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NEWSPAPERS AND THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR:
EFFECTS ON A MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY

by
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B.A., St. Cloud State University, 1990

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of
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This thesis submitted by Steven C. Penick in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

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NEWSPAPERS AND THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR: EFFECTS ON A MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY

Steven C. Penick

The Spanish American War had a profound influence on United States' foreign policy throughout the twentieth century. Stearns County, a Midwestern German community in central Minnesota, expressed their reaction to this national occurrence through their local newspapers. Like other communities distant from major media centers, Stearns County newspapers responded slowly to the growing prewar issues in 1898, determining their relevance for the local population. The Democratic *St. Cloud Times*, the German Catholic *Der Nordstern*, and the Republican *St. Cloud Journal-Press* were the most influential newspapers in the region. Each St. Cloud newspaper took a different position on the war and its potential political consequences.

This study will prove how these newspapers, with their respective party affiliations, brought Spanish American War issues to the local population by illustrating a variety of interpretations as they followed the Stearns County volunteers during their eighteen months of service.

May 2000
Month Year

Approved by Research Committee:

Lee Simpson
Lee Simpson Chairperson

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Chapter I

WAR ISSUES AND NEWSPAPERS RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Through newspaper influence, Stearns County's volunteer company joined the rest of the country in 1898 to fight Cuba's imperial ruler Spain over issues ranging from humanitarian concerns to the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine*. Along with the other 125,000 volunteer troops requested by President McKinley, Stearns County's military contingent began their active service believing they were fighting for Cuban well being against Spain. For these young men, enrollment into military service climaxed a series of events that captivated both local residents and their countrymen. The volunteers' expedition would lead to places unknown in American history and was a journey traveled under unique circumstances and moral standing.

In conjunction with these international concerns, domestic political forces contributed to the war with Spain. Since the Panic of 1893, the American economy had suffered a significant slowdown. To fuel the recovery, influential Republicans such as Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt or Minnesota Senator Cushman K. Davis proposed a vision of expansion to cure the economic woes of the country. Linked with the Cuban humanitarian concerns, the war provided an opportunity for America to

achieve this new status as a world power. Advocates such as Roosevelt spoke in favor of this stance by stating, "Throughout a large part of our national career our history has been one of expansion. This expansion is not a matter of regret, but of pride."¹ Based on this precedence, expansionistic Republicans formulated their intentions, while the war with Spain provided an avenue of implementation to their imperialistic vision.²

Similarly, American newspaper owners realized the war's potential profitability to expand their circulation numbers. In 1895, New York newspapers began consistent reporting about Cuban events and their consequences, with other papers across the country following suit. As the industry's model during the period, these papers set the standard including inventive format changes, increased editorials, and distinctive headlines. Senator Davis commented on the newspaper role in society by stating, "the newspapers are the great debaters of our time. It is by them that political issues are formulated, decided, pressed to results or abandoned."³ Davis' opinion characterized the important newspaper role in American society. Newspaper's influence was critical for war support but also provided the forum for debate over imperial issues, such as the Philippines, later on during the war.⁴

¹ David Healy, US Expansionism, (Madison, Milwaukee and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), pp. 34-35.

² Ibid.

³ National Printer-Journalist, (Chicago, Vol. XVIII; No. 1, January 1901), p. 19.

⁴ Sidney Kobre, The Yellow Press and Gilded Age Journalism, (Florida State University, 1964), pp. 279-282.

Unlike major metropolitan areas, rural Minnesota editors reacted gradually to the Cuban story. Between January and April 1898, Minnesota citizens responded to these international events surrounding Spanish controlled Cuba, its humanitarian concerns, and the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine*. Distance from the major commercial centers played a major role in initial newspaper coverage. Stearns County papers published scattered reports by 1895 but were often weeks or months apart. Instead, their interest focused on more pressing issues such as agriculture prices, worker issues, and the local economy. However, this attitude slowly changed. As was the case in other remote sections of the country, Minnesota editors began publishing new stories by late 1897 and throughout early 1898. As in New York, newspapers provided the spark. Local editors weighed the developing Cuban circumstances, their importance to Stearns residents, and how a resolution would affect them. However, political affiliation influenced newspaper reporting and often altered the story's content to fit the specific ideology of the editor.⁵

NEWSPAPERS AND THE STEARNS COUNTY AUDIENCE

For rural Minnesota regions such as Stearns County, newspapers provided the public with the primary information source through editorials, published articles, and formulated opinions for public discussion. Newspapers and their accompanying editors

⁵ Kobre, pp. 279-282; Franklin Holbrook, Minnesota in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, (St. Paul: Minnesota War Records Commission, 1923), pp. 8-9.

also had tremendous power to limit or omit what articles were printed. These often catered to specific political opinions and were influenced by national patterns.⁶

In Stearns County, Minnesota, residents had several choices for their weekly news: the *St. Cloud Times*, *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, and *Der Nordstern* or their local town paper out in the county. St. Cloud, the largest city in the region with 9,000 residents, provided the principal audience for these papers. The *Times* was the Democratic organ, while its counterpart, the *Journal-Press* subscribed to Republican influences. *Der Nordstern* provided a conservative voice for the many German Catholics who settled throughout the region. St. Cloud's weekly editions circulated to every town in the county, providing more state and national news than newspapers from smaller towns such as Sauk Centre or Melrose.⁷

The newspapers and their party affiliations reflected Stearns County's population. In 1898 Stearns County had nearly 45,000 residents with the great majority German Catholic. During the 1850s, Father Francis X. Pierz, a German-speaking Slovenian missionary, drew these settlers to the region. Pierz traveled throughout the Great Lakes territory for nearly twenty years, converting the Ojibwe Indians to Christianity while serving Catholic settlers who lived in the area. As signed Indian

⁶ Kobre, pp. 279-282; Holbrook, pp. 8-9.

⁷ *St. Cloud Times*; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*; *Der Nordstern*. 1899 circulation numbers for Stearns County newspapers: *St. Cloud Times* 2,975; *St. Cloud Journal-Press* 2,800; *Der Nordstern* 6,200; *Melrose Anzeiger* 1,956; *Melrose Beacon*, 500; *Sauk Centre Herald*, 875; *Sauk Centre Avalanche*, 720; *Ayers and Sons American Newspaper Annual*: (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayers and Sons, 1900).

treaties opened large land tracts west of the Mississippi in 1851, Pierz visualized changes to the Minnesota Territory. He preferred to lure German Catholics as appropriate neighbors for his friends the Ojibwe as their lifestyle would change dramatically once settlement occurred. Pierz believed Germans would best understand the Ojibwe's circumstance and encourage a peaceful coexistence between the two groups.⁸

With this in mind, Pierz composed letters and placed newspaper ads in eastern American and European cities with high German concentrations. He described central Minnesota land traits: an ample water supply, quality agricultural soil, available timber, and a virtually uninhabited land for settlement. Pierz believed these attributes would lure Germans to an ideal location to practice their Catholic faith while working the land in agricultural practices. In the *Wahrheitsfreund*, a German Catholic paper in Cincinnati on 1 March 1854, he stated:

I do wish, however, that the choicest pieces of land in this delightful Territory would become the property of thrifty Catholics who would make an earthly paradise of this Minnesota which Heaven has so richly blessed, and who would bear out the opinion that Germans prove to be the best farmers and the best Christians in America. I am sure that you will likewise do credit to your faith here in Minnesota, but to prove yourselves good Catholics do not bring with you any freethinkers, red republicans, atheists or agitators.⁹

Responding to Pierz's invitation, German Catholics settled in the area bringing their faith and hopes for a prosperous future. Their link to the land and its natural resources built

⁸ Hildegard Binder Johnson, *They Chose Minnesota*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981), p. 167.

⁹ Ibid.

the foundation for future development. As a community, they succeeded both in business ventures while simultaneously growing significantly in population.¹⁰

For the next thirty years, Stearns County attracted immigrants similar to Pierz's call. So extensive was the German Catholic settlement that a member of the 1859 Nobles' Northwest Exploring Expedition stated, "You may travel fifty miles from St. Cloud out, and every man you meet will be German, and for the most part utterly ignorant of the language of their adopted country."¹¹ Settlement became so widespread that twenty-one of Stearns County's thirty-seven townships contained at least a sixty percent German majority. Other nationalities such as the Irish, Poles, English, and Norwegians were drawn to the county but their numbers remained significantly lower.¹²

Stearns County Germans were extremely devoted to their Catholic faith. Their lives revolved around the Church, its numerous feast days, and rites of religious passage. Traditions, family loyalty, and respect were passed on to the next generation. While loyal to the Catholic Church, residents were cautious of outside influences regarding their lifestyle. As Pierz preferred, Stearns residents were fiscally conservative and traditionally voted Democratic as they believed the party protected their traditions, cultural interests, and religious practices.¹³

¹⁰ Johnson, p. 167.

¹¹ John C. Massmann, German Immigration to Minnesota, 1850-1890. (Doctorial Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1966), p. 200.

¹² Johnson, p. 167.

¹³ Fred W. Peterson, Building Community, Keeping the Faith. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1998), pp. 167-172.

Similar to other ethnic groups that settled in America, Stearns Germans retained their cultural elements and adapted them to their new homeland. They clung to brewing and drinking beer, Sunday socializing events, and their native language. During the 1870s they accepted the railroad's arrival as an improvement in their economic condition. However, at times local residents resisted outside influences. Meire Grove refused to allow railroad passage through their community as an irrelevant intrusion. Citizens perceived if life was profitable, why change for the sake of change. They believed in "less to build something new than to regain and conserve something old . . . to till new fields and to find new customers, true enough, but ultimately to keep the way of life they were used to."¹⁴ Stearns County residents thus retained their valued traditions as their communities developed throughout the nineteenth century. However, these elements were challenged by the threat of war and their role in it. Would these residents change their lives for the people living in Cuba?¹⁵

Agriculture and its accompanying services dominated the Stearns County way of life. Since the 1860s, residents ambitiously cleared several acres a year to improve their farm operations. Their established family farms were developed for future generations and avoided an over-burdening debt load. Hard working, residents prided themselves on their achievements and gradual operational improvements. Technology, such as improved plows and the invention of such equipment as threshers, changed farms from subsistence

¹⁴ Peterson, p. 28.

¹⁵ Peterson, pp. 28, 126-127.

to profit seeking ventures. In the 1890s, dairy cooperatives were formed that enabled farmers to be more efficient with an available local market for their products.¹⁶

While not a clear contrast, St. Cloud differed in certain aspects from the rest of rural Stearns County. Early St. Cloud promotion, led by John L. Wilson and George F. Brott created a balance between German Catholics, Protestants, and New England Yankees. However, Father Pierz's successful plea for German Catholics to settle in central Minnesota soon eclipsed the established Yankee population. Nonetheless, an influential Republican core slowly developed, led by businessmen such as Nehemiah P. Clarke and William B. Mitchell. Other businessmen included land speculators and granite industrialists who arrived in the budding frontier town for an opportunity at prosperity. Prominent attorneys with state and national political connections arrived, such as Dolson B. Searle, Loren W. Collins and James M. McKelvy. The Republican establishment proved an important one by the century's end. These ties provided the necessary influence with state political leaders who controlled the Minnesota National Guard and the opportunity for military service against Spain.¹⁷

In 1898, the largest national concern for local citizens was the country's economic condition. After initial economic growth, the Panic of 1857 and the Civil War slowed the rapid economic development of the region. During the 1870s, the railroad's arrival brought increased commercial opportunities to county residents and their communities.

¹⁶ Peterson, pp. 28, 126-127.

¹⁷ John J. Dominik, *St. Cloud, The Triplet City*, (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1983), p. 13; William B. Mitchell, *History of Stearns County*, (Chicago: H.C. Cooper, Jr. & Company, 1915), pp. 171-180, 1421-1425.

Following the successful post-Civil War years, the Panic of 1873 halted this prosperity for both area farmers and businesses. The local economy continued its sluggish performance during the latter half of the decade as a grasshopper plague invaded the area. The result was catastrophic. Throughout the region these pests devoured leaves and grasses, leaving a barren wasteland in their wake. Combined with the local economy's effects in 1873, the plague forced many families to abandon their homesteads. However, the community rebounded, illustrating their faith and commitment. Drawing on their Catholic faith, the citizens erected two chapels in 1878 to commemorate the plague's conclusion. Meanwhile, prosperity of the 1880s was attributed to the renewed vigor of increased immigration, technological advances in farming, the railroad's influence, and industrial development such as granite quarrying. The Panic of 1893, however, concerned residents during the Spanish American War period.¹⁸

During the early 1890s, the economy for most Americans fell on hard times as thousands of banks and commercial establishments failed. These difficult economic conditions affected local businessmen such as Edwin Clark of Melrose. During the 1870s Clark's capital was self-made as he ambitiously platted and surveyed the town, constructed a saw and lumber mill, established a store, and operated the local bank. Within a decade Clark had accumulated a measurable fortune. In 1893 the nation's recession reached Melrose, devastating Clark's wealth so that he was forced to sell his entire business empire. While conditions were not as extreme for most residents as they

¹⁸ Peterson, p. 18; Vincent A. Yzermans, The Mel and The Rose, (Melrose, MN: The Melrose Historical Society, 1972), p. 44.

were for Clark, the severity of the nation's economic circumstances was clearly apparent.¹⁹

As the economy slowly improved through the 1890s, the *St. Cloud Journal-Press* reported its progress in early 1898. Alvah Eastman, its editor, wrote,

An indication of the betterment in the times is found in the fact that the list of delinquent real estate taxes for 1896 is composed of only 1600 descriptions. This is as against 2300 last year . . . The fact shows that farmers and people generally have had money with which to pay their taxes as they have not before in many years.²⁰

Economic concerns aside, Stearns County citizens read newspaper coverage pertaining to the escalating Cuban story and America's role in it. Their initial knowledge of Cuba and broad foreign affairs probably remained limited to George Washington's caution against American "entangling alliances" with European countries or the Monroe Doctrine. By early 1898, local editors of *Der Nordstern*, *St. Cloud Times*, and the *Journal-Press* had featured their perceived American interests in Cuba. Would Cuban humanitarian concerns be enough to influence these predominately independent Germans into a war with Spain? The only widespread local information source for this remote rural Minnesota region was the area's newspapers. Stearns County newspapers became the primary reference through their influence, party affiliation, and their syndicated articles from national and state sources. Utilizing these sources and their already established experiences, each editor stated opinions for the war against Spain.

¹⁹ Yzermans, p. 44; *Star Tribune*, 23 July 1898.

²⁰ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 20 January 1898.

STEARNS NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR POLITICAL EDITORIAL STANCES

Der Nordstern, German Newspaper

"Independent-Democratic organ in the service of the people."²¹

- Gerhard May

Of the three St. Cloud editors, Gerhard May best represented Stearns County's population. May's role as editor of *Der Nordstern* was influential due to his German background and Catholic faith. Born in Kries Duren, Rhineland, in 1851, he pursued his education at Muenster and later at the University of Louvaine. He later immigrated to the United States initially settling in Milwaukee before attending Collegeville's St. John's University in 1878. Within four years of his Stearns County arrival, May was married and undertook the editor position at *Der Nordstern*.

His opinions, like those of other Minnesota German editors such as the *New Ulm Post* and St. Paul's *Der Wanderer*, voiced hesitation for any American involvement in Cuba. His newspaper style concentrated on pressing domestic issues that concerned his local German readership included working class wages, agricultural prices, and changes in political policy. During the 1880s, May's guidance saw the newspaper grow in popularity and circulation. He catered to his clientele by providing quality customer service, accessibility, and a format endorsed by his readership. In 1899, his circulation reached over six thousand customers and eclipsed that of his rivals in their combined weekly totals. By the turn of the century, May's philosophy and religious background,

²¹ Carol A. Mayer, Editorial Opinion in Minnesota's German Language Weeklies, 1890-1920, (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State College, 1974), p. 22.

similar to that of local residents, enabled him to control the dominant paper in the region.²²

Der Nordstern's mission was a social publication that focused on families, individual businessmen, local obituaries, and regional German news throughout Minnesota as well as news from the Old Country. In comparison to the *St. Cloud Times* or the *Journal-Press*, out county news was more extensively covered, making his paper more attractive to rural readers. This local favoritism limited his national coverage, such that concerning Cuba, compared to the other St. Cloud papers. As American policies came to include the Philippines, May adopted an anti-imperialistic philosophy, concluding it an inappropriate American venture because pressing domestic concerns were viewed as a higher priority.²³

National information was not excluded, however. May addressed national concerns such as labor, economic issues, and political movements that appeared during the period. This stance shaped his war opposition as a decisive class struggle between rich and poor. In 1892, *Der Nordstern's* political opinion supported labor efforts such as the Homestead strike in Pennsylvania. Two years later, a more complex situation developed in the Pullman strike in Chicago. The conflict for German newspapers such as *Der Nordstern* surrounded Democratic President Grover Cleveland's policy that contradicted that of fellow party member Illinois Governor John P. Altgeld. The strike

²² Gerhard May biography file, Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN 56301, Old Settlers Association interview; *St. Cloud Times*, 23 May 1945.

²³ *St. Cloud Times*, 23 May 1945, (Obituary).

and its principals raised morality questions among the press, especially the Democratic organs. The conflict within the party and its strong labor backing forced many Minnesota German presses to divide their support among the strikers, Altgeld and Cleveland. May's policy typically favored labor issues and was also a key element in his Spanish War opposition.²⁴

Along with labor concerns in the 1890s, May commented on the Farmers Alliance and the Populist Party political movement that occurred during the period. May's primary complaint regarding the union of two political organizations was its effects on the Democratic Party. Similar to other presses statewide, many concluded a third party element in national and state circles hampered the effectiveness of the Democrats. Despite third party misgivings in 1896, the presidential election forced May and his German readers into a difficult political position. The Democratic Populist merger in nominating William Jennings Bryan persuaded May to support the Nebraska politician. May stated:

Also we recognize in the election of a Democratic ticket a better era for our rich, free America. Also we say with the people in general: Things must change, and conditions for the worker and the farmer, especially, for no one in the country can be any worse off than they are at the present time. This conviction alone has led us to adopt our present position.²⁵

²⁴ Mayer, 11-15.

²⁵ Mayer p. 22; Der Nordstern, 20 August 1896.

Justifying his opinion to his readership, May reaffirmed his position by stating he supported Bryan for the people's best interest.²⁶

It was the class issue that troubled May as the Spanish war unfolded, however. His adamant position that the war initiative was fueled by big business to increase their profits with few benefits for the working class remained with him throughout the war. Most Minnesota German newspapers were anti-imperialistic and were hesitant about United States involvement in Cuba. His fellow Democrat, Colin F. Macdonald, also shared some political similarities politically in foreign policy concerns. However, there were major differences, and these issues separated the two as Spain, Cuba, and future American policies entered the new century.

St. Cloud Times, Democratic Voice

"A newspaper should be a mirror of the place in which it is published-portraying its business as a glance."²⁷

- Colin F. Macdonald

As editor of the Democratic *St. Cloud Times*, Colin F. Macdonald complemented May in his political origins and religious affiliation. Macdonald was the senior editor in St. Cloud and the most vocal against President William McKinley's Cuban policy. An avid Democrat, he remained loyal to the party but was not afraid to support nonpartisan issues if their causes improved society. Like May, he supported workers' rights such as increased wages and tended to oppose monopolies and trusts. While Macdonald

²⁶ Mayer, pp. 15-19, 22.

²⁷ St. Cloud Times, 12 June 1961.

supported the war effort initially, he became frustrated with the President and his infrequent public commentary on the developing Cuban issues. As the war progressed throughout 1898, Macdonald voiced his objection regularly about American foreign policy intentions and McKinley's handling of the war.²⁸

The long-time St. Cloud editor was born in Nova Scotia in 1843 and arrived thirteen years later in Minnesota with his parents. As a youth Macdonald worked at the *Shakopee Argus* where his father was employed. The Civil War interrupted his newspaper career, and he joined the Union cause by becoming a member of Company I, Ninth Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. During his enlistment, trouble erupted on the southern Minnesota frontier, and his regiment saw action in the Dakota War of 1862. The following year his regiment was transferred to Missouri and later saw action against Confederate forces in both Tennessee and Mississippi.²⁹

By the conclusion of the Civil War, Macdonald was a second lieutenant; his experiences shaped his views on government, patriotism, and political leaders. He believed strongly in supporting the government, especially during a national crisis. This came into conflict during the Spanish American War, however, as Macdonald attempted to support McKinley despite disagreeing with his policy implementation. He accepted

²⁸ Patrick M. Daniel, Nativism: A Comparative Study, Colin F. Macdonald. (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 1998), p. 66.

