

Document A: Reconcentration Camps

*By the late 1800s, the Spanish were losing control of Cuba. Concerned about insurrection in the countryside, they moved rural Cubans to “reconcentration” camps where the Spanish claimed they would be better able to protect them. U.S. **Consul-General** Fitzhugh Lee forwarded the following account of the conditions of the camps to the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State on November 27, 1897. Lee said the author of the note was “a man of integrity and character.”*

[W]e will relate to you what we saw with our own eyes:

Four hundred and sixty women and children thrown on the ground, heaped **pell-mell** as animals, some in a dying condition, others sick and others dead. . . .

There is still alive the only living witness, a young girl of 18 years, whom we found seemingly lifeless on the ground; on her right-hand side was the body of a young mother, cold and rigid, but with her young child still alive clinging to her dead breast; on her left-hand side was also the corpse of a dead woman holding her son in a dead embrace. . . .

The circumstances are the following: complete **accumulation** of bodies dead and alive, so that it was impossible to take one step without walking over them; the greatest **want** of cleanliness, want of light, air, and water; the food lacking in quality and quantity what was necessary to sustain life. . . . From all this we deduct that the number of deaths among the **reconcentrados** has amounted to 77 per cent.

Source: *Unsigned note that was included in a telegram sent by Fitzhugh Lee, U.S. Consul-General in Cuba, to the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State November 27, 1897.*

Vocabulary

consul-general: a government official living in a foreign country charged with overseeing the protection of U.S. citizens and promoting trade

pell-mell: state of disorder

accumulation: pile

want: lack

reconcentrados: the reconcentration camp prisoners

Document B: March of the Flag

The following is an excerpt from Albert J. Beveridge's speech, delivered September 16, 1898. Beveridge gave this speech while he was campaigning to become a senator for Indiana. The speech helped him win the election and made him one of the leading advocates of American expansion.

Fellow citizens, it is a noble land that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world;. . . It is a mighty people that he has planted on this soil . . . It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon his chosen people; . . .a history of soldiers who carried the flag across the blazing deserts and through the ranks of hostile mountains, even to the gates of sunset. . . .

The Opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer: The rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government. I answer, We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent.

They ask us how we will govern these new possessions. I answer: If England can govern foreign lands, so can America. If Germany can govern foreign lands, so can America. . . .

What does all this mean for every one of us? It means opportunity for all the glorious young manhood of the republic, the most **virile**, ambitious, impatient, **militant** manhood the world has ever seen. It means that the resources and the commerce of these immensely rich **dominions** will be increased. . . .

In Cuba, alone, there are 15,000,000 acres of forest unacquainted with the axe. There are exhaustless mines of iron. . . . There are millions of acres yet unexplored. . . . It means new employment and better wages for every laboring man in the Union. . . .

Ah! as our commerce spreads, the flag of liberty will circle the globe. . . . **Benighted** peoples will know that the voice of Liberty is speaking, at last, for them; that civilization is dawning, at last, for them. . . .

Fellow Americans, we are God's chosen people. . . .

Source: *Albert J. Beveridge's Senate campaign speech, September 16, 1898.*

Vocabulary

virile: having strength and energy
militant: aggressive

dominions: controlled territories
benighted: pitifully ignorant

Guiding Questions

Name _____

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1. **Sourcing:** Given that in the U.S. there was an ongoing debate about whether the U.S. should intervene in Cuba, why might Lee have chosen to send this account to Washington?
2. **Close Reading:** Notice the graphic descriptions of the account. How do these details about the camp conditions affect you as you read? Why might these descriptions be so detailed?
3. **Contextualization:** How do you think U.S. government officials might have reacted to this description of the reconcentration camps?

Document B: March of the Flag

1. **Sourcing:** This speech is part of a political campaign. How does that influence what you can expect of it?
2. **Close Reading:** What do the following phrases suggest about Beveridge's view of Americans as compared with people of other nations?
 - a) "noble land that God has given us"
 - b) "applies only to those who are capable of self-government"
 - c) "civilization is dawning, at last, for them"
3. **Contextualizing:** According to Beveridge, what else was going on in the U.S. and the rest of the world that made expansion a good idea?

Why did the United States invade Cuba in 1898?

Document Name	Date/ Author	According to this document, why did the United States invade Cuba?	Provide evidence from the source that supports these reasons.
Awake United States!			
Reconcentration Camps			
March of the Flag			