She refused to recognize the 1887 constitution. She wanted to restore the power of the monarchy and reduce foreign influence in Hawaii.

### Main Idea

The United States gained Pacific footholds in Samoa and Hawaii.

### Biography Quest



**Liliuokalani**  
1838–1917

Queen Liliuokalani championed several women’s causes during her long life. She supported the establishment of a college that would train young Hawaiian women to be scholars. Other efforts led to the 1890 founding of a maternity home to help mothers and to provide care for newborns. She also championed the idea of a women’s bank for Hawaii.

### Biography Quest online

**In what other field is Liliuokalani remembered for her contributions?**

**For:** The answer to the question about Liliuokalani

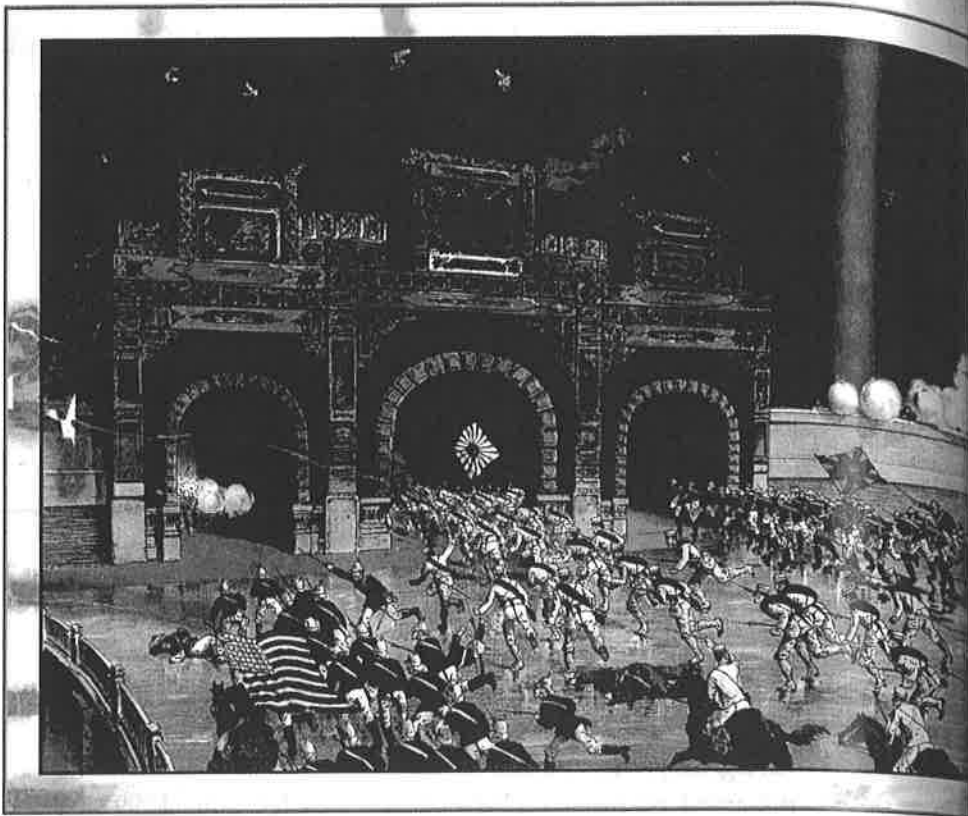
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## Boxer Rebellion

U.S. troops joined soldiers from other powers in crushing the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 in China.

**Critical Thinking: Detect Points of View** This painting shows the event from the foreigner's point of view. Describe how a Chinese artist's painting would have differed.



**Annexing Hawaii** In 1893, American planters organized an uprising. Without consulting the U.S. government, they persuaded a U.S. official to land 50 U.S. Marines to help overthrow the queen and set up a pro-American government. But President Grover Cleveland rejected a proposal to annex Hawaii. He argued that the revolt had been illegal and was not supported by the people of the islands.

Cleveland's successor, William McKinley, however, favored annexation and supported a treaty to achieve it. On July 7, 1898, Congress voted to make Hawaii a territory of the United States.

**Checkpoint** How did the United States acquire Hawaii?

## Main Idea

After other powers grabbed spheres of influence in China, the United States campaigned for equal trading rights there.

## Vocabulary Builder

**exclude** (ehks KLYOOD) v. to keep out or expel; to reject or not be considered

## Carving Up China

In the late 1800s, China had just emerged from an unsuccessful war. Taking advantage of China's weakness, European powers and Japan forced the Chinese empire to grant them land and trading rights. They set about dividing China into **spheres of influence**, or areas where another nation has economic and political control.

**Open Door Policy** At first, Americans were not part of this activity. But as the other powers carved up China, U.S. leaders feared that Americans would be **excluded** from the China trade.

In 1899, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay issued a message to the other powers. He called on them to keep an "open door" in China. By this, he meant that he wanted them to guarantee the rights of all nations to trade with China on an equal basis. The various nations responded cautiously, most saying neither yes nor no. But Hay declared publicly that the Open Door Policy had been accepted.



**Boxer Rebellion** Many Chinese resented foreign influences in their country. They organized a secret society to combat the foreigners. The society called itself the Righteous and Harmonious Fists. Europeans called this society and its members Boxers, because they performed ceremonial exercises that resembled shadowboxing.

In the spring of 1900, the Boxers began a rebellion to expel the foreigners. Backed by China's government, they attacked and killed westerners and Chinese Christians. Mobs burned churches and the homes of foreigners. Hundreds of foreigners and some 2,000 Chinese sought safety in a walled section of Beijing, the Chinese capital.

Eventually, the outside powers, including the United States, sent in 18,000 troops armed with modern weapons. The troops freed the trapped foreigners, crushed the rebellion, looted the capital, and killed thousands of Chinese.

**The Open Door Again** Secretary Hay feared that the other powers would use the Boxer Rebellion as an excuse to seize more Chinese territory. To prevent this, he issued a second Open Door note. In it, he repeated the principle of open trade and made an even stronger statement about American intentions to preserve trade. He also said that China should remain one country and not be broken up into separate pieces.

**Checkpoint** What was the goal of the U.S. Open Door Policy?

**★ Looking Back and Ahead** Under the urging of expansionists, the government promoted U.S. trade and began to acquire territories overseas. In the next section, you will read of how the Spanish-American War gave the United States an empire.

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### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Recall** What benefit did Seward see in acquiring Alaska?

**(b) Detect Points of View** Why did people call the purchase of Alaskan lands "Seward's Folly"?
- (a) Summarize** In what three ways did U.S. supporters of expansion justify increased involvement in world affairs?

**(b) Identify Economic Benefits** How did the division of Samoa and the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands benefit the United States?

### Reading Skill

#### 3. Ask Extension Questions

American acquisition of territory in the Pacific region was controversial. Suggest a possible research question building on this topic.

#### Vocabulary Builder

Complete each of the following sentences so that the second part further explains the first part.

- During much of the 1800s, the nation followed a policy of **isolationism**; \_\_\_\_\_.
- Competing European nations followed policies of imperialism; \_\_\_\_\_.

- China was divided into spheres of influence; \_\_\_\_\_.

### Writing

- The paragraph that follows contains some vague, incorrect, or illogical arguments. Revise the paragraph to strengthen the passage. **Paragraph:** The United States could no longer be isolated by the rest of the world. The nation had to look overseas to promote economic growth because we were out of raw materials at home. The United States also needed to protect overseas trade, because trade is always useful.