²⁹ Daniel, pp. 66-67; Colin Macdonald biography file, Stearns History Museum.

this responsibility and adhered to the patriotic call again in 1898, as the American public became aware of the developing Cuban conditions.³⁰

After his return to Minnesota, Macdonald again renewed his journalistic interests. He worked at the *St. Paul Pioneer-Press* for nearly eight years before purchasing the *St. Cloud Weekly Times* in 1875. Drawn to St. Cloud after the *Pioneer-Press* aligned itself with the Republicans, Macdonald sought to work for a Democratic paper; St. Cloud's opportunity appeared appropriately attractive due to its strong Catholic heritage. He later offered a daily paper that further enhanced his business goals. Macdonald developed a strong political stand and used his paper as a vehicle to support his ideas and Democrat interests. While Macdonald shared party affiliation and religious beliefs with Gerhard May, their style differed dramatically in format and context.³¹

Differences between the *Times* and *Der Nordstern* reflected the editors' personalities. Macdonald followed the influence of New York newspapers incorporating elements of their newspaper style, appealing story headlines, and a strong editorial page. Macdonald produced a newspaper similar to the *New York Times* published by Adolf S. Ochs, who stated, "Give all the news, and in concise and attractive form, . . ."³² Macdonald prominently stressed his opinions and utilized his extensive political experience to convey an opinion to his readers. In contrast, May practiced a more

³⁰ Daniel, pp. 66-67; Colin Macdonald biography file, Stearns History Museum.

³¹ Colin F. Macdonald biography file, Stearns History Museum.

³² Charles H. Brown, *The Correspondent's War*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 19.

reserved approach, staying focused on national events and their German implications rather than on extensive political analysis.³³

Macdonald was thoroughly in tune with the Democratic philosophy of the day, and the *St. Cloud Times* clearly expressed his political beliefs on issues. His conservatism mirrored that of fellow residents, and he had strong community ties in politics. Macdonald's political credentials came without question. He was elected State Senator in 1876, 1878, and again in 1880. Starting in 1883, Macdonald had successive terms as St. Cloud mayor. His voter approval, long party standing, and his commitment to the local area added to his prestige.³⁴

In 1898 Macdonald's established service to the Democratic party, his past approval by Stearns County voters, and his support of Catholicism enhanced his opinions as war clouds developed with Spain. His views for Cuba stressed intervention for humanitarian concerns based on American moral sentiment. He felt obligated to support the President's course, but his disagreements surfaced in policy discrepancies, imperialism, and McKinley's apparent inactivity after the *U.S.S. Maine* explosion. Macdonald's commitment to his party and his newspaper profession reflected his desire to represent the area and its Democratic roots.

³³ Colin F. Macdonald biography file, Stearns History Museum; Brown, p. 19.

³⁴ Daniel, pp. 66-70; Colin F. Macdonald biography file, Stearns History Museum.

St. Cloud Journal-Press, Republican Organ

"Well, editors are pretty much like other people, . . . They ought to have opinions—and the courage to express them."³⁵

- Alvah Eastman

Alvah Eastman's opposing political stance fostered an intense rivalry with Macdonald that contrasted with the county's traditional viewpoints. These contradicting viewpoints played an essential role in how local citizens interpreted the war and its complex issues. Despite being in the political minority, Eastman's acquaintances included the strong business element within St. Cloud and its prominent attorneys who promoted the party. Eastman's war interpretation was a gradual process as he gathered information to formulate his opinion. While younger and less experienced than his two contemporaries, Eastman proved an equal advocate for his Republican views.³⁶

Like his chief editorial rival, Alvah Eastman had a strong connection to newspapers. His party affiliation relied on a strong Republican philosophy developed initially from family influence. Born in Lovell Center, Maine, in 1858, Eastman worked his way into the trade by establishing himself as a printer at the *Oxford Democrat*. In 1880, he moved to Anoka, Minnesota, seeking employment at his uncle's newspaper, the *Herald*. Within three years Eastman purchased the paper. During this period he developed political aspirations, winning the 1889 legislative seat as a representative. Through known associates at the time Eastman accepted a new opportunity to work at

³⁵ Minneapolis Times Tribune, 25 December 1939.

³⁶ Alvah Eastman biography file, Stearns History Museum; Thomas E. Gambrino, The Editorial Reaction of Alvah Eastman to the Events and Issues of World War I in the St. Cloud Journal-Press, 1914-1918; (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 1977), pp. 1-7.

the Federal Internal Revenue Bureau, but it was short-lived. In 1892 he returned to the newspaper business by acquiring the *Journal-Press*, St. Cloud's Republican paper. After six years in St. Cloud, Eastman had earned the respect of the community and served as President of the State Normal School Board. In 1897 he also acquired the receiver position from President McKinley at the U.S. Land Office in St. Cloud, while retaining his duties at the *Journal-Press*.³⁷

A devout Unitarian, Eastman practiced his faith in what he called a "church-going city."³⁸ The congregation was small, however, and Eastman often participated with the numerous denominations available by rotating each week to a different assembly. Eastman quickly formed relationships with powerful allies in St. Cloud, including businessmen associated with the Republican Party. Eastman's ties to these individuals, his status at the newspaper, and his influential friends elevated his influence in the community. Within a short period, Eastman became a strong Republican voice in Stearns County and utilized the newspaper to spread his opinion on the upcoming Spanish war.³⁹

Eastman's political philosophy included the local community's best interest. His commitment to improving the area's well being was clearly evident. A progressive, Eastman was against the growing trend of trust formation, such as the railroad, and feared the power of big city politics for his rural audience. Eastman favored programs to improve rural roads that not only helped locals travel but also increased their

³⁷ Gambrino, pp. 1-7.

³⁸ Minneapolis Times Tribune, 25 December 1939.

³⁹ Gambrino, pp. 1-7.

opportunities for commercial enterprises. He also realized the farmers' plight and advised them to form their own creameries. While believing in these causes, Eastman remained loyal to Republican ideals and spread the influence to the public through his motto, "Truth, courage and fair play."⁴⁰ His party loyalty and its unity were important while progressive ideas remained an added dimension to his character.⁴¹

As May, Macdonald, and Eastman formulated their opinions, they used their newspaper format to spread influence to their readers. Their varied perceptions, experiences, and political influence all became important as they attempted to persuade the public to their orientations.

AMERICA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA

"Emotion, strategy, economics and power politics logically focused American interests in Cuba. It is quite clear that this attitude prevailed among the great majority of Americans in 1898 and among the men who made diplomacy."⁴²

- H. Wayne Morgan

This public attitude required decades to formulate and climaxed at the close of the nineteenth century. In the 1820s, President James Monroe proposed his famous doctrine to isolate the Western Hemisphere as a sphere of American influence while attempting to curb further European imperial expansion. By the 1870s the American public's acquaintance with Cuba and its internal strife began during the Grant Administration. As

⁴⁰ Gambrino, p. 2.

⁴¹ Gambrino, pp. 1-10.

⁴² H. Wayne Morgan, America's Road to Empire. The War With Spain and Overseas Expansion, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. xi.

the decades passed into the 1880s, American businesses became more involved in the Cuban economy concentrating on the sugar industry and its continued development. The close proximity of Cuba and the United States made this arrangement logical compared to the long shipping distance back to Spain.⁴³

For Cuba economic development hinged on its sugar export while retaining good trading relations with the United States. The trading relationship also benefited American businesses as the public demanded its product. Sugar continued to be the major investment during these years as hundreds of Americans lived and worked in Cuba. By the mid 1890s, American firms had developed a \$100 million market for their investors. While Stearns County editors may not have had this extensive knowledge of Cuba, they occasionally published news reports that brought awareness of the colony's condition and its trading relationship to the United States.⁴⁴

Cuban conditions dictated a difficult business climate. American businessmen were concerned over Spanish rule and its unstable environment that had developed for centuries. Since the 1500s, Spain's imperial presence controlled every facet of Cuban life. Throughout the next three centuries most Cubans faced this policy that resulted in daily struggles for survival and limited economic opportunity. The late nineteenth century was no exception. For the native population this created an endless cycle of attempts to improve their living conditions, while American firms sought assistance from Washington

⁴³ Barbara Stuhler, Ten Men of Minnesota and American Foreign Policy 1898-1968, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1973), p. 22.

⁴⁴ Holbrook, p. 1; Stuhler, p. 22; New York Times, 14 March 1898.

politicians to rectify the situation. This circumstance brought American newspaper reporters to the island to raise public awareness to the situation.⁴⁵

While contained primarily to Washington politicians and national business interests during the 1870s and 80s, awareness of the Cuban plight had spread to a broader audience by 1895. That year the Cubans had attempted yet another revolt; New York newspapers were extensively involved in its coverage. These papers assigned aggressive, adventurous correspondents to uncover the Cuban revolution for American readers and at times fabricated stories to sell newspapers. This type of coverage tainted the newspaper industry's reputation as yellow journalism tactics despite the fact that many were authentic events.⁴⁶

Although conflicting sources often appeared as to the extent of the revolution, most papers reported it rather casually. The *New York Times* reported, "The most alarming Cuban revolutions have occurred in New York for many years--in speeches."⁴⁷ The *New York Tribune* reported, "It is doubtful whether any real attempt has been made to raise the standard of revolt in any quarter of the island. Revolutionists are most numerous and demonstrative in the cigar factories of New York or the cafes of Key

⁴⁵ Stuhler, p. 22; Trask, pp. 1-6.

⁴⁶ Brown, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

West."⁴⁸ These statements suggested how Cuban Americans supported intervention as newspapers elaborated their island coverage and its implications.⁴⁹

In 1895 two events occurred in Cuba that expanded newspaper coverage nationally. One involved Ten Year War veterans José Martí and Máximo Gómez and their new revolutionary philosophy. These Cubans realized Spain intended not to improve their economic opportunity, and they renewed their revolt while seeking assistance from the United States mainland. Thus, the Cubans anticipated American media reports to generate public support for an intervention. Cubans like Gómez also comprehended that they could not win an all-out campaign against Spain; he simply did not have the resources to accomplish this task. His Cuban Army forces totaled only forty thousand troops at its peak, thus limiting a conventional military operation against the numerically superior Spanish forces based on the island. Cubans instead focused on a guerrilla war that targeted commercial outlets to cripple the economy. Transportation routes, sugar crops, and communication lines became likely objectives for quick, Cuban ambush attacks. Impacting business profits, these targets became newsworthy stories for American interests.⁵⁰

A year later, newspaper coverage increased by the Spanish appointment of General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau. After a disappointing year under Spanish General

⁴⁸ Brown, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Trask, pp. 23-29; Brown, pp. 103-114; Richard L. McCormick, The Party Period and Public Policy. (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 263.

Martínez de Campos, the crown appointed Weyler to command military operations and end the bloodshed. His primary goals were to end the hostilities, retain Spanish imperial control, and avoid an American military entrance to the war. Within a week of his appointment, Weyler introduced his controversial reconcentration program that resettled the rural Cuban population to areas near military installations.⁵¹

Primarily affecting the rural population, resettlement's design forced people to live in enclosed encampments. The program's intentions included the following: limit Cuban population movements, limit access for Cuban revolutionaries to these camps while reducing arms and supply lines, restrict Cuban intelligence from possible sources, and develop rebel sympathy for those detained in the camps. The *New York Times* reported, "We cannot be at rest when Cuba is in convulsions. The struggle of her people to be free would at any time excite our ardent sympathy . . ."⁵²

Like their fellow countrymen, Minnesota citizens became interested in this human-interest story because they felt a moral obligation to improve the difficult conditions in Cuba. Similar to the nation at-large by late 1897, St. Cloud papers gravitated to this plight, and Weyler's reputation was severely damaged by the press due to his policy implementation. Colin Macdonald commented on this impression of Spanish authorities,

The sunshine of hope penetrates the gloomy darkness which has long hung like a pall over poor Cuba and the hearts of the long suffering, the starving and dying are made

⁵¹ Trask, pp. 1-11.

⁵² *New York Times*, 14 March 1898.

joyful by the thought that at last this great nation will aid them and punish their tyrannical and brutal rulers.⁵³

This sentiment illustrated the American position and commitment to the islands. The *New York Times* stated, "We can not turn back," signified a moral public obligation that emphasized United States involvement.⁵⁴ Others, such as Secretary of State John Sherman, echoed Macdonald's statement. Sherman said before the Senate, "If the people of the United States are informed of its condition, there is no earthly power that will prevent the people of the United States from going over to that island and driving from Cuba these barbarous robbers and imitators of the worst man who ever lived in the world."⁵⁵

While United States action appeared more likely, Weyler's reconcentration program generated two principal Cuban outcomes. The first was its grim affect on the population and the second was consistent American press coverage. Estimates by 1898 claimed nearly 100,000 Cuban casualties. These Cuban death numbers varied from different newspaper reports and were often exaggerated. For example, the *New York World* and the *New York Journal* reported death counts to be as high as 400,000. These overstatements also included fictitious battles, grossly overstating Cuban living conditions, and atrocities against Americans which produced a credibility issue with

⁵³ *St. Cloud Times*, 30 March 1898.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, 30 March 1898.

⁵⁵ *St. Cloud Times*, 2 March 1898.

competing papers that damaged public trust. The *New York Times* responded to this industry trend of the Cuban story.⁵⁶ The paper stated:

It is unlikely there has ever been in the history of the world such an epidemic of shameless public lying as has been going on in New York . . . The liars are not in the least abashed by the refutation of their lies. They do not pause to parley or dissemble nor take the trouble to support their lies of yesterday, or even of this morning. They abandon them to their fate, and occupy themselves with concocting new lies for the later editions.⁵⁷

Despite New York newspapers and their yellow journalism tactics, Cuba's population had endured a severe hardship. United States Congressmen toured Cuba and investigated the conditions on behalf of the country. Regardless of newspaper embellishments, Congressmen encountered a difficult situation. Weyler's reconcentration camps were noted for poor environment, inadequate food supplies, and poor medical facilities. Macdonald's *St. Cloud Times* reported to his readership regarding Utah's Congressmen King, who toured the region in December 1898. King stated, "I made it to learn just what conditions were and I found that no one has ever half depicted the awful horrors of the reconcentrados. These people, naked and emaciated, are still dying like sheep in the streets of the towns where they are huddled."⁵⁸ King's words reinforced the American commitment to the islands, especially on humanitarian and political grounds. Spanish reform policies had still not materialized so the public became impatient with President McKinley's efforts to resolve Cuba's condition as a third party negotiator.

⁵⁶ Trask, pp. 23-29; Brown, pp. 103-114; McCormick, p. 263.

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, 1 March 1898.

⁵⁸ *St. Cloud Times*, 12 January 1898.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND CUBAN ISSUES

When William McKinley achieved his landslide victory in 1896, he entered the Presidency with optimism and continued hopes for economic improvement. His appeal was widespread, drawing allies among business and labor. Alvah Eastman described McKinley's popularity with the American public: "Organs of political candidates devote unlimited space to the utterance of their favorites, but when newspapers without regard to party bias publish speeches of public men there is something in them for the general reader."⁵⁹ Despite these accolades, McKinley suffered from poor communication, not only with congressional leaders but the public as well. Historian H. W. Morgan states, "The President practiced his seasoned calm, talking in generalities in private, saying nothing in public."⁶⁰ Like his predecessor Grover Cleveland, McKinley attempted to maintain peace with Spain while improving Cuban humanitarian conditions.⁶¹

McKinley's immediate foreign policy concern was the Cuban turmoil and its successful resolution. The President stated as he entered the Presidency:

We have cherished the policy of non-interference with the affairs of foreign governments . . . It will be our aim to pursue a firm and dignified foreign policy which shall be just and impartial, ever-watchful of our national honor and always insisting

⁵⁹ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 26 March 1896.

⁶⁰ Morgan, p. 20.

⁶¹ Lewis L. Gould, The Spanish-American War and President McKinley, (University Press of Kansas, 1982), pp. 6-7; Brown, p. 104.

upon the enforcement of the lawful rights of American citizens. We want no wars of conquest. We must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression.⁶²

Statements such as this haunted McKinley later during the Spanish War, especially from Democratic criticism. Perhaps underestimating American public will by 1898 or optimistically wishing for a Spanish compromise, McKinley was confronted with a series of events that slowly changed his policy of non-interference. His gradual departure from his early statements created an avalanche of pressure from the both the public and the press. Local editors followed a similar pattern, especially as Macdonald pursued his own aggressive policy.⁶³

As the pressure mounted, McKinley pursued a deliberate pattern with Spain by respecting its imperial integrity but seeking to rectify the growing list of American grievances. His strategy was persistent, gradually seeking reforms and patiently waiting for Spanish implementation. McKinley outlined his Spanish policy toward Cuba in his first annual message. He rejected the following options: recognition of Cuban belligerency, Cuban independence and American intervention. However, this policy drew criticism, even from party supporters. The *Brainerd Tribune*, a Republican paper, commented, "The weakness and timidity which characterizes the attitude of the administration toward Spain and the bloody butcheries in Cuba is humiliating in the extreme to every liberty-loving American, regardless of political belief."⁶⁴

⁶² Brown, p. 104.

⁶³ Brown, p. 104; Trask, p. 21.

⁶⁴ St. Cloud Times, 23 February 1898.

Within several months, newspaper debate also included public discussions and increased congressional pressure on the President for a Cuban resolution. Instead of demanding immediate compliance, McKinley encouraged Spanish humanitarian reforms in Cuba and an end to reconcentration. In early January 1898, reports had surfaced regarding the deteriorating Spanish American relationship. The *St. Cloud Journal-Press* covered the crisis stating, "The talk in congress, in the corridors and committee rooms and in the offices of high officials has taken a warlike tone during the past week, and there is considerable apprehension in various quarters that there may be hostilities between this country and Spain."⁶⁵ Eastman defended the President's Cuban policy, however, with this editorial, "Just now the people who like to see their names in the papers-eekees of cheap notoriety-are busy denouncing the president because he does not declare war on Spain, or do something equally foolish or sensational."⁶⁶ Despite McKinley's patience, events beyond his control occurred that added an almost inevitable course toward war.⁶⁷

REASONS FOR WAR THAT INFLUENCED PUBLIC OPINION Steps Toward War, the Moral Issue and Intervention

Cuban Independence

Groundswell support across the country focused on an appropriate American military response to aid the suffering Cubans. In Stearns County, Macdonald and

⁶⁵ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 27 January 1898.

⁶⁶ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 24 February 1898.

⁶⁷ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 27 January 1898, 24 February 1898.

Eastman shared their opinions on intervention and Cuban independence. Their combined support reflected a unified position among the local editors with the exception of May, who believed the venture was not an American priority. Eastman stated his understanding of the United States position on Cuban independence. He said:

The war on our part, for it may come to war, should be for the protection of the weak from the savages of Spain, and not for self aggrandizement or the acquisition of more territory. The United States does not want Cuba, and it should not be annexed to this country under any condition. But the civilization of the closing days of the nineteenth century demands that the kind of warfare now being waged in Cuba be stopped, and that this oppressed isle be given an opportunity to work out its own salvation.⁶⁸

During this period, Eastman's opinion differed slightly from that of other Republicans. For example, Senator Davis advocated a more aggressive American policy that included imperialistic elements. Eastman's differing perspective illustrated Republican inconsistency in its policy toward Cuba and was compounded by McKinley's prolonged silence on the Administration's objectives.

Macdonald mirrored Eastman's stance while further explaining the importance of Cuban independence. He stated:

Armed intervention on the part of this nation in the Cuban affair without recognition of independence would place this government in a most peculiar position, one that would untenable, it seems to us. Cubans object to our intervention in their war with Spain, unless we recognize the independence that they are and have been struggling for. Let there be a declaration of Cuban independence.⁶⁹

Macdonald clearly voiced his position that Cuba should be independent, and the United States should grant them that right. Eastman, while stating they should have the

⁶⁸ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 24 March 1898.

⁶⁹ St. Cloud Times, 13 April 1898.

opportunity to form their own government, never committed to an open declaration by the United States. While subtle, this difference formed the foundation of later complex issues, such as that of the Philippines, that divided the St. Cloud editors.

With political affiliations aside, Macdonald and Eastman complemented each other on their Cuban perspectives. Excluding May, most Minnesota newspapers seemed to endorse American intervention. The situation's complexity was evident, however. Other events such as the *U.S.S. Maine* explosion, killing nearly its entire crew, further produced public anxiety about intervention, and newspapers played a major role in fostering this sentiment.

The U.S.S. Maine Incident

Since October 1897, President McKinley had grappled with a solution to recent threats against American interests in Havana, Cuba. As the diplomatic relations became strained, McKinley realized efforts must be taken to initiate Spanish compliance to American demands. Beginning in January 1898, he eventually decided to resume the prior common practice of friendly visits by U.S. Navy vessels to Cuban ports.⁷⁰

During this period, the *St. Cloud Times* and *Journal-Press* began extensive coverage of Cuban events, perhaps realizing the critical nature of the situation. Both Macdonald and Eastman utilized syndicated news reports and analyzed the developments through their respective editorials. They both had reported to local readers McKinley's

⁷⁰ Trask, pp. 24-25.

intention to reduce further tension while encouraging progress in negotiations for all parties involved.

