

Expansionism in the late 19th early 20th century essay



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Expansionism in America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century shared many similarities and differences to that of previous American expansionist ideals. In both cases of American expansionism, the Americans believed that we must expand our borders in order to keep the country running upright. Also, the Americans believed that the United States was the strongest of nations, and that they could take any land they pleased. This is shown in the “manifest destiny” of the 1840’s and the “Darwinism” of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

Apart from the similarities, there were also several differences that included the American attempt to stretch their empire across the seas and into other parts of the world. Throughout history, the United States had come off as a stubborn nation that would take what they wanted at any cost. This was prevalent in both cases of expansion as the Americans risked war and national safety for the sake of gaining land, or even merely for proving a point. During the early years of expansion, the Americans had pushed aside the Native Americans and whoever else inhabited the land they wanted.

They believed that the land was rightfully theirs and that every one else was merely squatting on their territory. This idea was continued into the early twentieth century as the Americans looked to the oceans for new territories to their kingdom. This idea is greatly exemplified in document ‘E’, in which Senator Albert J. Beveridge delivers a speech to Congress, saying that, “... and thanksgiving to Almighty God that He has marked us as His chosen people, henceforth to lead in the regeneration of the world... “

In contrary to America's earlier beliefs, however, the race for expansion became more of a global competition than that of controlling the surrounding lands. Other countries were quickly scooping the remaining uncontrolled territories up, and America felt that they needed to stake their claim in imperialism around the world. The cartoon presented in document "A" shows how all the European countries were picking away at the lands still open for taking. In addition to the sense of "catching up" with the other nations around the world.

America also felt that they were more powerful than ever, with the addition of an improving navy, turning their attention to the seas for conquest. During the earlier attempts of expansion, America had virtually no navy, which made oversea conquest out of their reach, leaving them only the surrounding areas for taking. America now had the opportunity at such territories as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, due to their navy and its power. Also, during the expansion of the late nineteenth century, there was much more outside resistance towards American expansion.

Because of the locality of the first expansion, there were not very many disputes over land as there were when America took their hopes for land overseas. With the addition of the Philippines and other islands to the American empire, the U. S. took on the self ordained title of "rulers of the Western Hemisphere." As seen in document 'G,' America stood at the door of their territories, not allowing anyone else to enter. In the new expansion of the American Empire, the Americans, as they did in earlier expansion, saw themselves as only "helping" those who they took under their power.

President Roosevelt thus stated this in his Annual Message to Congress of 1904, (document ' F') where he says, " All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. " This was also believed in expansion of the 1840's, where the U. S. pushed the Native's aside, presumably " helping" them, and making way for what rightfully belonged to the Americans, eventually dwindling the Nave American population to next to nothing.

This idea of Americans being the " end all be all" of the world, would last throughout history, nearly causing many wars and conflicts because of it. In both periods of American expansionism throughout the world, there are many similarities and differences that occurred, yet the one thing that remained the same in both cases was the strong American necessity for domination and to expand their power as far out as possible. MLA Citation: " Expansionism in the late 19th/ Early 20th century. " 123HelpMe. com.