The *U.S.S. Maine's* mission was twofold. McKinley wanted to provide higher security for American citizens and business operations in Cuba while reducing the growing tension with Spain. The President reasoned the reintroduction of naval visits would not be controversial. This conflicted with the opinion of American Consul-General Fitzhugh Lee, who was stationed in Havana. However, the President had his allies. Secretary of the Navy John D. Long agreed with McKinley and concluded the mission would prevent further difficulties for Americans in Cuba. Long confessed the potential risks stating, "There is, of course, the danger that the arrival of the ship may precipitate some crisis or riot; but there is far less danger of this than if the ship went in any other way."⁷¹ Despite the mixed opinions, the vessel arrived in Cuba by late January, but an unrelated event had a tremendous influence on its mission.⁷²

On 9 February, the *New York Journal* published a private letter written by Enrique Dupuy de Lome, the Spanish minister in Washington, that contained his impressions of the Cuban situation and President McKinley himself. Originally intended for Jose Canalejas, a friend and publisher of de Lome's, the letter's, the interception by Cuban sympathizers, proved fatal for the Minister's career and added a growing anxiety to the already tense situation. The note contained slanderous remarks about McKinley and an understanding of the two countries' problem over a Cuban solution. His

⁷¹ Trask, p. 25.

⁷² Trask, pp. 24-29.

estimation of McKinley proved fatal and created an American public backlash. De Lome stated:

Besides the ingrained and inevitable bluntness with which is repeated all that the press and public opinion in Spain have said about Weyler, it once more proves what McKinley is, weak and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd, besides being a would-be politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party.⁷³

Most Americans viewed this as a tragic event that slighted the country's leader. Macdonald and Eastman both were appalled; to the amazement of many citizens, McKinley refused a public rebuttal of de Lome's attack. In fact, McKinley admitted de Lome's resignation was unfortunate due to his able diplomatic ability.⁷⁴

While the event marked an additional element to the already tense environment, it also produced the first in a series of major disagreements between Macdonald and Eastman that occurred throughout the war. Macdonald initiated the attack striking at the President's character while illustrating his growing frustration for a Cuban solution. He explained in a February editorial, "Yes, De Lome wrote that letter. We did not think he could be so great a fool. And yet, he told the exact truth; but then, it was not diplomatic to describe the President so accurately."⁷⁵ Eastman reacted to Macdonald's editorial with words of his own. He countered, "The popocratic editors who endorse the sentiments expressed by that Spanish our, De Lome, are as contemptible as he is."⁷⁶ The back and

⁷³ Trask, p. 28.

⁷⁴ Trask, pp. 24-29.

⁷⁵ St. Cloud Times, 16 February 1898.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

forth comments signified a new intolerance level for the two editors. The de Lome event did not linger, however.

On the night of 15 February, the *U.S.S. Maine* exploded, killing 266 crewmembers. Six days after the *New York Journal* published the de Lome letter, Americans now faced the reality that their servicemen had been killed in action over Cuba. Compounded with the past weeks' events, the *U.S.S. Maine* casualties had elevated the public's desire for American intervention. McKinley appreciated the public's concern but he preferred to uncover the truth to the event before making an official American response. In his typical methodical manner, McKinley patiently gathered the most experienced experts available for an extensive naval investigation of the explosion. However, the investigation took considerable time, resulting in the public's angry desire for an immediate American retaliation against the perceived perpetrator, Spain.⁷⁷

Macdonald fueled the local controversy as he targeted both McKinley and Eastman through extensive editorials. By quoting Eastman's words first, Macdonald introduced his disgust of the de Lome and *U.S.S. Maine* incidents. He stated,

With characteristic consistency, Bro. Macdonald of the Times condemns President McKinley's foreign policy, and commends W.J. Bryan when he endorses the course pursued by President McKinley. With characteristic consistency, the Journal Press misrepresents. If it refers to the present wait of the administration, until the court of inquiry reports, we emphatically endorse the same. But should it be found that the Maine disaster was due to Spanish treachery or agency and McKinley's foreign

⁷⁷ Holbrook, p. 2; Trask, pp. 28-29; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 17 February 1898.

policy should be favorable as is the J.P. to accepting a money indemnity, then we oppose such a craven-hearted policy with every fiber of our being."⁷⁸

Macdonald's anger and frustration continued, as he preferred a more aggressive American response. His column included anything related to McKinley even to the point when the President's pastor was scrutinized. Macdonald wrote the Reverend Hugh Johnson's words regarding the growing public sentiment for war,

Even if it is proven that the cause of the explosion was through the official authority of Spain and diabolical treachery, a cool, dignified determined demand would serve the nation better than to rush unnecessarily into warfare with all its horrors. It is consistent with the Christian spirit to cause blood to flow when other methods are entirely satisfactory.⁷⁹

Macdonald commented on Johnson's remark by writing, "And this craven and cowardly statement was made by the President's minister, probably in his hearing. America has not many persons even among men of peace who would advocate condoning the official murder of our brave seamen."⁸⁰

While Macdonald continued his attacks against McKinley, Eastman refrained from any extensive defense for the President, as his editorials had remained brief. However, he did offer a response in March that hinged on McKinley's desire to wait for the naval investigation to be completed before any American response was enacted. Eastman stated, "There seems to be no reasonable doubt that the destruction of the Maine was from Spanish treachery. But this matter should be absolutely determined by the court of

⁷⁸ St. Cloud Times, 9 March 1898.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

inquiry--and when their report is made there will be prompt action on the part of the administration."⁸¹ Reminding his readers to trust the President and a direct response to Democratic criticism, Eastman supported McKinley's deliberate pattern to investigate the probable cause before any American action was implemented.

Throughout March, public pressure mounted, reflecting an impatient tone with McKinley's policy. Without an American response by mid March, Democratic papers like Macdonald's *Times* remained critical. About the seemingly extensive inquiry and the restrained desire for war Macdonald commented, "Mr. McKinley was a little slow in getting in touch with the sentiment of the country, but now that he has got there, let us all hope that no backwards steps will be taken by him."⁸² Even Republican papers like the *Brainerd Tribune* offered their disappointment, stating, "If President McKinley has any backbone, he had better use it at once."⁸³ Macdonald added, "Well, so far he has not given any evidence that he possesses any such thing as a spinal column. The weakness and timidity which characterizes the attitude of the administration toward Spain and the bloody butcheries in Cuba is humiliating in the extreme to every liberty-loving American regardless of political belief."⁸⁴ Macdonald's strong words for an honorable response to the *U.S.S. Maine* and Cuban relief clearly defined his early war objectives. With public

⁸¹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 3 March 1898.

⁸² *St. Cloud Times*, 16 March 1898.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

support, these newspaper attacks persisted throughout March and carried into April as events led toward war.⁸⁵

Economic Expansion

While McKinley's leadership was questioned throughout early 1898, other Republican Party notables pursued grand visions of their own for the United States. Including influential individuals such as Theodore Roosevelt, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and Naval historian Captain Alfred T. Mahan, these expansionists desired collectively to build the United States into a global power. These visionaries sought a powerful U.S. Navy to secure routes for American goods, especially to the lucrative Far East and China markets. Another influential member of this group was Senator Cushman K. Davis of Minnesota, who believed this policy was necessary for United States economic stability and security into the twentieth century.⁸⁶

However, war concerns and the accompanying economic expansion were not favored by all Republicans and business interests. Business executives such as Andrew Carnegie or railroad magnate James J. Hill voiced their dissatisfaction that the war itself would damage any economic recovery experienced throughout the country. For example, railroad executive General Grenville M. Dodge stated to McKinley that the United States

⁸⁵ St. Cloud Times, 16 March 1898.

⁸⁶ Ivan Musicant, Empire By Default, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), p. 9; John R. Procter, edited by Richard E. Welch, Imperialists vs. Anti-Imperialists. The Debate Over Expansionism in the 1890s, (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1972), pp. 4-5.

could ill afford the war risks unless it had to defend its honor. Dodge also believed war with Spain might draw other European powers into the conflict, placing the United States in a difficult military position. While these typical Republican supporters opposed Cuban intervention, they remained a sideline minority in the public's desire for war.⁸⁷

Imperialism and the Monroe Doctrine

Coinciding with economic expansion, imperialism and the Monroe Doctrine were significant elements in newspapers that influenced public opinion for war. Newspapers combined imperialism with Manifest Destiny elements which carried considerable weight among Republicans and Protestant leaders, who perceived the insular expansion in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and eventually the Philippines as an evangelistic opportunity. Locally, Eastman followed suit with these elements but refrained until mid-summer 1898 from fully exposing them. Eastman often combined characteristics of imperialism and Manifest Destiny, either from confusion or by simply adapting a definition that suited his interpretation of the unfolding war events. However, Eastman was not alone in this perception.⁸⁸

Imperialism and its Manifest Destiny elements attracted economic, military, and religious visionaries to its philosophy. By the 1890s progressive development grew for continental expansion to insular methods. Historian Richard E. Welch stated:

Only as the decade of the nineties moved towards its conclusion did insular expansionism become a movement possessed of perceptible popular support, and even then no single component of the American public-not manufactures, the merchant

⁸⁷ Stuhler, pp. 15, 18; St. Cloud Journal-Press, 13 January 1898; 10 February 1898.

⁸⁸ Fredrick Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 231-247; Healy, pp. 34-35.

importers, or the investors of capital-was united in urging the acquisition of an overseas colonial empire. Movements, however, need not have the allegiance of a clear majority to begin or to succeed, only to continue and survive. As the nineties wore on, the voices of missionaries in search of converts, politicians in search of allegiance, and investors in search of markets joined the early propagandists of naval power and diplomatic activism to form a pressure bloc of growing size and influence.⁸⁹

Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge envisioned America as a strong, global power. Imperialism was essential in Lodge's vision as he related to the Panic of 1893 and its damaging effects on the American economy. He believed the United States should attain its rightful position among the world's nations stating,

America must demand its rights and play its destined role as a world power. It must assume a greater burden of responsibility for the spread of civilization through the dark corners of the world. America must have naval bases and coaling stations; she must control essential sea-lanes and transisthmian canal. Only so could she perform in the 20th century the role necessary to her responsibilities to civilization and to her own well-being. There was no option to growth but decay.⁹⁰

Clearly, Lodge's new foreign policy vision contained elements not practiced by the United States previously. These Republican aims were combined with other prior policy issues that had been exposed to Americans for decades.

Since the James Monroe Presidency in the 1820s, the Monroe Doctrine had circulated in American policies. The Doctrine's importance had been well established with the Venezuelan boundary dispute with England, the impending Central American canal plan, and a growing United States mistrust of European powers in the Western

⁸⁹ Richard E. Welch, *Imperialists vs. Anti-Imperialists. The Debate Over Expansionism in the 1890s*. (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1972), pp. 4-5.

⁹⁰ Welch, p. 7.

Hemisphere. An undeclared policy by Congress for over seventy years, it exemplified American values and opinions in the late nineteenth century.⁹¹

The newspaper combination of imperialism, Manifest Destiny, and the Monroe Doctrine adapted to the Cuban circumstance was instrumental in the war effort against Spain. St. Cloud editors similarly combined these principles. Eastman wrote in 1898,

We commenced this war on humanitarian grounds . . . We must keep clear of entangling alliances. For the present, at least, all the conquered territories must be held by the United States. It may be in time the people of these islands can become self-governing. We are committed to that policy as far as Cuba is concerned, although the outcome is not hopeful. The position this nation occupies is one of grave responsibility to the human race. The question is not what to do, but what is our duty? To be responsible for the governments in the East and West Indies is not pleasant or profitable task. But fate, which is but the will of God, has given the United States the work to do and there is no escape from it.⁹²

Eastman's combination of these complex meanings provided an insight to the numerous influences surfacing during the early prewar period. Editors gathered information on this development and attempted to interpret its meaning for a public eagerly anticipating any political or military action against Spain. The implementation of imperialism, Manifest Destiny's elements, and upholding the Monroe Doctrine all combined to further pressure McKinley to act against Spain.⁹³

Macdonald's Monroe Doctrine interpretation stressed the significance of "no foreign alliances," a belief the American founding fathers preached as the country was

⁹¹ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 14 July 1898.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

formed. He reiterated words from George Washington: "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connections as possible."⁹⁴ The Doctrine's American importance and its European perception also were critical during the period. Americans believed European powers such as England and Spain should not enlarge their colonial empires. Troubling circumstances like Cuba reemphasized the Doctrine's importance. Macdonald explained, "To this day they [European countries] have not conceded our right to maintain it. President Cleveland reaffirmed it in his message upon the Venezuelan question and England came nearer acknowledging our position than has any other nation."⁹⁵ Macdonald's solution for Cuba was based on a similar philosophy. Spain must relinquish political control because it was unable to provide security for American interests in the region.⁹⁶

Macdonald referred to the Doctrine's importance throughout 1898 and prophesied his future objections to the Philippine issue later in the year. He stated,

The sheet-anchor of the Monroe doctrine was our implied pledge or declaration that we would not extend our possessions to include foreign territory, and, therefore, would not permit foreign acquisition of further American territory. Once we go beyond American lines, we disregard and cast to the four winds the advice of Washington, and wipe out the Monroe doctrine.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ St. Cloud Times, 13 July 1898.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

The perceived power that Americans had for their status in the Western Hemisphere was clearly apparent for St. Cloud editors. Both Macdonald and Eastman agreed to the principles and most Americans shared this sentiment. Independence status for these colonies, however, raised different American interpretations. Cuba had the benefit of the Teller Amendment that promised their independence, but other Spanish possessions came into question, including Puerto Rico and the Philippines and their ability to govern themselves. Thus, the Monroe Doctrine and its assimilation into imperialism blurred and often confused newspaper editors' interpretations.

With the war's outbreak in April 1898, these issues climaxed into American foreign policy. Newspapers remained an essential element for public discussion on war issues, relating their complexity for local readers. While the newspapers and the reading public assumed a rapid victory over Spain, they underestimated the war's alteration in American foreign policy. President McKinley was at the forefront of this change, but his reserved personality added to the confusion about United States direction. Without McKinley's taking a decisive stand, newspapers opened speculation of their own by raising numerous options based on their political orientation.

As the public became aware of these issues and their role in the war, Stearns County residents decided to form a volunteer military company. Through a sense of loyalty, political duty, and newspaper influence, the community formed its fighting force in a short period. This signified a local commitment to the national cause, a cause Stearns County residents believed to be for Cuban relief and for honoring the mission of the *U.S.S. Maine*.

Chapter II

STEARNS COUNTY PUBLIC SUPPORT AND MILITARY FORMATION

As March 1898 concluded, President McKinley realized war with Spain was virtually inevitable. His efforts for peace included countless hours of negotiation with Spanish officials, which appeared hopeless against the endless tide of public pressure for intervention. During this period, the naval commission's report was publicly announced without any concrete evidence of what caused the *U.S.S. Maine*'s tragic blast. St. Cloud newspapers, like those of the rest of the country, concluded Spain was directly responsible for the explosion, further encouraging the public's desire for war. McKinley's position through this tense environment appeared to leave him few options other than war for a Cuban solution.

Keeping stride with the nation's sentiment for war and reprisal for the *U.S.S. Maine*'s sinking, Stearns County residents supported action despite hesitation from Gerhard May and his influential *Der Nordstern*. From February on, the escalating war sentiment displayed through the *Times* and *Journal-Press* stimulated a growing desire for American intervention on the local level. Even Spanish Minister de Lome noted the American level for war, stating, "The news from Havana is not improved. If it continues it will cause the situation here to change."¹ Influenced by newspapers, Stearns County

¹ *St. Cloud Times*, 16 February 1898.

residents were stimulated to participate in a war and local action produced a movement to form a volunteer militia company.²

Macdonald and Eastman were crucial in this process. Their newspapers extensively promoted the war by reporting the issues to the public. Obstacles were evident, however. The community did not have an active National Guard unit, a decisive disadvantage due to the rapidly developing events toward war. They relied on their political influence to promote their cause. Local Republican elements within St. Cloud provided this presence and exercised their influence with Minnesota Governor David M. Clough.³

The community realized an efficient local organization was essential and must be developed within a short period. Organizers understood the laborious task of gaining acceptance into the National Guard due to the limited positions available and the tremendous competition from other Minnesota community units desiring the same opportunity. Governor Clough added to this apprehension stating to McKinley in a letter, "Minnesota can furnish you three first class regiments in short order."⁴ Through newspapers, local Republicans spearheaded an intensified effort throughout April to secure local participation in the war.⁵

² Carol A. Mayer, Editorial Opinion in Minnesota's German Language Weeklies, 1890-1920, (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State College, 1974); St. Cloud Times, 16 February 1898.

³ Franklin Holbrook, Minnesota in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, (St. Paul: Minnesota War Records Commission, 1923), p. 15.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Holbrook, p. 15; St. Cloud Times, 6 April, 13 April 1898.

COMMUNITY LEADERS AND LOCAL WAR SUPPORT

Community organization appeared on two fronts. First, prominent Republicans from St. Cloud contributed their political access to state officials such as Governor Clough. This influence allowed the Stearns contingent an opportunity to declare their intentions for company formation and its admittance into a National Guard regiment. Clough's background was important for this to occur as he was well acquainted with Minnesota's past. He was a long-time Minnesota resident and served in public office for nearly twenty years as a state senator, lieutenant governor, and eventually the governorship in 1896. Through this environment, Dolson B. Searle, and Loren W. Collins, along with Senator Ripley B. Brower, arranged conferences with the Governor that proved essential in achieving a final National Guard position for Stearns County. Aside from their political connections, all three had a strong desire to serve their country.⁶

The second aspect was the actual military drive that encouraged potential recruits to come forward and volunteer. To lead the company, the community chose Captain James E. McKelvy, the Stearns County Sheriff and a former U.S. Cavalry soldier. The Army veteran assumed the responsibility of arranging elements needed to raise a volunteer company in a relatively short period. His initial role encouraged recruits to come forward, utilizing St. Cloud newspapers to inform the public regarding the company's formation.⁷

⁶ George E. Hallberg, The Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota 1897; St. Cloud Times, 6 April, 13 April 1898.

⁷ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 28 April 1898.

During the formation process newspapers provided the key information source to the public. Politicians realized the press's importance. Senator Davis commented, "In my opinion, the origin of this peculiar power of the newspaper is very recent."⁸ Davis realized the press's power to spread information to the public and influence its opinion. Without Macdonald and Eastman's backing, the local effort to fill the militia's ranks would probably have been unsuccessful. The editors' interests in Cuban reform, support for the *U.S.S. Maine's* redemption, the formation of a militia company reached the public through their commentaries and feature articles. In essence, the papers stimulated a grassroots desire to participate against Spain. Their subtle political differences were set aside for the patriotic movement before them. The effort of both Republican and Democratic papers encouraged the local population to participate against Spain. The recruits themselves included both Republicans and Democrats, illustrating widespread public support. The names on the final roster appeared from numerous occupations and ethnic origins from throughout the county. Even May's disapproval did not discourage Stearns County Germans from enlistment.⁹

As the movement progressed through the political channels at the state level, the community relied on an experienced leader to accomplish the actual local recruitment. James McKelvy, the Stearns County sheriff, was familiar to residents not only for his community position but also for his military service and family name recognition. His experience surpassed that of any Stearns County resident ready for active military duty.

⁸ *National Printer-Journalist*, (Chicago, Vol. XVIII; No. 1, January 1901), p. 18.

⁹ *St. Cloud Times*, 7, 21 April 1898; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 20 April 1898; Macdonald biography file, Stearns History Museum, 235 33rd Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN 56301; Eastman biography file, Stearns History Museum; *National Printer-Journalist*, p. 18.

McKelvy's attitude voiced the optimism of the period. He stated, "The only thing we are praying for is a crack at the Spaniards, so that we can show our friends in St. Cloud that she is well represented. We hope that you will hear good reports of us in the field."¹⁰

This sense of pride, commitment, and duty were all elements that drove the local population. They sought not only glory in battle, but honor at home for the county's statewide reputation.¹¹

McKelvy's occupational influence came from his father James M. McKelvy, who was a Civil War veteran and a respected attorney in St. Cloud. In this environment, the junior McKelvy gained influence from prior family experiences and its accompanying status. McKelvy attended St. Cloud public schools and emulated his father's military service by enlisting in the U.S. Army when he was just eighteen years old. McKelvy's military experience saw steady advancement from Corporal to Battalion Sergeant-Major as he participated in numerous Indian wars in the American West. His military life transferred into his private occupation when he completed his tour commitment. When he returned to St. Cloud in 1892, he accepted a position at the police department and later in the decade performed the sheriff's duty for Stearns County.¹²

As 1898 progressed and Cuban complications appeared to be leading toward war, James E. McKelvy, 33 years old, was a seasoned community leader. His dedication to the military profession and law enforcement, inspired in part by his father's influence, rekindled another military tour as a volunteer captain for his home county in a war with

¹⁰ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 21 July 1898.

¹¹ McKelvy biography file, Stearns History Museum; St. Cloud Journal-Press, 21 July 1898.

¹² St. Cloud Times, 1 August 1884; James E. McKelvy biography file, Stearns History Museum; St. Cloud Journal-Press, 21 July 1898.

Spain. Political influence would be necessary, however, to assure a Stearns County position in one of the state's three regiments. The community relied on these political channels for successful admittance of their company into the Minnesota National Guard.¹³

Loren W. Collins, a successful attorney in St. Cloud, quickly established himself as a leader during the volunteer company formation process. A Civil War veteran and active party member, Collins' Republican connections with state leaders provided Stearns County residents the opportunity to propose their militia formation intentions. In reiterating his Civil War experience to the Spanish War period, Collins stated, "There was the same public demonstration, and the same hearty cheers, as greets you boys today."¹⁴ With local support, Collins' past accomplishments proved his capabilities to the task before them.¹⁵

Through available political opportunities, Collins served St. Cloud as a multi-term mayor in the 1870s and early 1880s, while developing strong local community ties. His commitment and popular support equated to the successful economic expansion evident throughout the city. In 1898 his popular appeal, state political connections, patriotism, and his Civil War connections inspired him to aid in a Stearns County's volunteer company. Due to his strong belief in the improvement of society, Collins stated, "the fitting place for man to die is when he dies for man," a commitment drawn from his Civil

¹³ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 27 August 1908; Martin E. Tew, Official History of the Operations of the 13th Minnesota Infantry, U.S.V. in the Campaign in the Philippine Islands, (1899), p. 85.

¹⁴ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898.

¹⁵ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898; Loren Collins biography file, Stearns History Museum.

War experience that fit the Spanish-American War period.¹⁶ However, other influential citizens stepped forward before the community to assist the patriotic cause.¹⁷

St. Cloud attorney Dolson B. Searle also provided his political influence to assist the company's formation. Searle's wisdom, connections with prominent Republicans both at the state and national levels, and his perseverance greatly benefited the community's militia campaign. He related his past Civil War experience to the nation's political environment in Cuba and its imperial ruler, Spain. He said,

We old soldiers who know and fully appreciate what is involved in this crisis have for the past few months watched seriously, the gradual rise of that dark war-cloud and hoped that the storm might blow over. Once more the people of this country witness another spontaneous uprising of a great people.¹⁸

Searle's past evoked national commitment and loyalty to serve the country when a crisis appeared. Leading by example, Searle inspired action to this perceived patriotic cause.¹⁹

Liberal in philosophy, Searle supported broad public enterprises for the common welfare. He took pride in being a Grand Army of the Republic member and was highly civic minded. His community service through public and private ventures added to his impressive resumé. During the Civil War, Searle received a combat injury that restricted his military service. Undaunted, he accepted a position in Washington for the remainder of the war; working closely with top Republican officials including President Lincoln.

Inspired by events in Cuba and the belief to assist the nation, Searle joined his colleagues to participate in the upcoming war. Building upon his over twenty years of

¹⁶ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898.

¹⁷ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898; Loren Collins biography file, Stearns History Museum.

¹⁸ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898.

¹⁹ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898; Dolson B. Searle biography file, Stearns History Museum.

public service in Minnesota, he promoted the community's militia effort to the highest levels in the state by utilizing his political connections. Searle's influence and acquaintance with local district's young senator Ripley B. Brower was another important element if Stearns County was to succeed.²⁰

Ripley B. Brower, the twenty-nine year old state Republican senator from St. Cloud, also displayed this emotion found in his peers. His father, a Civil War veteran himself, possibly influenced his views in the escalating Spanish crisis over Cuba. For Brower, Cuban humanitarian concern was an important element to support intervention. He described his sentiment during the time, "As Americans you are responding to the call for troops inspired by the most patriotic sentiment that can move a human heart. The love of country has ever animated the American breast."²¹ Brower's local description concluded public sentiment supported a war against Spain while illustrating the important humanitarian element that inspired the volunteer formation.²²

Through Macdonald and Eastman, these individuals promoted their efforts for an active role in the war with Spain. For many, past Civil War experience seemed a critical aspect in forming the local militia company. Inspired by national unity, honor, and the desire to become involved, local veterans stepped forward to serve their country again. Cuban sympathy and its presentation in local newspapers certainly influenced this reaction. Theodore Roosevelt's statement, "If it wasn't wrong I should say that personally I would rather welcome a foreign war", best expressed Stearns County's goal

²⁰ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898; Searle biography file, Stearns History Museum.

²¹ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898.

²² *Ibid.*

to serve this noble adventure.²³ The local population, possibly inspired by this type of rhetoric, followed a similar path instrumentally led by these patriotic veterans.

With the exception of Macdonald, Republicans dominated the political effort to form the company. These connections also illustrated the distinct absence of the German Democrat representatives, especially in rural Stearns County. The political effort lacked their participation, even though many German residents volunteered to fill the ranks of the military company. Macdonald's avoidance of mentioning any rural Democrat state representatives such as Valentine Batz of Holdingford, William F. Donohue of Melrose and Frank Benolken of Freeport illustrated the prominent St. Cloud role in the company's formation.

A conceivable explanation for this shortcoming was the difference between local Republicans and the rest of the county's political interests. This distinction between St. Cloud politicians and their war motivations was not shared as enthusiastically with their rural colleagues who were struggling with complicated agricultural issues such as prices and freight costs for their products. Typically, Stearns County Germans had limited war experience because their arrival had not yet occurred to America or they lacked the state political connections local Republicans enjoyed. The differences, while dramatic, changed as the contagious enthusiasm for war reached all points of Minnesota. Newspapers throughout the state filled these gaps as readers learned the issues surrounding Cuba and developed a desire to serve their country. As the opportunity for

²³ H.W. Brands, *T.R. The Last Romantic*, (New York: Basicbooks, 1997), p. 289.

intervention neared for Stearns County, a significant barrier faced the local company's formation due to its association with the National Guard system for military duty.

THE NATIONAL GUARD AND THE US ARMY

The political push by Eastman, Macdonald, and St. Cloud Republicans to join the swelling number of Americans supporting war intervention relied on state and national connections to make the company a reality. The successful formation of Stearns County volunteers and their quest for military involvement depended on the powerful position of both the Minnesota National Guard and their nationwide contemporaries in military affairs. Historian Franklin Holbrook described the National Guard sentiment by stating, "Guardsmen everywhere discussed the probability of war and the prospect of the guard being called out, the volunteer bill was followed with keen interest."²⁴ These forces, many outside their influence and control, were often beyond newspaper coverage. State and national military events such as National Guard news were occasionally reported locally, but many issues were absent. Macdonald and Eastman either did not have the resources to investigate them or perhaps avoided their inclusion into their editorials as other issues demanded a higher priority.

Nonetheless, national military affairs played a significant role in Stearns County's ability to participate in the war. Historically, St. Cloud never had a local militia

²⁴ Holbrook, pp. 14-15.

organization that continually operated in the nineteenth century. Periodically, area residents had discussed militia formation but either lack of interest or need dispelled its implementation. During 1898 interest appeared again but this time with the potential for active service. A potential roadblock to their vision involved the U.S. Army. Congress debated the Hull Bill, a major Army reform effort that restricted the National Guard's role in potential Cuban military plans.²⁵

Prior bill versions had been attempted unsuccessfully by Regular Army reformers for nearly twenty years. The basic disagreement between the two military organizations centered on the National Guard's legal right to fight an offensive military campaign. Army interpretation of the U.S. Constitution restricted state militia groups to fight only in defensive military actions. Conversely, Guard officials viewed their rights as any action needed to protect national security or intervention such as Cuba. As a result of two differing positions, a political battle ensued between the Army and the Guard that determined the accessibility for local units and the right to actively participate in the war. The decision, with tremendous political ramifications for many officials at local, state and national levels, determined Stearns County's fate in the war.²⁶

After the *U.S.S. Maine's* explosion in February 1898, many state governors informed McKinley and other Washington officials regarding their National Guard strength by inflating troop readiness and military condition. Minnesota Governor Clough followed suit as he cabled a New York newspaper inquiry in late April by stating, "From present indications I would say Minnesota could furnish 341,762 soldiers, which was the

²⁵ Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire*. (University of Missouri Press, 1971), pp. 90-91.

²⁶ Cosmas, pp. 90-94.

entire vote cast in this state for presidential candidates in 1896."²⁷ These overstatements and even over-confidence came from newspapers and the general public. Clough clearly exaggerated his troop estimation but his point was important. Public endorsement supported the war, and Minnesotans obviously wanted to participate in its involvement. As the Cuban crisis neared closer to war in late March, governors across the country assured Washington officials and President McKinley regarding the readiness of their units despite the known deficiencies.²⁸

Early in 1898, the battle between the National Guard and the Army interests reached New York papers. The *New York Times* described the importance of cooperation between the two military groups and their position about the need to expand the Regular Army with professional soldiers rather than volunteers. The *Times* stated in April,

We are all agreed that the war with Spain, if it must come to that, must be short and sharp and decisive. But with respect to the land forces, the co-operation of which is admitted to be essential, the case is otherwise. We do not need volunteers under political Colonels. We had them in 1861, and the effect of employing them was an enormous increase in expense in time and money.²⁹

State governors disagreed, however. They realized the change in the meager federal forces to a larger standing Army would alter the National Guard's role in the Spanish war. Their power base included influential members in the National Guard, members of Congress, and local state officials. To prevent this change, governors utilized their

²⁷ Holbrook, p. 14.

²⁸ Holbrook, p. 14; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 23 April 1898; *St. Paul Globe*, 23 April 1898; Cosmas, pp. 12-13; Ivan Musicant, *Empire By Default*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), p. 235.

²⁹ *New York Times*, 17 April 1898.

tremendous political power with their colleagues in Washington to prevent major reform.³⁰

When the military structure was discussed nationally, local newspaper coverage remained limited. For *St. Cloud Times* and *Journal-Press* editors, they never comprehended the magnitude of the power struggle occurring in Washington. Its absence was logical. Macdonald and Eastman avoided the topic because its militia formation was merely in its infancy, thus making the story an irrelevant sideline to the many other breaking stories available to publish in their respective papers. Instead, Macdonald and Eastman focused on local events such as military formation or pressing national issues as the *U.S.S. Maine* reprisal.³¹

While many state politicians worked to retain National Guard power, other elements in society favored progressive Army reforms. The *New York Times* criticized Congress's efforts to retain the military system that they perceived was ineffective during the Civil War. The *Times* commented:

It is the business of those who can speak with authority to tell Congress that the way to fight Spain, if Spain is to be fought, is to increase the army, to entrust the recruits to professional officers, and not to authorize the addition to the professional force of 100,000 amateurs.³²

Despite this interpretation, most in the general public retained their war enthusiasm. The *New York Times* believed that volunteers and the National Guard lacked proper training, strict discipline, and officer experience. The *New York Times* concluded these were

³⁰ *New York Times*, 17 April 1898.

³¹ Cosmas, pp. 89-100.

³² *New York Times*, 17 April 1898.

significant reasons for concern. The last major hurdle for area residents transpired in Washington, D.C. as the Army attempted to restrict National Guard power in their assertion to participate in Cuba.³³

The proactive response by the National Guard had begun building nationally since the *U.S.S. Maine* explosion in February. Some states prepared supply inventories and had drawn mobilization plans in anticipation to the President's call for troops. When word spread regarding the bill's proposals, states aligned their Congressional representatives to block its passage. Their principal disagreement to the Hull Bill centered on the National Guard's role in Cuba. State governors resented the suggestion that their troops would be eliminated from combat in a war backed strongly by the public. Instead, the Army preferred National Guard members to enlist in the regular ranks as individuals if they desired military action. So strong was Army resentment that a National Guard member of New York's 7th Regiment promptly stated:

One of the reasons that we would not go willingly into the Regular Army is that we would have to serve under West Pointers. For a self-respecting American of good family to serve as a private, corporal or sergeant under a West Point lieutenant or captain is entirely out of the question . . . To fight for my country as a volunteer in the regiment that I love would be a glorious pleasure, but to serve in the Regular Army and do chores for some West Pointer-well, I would rather be excused.³⁴

This autonomy and independence from federal authority was commonplace among National Guard members nationwide. Minnesota's situation was similar. The National Guard's achievement in defeating the Hull Bill continued the quest for military preparation. With the door open for their war involvement, National Guard units concentrated on organizing their military forces while accepting a compromise with

³³ *New York Times*, 17 April 1898; Cosmas, pp. 90-98.

³⁴ Musicant, pp. 241-242.

Army reformers in a modified reform bill. This version had minimal requirements for most Guard members, such as terms of service and physical standards. However, the Hull Bill failed in its major attempt to reform and limiting National Guard involvement. By April its compromised format retained the National Guard power and thus assured Guard members an opportunity to fight against Spain.³⁵

MCKINLEY'S SPANISH ULTIMATUM

As the National Guard successfully defended its military position, McKinley's complications continued with Spain. To encourage Spanish compliance with American demands to improve Cuban conditions, the President had set an ultimatum date for 6 April. Even this date passed, however. The public viewed the delay as another attempt to prolong the inevitable; thus, McKinley's poor press image continued. McKinley decided to postpone his prepared speech by one week hoping for any Spanish compliance while simultaneously alerting Americans in Cuba to evacuate the country. This political maneuver only furthered public anger. The public's wish for war became McKinley's burden and a determined force he was unable to overcome.³⁶

Newspapers, Congress, and the public had all pressured McKinley for months to set a date for Spanish compliance with American demands in Cuba; but the President had arguable reasons for the postponement that were not properly explained in newspaper

³⁵ Holbrook, p. 15.

³⁶ Lewis L. Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley*, (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1980), pp. 84-85.

accounts. A primary concern for McKinley was the safety of Americans living in Havana and their timely departure home. The possibility of anti-American riots before this could occur was extremely high, and McKinley preferred to reduce this risk. However, the press negatively reported his deferment. McKinley failed to disclose these issues, however, and many Democratic papers like the *St. Cloud Times* condemned his action.³⁷

On 11 April the long awaited ultimatum address arrived in Congress. McKinley remained a diplomat and always sought to avoid war. His address reflected this philosophy by avoiding any confrontational tone against Spain. McKinley's Spanish ultimatum included the following goals: 1) the futility of further diplomacy with Spain regarding Cuban humanitarian improvements, 2) the continuation of American commercial rights and for the safety of American workers while restoring trading relations between the two countries, and 3) to improve American strategic rights in the Western Hemisphere, in reference to the Monroe Doctrine.³⁸

McKinley described the problems he had diplomatically with Spain. He had sought peace ever since his inauguration in 1896. In this spirit, he declared,

The long trial has proved that the object for which Spain has waged the war cannot be attained. The fire of insurrection may flame or smolder with varying seasons, but it has not been and it is plain that it cannot be extinguished by present methods. The only hope of relief and repose from a condition which can no longer be endured is the

³⁷ Gould, pp. 84-85.

³⁸ Ibid.

enforced pacification of Cuba. In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of endangered American interests which give us the right and the duty to speak and act, the war in Cuban must stop.³⁹

McKinley explained his future intentions for the two countries by stating,

I have directed that the findings of the court of inquire and the views of this government be communicated to the government of her majesty, the queen, and I do not permit myself to doubt that the sense of justice of the Spanish nation will dictate a course of action suggested by honor and the friendly relations of the two governments.⁴⁰

McKinley's closing words opened the door for further newspaper and public criticism. The public preferred an aggressive tone; one that would both honor the *U.S.S. Maine* casualties and defend Cuban hopes was instead met with a deflated appeal for friendly relations.⁴¹

Congress and the American people reacted to the President's ultimatum "with intense interest and profound silence," while many others were in a state of disbelief.⁴² The President's words provided little incentive as a patriotic message for Cuban humanitarian issues or in response to the *U.S.S. Maine* incident. Democrats, disappointed with the President's stance, quickly spoke against the ultimatum's soft tone. Texas Senator Joseph W. Bailey explained, "It is the weakest and most inconclusive speech sent out by any President."⁴³ Utah Senator Joseph L. Rawlins stated, "The message is weak,

³⁹ *St. Cloud Times*, 13 April 1898.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Morgan, p. 58; *St. Cloud Times*, 13 April 1898.

⁴² Gould, p. 47.

⁴³ Gould, pp. 47-49.

impotent, imbecile and disgraceful."⁴⁴ Disgusted, the Democratic press similarly chastised the ultimatum's tone.

Local Democratic newspaper reaction followed suit, disappointed at the mere suggestion of his words. Macdonald, frustrated with McKinley for some time stated in a *Times* editorial writing,

These are the words in which the President of the United States informed the Spanish government of the murder of 268 brave American seamen, and the destruction of a great battleship. He talked about the sense of justice of a people who had committed this wholesale slaughter of American citizens; he referred to honor and friendly relations with a government whose subjects had blown up the noble Maine and gave its men as food for the sharks in Havana harbor.⁴⁵

A dejected Macdonald, who anticipated an aggressive Spanish rebuttal, was left emotionally empty from McKinley's address. Even Republicans shared the disappointment. New Hampshire Republican Senator William E. Chandler added, the "President's message on Cuba-disappointing."⁴⁶ Others included Ohio Senator Joseph B. Foraker, who said, "I have no patience with the message, and you can say so."⁴⁷ The widespread disappointment was clearly visible within both parties, as the American people expected a stirring address for war.⁴⁸

Many Republicans simply did not comment publicly about the address or if they did it was supportive in nature. Republican Page Morris, Representative of Minnesota's Sixth District which comprised Stearns County, was one such individual. A Duluth

⁴⁴ Gould, pp. 47-49.

⁴⁵ *St. Cloud Times*, 13 April 1898.

⁴⁶ Gould, p. 81.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Gould, pp. 81-90.

resident and former judge, Morris commented positively of McKinley's address. He said, "I have all along been confident that President McKinley would meet the demands of the people, and I still believe that when his message is read on Monday it will be found that I have not been mistaken."⁴⁹ Page's supportive remarks aided McKinley's reputation but the public damage had been completed. Public sentiment favored a war with a sense of urgency, and McKinley's unoffensive expression toward Spain produced a national backlash.⁵⁰

While the President experienced a poor public image during April, loyal Republican member Alvah Eastman published a supportive article before public backlash appeared. The article's headline stated, "Patriotic Message, President McKinley Sends His Message to Congress and the Country Will Approve."⁵¹ After the public's majority response appeared negative to the ultimatum, Eastman simply replied, "Congress will sustain the president and the people will sustain both."⁵² To bolster the President's local image, Eastman related McKinley's circumstance to past presidents such as Lincoln or Washington and their accomplishments through their difficult terms. Even Representative Page acknowledged the President's difficult public image. He commented, "I have the fullest confidence in him, and know that he is actuated by the motives of the loftiest patriotism, and believe that the dignity and honor of the country are safe in his hands, and that he will ultimately receive the endorsement and support of

⁴⁹ St. Cloud Journal Press, 12 April 1898.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ St. Cloud Journal Press, 11 April 1898.

⁵² *Ibid.*

the people."⁵³ Page's belief in McKinley's political ability to survive his criticism surely reinforced Republican morale. Political difficulties remained, however, and Democrats such as Macdonald pursued their initiative against the President's policy.⁵⁴

Despite voices of criticism, Republicans and their newspapers countered by defending the President and the party's patriotism. Eastman never expanded this theme to any extent until early summer when the Republican position became clearer to him. These instances, both from Macdonald and Eastman, were probably linked to the lengthy distance to Washington, D.C. During this period, the unfolding political divisions between Republicans and Democrats were more evident at the national level than in Stearns County. Both editors remained committed to war, with only subtle differences in policy. Thus, Macdonald's and Eastman's editorial views portrayed their similarities more clearly than their differences. This would change, however, but only after their volunteers had departed for the front.

COMPANY M AND MINNESOTA'S NATIONAL GUARD

I had great hopes that the war cloud would break, and that the young men of Minnesota would have an opportunity to gain glory on a field of battle, but it seems now that the eastern money men will intervene and prevent war. Under such circumstances I feel sick at heart.⁵⁵

- Adjutant General Herman Muehlberg, Minnesota National Guard.

Despite the momentary disappointment for Adjutant General Herman Muehlberg, war appeared closer for his three Minnesota National Guard Regiments than he realized.

⁵³ St. Cloud Journal Press, 13 April 1898.

⁵⁴ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 11 April 1898; 13 April 1898.

⁵⁵ Holbrook, p. 12.

Resembling other prominent figures during the period, the Carver County resident was a surveyor by trade but never departed far from his Civil War experiences. Since 1893, Muehlburg had served as the Adjutant General with consecutive Republican governors who shared his party affiliation. Because of the Civil War passion he possessed, Muehlburg sought Minnesota participation in the war to confirm past accomplishments of the state's military.⁵⁶

Under Muehlburg's command, Minnesota's National Guard was composed of approximately two thousand members in three regiments of infantry, an artillery battalion and a medical corps. The Guard's heritage, rooted in the successful Minnesota regiments during the Civil War, rekindled military aspirations as the Cuban crisis approached war. Individual applications poured in from around the state in the hopes they could fight against Spain's injustices and reprisal for the *U.S.S. Maine's* explosion. Many existing local units offered their support to Muehlberg. In addition to new inquires, Civil War veterans utilized their local G. A. R. chapters to provide a large, supportive voice that also offered their services in any means possible to state officials. Volunteering their services not only signified a national commitment but their belief in the Cuban cause. While Stearns County officials had not been accepted into the Guard, their determination to serve illustrated how far newspaper influence had spread in less than three months.⁵⁷

As service requests reached his office, General Muehlberg responded with the following address to Guard members on 31 March. He announced:

⁵⁶ Holbrook, pp. 11-13.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

It is with feelings of gratitude and pride that the Adjutant General takes this method to acknowledge receipt of offers-both verbal and written-of services to the United States, should the same be required. The splendid spirit manifested by you demonstrates that your labor as soldiers has not been in vain and that, when the country needs you, you are ready to respond and willing to leave your homes and families, lay aside your ordinary occupations and do what men may to uphold the dignity and honor of our country.⁵⁸

Muehlberg's statement illustrated not only the public's desire for war but also the manner in which patriotism had spread beyond newspapers.⁵⁹

The Adjutant General's order reiterated the importance of the fact that war had not been declared officially and that only presidential approval allowed National Guard mobilization for overseas duties. He also stated plainly to the public the conditions by which the Guard could serve in Cuba. The President may call National Guard troops under the following conditions: 1) support the laws of the United States; 2) to repel invasion by a foreign power and 3) to suppress rebellion or insurrection. With the criteria open for National Guard service, Stearns County organizers realized their opportunity. Muehlberg's address explained Minnesota's military situation with the National Guard. It stated,

The companies of the guard are not all filled and the governor has had this order issued so that the guard may be in readiness to respond to orders from the national government. What those orders will be I cannot say. We have received no instructions as yet. On a war footing the guard, as now constituted, will number about 3,500. The recruiting will be done by captains of companies, who will take any means they may see fit to recruit their companies. The most feasible way is to place advertisements in the papers.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Holbrook, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Holbrook, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁰ St. Cloud Times, 20 Aug. 1898.

State company commanders and potential new companies received this preliminary news with great enthusiasm.⁶¹

Minnesota newspapers, already captivated by the prewar activity in 1898, patriotically added possible recruitment information for local volunteers. Captains immediately issued notices declaring their need for recruits. Newspapers provided the most logical means to reach potential volunteers. On 17 April, St. Paul Commander Captain Edwin S. Bean, Company D, First Regiment summoned "sixty able-bodied men" and was "jubilant" after his notice became "the first in the state to call for recruits."⁶² Other communities such as Stearns County reached its climax as well during this period. There, the militia development had become headline news.⁶³

March's final week produced tremendous interest in Stearns County as residents attempted to form its own company. As the community proceeded with its company formation process, both the *Times* and *Journal-Press* provided event coverage. Macdonald described the early days of organization, as discussions on local street corners appeared to indicate excitement for possible volunteers. He stated,

There is a movement on foot among a number of young men of this city to organize a militia company in this city. The war talk has set a number of young men to thinking and they have concluded that the time is ripe to organize a big company. Efforts in that direction are now being made.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Holbrook, pp. 11-13.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *St. Cloud Times*, 20 April 1898; Holbrook, pp. 11-13.

⁶⁴ Holbrook, p. 14.

The story received a quiet column near the bottom of the page, but its importance gained more prominence in future installments.⁶⁵

Alvah Eastman's account was slightly more in-depth, perhaps due to his Republican source connections. His perception provided insight to what area officials expected to receive from the National Guard. He stated:

Some of the young men about town are very much interested in the organization of a militia company. In view of the patriotic feeling abroad in the land just now and the probability that the state would do something handsome in the way of equipment in uniforms, arms, etc., there has been a decided revival in the interest. St. Cloud is one of the few larger towns in the state with no military company. There are perhaps a half dozen young men in the city who would join such an organization who have been members of a military company and many one of whom is competent to act as drillmaster.⁶⁶

Once official notice was received publicly from Adjutant General Muehlburg, the Stearns County community activated its efforts to begin recruitment. Early notices appeared in the local paper describing potential volunteer's procedures for enlistment. The *St. Cloud Times* reported a McKelvy notice by stating, "Sheriff McKelvy this afternoon began taking the names of young men who want to enlist in the proposed company of National Guard. Sheriff McKelvy will keep his office open until his company is filled."⁶⁷ Notices such as these produced quick results. The following day McKelvy received fifty potential names for the volunteer company. This not only illustrated newspaper influence but citizen awareness and interest in national affairs.⁶⁸ Out county communities such as Clearwater, Melrose, and Albany reported to McKelvy

⁶⁵ Holbrook, p. 14.

⁶⁶ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 7 April 1898.

⁶⁷ *St. Cloud Journal Press*, 20 April 1898.

⁶⁸ *St. Cloud Times*, 20 April 1898, 21 April 1898, 23 April 1898, 25 April 1898.

about the possibility of their inclusion for recruits. Rural Stearns County interests occurred despite May's opposition and appeared to have little influence on potential volunteers. Including out county interest, McKelvy's numbers within a short time had swelled to over two hundred applicants.⁶⁹

The next three weeks reflected the political power of local Republicans at the state level. Searle, Eastman, and Collins utilized their connections by meeting state officials including Governor Clough and Adjutant General Muehlburg. After these meetings, state officials were convinced of the local effort over other competitors throughout Minnesota. They granted Stearns County their company and the right to join the Minnesota National Guard. In the last week in April, Stearns County residents received the news they had anticipated. McKelvy, upon the Governors authority, received the commission as the company's captain and had two days to report at St. Paul's state fairgrounds to begin the mustering in process. McKelvy wired the county jail with the jubilant news. He stated in patriotic fashion, "Tell the boys to rally round the flag. I have got my commission. Leave Saturday morning. Jim."⁷⁰ The successful trek to St. Paul indicated the influence of St. Cloud Republicans. In less than a month, they had their militia company not only formed but assigned to a regiment as well.⁷¹

The confirmation notice created a stir of activity for local residents for the next few days. Volunteers assembled in St. Cloud, a committee was formed to plan a

⁶⁹ St. Cloud Times, 20 April 1898, 21 April 1898, 23 April 1898, 25 April 1898.

⁷⁰ St. Cloud Times, 28 April 1898.

⁷¹ Ibid.

departure ceremony, and St. Cloud decorated its buildings in patriotic colors. On returning to St. Cloud from St. Paul, McKelvy approved the officer request of Leigh D. Bruckart, a former St. Cloud resident who became lieutenant in the company. Employed at the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Bruckart wanted to serve in his hometown unit. Within a short time Henry Limperich also became the company's other lieutenant as the company command structure developed.⁷²

For the rank and file, several hundred gathered to fill the one hundred available company positions while hoping to meet Regular Army standards. Volunteer ages ranged from the late teens to those in their thirties. McKelvy's troop standard followed a simple motto. He stated, "I want young men, well and strong and good shots."⁷³ McKelvy's military experience was an added benefit for the local community. His knowledge and organizational skills readied the men within two days for mobilization in St. Paul. While McKelvy attended to the company's physical details, the community immediately began preparations for the company's departure.⁷⁴

On 30 April broke with a drizzly rain, a morning the *St. Cloud Times* declared, "Wet as were the eyes of many loved ones left behind."⁷⁵ The downhearted tone depicted the realization of the moment. Families and friends struggled with the unknown as their volunteers prepared for war. Regardless of the morning rain, thousands gathered at the

⁷² *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 12 October 1899; Tew, p. 85.

⁷⁵ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

Stearns County Court House Square in St. Cloud's downtown where the initial ceremonies commenced. Inner city buildings draped in red, white, and blue provided additional patriotic spirit as the participants witnessed a parade, enjoyed a dinner for the volunteers, and listened to guest speakers wish "goodspeed" to the volunteers.⁷⁶

However, initial public sadness at the moment was replaced by war enthusiasm. Along the parade route thousands of people cheered as the procession passed by demonstrating their resounding support. The column trudged through the muddy streets to Fifth Avenue's Mitchell Building where the veterans broke into chorused cheers encouraging each other in echoed repetition. At the Davidson Opera House, a one-thousand-seat theater on 5th Avenue South, the volunteers arrived to hear words from the distinguished panel of local guest speakers. Seating was limited but its message reached beyond the building's walls. Here the public stated their convictions, goals, and patriotic sentiments regarding the war to a gathered assembly as well as hopes for a speedy return.⁷⁷

Several community leaders spoke at the Davidson Opera House. Their theme centered on Civil War glories, Cuban humanitarian issues, the *U.S.S Maine* incident, and the public support for the volunteers. The speakers included prominent individuals of the St. Cloud area. Colin Macdonald, Fred Schilplin, D. B. Searle, Lorin Collins, and Ripley Brower shared their views of the war and why America became involved in Cuba. Generally, the speakers reiterated that the United States did not seek material gain or conquest, and they assumed a speedy victory for American forces. They compared the

⁷⁶ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898; *St. Cloud Journal Press*, 12 October 1899.

⁷⁷ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

situation to the Civil War. These words echoed the local sentiment of the period. What remained unsaid were the complex elements in national circles that sought economic expansion or the potential political issues in American foreign policy such as imperialism. This vision, clouded by both physical and political distance, laid the foundation for future public disagreement. Macdonald and Eastman, both at this time standing side by side for war, never imagined the extent of future division between them. Nonetheless, the local population focused on the immediate task at hand: winning the war against Spain, Cuban relief, and a safe return for their volunteers.⁷⁸

Colin Macdonald, as commander of the McKelvy Post of the G. A. R., opened the speaking segment. His status within the community was well established and his perception of duty was apparent. He said,

Captain McKelvy and Company, This gathering of our citizens, the decoration of our public buildings and business places, and the demonstration of today in your honor, bespeak in the appreciation which our people feel at your brave conduct in volunteering at your country's call.⁷⁹

Macdonald drew from his own war experience and the duty to serve his country. The *Times* editor believed strongly in national unity and military duty. As a veteran he knew war's hardship but he accepted his risk for the well-being of the country. For the present moment, Macdonald set aside his political disappointment with President McKinley and instead preached for a unified front against Spain.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898; Patrick M. Daniel, *Nativism: A Comparative Study*, Colin F. Macdonald, (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 1998), pp. 66-70.

Macdonald's patriotic introduction was followed by Fred Schlipplin, a local businessmen working for the *St. Cloud Times*, who added his encouragement.

Representing St. Cloud Mayor McDonald, Schlipplin summarized war fever. He said,

You leave us for the field of honor; you are the chosen ones, and I know that you will pardon the friends who envy you. The breath of war is in their nostrils as well as your own, and should the fortune of battle require your succor, as we pray it may not, yet should your country be still further threatened, rest secure, my friends, that you are but as the hundred of the thousand that will follow your patriotic example. Your friend the mayor wishes me to say to you . . . Remember the Maine. He would have you known as the "Granite Boys" of the First Minnesota, the unterrified fighters, as invincible as the granite ledges upon which our city has been reared.⁸¹

Schlipplin addressed the military goals of the campaign and reasons why the troops volunteered. The *U.S.S. Maine's* sinking motivated many local individuals to volunteer. The local work ethic to fight and accomplish victory, belief in improving the society and desire to serve their country perhaps influenced the population's widespread support.⁸²

Patriotism also drove remarks reiterated by Civil War veteran D. B. Searle. The successful attorney and influential Republican stated his thoughts on the reasons for war. He declared,

Today, after more than a generation of peace, this country is again involved in a cruel war. Never before in the history of this country have we witnessed such manifestations of pure genuine patriotism as we see among the young men of today . . . We had hoped that the insanity of war was not to visit this country again, . . . We have waited patiently to ascertain whether this occurrence was the most remarkable accident that ever occurred in history, or whether it was one of the most diabolical crimes ever committed against this nation, the people of this nation have in my judgment become satisfied to a moral certainty that there was Spanish complicity in the blowing up of the Maine . . .⁸³

⁸¹ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Belief such as Searle's that the *U.S.S. Maine* was sunk by Spanish treachery provided the necessary fuel to drive many Americans toward Cuban intervention. Like Macdonald, Searle also believed in duty and loyalty toward the country's call. His battle experiences knew the dangers of war involved but also subscribed to the country's benefit verses individual losses. While both Searle and Macdonald preached duty and honor, Lorin Collins drew on the reality of war for front-line troops.⁸⁴

Collins informed the gathering about the seriousness of entering combat and foretold the volunteer's experience about war and its dark side. Drawing on his Civil War experience, Collins argued that patriotic sentiment was different from actually performing a soldier's duty. He proclaimed, "To the officers I would say: Care well for your men. See that they get good rations and plenty of them . . . And to the boys: You are not going to have very much fun, and it will not be very generally distributed. It will be no picnic. You go for business."⁸⁵ Collin's perception differed greatly that of the previous speakers. Instrumental in state influence and a war supporter, he nonetheless spoke about the grim realities of war.⁸⁶

While Collins spoke about war's condition, Ripley B. Brower concluded the ceremony by stating the importance of the Cuban plight with Spain for Americans. As the local representative, Brower utilized his statements to give McKelvy a flag in remembrance of the community. He stated:

My countrymen, it was written upon the state book of humanity by the direction of an Infinite Wisdom that it should be the destiny of this grand country to free Cuba from the infamy and cruelty of Spanish rule and Spanish domination. History has seldom

⁸⁴ Searle biography file, Stearns History Museum.

⁸⁵ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

recorded similar wars of intervention. We seek no territory: We are desirous of none of the political spoils of battle. Our government is fighting for the independence of a people made kin to us, made dear to us... In the name of the citizens of this city and in behalf of all our people I present to you this flag. We give it to you as a representative of this city and of this county.⁸⁷

Brower's comments finalized the ceremony, drawing on America's moral issue for Cuban independence that most influenced the general public initially toward intervention. To fight for their freedom, as many Americans believed in this noble act, differed from that of many officials who envisioned new opportunities for the country. Brower's statements also provided the prophecy for the political division that spawned throughout the country by July 1898. Along with his fellow speakers, the panel also illustrated the complex meaning the Spanish war had for the American citizenry. Combined with McKinley's quiet and often unclear political and military objectives, the public was left with local newspaper attempts to interpret the complexity of these goals amid their party biases.⁸⁸

As the troops departed toward St. Cloud's railroad depot, thousands lined the rain soaked streets to cheer their volunteers. It was fitting to leave on a rainy day, a glimpse of future battle conditions encountered in their military assignment, the Philippines. Trudging through the muddy St. Cloud streets, the volunteers hoped Cuba would be their military assignment for front-line action. Instead, as they entered the railroad cars with booming cannons, their duty took them to the Philippines, a country most had little idea of its location. Brower's words foretold what the community expected of them. He said, "Take it and when you are in your camp or when you are arm to arm and shoulder to

⁸⁷ *St. Cloud Times*, 4 May 1898.

⁸⁸ Brower biography file, Stearns History Museum.

shoulder with the boys in blue beneath its curling folds remember that the friends at home are thinking of you and longing for your safe and speedy return."⁸⁹ Community support, did not anticipate the future implications.

Due to newspaper perception and widespread public sentiment that Spain's defense of Cuba would be short-lived, Americans believed the war's length would be brief. The departure also escalated Macdonald and Eastman's division. Throughout the remainder of Company M's service, they dueled for public influence while Gerhard May remained quietly on the sidelines. McKinley's silence on his foreign policy plans to the public initiated some fertile ground for political divisions. After May 1898, the Spanish held Philippines, an island Archipelago 8,000 miles west of California, became familiar to most Americans due its military objective.

⁸⁹ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898.

CHAPTER III

WAR MOBILIZATION AND NEWSPAPER REACTION

The empire county of Stearns will be represented in the struggle. The county with 60,000 population will not be behind its fellows in its demonstration of patriotism. It has not been derelict in its offer of goodwill but the fates have all along apparently been looking the other way when St. Cloud and Stearns County raised its hand.¹
- Alvah Eastman.

For local residents the departure of Stearns County volunteers signified a new level of national commitment. Experienced across the country as volunteers mobilized for war, this sentiment was shared by the American public. In early May Stearns County volunteers began training at Camp Ramsey in St. Paul as the first major war news reached the American public from the Pacific. Commodore George Dewey and his Asiatic Squadron accomplished a convincing victory over the Spanish fleet in the Philippines by destroying their operations in Manila Bay. Americans accepted this news with patriotic excitement. Many citizens, however, did not have any prior knowledge of these islands 8,000 miles from America's west coast.²

¹ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 28 April 1898.

² Franklin Holbrook, Minnesota in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection. (St. Paul: Minnesota War Records Commission, 1923), pp. 8-11.

Unlike coverage of the Cuban situation, the American press avoided extensive newspaper coverage. The United States decision to attack the Philippines was a strategic military maneuver, and its implementation was planned several years previously. The implications, however, enabled imperial minded Republicans to pursue their ambitious American visions.³

After Dewey's victory, Americans faced political questions regarding its governing issues. As they developed throughout 1898, newspaper editors, politicians, and the public raised questions on possible political solutions. Unlike the Cuban circumstance where Americans had emotional and economic ties for decades, the Philippines produced an immediate political debate on American involvement. Initial responses ranged from selling the islands to annexation. From strategic military objectives, political goals, business incentives, and the Philippines, these additional elements complicated American war aims. The war was not just about humanitarian concerns and the *U.S.S. Maine* but became an elaborate web of political forces and military objectives. The debate occurred without public input from one key figure. President McKinley's reserved pattern continued as he failed to disclose his foreign policy goals to the American public until late fall. Meanwhile, a war between Filipino nationalists and American troops further added ramifications to the Philippine policy.⁴

As local newspapers covered the rapidly changing events from May to the war's conclusion in August 1898, the public either had to support the government's actions in the Philippines or to raise questions against its motives. During these crucial summer

³ David Trask, *The War With Spain in 1898*, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 74-83.

⁴ Trask, pp. 473-485.

months it became clear to most in the public about the possibility of a new American role as a global power. While individuals such as Theodore Roosevelt and Cushman Davis had previously addressed this issue, it became a potential reality. The proponents of economic expansion, imperialism, and the Monroe Doctrine spread their messages on the heels of Dewey's victory in the Pacific.⁵

Reaction to this public awareness in early summer saw an organized grassroots movement known as the Anti-Imperial League formed in New England that opposed President McKinley's implied foreign policy. These individuals included Edward Atkinson and attracted supporters such as Andrew Carnegie, a Republican Party contributor. Composed of mainly Democrats, they raised nationwide awareness through newspapers and literature about the possible consequences of McKinley's actions. Local chapters soon formed throughout the country. Business interests offered some support, such as Carnegie, who believed war would slow recent economic gains.⁶

The local Stearns County editors reflected this growing division between Republicans and Democrats through their respective papers. While both Macdonald and Eastman supported the war, they were divided on its eventual American foreign policy and political ramifications. The gradual division reached a point where major political differences separated any common ground they previously had shared. Meanwhile, Gerhard May was isolated from the two and opposed any American intervention plans

⁵ David Healy, *US Expansionism*, (Madison, Milwaukee and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), pp. 171-173.

⁶ Edward Atkinson, *Twelve Against Empire*, edited by Robert L. Beisner, (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 104; H.W. Brands, *T.R. The Last Romantic*, (New York: Basicbooks, 1997), p. 385.

in either Cuba or the Philippines. His stand remained firm throughout the war. Nationally, his fellow German editors had a similar sentiment, voicing their objections from a working-class perspective.

At the year's conclusion, Macdonald and Eastman's debate remained intense and continued into 1899 as they defended their respected positions. The public read these opinions and formulated their own thoughts about the war and the military mission of the local volunteers. The troops themselves were caught in the middle of the controversy. Like thousands around the country these volunteers went to fight a noble adventure inspired by patriotism. Instead, they experienced President McKinley's slowly evolving political mission and an unclear military objective that extended their military service. Like the public, they found themselves questioning the American role in the Philippines.

EDITORS AND THE ROOTS OF LOCAL POLITICAL DIVISION

May and the Minnesota German War View

The Minnesota German press appeared to be consistent in its approach to Cuba and the Spanish war. From the outset, Gerhard May did not favor intervention in either Cuba or later on in the Philippines. May and many of his Minnesota German colleagues opposed American expansion into global affairs due to the possibility of risky foreign alliances, military involvement, and the deviation from pressing domestic issues. His anti-intervention stand compared with that of other Minnesota German papers that considered plans to become involved in Cuba even after the *U.S.S. Maine* explosion a risky political venture for the United States. The Minnesota German press also believed

war with Spain might expand, with European powers such as England or Germany threatening national security. The *U.S.S. Maine* incident, with its political and patriotic symbolism for American unity, failed to unite the Minnesota German press for war. Most German papers, including *Minnesota Volksfreund*, *Minneapolis Freie Presse* and *Der Nordstern*, believed that Spain could not have been responsible for the act. The *St. Croix Post*, shared with its readership that Cuba was not even worth American intervention.⁷

McKinley's war declaration brought the seriousness of the situation to Minnesota Germans. As war became a reality, May favored a rapid conclusion to hostilities, a position held by other papers at *Minnesota Volksfreund* and *Westlicher Herold*. However, war motives inspired doubts among Minnesota German editors. The *Minnesota Volksfreund* and *Minneapolis Freie Presse* maintained the war was fueled by upper class individuals seeking profits for themselves, while lower classes received nothing for their efforts. May followed a similar tone, warning his readers about lower-class sacrifices the war involved, especially for those who had to fight on the front lines. This sentiment abounded in the German Minnesota press. *Der Fortschritt* editorially explained it as "an unholy war, in which the United States could gain little or nothing at all."⁸ Other Minnesota German papers were even more critical of the perceived business

⁷ Carol A. Mayer, *Editorial Opinion in Minnesota's German Language Weeklies, 1890-1920*, (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State College, 1974), pp. 82-83.

⁸ Mayer, pp. 82-83.

interests in the war, taking it a step further. In central Stearns County, the Melrose paper *Der Anzeiger* cautioned American working class members that the war would result in their continued poverty while the "percent patriots" gained enormous profits.⁹ The *Duluth-Superior Volksfreund* conformed to this viewpoint, stating the working class bore the war's burden by "the hired servants of capital".¹⁰ It appeared the German Minnesota press was united against the war based on two criteria: pressing domestic issues and economic class disparity.¹¹

Instead of international concerns, the German press favored attention on pressing domestic issues such as agricultural problems or wages for the working class. While McKinley campaigned to address these concerns in 1896, his perceived inactivity concerning traditional Democratic issues raised doubts about the sincerity of his domestic policies. Based on 1896 election results, Stearns County support for McKinley reflected an overwhelming opposition. Two years later it would be difficult to imagine that this attitude had changed.¹²

While there were political differences between them, Macdonald and May shared Democratic values such as working class issues. Both looked with skepticism on Republican big business attitudes and the Wall Street influence in Washington politics. They questioned McKinley's perceived business connections and their influence on the war although May entertained stronger sentiments than his party

⁹ Mayer, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Minnesota Votes*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1977).

colleague. Collectively, both editors shared some policy issues within the Democratic Party platform. However, Macdonald and May represented a stark contrast in foreign policy.¹³

May's preference included a reduction by the United States in its growing foreign policy involvement. Drawn from their Stearns County German character, many local residents may have believed Cuba and its circumstance was not an interest to their lives. May certainly believed in this viewpoint. Stearns County German interests tended to be more domestic in nature, while Macdonald expanded his interest with broader foreign policy concerns like Cuba. Another major distinction between the two Democrats was the working class condition. Macdonald never explored it to the extent May did in the *Der Nordstern*. Their distinctions, while both representing elements of the local population, illustrated the complexity of the war and its differing perceptions even within the same party.¹⁴

Macdonald's War Perception

A war proponent, Macdonald had several reservations about America's foreign policy future and McKinley's ability to guide the country into the twentieth century. His *St. Cloud Times* provided an open forum for his political disagreements with McKinley. Frustrated by his subdued personality, inconsistent communication with the public, and the appearance of inactivity, Democratic papers like Macdonald's lashed out against the President with negative editorials. Macdonald often voiced his disgust with McKinley referring to his policies as a "weak and vacillating course" or "a king for Wall Street" for

¹³ Mayer, pp. 81-84.

¹⁴ Ibid.

the business interests.¹⁵ As to Minnesota's German press, Macdonald's political disappointment centered on Republican attempts to broaden American influence internationally by acquiring new territories by annexation. Macdonald viewed American expansion into Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and eventually the Philippines as seemingly a European imperialistic venture contrary to the country's foundation.¹⁶

Macdonald often criticized McKinley's policy procedures through his editorials. Like many Democrats, he perceived McKinley's slow manner as unproductive and damaging to the country's welfare. Macdonald commented on this position by stating:

The Times is not one of those papers which believe in forcing the President to overt acts of war until such time as the navy and war departments are ready for the struggle. We do believe, however, that every step taken should be in accordance with the dignity which should attach to all acts of the greatest nation on earth. A bold, firm stand is better calculated to settle international difficulties, than a hesitating, so-called diplomatic position.¹⁷

This view was even shared by Republican Theodore Roosevelt, who stated, "I am afraid that our hopes as to the Spanish business are a dream."¹⁸ These negative press comments by Republicans further damaged the President's image throughout the war. Even newspaper cartoons featured the President as unable to determine his path during the war.¹⁹

¹⁵ St. Cloud Times, 13 April 1898.

¹⁶ St. Cloud Times, 16 February 1898, 23 March 1898.

¹⁷ St. Cloud Times, 6 April 1898.

¹⁸ Brands, p. 323.

¹⁹ St. Cloud Times, 6 April 1898.

Presidential critics were extremely harsh on McKinley's leadership skills as the war progressed. Macdonald's condemning attitude against McKinley occurred frequently, but his aggressive stance ebbed and flowed depending on American-Spanish relations. His criticism was never overly extended but was constantly against the President. However, Macdonald also revealed his determination for an American victory and put aside his political differences for total victory.

While critical of McKinley, Macdonald also illustrated his perception to provide a unified public endorsement against Spain. He offered his patriotic support by making comments such as "While this nation is of one mind as to the probable war and national defense, poor Spain is all torn up with dissension's at home . . ." to emphasize his commitment in defeating Spain.²⁰ Macdonald firmly believed in national unity to be successful in war. Obtained from his Civil War experience, the Democrat rallied the local population to serve the nation's cause despite the growing differences with Republicans. One such example surfaced in April. During the Congressional debate over McKinley's ultimatum and the resulting war resolutions, both Macdonald and Eastman sparred over the actions in Washington. Macdonald wrote in some detail regarding party loyalty and the interests of the country. Macdonald's irritation for party politics surfaced during this period.²¹ He stated:

Just now, when the great heart of the nation is throbbing with quickened patriotic impulses, and with an unselfish and disinterested feeling of devotion to the true and best interests of the Union, what a shame to see the spectacle presented in Congress! We believe in the patriotism of William McKinley, but we also believe, and the country believes that he is not a free agent. He is too much hedged around by the kings of Wall Street . . . The Senate was finally obliged to recede from its

²⁰ St. Cloud Times, 16 March 1898.

²¹ St. Cloud Times, 16 March 1898; 20 April 1898.

recognition clause, the resolutions were passed by both houses and signed by the President. And now, let there be no more talk of loyalty to party no more talk of party at all, but one country and one people against our foreign foe!²²

Macdonald's patriotic commitment became so focused that he organized his objectives for area readers. He popularized a quote used from an Eastern newspaper that stated, "Every editor in the country ought to be able to endorse the motto which the Boston Post has adopted-Peace with honor, or war with victory."²³ While determined on victory, Macdonald still persisted in his attacks on McKinley.²⁴

Macdonald reflected on the public's power to pressure McKinley into military action after war was declared. He simply was unaware of the inadequate military state of the country. In any event, he aggressively pursued public opinion to influence American military operations. Macdonald believed that public opinion spread through newspapers affected Washington politics. Critical of the perceived military delays in mobilizing troops, he voiced his disapproval of McKinley politics. He said, "The administration was forced into this war by the almost unanimous public sentiment of the country, and the same power will again be brought to bear, if there shall be unnecessary delay in fighting it."²⁵ Clearly, Macdonald wanted immediate action. However, he failed to note supply delays and military planners' concern about yellow fever outbreaks during the Cuban summer heat.²⁶

²² St. Cloud Times, March 23, 1898.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ St. Cloud Times, 4 May 1898.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

There was little doubt McKinley was keenly aware of public opinion and newspaper reports against him. His personal savvy attempted to weigh these forces to best serve the country during the crisis. Charles E. Smith, the postmaster general during the McKinley administration, commented on public opinion and the President's viewpoint. Smith stated, "He led public sentiment quite as much as public sentiment led him and the popular manifestations were in response to the keynotes he struck."²⁷ Newspapermen like Macdonald believed public opinion influenced McKinley's policy implementation. Whether this was a driving force in McKinley's response to public criticism was irrelevant. Macdonald believed it true and persuaded his own writing. The war that was so wanted by the public, however, raised difficult issues for many Americans who opposed potential postwar policies.²⁸

Macdonald's principal objection was American expansionism. He supported the war effort, but he opposed potential Republican political aims such as the Caribbean and the Philippines. Issues that formed during the period fostered Macdonald's speculation and intensified after the war concluded in August. Statements by aggressive Republican politicians, such as Maine's Senator Frye, for broadening American influence, particularly in the Pacific, alerted Macdonald about America's future. Frye explained the expansionist sentiment by stating, "The fear I have about this war is that peace will be

²⁷ Ephraim Smith, *Crucible of Empire*, edited by James C. Bradford, (Annapolis, MD: Navel Institute Press, 1993), p. 207.

²⁸ Smith, p. 207.

declared before we can get full occupation of the Philippines and Porto Rico."²⁹ The conflicting atmosphere from outspoken Senators, combined with a reserved President naturally raised questions regarding the administration's intentions. Macdonald firmly believed that expansion would lead Americans to financial and political crisis much like the European powers. As a result this American policy in turn would cause domestic unrest and political turmoil.³⁰

The war's development continued Macdonald's anxiety for America's future expansionist tendencies. His editorials throughout the summer voiced his fears about the expansionist rhetoric. He quoted Senator Hoar from Massachusetts about his concern. Hoar said, "Are you going to admit the Philippine islands as states, with sixty representatives in congress and a dozen or twenty senators? Are you going to hold them as subjects, taxation and representation not going together, all men not created free and equal to live under the American flag?"³¹

Macdonald's burden over expansion was further increased by McKinley's occasional statements. In a rare disclosure, the President stated, "While we are conducting war and until its conclusion we must keep all we get; when the war is over we must keep what we want."³² In October McKinley stated that there "Is a very general feeling that the United States, whatever it might prefer as to the Philippines, is in a

²⁹ H. Wayne Morgan, America's Road to Empire. The War With Spain and Overseas Expansion, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 74.

³⁰ Morgan, p. 74; St. Cloud Times, 23 March 1898.

³¹ St. Cloud Times, 16 November 1898.

³² Smith, p. 209.

situation where it cannot let go."³³ Macdonald's fears were firmly established in how effectively the United States would govern these islands without damaging its obligation to American citizens.³⁴

Macdonald's objection to these perspectives was based on his democratic principles. His beliefs were rooted in traditional democracy where the governed choose their own government. He also theorized that if the United States exceeded beyond its borders, government's effectiveness would suffer. Macdonald said, "Upon this continent the American republic is invincible. But once we go abroad and attempt to wrest from the hungry nations of Europe, . . . we abandon our invincible fortress . . ."³⁵ For the public, expansionism gathered the numerous forces together to form the possible future American foreign policy. Meanwhile, Macdonald concluded this a dangerous precedence that potentially led to problems not only for the country but also for the acquired territories.³⁶

American expansionism created some governing issues that concerned Democrats. Democrats raised citizenship criteria for new American acquisitions and raised questions about the problem of territorial gains. Elements within the Anti-Imperial League implied that these potential citizens did not meet perceived American intelligence standards. Americans such as Carl Schurz of Wisconsin believed Cubans, Filipinos or Puerto Ricans did not have the criteria to become United States citizens. While not

³³ Smith, p. 209.

³⁴ Smith, p. 209; St. Cloud Times, 16 November 1898.

³⁵ St. Cloud Times, 16 November 1898.

³⁶ Morgan, p. 74; St. Cloud Times, 16 November, 1898.

extensively covered by Macdonald, he certainly shared Schurtz's criteria for United States citizenship. For example, Macdonald's agreement with Senator Thurston provided an illustration of this viewpoint. Thurston declared,

God forbid! I would oppose annexation with my last breath. The people of Cuba are not our people they cannot assimilate with us, . . . Let the world understand that the United States does not purpose to annex Cuba, that it is not seeking a foot of Cuban soil or a dollar of the Spanish treasury. These words are grandly patriotic and thoroughly American! Every word and line, too applies to the proposed annexation Hawaii.³⁷

Comments regarding citizenship were rare for Macdonald but its undercurrent was important. So adamant did the Democratic editor become to expansion that he regularly featured articles against the movement and featured Filipino independence quotes and American troop morale in the Philippines to illustrate his viewpoint.³⁸

Despite Macdonald's strong sentiment against American expansionism, he initially shared specific war sentiments with Alvah Eastman. Each editor favored war with Spain over humanitarian causes, Cuban independence, and the repulsion of the foreign power from the hemisphere. Macdonald and Eastman's common war bond for Cuban relief and the *U.S.S. Maine* incident were slowly being overshadowed by the looming foreign policy complications. McKinley's constrained policy certainly provided the fuel for the division. Outspoken Republicans and their noted opinions eclipsed the President's silence, sending a mixed message to the public. With few comments from McKinley, editors like Macdonald wondered who was actually formulating the country's

³⁷ *St. Cloud Times*, 6 April 1898.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

future. From April onward, decisive editorial arguments between the two became common, especially those focused upon territorial acquisitions, party influence and the Philippines.

Eastman's Expansion Logic

Through the course of 1898, Eastman gradually developed his viewpoint through his editorials. His initial war opinions early in the year quietly focused on Cuban reforms that provided direct American solutions, but July advanced to include many imperial elements. Eastman's progressive beliefs drew from the many Republican sentiments for expansion that centered on a new American image internationally. With cornerstone elements such as naval power and economic influence, especially to the Far East and China, Eastman exposed his differences from Macdonald. At the war's conclusion in August, he shared with his audience an imperialist mentality that prominent Republicans such as Davis and Lodge had promoted as a new vision for the United States.³⁹

Eastman and Macdonald's public disagreement on foreign policy occurred during the Spanish war and its future American ramifications. Similar to those of President McKinley, Eastman slowly revealed his opinions and offered Republican alternatives to Macdonald's Democratic anti-expansion rhetoric. He began to publish high profile remarks by influential Republicans who shared a vision for future American endeavors. Maine's Senator Frye was one such prominent individual who stated five specific goals. Frye remarked, "One, the annexation of Hawaii; two, the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal; three, the revival of our merchant marine; four, every possible extension of our

³⁹ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 7 July, 14 July, 21 July 1898.

commerce with foreign countries and, five, the enlargement of our navy."⁴⁰ Frye continued by stating, "to each and every one of these propositions the Democratic Party is opposed."⁴¹ Eastman revealed his support for these principles that became essential Republican postwar policies. In July the Minnesota Republican Party declared its platform which shared many of Senator Frye's aims. State party officials also added, "We desire to especially commend the wisdom and patriotism of the present administration in the management of the existing war between this country and Spain, a war . . . that is being prosecuted in the interest of humanity and for no selfish ends whatever."⁴²

In early 1898 Eastman appeared uncertain regarding his own policy views on the war. His preliminary pattern in defense of McKinley seemed inconsistent. Compared to Macdonald, Eastman either remained silent, offered a few short lines of comment, or simply avoided the war developments in his newspaper editorials. This policy gradually changed, however. Outspoken Republican leaders including Frye, Davis, Roosevelt, and Lodge, filtered their objectives through newspapers. Davis declared, "Next to China, the Pacific possessions of the U.S. are the most inviting objects of attack. The United States must become an efficient element in the Asiatic situation or it must entirely abstain from any participation in it . . ."⁴³ These types of comments influenced Eastman.

⁴⁰ New York Times, 22 June 1898.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² St. Cloud Journal-Press, 7 July 1898.

⁴³ Dwight Richard Coy, Cushman K. Davis and American Foreign Policy, 1887-1900, (Graduate Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1965), pp. 266-267.

Once war neared in March, he became more vocal on war topics and opened himself for party support especially McKinley's performance. Eastman's emergence perhaps can be attributed to a clearer understanding of Republican intentions. After March he loyally defended the President's patient conduct by comparing him to past revered American leaders such as Lincoln and his accomplishments during the Civil War. Compared to Macdonald's extensive comments, Eastman's editorials were often brief and refrained from any analysis of presidential policies. Within several months Eastman's confidence improved and expanded his writing, giving readers a greater understanding of his perspective. Influenced by Republican national leaders, Eastman followed suit and became more outspoken regarding the country's future.⁴⁴

After the *U.S.S. Maine*'s explosion, Eastman entertained an indemnity payment plan from Spain for American losses and provided insight to future political debates with Macdonald. Eastman declared his position in March, stating, "If it should prove not to have been an accident but to have been caused by some engine of destruction employed by Spanish hands, although not with the countenance of the Spanish authorities, then we would have a just demand upon Spain for an indemnity."⁴⁵ This initiated a series of back-and-forth editorial remarks with Macdonald regarding a proper American response. Macdonald countered Eastman's indemnity suggestion by writing, "Patriotic Americans want no blood-money from Spain; they want nothing short of an opportunity to give Spain such a thrashing as will for a hundred years to come cause the nations of the world to beware of an act of treachery towards the American flag or towards an American

⁴⁴ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 14 July 1898.; Coy, pp. 266-267.

⁴⁵ *St. Cloud Times*, 3 March 1898.

citizen."⁴⁶ Macdonald's aggressive tone to save national honor greatly overshadowed Eastman's calmer solution.

Macdonald followed his statement in a later *Times* edition continuing to pressure Eastman. He stated, "One thing can be set down as absolutely certain. The American people will never consent to the idea advanced by the administration of accepting money from Spain as satisfaction for the destruction of the Maine."⁴⁷ The ensuing Macdonald and Eastman dispute later reached a point where they challenged each others patriotism and loyalty.

Although Eastman utilized patriotism to garner public support for his party's viewpoint, it became a powerful Republican tool against prior Democrat attacks against McKinley. Using syndication access, Eastman published other national papers articles to illustrate McKinley support. Several examples depicted Eastman's favoritism to Republican objectives. In a syndicated article from *The New York Journal* Eastman referred to newspapers that changed from earlier viewpoints. He commented,

The Journal will soon discover that the administration had the best interests of this country at heart when it insisted that this country must get reasonably well prepared for war, before hostilities were commenced. Now that the war is on McKinley will see that it is pushed to a successful conclusion.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 9 March 1898.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *St. Cloud Times*, 28 April 1898.

Through Eastman's understanding, McKinley's experience and war savvy proved an important asset for the country's future rather than quick judgment subscribed by Democrats.⁴⁹

Eastman also emphasized the President's wisdom as the nation entered war against Spain. The loyal Republican remarked, "William McKinley and Thomas B. Reed, president and speaker are two pretty safe men to train with. The sensible people of the country will follow their lead rather making war on the president and speaker."⁵⁰ Eastman reflected how the President's plan provided dividends for the American people. He argued the President's ability to fend off criticism elevated his plan in resolving Cuba and eventually the Philippine debate. He stated, "The Popocratic senators who have been shouting so fiercely for war with Spain for the past six months turned cowards at the last moment and voted against the resolution which will free Cuba. And those are the senators Macdonald has been supporting."⁵¹ With the war's outbreak Eastman believed retaining McKinley's course proved his leadership abilities, to see potential difficulties, and provide a sound decision to American foreign policy.⁵²

Eastman, like his counterpart Macdonald, also professed the importance of American unity after the declaration of war. Specific incidents raised different perspectives from each editor. For example, Eastman and Macdonald differed over the Senate debate on the war resolutions. Republican editors like Eastman developed their

⁴⁹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 28 April 1898.

⁵⁰ *St. Cloud Journal Press*, 21 April 1898.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

stance, claiming that disagreement with the President's policy were either unpatriotic or un-American. Eastman commented on the debate for the war resolutions in Congress during April. He said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. Which faction will Macdonald follow-Bryan and the free silver senators, or Bailey and the free silver member of the house, who finally voted to sustain President McKinley and stand by the honor of the country."⁵³ Eastman's implications were clear: either follow the President and his patriotic course or be a defector against the country.

As Republicans gathered themselves for unified support, Eastman expressed his opinion about his view of Democrat disloyalty. He commented, "The Popocratic press of Minnesota is very mad because Senator Nelson jokingly remarked that no Spaniards would be elected in Minnesota this year."⁵⁴ Eastman aimed his comments at Macdonald's long standing complaints about the President. It only continued as the intense policy debate developed. He added with the same tone, "Editor Macdonald should remove to Spain where he will find plenty of people of his way of thinking. They, too, have a personal grievance against President McKinley."⁵⁵ Words became so vehement against each other that they soon eclipsed the initial commonality both parties shared in the prewar efforts, Cuban humanitarian relief, and governmental reform.⁵⁶

⁵³ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 21 July 1898.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 28 July 1898.

⁵⁶ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 21 April, 28 July 1898.

As the war progressed, the major policy opposition between Eastman and Macdonald stemmed from the Philippines and America's governing capacity. In May 1898, Dewey's naval victory in the Philippines resulted in Macdonald and Eastman's growing division over American policy. Eastman's position built upon the Republican platform as new military operations corresponded with political opportunities. July proved to be a breakout month for the St. Cloud Republican editor. Eastman wrote in detail about the growing conflict within the local Minnesota environment that was equally shared by Americans across the country. He referred to the public's concern for American future foreign policy objectives. He stated, "A great many people are getting needlessly alarmed over the future of this government. We hear a great deal about "Imperialism, and the danger of breaking away from old traditions."⁵⁷ To emphasize his point, Eastman referred to the Alaskan purchase as an example of prior American imperial policy. Although Eastman did not refer to him by name, it also appeared to be an attempt to discredit Macdonald's stance.⁵⁸

Eastman also disclosed the key to Republican philosophy in July and the major stumbling block between the Democrats and their foreign policy beliefs. Eastman commented,

But war was inevitable, and with war came the great victory of Dewey's almost across the continent. This opened up a new question to determine one of the most important in the history of this nation. The capture of the Philippines made the annexation of Hawaii absolutely necessary. We started this war on humanitarian grounds. We started in to free Cuba. To do this it was necessary to strike a blow at Manila. As soon as this was done we discovered that the Spanish rule was just as objectionable to the people in the Philippines as it was to the people of Cuba.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 14 July 1898.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

The progression, whether led by military influences or political opportunity, mushroomed into the critical foreign policy of the period. Its decision tore at the local newspapers, each seeking readership support.

Eastman continued his perceived American future plans for the post war period and United States governing responsibilities. He said,

For the present, at least, all conquered territory must be held by the United States. It may be that in time the people of these islands can become self-governing. We are committed to that policy so far as Cuba is concerned, although the outcome is not hopeful. The position this nation occupies is one of the grave responsibility to the human race. The question is not what we want to do but what is our duty? To be responsible for the governments in the East and West Indies is no pleasant or profitable task. But fate, which is but the will of God, has given the United States the work to do, and there is no escape from it.⁶⁰

Imperialism combined with Manifest Destiny components clearly presented itself in Eastman's writings. Eastman had taken nearly four months to declare this position. McKinley's stance failed to become public knowledge. This mystifying circumstance and political ramifications faced the volunteers who served in the war.

STEARNS VOLUNTEERS AND ASSIGNMENT PHILIPPINES

"We are entering a new era. The flag will not be lowered from Hawaii, and the fate of the Philippines is linked with the destiny of the republic."⁶¹

- Senator Cushman Davis

As aggressive expansionist Republicans attempted to be included among the elite European powers by 1898, Davis' vision symbolized the new American foreign policy. Eastman supported it through his daily columns, conforming to national Republican

⁶⁰ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 14 July 1898.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

sentiment as the summer months progressed. Meanwhile, Macdonald's casual tone against the Philippine question early in the war took a more aggressive stance by this period. Simultaneously, the Stearns County volunteers became active participants in this political situation, caught between military loyalty and the developing public debate. Their military assignment was the Philippines, and its surrounding complexities became regular news to Stearns County readers. Due to this assignment, the Philippines soon eclipsed Cuba for local news importance.

St. Cloud newspapers also informed the public of mobilization efforts, military camps, and naval blockades of Cuba. Readers became aware of both American and Spanish commanders, weaponry such as rifles, and military defensive positions. Naval reports, warship capabilities, and known Spanish defensive positions were published for local readers in informative articles. The paper sought local exclusives from the volunteers themselves by attempting to publish inside stories from training camp and later first hand accounts from the field. Local papers utilized the public's input as well. Family and friends submitted letters to St. Cloud papers that complimented editorial political philosophy. For example, Captain McKelvy wrote exclusively for the *Journal-Press*, while others declared their opinions from Hawaiian annexation to troop conditions in the Philippines. By having volunteers relate their viewpoints, editors supported their arguments as the war progressed.

For the Minnesota National Guard mobilization throughout the state occurred rapidly. Public gatherings across the state sent their existing companies to St. Paul with wishes for victory and a speedy return home. Volunteers arrived on 29 April at St. Paul's Union Station and organized themselves in a patriotic atmosphere of grandly decorated buildings, storefronts, and homes. As the volunteers arrived and arranged their ranks for the march to the State Capitol and then Camp Ramsey, thousands of Minnesota citizens joined in the celebration. As the volunteers marched past, the mass assembly lined the streets cheering the patriotic task they undertook. At the State Capitol Governor Clough's brief address to the volunteers encouraged their commitment to their assignment.⁶²

Twin City papers reported the atmosphere with excitement and anticipation. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* described the event writing,

As the long column of men passed the governor and his staff, the band played, the officers saluted, the colors were spread and the men brought their arms to port. And there was no time during the entire march when they looked more like real soldiers than they did at that moment. Many of them were tired with the long march from the city and all were dusty and travel-stained. But they stepped out briskly and many of the untrained recruits saluted the commander-in-chief with a hearty cheer.⁶³

Captivated by the war's initial causes, Minnesota citizens waved flags and wished "goodspeed" to their volunteers.⁶⁴

Stearns County's contingent arrived a day later. Twin City papers such as the *Minneapolis Times* commented on the arrival of McKelvy and his company by stating,

⁶² *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 29 April 1898; Franklin Holbrook, *Minnesota in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection*, (St. Paul: Minnesota War Records Commission, 1923), p. 19.

⁶³ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 29 April 1898.

⁶⁴ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 29 April 1898; *Minneapolis Tribune*, 30 April 1898.

"Company M-1 of St. Cloud arrived in camp at 4:30, marching in columns of fours, and a sturdier looking lot of men cannot be found. Captain McKelvy, the noted sheriff of Stearns County, was at their head."⁶⁵ Stearns County volunteers were assigned to the Thirteenth Infantry Regiment, the old Minnesota First Regiment comprised of mostly Twin City members. These included Companies A, B, F, I and L from Minneapolis; C, D, E, and H from St. Paul. Outstate elements were represented by G from Red Wing; K from Stillwater and M from St. Cloud. Two companies, L and M, consisted of entirely new members raised specifically for the war. The Regiment's personnel consisted of fifty officers and 979 men with only twenty percent of enlisted men having prior National Guard experience. The remaining membership come from men with limited military training. Many of the Regiment's rank and file included professionals, businessmen, farmers, laborers and college students.⁶⁶

While the bulk of the Regiment lacked military experience, they had a willingness to learn soldier skills. The volunteers appeared to be conscious of past Civil War glories such as at Gettysburg and wanted to perform equally to these expectations. To meet these standards, the volunteers had to overcome some difficulties. As news hungry reporters eagerly obtained any story for their newspapers, problems arose for the Thirteenth and their fellow comrades.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Holbrook, p. 19; St. Paul Pioneer Press, 29 April 1898.

⁶⁶ Holbrook p. 46.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

During mobilization in Minnesota, Civil War veterans raised concerns regarding the regimental names. Originally the First, Second and Third Regiments, the veterans insisted on renaming the units to retain their historic significance to past Civil War glories. State authorities complied to this request. Thus, the First became the Thirteenth, the Second the Twelfth and the Third the Fourteenth. Holbrook, p. 20.

Quick to find any exclusive story, newspapers reacted to any available. For example, Captain McKelvy's status as Company M commander appeared in a report in the *Journal-Press* from a Minneapolis newspaper. The *Minneapolis Tribune* reported, "There is a report in circulation, and it found its way into the Minneapolis Tribune of Sunday that all is not agreeable in Co. M, and that certain city officers are striving to depose Capt. McKelvy from his command. Little if anything definite of the troubles has found their way to the city which sends this company to the front . . ." ⁶⁸ The *Journal-Press* later recanted this report but its rumor typified yellow journalism techniques found in larger, metropolitan papers. War reports thus illustrated their important value to newspapers, even if they later proved inaccurate. While selling newspapers was imperative, acquiring exclusive stories also carried considerable prestige. ⁶⁹

The Thirteenth's stay at Camp Ramsey was brief and lasted only two weeks. Captain McKelvy noted the difficult task evident at Camp Ramsey. The Captain said, "It is a big job to get a green company drilled, armed and clothed ready for the field, . . ." ⁷⁰ Training was not the only information that became public information. Minnesota newspapers published articles noting supply shortages from uniforms, tents, blankets and weapons at Camp Ramsey. Supply depots revealed a shortfall in rifles as only half of the thirty-six hundred troop could bear arms, gun slings and bayonets. The *Journal-Press* reported, "In the midst of the hurry and worry of the life at Camp Ramsey, Captain McKelvy and his two lieutenants had about all they could do in getting the equipment for

⁶⁸ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 19 May 1898.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 21 July 1898.

the boys. This left the work of drilling the boys in the hands of the non-commissioned officers."⁷¹ Training exercises were possibly affected by this shortfall. Circumstances dictated some troops were quartered in existing horse and cattle barns used for state fair competitions. The Twelfth and Thirteenth utilized these facilities, while the Fourteenth Regiment was assigned to the limited number of tents available. Tents were so scarce up to six men were assigned a single tent often without blankets in cool, near freezing May temperatures. The *Pioneer Press* informed its readers of the conditions by stating, "In such cases there was no cause for apprehension, as the men found that their quarters were so warm that blankets were not necessary. They are becoming accustomed to the routine of camp life and find it much more pleasant than on the initial day."⁷² St. Cloud newspapers failed to give account to these camp realities in any extensive detail. The war and its endeavors were deemed so positive in the press it almost led readers to believe nothing could go wrong.⁷³

Company M member Henry Tenvorde countered any negative press comments. His statements contradicted a St. Cloud newspaper report regarding poor food quality at Camp Ramsey. Tenvorde said,

As far as I know, all these reports are false. As to the food, of course we don't get quail on toast, or pate de goie gras, but we get good food and what is more than this, we get all we can eat. One of the boys has written home he hasn't had a square meal since he has been at camp, except at his aunt's in St. Paul. I don't know how that happened, for all the rest of us are well fed.⁷⁴

⁷¹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 19 May 1898.

⁷² *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 3 May 1898.

⁷³ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 3 May 1898; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 19 May, 21 July 1898.

⁷⁴ *St. Cloud Times*, 11 May 1898.

Despite the disparity in reports, it remained clear why the troops enlisted. Tenvorde consolidated Camp Ramsey's mood stating, "The feeling in camp is the same in all the companies. The boys want to get to the front as soon as possible, and have a share in the actual work. I think our Minnesota troops will compare with any in the country, and when the time comes, will be able to sustain the reputation which the old 'First' made at Gettysburg."⁷⁵ From Tenvorde's account, the volunteers appeared focused on the war rather than the possible drawbacks experienced at camp.

During the two weekends the troops stayed at Camp Ramsey, 40,000 Minnesota residents visited the volunteers and offered encouragement to their military duty. Stearns County residents also showed their patriotic support as local newspapers covered its social implications. The meaning was clear. The public created this "Sunday Fair" attitude with little regard for war's bloody reality. As the St. Cloud Band performed for the passengers, newspaper reporters noted its social qualities as depicting a bubbly atmosphere. Travelers regarded it as the season's best social event. One resident claimed, "St. Cloud will never have occasion to feel otherwise than proud of the boys who went from here."⁷⁶ The sense of pride, the strong desire to participate, and its accompanied recognition appeared a motivating factor for the contingent to visit their boys.⁷⁷

On 12 May, the Thirteenth and Company M received the long anticipated orders from the War Department to join the Philippine Expedition as members of the United

⁷⁵ St. Cloud Times, 11 May 1898.

⁷⁶ St. Cloud Journal Press, 19 May 1898.

⁷⁷ Minneapolis Tribune, 30 April 1898; St. Cloud Times, 4 May, 11 May 1898; St. Cloud Journal-Press, 19 May 1898.

States 8th Army. A competitive assignment, military circles viewed it an honor due to the limited number of regimental positions available. The Twelfth and Fourteenth Regiments received their orders to Chickamauga, Georgia facing a possible Cuban campaign. Within several days, Camp Ramsey bustled with activity as troops prepared for departure to their respected assignments. On the morning of the 17th, Minnesota's volunteers prepared for their final day in Minnesota. As the troops filtered out of camp with loaded supply wagons and gear packed, the public illustrated their support along the route toward the train depot. Thousands lined the streets, the *Minneapolis Tribune* recounted the event. The paper reported:

The departure of the Twelfth was the military sight of the day. The entire regiment moved at once and marched from their camp ground to the train in ranks of four. From the camp which occupied high ground, a magnificent view was to be had by the observer as they wended their way steadily and with military precision, out of the fair grounds. With the other regiments, none of the pomp of war appeared to add interest to the scene. So many companies were assigned to each section, and as the cars were in upon the sidetracks they merely had to cross the company street, file through the depot gates and climb aboard.⁷⁸

With final good-byes uttered between volunteers, friends and family, the *Minneapolis Tribune* described the painful scene for the participants. The *Tribune* reported, "It was a day of farewells and grief-stricken partings. Wives clung to their husbands as though it was impossible to let them go. Sweethearts twined their arms about their loved ones, and sweetened the bitterness of parting with assurances of fidelity and a lasting kiss."⁷⁹ The war's realities surely appeared to all present that day as the atmosphere included both excitement and sorrow. As the crowd dispersed, these emotions surely were in their

⁷⁸ *Minneapolis Tribune*, 30 April 1898.

⁷⁹ *Minneapolis Tribune*, 16 May 1898.

minds. Meanwhile, the Thirteenth proceeded West to finish their training and prepare for the long voyage to the Philippines.⁸⁰

The cross-country trek by the Thirteenth to California reflected the broad public war support. Brief stops in western states included Nebraska, where residents greeted troops with gifts and grand wishes for a rapid victory. The *St. Cloud Times* and *Journal-Press* supplied special correspondents to report the developing story. Despite the distance, these reporters wired back in a timely fashion, keeping Stearns County residents informed of the volunteer's experiences. Alongside these accounts, local newspapers published Company M letters regarding the trip westward, conditions, and the reaction by citizens in the West.⁸¹

After four days of grueling travel, San Francisco's Camp Merritt became the new home for the Minnesota Regiment. The Thirteenth arrived on 21 May, unpacked their gear and assembled their tents. Located adjacent to Golden Gate Park near San Francisco Bay, the camp provided a temporary mobilization center for all troops entering the Philippine Theater. Similar to their stops along the route west, the public favored their arrival with patriotism and endorsement. John Bowe, a member of the Thirteenth, described life at Camp Merritt. He wrote in his diary:

We are camped at Camp Merritt, adjoining Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. The time is passed in teaching the awkward squad how to fill out their uniforms, eliminating civilian characteristics, and branding U. S. upon him so strong that it is not necessary to look at his uniform to see he is a soldier. In the evening, San Francisco moved up to camp. The street cars are crowded and nearly every lady carries a bunch of flowers, or a basket of eatables.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Minneapolis Tribune*, 16 May, 17 May 1898.

⁸¹ *St. Cloud Times*, 11 May 1898, *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 12 May 1898.

⁸² John Bowe, *With the Thirteenth Minnesota*, 1906, p. 11.

Editors published these positive images for their readers and captured the moment.

Journal-Press correspondents stated, "The San Francisco girls have a warm place in their hearts for the soldier boys, and the young men of the city are complaining that they receive absolutely no attention whatever."⁸³

Difficult conditions were present at Camp Merritt, however, and newspapers again reported their findings to the public. *St. Cloud Journal-Press* reports listed the difficulties. "At first they were compelled to put up with many inconveniences, but by Monday everything was properly arranged."⁸⁴ Fortunately for Minnesota volunteers, their stay was relatively brief as later during the war the camp became infected with sickness from poor sanitation. Aside from the conditions that generally improved, the men adapted to the camp and waited patiently for their Philippine voyage.⁸⁵

According to the *Journal-Press*, general impressions of Minnesota troops remained high as the 8th Army military command shared positive comments for the men. Likewise, San Francisco residents extended their homes to the soldiers for both meals and companionship. Stearns County volunteers found themselves exploring the city, visiting the sites such as Chinatown and numerous other offerings available in San Francisco. The Thirteenth participated in the various military drills, perfecting their rank and taking in target practice. After five weeks of drill, the volunteers anticipated the news,

⁸³ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 2 June 1898.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Bowe*, p. 11; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 2 June 1898.

confirming the voyage to the Philippines. For commanders the military aspect of the campaign illustrated the difficult problems in President McKinley's political aims.⁸⁶

Like that of the *New York Times*, General Merritt's position similarly agreed with newspaper opinion regarding the Army's mission, troop quality, and political objectives. Merritt's hesitation was confirmed by his initial visit with the President. He said, "I do not yet know whether it is your desire to subdue and hold all of the Spanish territory in the islands, or merely to seize and hold the capital."⁸⁷ Merritt preferred a larger military force, twice the number his superior Miles intended to order, and based his decision on several criteria. Merritt believed he needed seasoned Army regulars to face the challenging situation in the Philippines. He objected to the poor National Guard troop reputation, unskilled officers, and their large numbers called by President McKinley. He stated, "Conquering a territory 7,000 miles from our base, defended by a regularly trained and acclimated army of from 10,000 to 20,000 men, and inhabited by 14,000,000 people, the majority of whom will regard us with the intense hatred born of race and religion."⁸⁸ Thus, Merritt's conclusion interpreted a difficult circumstance for American troops without a specific military mission.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, General Miles disagreed with many of Merritt's assessments and military mission. The Commanding Army General claimed Merritt distorted the Spanish military force and his Philippine military assessment. The largest difference focused on

⁸⁶ Holbrook, pp. 46-48; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 2 June, 16 June 1898.

⁸⁷ Graham A. Cosmas, *Army for Empire*, (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1971, p. 116.

⁸⁸ Cosmas, pp. 120-121.

⁸⁹ Cosmas, pp. 116, 120-121.

the military objective. Miles said, "The force ordered at this time is not expected to carry on a war to conquer extensive territory."⁹⁰ Miles' believed the American force was expected to establish "a strong garrison to command the harbor of Manila, and to relieve the . . . fleet under Admiral Dewey with the least possible delay."⁹¹ Each General concluded a different Army role in the Philippines. These two differing opinions drawn from McKinley's policy illustrated how complicated it was for the War Department. It can be safe to conclude the public was equally confused as to the Philippine policy as well.⁹²

The difference between the two generals depicted the complexity of the Philippine question, not only for military commanders, but how the public interpreted it from various newspaper reports. Miles sought only to occupy Manila while Merritt expected a larger military operation and occupation. Through their available newspapers, the public either questioned McKinley's course or accepted its possible outcomes. On 19 May, the President issued official instructions to General Merritt but failed to disclose long-term political and military purposes. The President wrote,

Necessary in the further prosecution of the measures adopted by this government for the purpose of bringing about an honorable and durable peace with Spain, to send an army of occupation to the Philippines for the twofold purpose of completing the reduction of the Spanish power in that quarter and of giving order and security to the islands while in the possession of the United States.⁹³

⁹⁰ Cosmas, p. 117.

⁹¹ Cosmas, p. 120

⁹² Cosmas, pp. 117, 120.

⁹³ Cosmas, 117.

McKinley's vagueness, even to the Army, certainly produced a chain reaction to newspaper reports and the American public about the intention of policy makers.⁹⁴

Newspapers, in some cases without warrant, attacked the Army's capabilities. Without proper direction, Army commanders faced numerous challenges that often resulted in public criticism. Army officials were burdened to assemble a large volunteer pool, proceed with mobilization and supply troops all within a short period. Unfortunately, the press was somewhat unforgiving about this massive task. Growing public awareness about the problems through continued newspaper scrutiny hampered the Army's mission.

By June 1898, the public was more aware of McKinley's intentions. Local Stearns County residents had more information to base support or objections on the war's political outcomes. Perhaps initially taken lightly by American officials, the Philippines became the most controversial aspect of the war, and newspapers claimed their specific stance often based on political origin.

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE

The Philippine independence was led by twenty-eight year old Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy, who gained the respect of both the local military insurgents and the population at-large to conduct the revolution. The *St. Cloud Journal-Press* described the leader stating, "Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo is the big man of the Philippines. Young, handsome, brave as a lion, patriotic and self-sacrificing, this native Malay is the type of the insurrectionists who, like the Cubans, have fought the tyranny of Spain through blood

⁹⁴ Cosmas, pp. 117, 120-121.

and death and destruction until they now seem assured of victory."⁹⁵ Especially after May 1898, his exploits and military successes were covered in local papers through increased regularity during the war.

Throughout his career and political experience, Aguinaldo had a deep resentment for Spanish authority and ambitiously sought to expel Spaniards from the country. During the 1890s, his frustration with the regime, the Catholic Church, and its corrupt friars who subjected the natives to economic extortion, brought his political skills to the forefront of Filipino politics. Within five years, the young revolutionist gained the respect of his many contemporaries while repelling his adversaries. Aguinaldo's rapid rise to power, his broad political experience, and leadership were amazingly accomplished by his mid twenties.⁹⁶

In 1897 his leadership by this time secured, Aguinaldo continued his focused attention on Filipino independence. St. Cloud newspapers reported Aguinaldo had assembled an army of 67,000 men, with the potential to raise thousands more against the Spanish. Aguinaldo related these numbers as a commitment to freedom. He stated, "The whole population of the Philippine islands was willing to fight for their independence."⁹⁷ His goals were published in June 1898, which later were presented to McKinley's administration. The objectives included: 1) the expulsion of the religious friars and the

⁹⁵ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 9 June 1898.

⁹⁶ Trask, pp. 392-394; Ivan Musicant, Empire by Default, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), p. 197; Leon Wolff, Little Brown Brother, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1960), pp. 23-28; David H. Bain, Sitting In Darkness (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), pp. 154-159.

⁹⁷ St. Cloud Times, 14 September 1898.

division of their lands to Spanish and Filipino secular clergy, 2) Spanish concession to political and economic autonomy, 3) civil servants receipt of equal pay regardless of ethnic origin, 4) all return of all lands obtained by the friars through appropriations must be returned to their rightful owners, 5) legal reforms, including equal treatment for all Filipinos. Aguinaldo commented on Filipino morale by stating, "We have been fighting for independence for a long time. The natives who profess to favor annexation are insincere. It is merely a ruse to ascertain American views."⁹⁸ Whether this gained any widespread support in Washington was unknown. Newspaper references to Philippine annexation appeared, but ongoing military difficulties overshadowed any immediate American plans. Macdonald certainly appreciated the Filipino's oppression but firmly opposed any annexation to the United States. Like the Cubans, he sympathized with their cause and the right for self-determination and preferred their independence.⁹⁹

The American press's Philippine perception influenced the public's impression of the islands. The press often portrayed the Philippines as culturally below the United States and unfit for self-governance. The *Boston Transcript* stated, "There is really no national spirit in the Philippines. The people have been ruled under Spanish military and civil officers for three centuries with the monastic government in practical control of the civil government, is quite sufficient to account for shortcomings in capacity to govern themselves."¹⁰⁰ Philippine political fragmentation, numerous spoken languages, and an

⁹⁸ *St. Cloud Times*, 14 September 1898.

⁹⁹ *St. Cloud Times*, 14 September 1898; Trask, pp. 394-397; Musicant, p. 197.

¹⁰⁰ *St. Cloud Times*, 7 September 1898.

unorganized military appearance possibly influenced McKinley's military and political decisions. Generally, newspapers portrayed the Filipinos in this manner, but American officials grossly underestimated their political and military capabilities. As would be found out in 1899, Americans discovered a determined people who ambitiously attempted to achieve their freedom.¹⁰¹

With the arrival of the Americans in May 1898, Aguinaldo realized a tense political atmosphere had materialized. On one hand, Dewey's squadron occupied Manila Bay and remained in a military standoff with Spain. The Commodore patiently waited for the arrival of American troops from California to capture the remaining Spanish troops holding out in the city and end the hostilities. Meanwhile, the Filipino Insurgent Army had achieved a success of its own, confining Spanish forces to the capital city with visions of the long anticipated independence. Dewey's political skills to defuse the situation were modest at best as he had received instructions from Washington to keep the Filipinos out of Manila and avoid a potential slaughter of Spanish troops. Aguinaldo skeptically obliged but questioned American political motives. From his perception, the Philippine circumstance compared to Cuba and its ambitions for freedom. Despite Aguinaldo's optimism, the situation had not changed by August 1898 when American troops arrived to take Manila by armed force.

¹⁰¹ St. Cloud Times, 7 September 1898; Trask, p. 392; Musicant, pp. 194-197; Wolff, pp. 19-20.

CROSSING THE PACIFIC

As the Minnesota volunteers left San Francisco in late June, their month long journey across the Pacific began. Stearns County readers converged their national interest in foreign policy with a local connection as the volunteers chugged to the Far East. Through the various camp conditions and their accompanied supply shortages, the new recruits experienced wartime hardships of a rapidly-formed army. It did not change once the volunteers boarded the vessel to the Philippines. A converted cargo vessel, the *City of Para* housed the Thirteenth Regiment along with other volunteers from across the country. Conditions were horrible, especially for the lower ranks. Troops endured difficult conditions compared to the officers among them, eating substandard rations and with limited access to extras. Officers wrote home regarding ample food, while conditions for lower ranks were quite different. Meat was often rotten and the diet consisted of rice and bread. Fluids, while not in short supply, were limited to staples, while officers enjoyed many options including alcoholic beverages.¹⁰²

Despite the inequality, the volunteers were optimistic about writing letters home about their military experiences. St. Cloud newspapers incorporated these letters and correspondence in their publications, especially when they reinforced their political agendas. Besides writing, volunteers spent their time with activities such as cleaning,

¹⁰² Bowe, pp. 20-30.

modest training drills, military briefings, and relaxation. The long, tedious journey also provided the occasion for numerous meetings in which specific commanders spoke of potential military encounters. General Arthur MacArthur, father of the famed World War II General, explained the future environment to the raw recruits. Through the words of the *Journal-Press* correspondent, MacArthur said,

The time for drills and learning formations is over . . . the situation in the Philippines there will be plenty of good hard fighting and of the meanest kind--bushwhacking. It is not expected that there will be much left of the Spaniards, but the Malays will be our opponents.¹⁰³

MacArthur's prediction regarding the political difficulty with the Filipinos proved an accurate description of a future American campaign.¹⁰⁴

Arriving in Hawaii, Company M member Daniel Thursdale related his firsthand account to his friend John Griebler of St. Cloud through a letter. Thursdale said, "We boys have been having a good time since leaving home but as this is the last friendly port we strike it may be different in the future." He continued,

The people here are anxiously waiting to hear that the islands have been annexed to the United States and when the news comes there will be the hottest time here that ever happened. I would like to see annexation declared, as this really is fine country. Of course there are a great many Chinamen, Japanese and the native Indians, but they are a better class of people than you would suppose.¹⁰⁵

Nicholas Roeser, a member of the First Expedition to the Philippines, wrote to his brother John and his words were published by the *Journal-Press*. He wrote, "I cannot say too

¹⁰³ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 21 July 1898.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

much in praise of the people of Honolulu. The native islanders seem just as anxious for annexation as do the Americans on the islands."¹⁰⁶

As the expedition chugged its way to Manila, residents back home read about the complexity of their expected situation. Anti-expansionists and expansionists promoted their position through newspapers fed by national syndicated articles. Likewise, Macdonald provided clues to his intentions early in the war but now aggressively expanded his case against any American presence in the Philippines. Countering this view, Eastman gathered momentum from Republican sentiment by actively promoting a spoil of war, the Philippines, and its economic potential for American business. The war's many forces converged locally in the Philippines as the volunteers began their service abroad.

¹⁰⁶ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 21 July 1898.

Chapter IV

ST. CLOUD NEWSPAPERS AND THE PHILIPPINES; COVERAGE OF MILITARY DUTY AND AMERICAN POLITICAL DECISIONS

From August 1898 and throughout the next year, St. Cloud newspapers covered the Philippine events as Stearns volunteers acquainted themselves with the complex military situation on the islands. All the prewar issues had surfaced since April; the *U.S.S. Maine* incident, Cuban reform efforts, economic expansion, imperialism, and the Monroe Doctrine revealed their respected influences. During 1899 the last two elements had joined a Republican expansion movement that sought implementation in the Pacific and Caribbean.

While this occurred, an organized New England opposition spread nationally against McKinley's Philippine policy. Comprised of mainly Democrats, the Anti-Imperial movement gained national attention in newspapers for their primary objection to McKinley's perceived motives. Through promoters like Edward Atkinson they also gained influence and financial backing. Atkinson wrote McKinley, pardoning the United States from any obligation to annex Cuba or Puerto Rico expansion was "uncalled for, totally foreign to our system of government, not within our duty."¹ Macdonald

¹ Edward Atkinson, *Twelve Against Empire*, edited by Robert L. Beisner, (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 95.

shared this sentiment by defining his opposition to Eastman. By this period, each editor had aligned with the respective movements, Macdonald with the anti-expansionists while Eastman sided Republicans and their imperial motives. With the war coming to a close in August, the importance of the movements loomed larger for local residents. Their volunteers were front line soldiers in the Philippines and these political forces affected them directly through military strategy and its resulting political consequences. Meanwhile, Stearns County residents prayed for their safe return from an environment that Democratic newspapers portrayed as "the worst place to live in the world."²

St. Cloud newspapers reported the Philippine events inconsistently to what they were in other papers across the country. They were unable to obtain consistently accurate information due to conflicting sources, McKinley's often vague intentions, and the long distance from the source. Reports, perhaps based on rumors, illustrated the discrepancies and were characterized by rather short articles. Examples were numerous and appeared almost weekly. Macdonald and Eastman often described a cooperative relationship between Americans and Aguinaldo's forces and then an attitude of extreme anxiety suddenly appeared. This sentiment continued until February 1899 when hostilities finally broke between Americans and Filipinos. Troop morale also suffered during the period as letters home disclosed the difficult soldier life in the Philippines. The President added to this difficulty by failing to inform the general public of his military intentions.³

² Atkinson, p. 95; St. Cloud Times, 16 November 1898.

³ St. Cloud Times, November 30, 1898.

In October, McKinley finally revealed his intentions for the islands that favored retaining them under United States control. The announcement itself was nothing new to the public but dramatically changed American foreign policy. Newspapers and the public realized there was more to come before a final political solution was adopted. Carl Shurtz, the noted anti-expansionist, stated, "If this democracy, after all the intoxication of triumph in war, conscientiously remembers its professions and pledges . . . it will achieve the grandest triumph of the democratic idea . . ."⁴ Shurtz's point noted opposition to imperialism while American officials met in Paris to decide the war's postwar settlement with Spanish diplomats. By December 1898, the treaty's controversial policy found opposition within Congress.⁵

For Macdonald and Eastman, the Philippine issue thus appeared to be the foremost editorial battleground of the war. Since summer 1898 their political philosophy and differences for American foreign policy had been exposed. Confrontation between Macdonald and Eastman increased in frequency; attacks against personal character provided readers with true political mudslinging. It was equal on both sides, as name calling and public degradation at times seemed more important than the actual war coverage.⁶

Similar to preceding months, loyalty questions remained and Eastman answered Macdonald's aggressive writings. For example, Macdonald reacted to an Eastman comment and illustrated some local opposition to McKinley's policy. The *Journal-Press*

⁴ David Healy, *US Expansionism*. (Madison, Milwaukee and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 217.

⁵ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 3 November 1898; Healy, p. 217.

⁶ *St. Cloud Times*, 10 August 1898.

published, "Editor Macdonald does not like the flavor of the loyal meetings now being held by patriotic citizens all over the country. Neither does Aguinaldo."⁷ Macdonald countered,

The above is only one more specimen of J. P. discussion of great questions. By the way, what does the Journal Press think of Rev. Mr. Simmons anti-expansion, anti-imperialist talk at Unity church, on Sunday? From what we have heard, it was a scathing denunciation of the McKinley policy. One of the satisfactory features of it was that it was delivered before a large number of St. Cloud's strongest imperialists. Mr. Simmons referred to the burning of churches by our army and he asked if this was a specimen of our boasted civilization? Bro. Eastman, who attends Unity church, has not yet answered that question.⁸

Macdonald's inclusion of Anti-Imperial League rhetoric corresponded with loyalty issues aimed specifically at Eastman's Republican policy makers. Macdonald attempted to inform readers about American superiority versus Philippine rights. Like Andrew Carnegie, Macdonald stumbled into inconsistencies in his own attempts to defend Filipino independence.⁹

Macdonald's political cornerstone earlier in the war had focused on opposition to Hawaii annexation, the departure from perceived American traditions, and future foreign policy intentions. These goals, while still an important element to the Democrat's position, complemented his intensified interest in the Pacific that received the vast majority of the war coverage in the *Times*. Adding elements such as Filipino degradation, he illustrated his contempt for McKinley's policy, while revealing his true

⁷ *St. Cloud Times*, 17 May 1899.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *St. Cloud Times*, 17 May 1899; Healy, p. 219.

feelings of imperialism. As Company M's assignment lingered in the Far East, he attempted to persuade readers against retaining the islands.¹⁰

DEMOCRAT VERSUS REPUBLICAN: GOING HOME OR LOYAL DUTY TO COUNTRY

Colin Macdonald and American Withdrawal From the Philippines

Macdonald's case against Philippine expansion included issues of loyalty, correspondence from the Thirteenth Minnesota, widespread sickness on the island, Filipino degradation, and departure from American political tradition. Since August 1898, Macdonald had argued these elements against Republican policy implementation. While Eastman's columns appeared more aggressive by taking the initiative, Macdonald countered, attempting to reveal any discrepancies to the public against Philippine retention. During the latter half of 1898 Macdonald's argument, like Eastman's earlier in the war, appeared more disorganized and contradictory. Through this environment, the Fall elections proved an important element in solving the Philippine question.

Local newspapers covered the fall elections and focused on whether troops should remain in the Philippines against prior American political traditions. Theodore Roosevelt's argument spoke of this expansion heritage, saying, "The question is now not whether we shall expand-for we have already expanded-but whether we shall contract."¹¹ One local example included Minnesota Republican Gubernatorial candidates William H. Eustis and Page Morris, the Sixth District Representative who both supported retaining the volunteers in Manila. At a St. Cloud rally in early November, the *Times* quoted

¹⁰ *St. Cloud Times*, 30 November 1898; 1 February 1899.

¹¹ H.W. Brands, *T.R. The Last Romantic*, (New York: Basicbooks, 1997), p. 402.

Eustis by stating, "Do not be a small American-be a large American, and vote to sustain the boys at Manila!" Macdonald condemned this statement, provoking an Eastman response by declaring him "an enemy to his country."¹² In light of this situation, the war's original goals that included the *U.S.S. Maine* sinking and Cuban conditions seemed to be forgotten. Editors gathered evidence to support their own arguments hoping to secure public approval. Local newspapers offered opposing viewpoints that included peace treaty elements and the politicians who supported them.¹³

In Macdonald's case against expansion, his evidence became more significant when volunteer letters arrived home that countered comments made by politicians such as Eustis, Morris, or other state Republicans who favored Philippine retention. In 1899 Macdonald's position was enhanced when newly elected Minnesota Governor John Lind from New Ulm, Brown County, took office. A lawyer by trade, Lind worked in various capacities within the Republican Party through his formative political career. During the 1890s, he aligned himself with the state's growing progressive element and eventually joined the Democratic Party.¹⁴

As the Spanish war unfolded, Lind volunteered for the Twelfth Regiment and was stationed in Georgia for the entire war. During his absence, Lind was nominated for governor by the Democrats, perhaps a surprise to both Lind and his fellow Minnesotans. With this endorsement he returned home to campaign against the Republicans and their

¹² *St. Cloud Times*, 2 November 1898.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ George E. Hallberg, *The Legislative Manual*, 1899; *St. Cloud Times*, 2 November 1898.

established political machine that had dominated state politics for nearly fifty years. After only a two month campaign, he claimed the governorship for the state's Democrats, their first in forty years. However, Lind's honeymoon with success was brief as complicated national issues engulfed his tenure. When the war concluded in August, he immediately faced the growing Philippine debate and the Thirteenth's assignment. State Republicans fought to keep them in their assignment, while Democrats pressured Washington for their deployment home. Lind's anti-imperial support gathered momentum in an effort to influence national officials to withdraw Minnesota troops from the Pacific. Together with U. S. Representatives such as Stevens, Minnesota elected officials prepared to remove the volunteers. However, Lind's election provided an opportunity for eager Republicans to raise loyalty issues against the Democrats.¹⁵

Lind's election and public stance was a sweet revenge for Eastman. After enduring a year of tongue-lashing by Macdonald against McKinley, Lind provided a similar position for local Republican editors. Eastman declared, "Now who is misrepresenting the Thirteenth Minnesota? John Lind says they want to quit fighting and come home whether or not and Brigadier General Hall, who is with the boys at Manila, says the only trouble with them is that they are too anxious to fight." ¹⁶ Republicans stated the volunteers wanted to stay in the Philippines, while Democrats urged their return home.

Macdonald's case against Philippine retention was strengthened by the words of the Thirteenth Minnesota members assigned to the islands. It was a convincing

¹⁵ Hallberg; St. Cloud Journal-Press, 4 May 1899.

¹⁶ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 11 May 1899.

argument. He reinforced his position by his numerous references from soldiers' letters or other syndicated articles from state newspapers. These comments were particularly damaging for Republicans who preached economic potential of annexation. Macdonald shrewdly utilized the opportunity. In one instance, Assistant Surgeon Law of the Thirteenth Minnesota uttered comments in early November 1898 regarding the Philippines, battle conditions, and politics. Law stated, "The Thirteenth Minnesota has suffered heavier than any regiment in the division, and her suffering will be heavier still, in the event of retaining these islands, as the jingo patriots and sidewalk orators claim we should do."¹⁷ These words not only explained the difficulty for the volunteers but also exposed the political problem for Minnesota residents. Should their troops remain in the Philippines?

Law continued the damaging evidence for Democrats as he declared his viewpoint by expanding the American role in the Philippines. He wrote to the *Minneapolis Journal*,

Our mails are few and far between, but when they do come, we hear of the growing sentiment in the states that the Philippines should be held-a sentiment born surely of an absolute ignorance of the country and the conditions present. I have yet to hear of one man here, high or low, who thinks the United States should hold these islands, and not a man has yet expressed any other wish except to go home again, regulars and volunteers alike.¹⁸

This strong voice against keeping the islands was shared by other Thirteenth members. Macdonald, of course, graciously published them. Peter Schumacher, a St. Cloud Company M volunteer, said, "There is a great deal of sickness throughout the regiment, and nothing would please the boys better than to go home at once. It is very hot here

¹⁷ *St. Cloud Times*, 2 November 1898.

¹⁸ *St. Cloud Times*, 30 November 1898.

now, and the really hot season has not yet begun."¹⁹ In addition to vague military planning, the rainy season further distressed the volunteers.

Macdonald utilized the volunteers themselves to further his viewpoints. Their words were published to discourage others back in Minnesota from joining the Army and was a complete reversal of their sentiments six months previously. Macdonald published a letter written by an unnamed Thirteenth Regiment soldier who wrote,

I have just come off sentry duty at gate No.9, and am all tired out. You may be glad that you did not come with us. This is as disagreeable a place as I ever saw. Of course, the boys don't write home to their folks and tell them how bad it is, because some of them think Manila is all right. It would be a pity to spoil such a nice delusion.²⁰

Statements such as these obviously illustrated the growing tension in the Philippines for the volunteers. It also illustrated volunteer awareness of newspaper articles sent by family members to the Philippines and Republican ideals in foreign policy.

While some Regiment members favored departing the Philippines, military and political objectives remained uncertain in Washington. Newspapers reported rumors regularly and were later confirmed by the volunteers. Stearns County residents followed the rhythm with hopes of the volunteers returning to their families only to have them dispelled. George Robinson of Company M described the circumstance by writing,

We hear strange reports here. One is to the effect that the government at home is offering a bounty of \$600 per man and \$30 per month to induce men to enter the service. Another which has its source here is to the effect that the Thirteenth is soon to return to the states, via New York, . . . Our Colonel and Capt. McKelvy and other officers think the report is true, but among the men there is a tendency to doubt its accuracy, because so many reports which have been circulated, have turned to be false.²¹

¹⁹ St. Cloud Times, 30 November 1898.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Volunteers' desires to come home paralleled efforts on the homefront among Democrats like Macdonald and Governor Lind to make it a reality. Elected officials became involved in the Regiment's removal from the Philippines that further opened a loyalty issue among both Democrats and Republicans alike. Governor Lind's actions were a prime target for Eastman. Eastman painted Lind as a crying leader, ready to release his soldiers despite their military duty. He said, "John Lind has been governor five months, and has made something of a record. Here are a few of the bright spots in it: Advertised the Thirteenth Minnesota regiment all over the country as composed of kids crying to come home."²² Ironically for Eastman, Lind was a Spanish American war veteran and a former Republican. This may have influenced Eastman's mistrust of the Governor. However, questions about duty, responsibility to the Army and national reputation surfaced with more frequency. While sentiment among volunteers was selective and primarily published in the *Times*, their words provided readers convincing evidence to abort American efforts on the islands.²³

The islands themselves provided Macdonald further reasons for an American withdrawal. His assertive tactics revisited his prior sentiment against the Filipinos. Considering the Filipino unfit for American citizenship, Macdonald exposed his desperation, his elitism, and his contempt for underdeveloped countries. For example, he utilized syndicated reports about the island's inhabitants themselves written by the *Detroit Free Press* and *Harpers Weekly*. It stated,

The Filipino is a true child of the East. His moral fiber is as flimsy as the web of the pineapple gauze of which the women make their dresses. He will cheat, steal and lie

²² *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 8 June 1899.

²³ *St. Cloud Times*, 30 November 1898; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 8 June 1899.

beyond the orthodox limit of the Anglo-Saxon. There can be no doubt that our soldiers are spoiling for a fight. They hate and despise the native for the manner he has lied and cheated them, and on the whole they are inclined to treat the Filipino the way a burly policeman treats a ragged street urchin.²⁴

Macdonald's support for this belief increased from earlier in the war, unveiling true sentiments, desperation, or a combination of both. While these elements appeared, a more prominent reason to oppose the Philippine policy developed in part because of anti-imperial objections.

Macdonald included elements of the growing anti-imperial movement to support his cause. Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts spoke against the "Cry for Empire" and championed the cause against treaty ratification. In a speech he proclaimed the hazards of American policies. He said,

This year has been crowded with history and crowded with glory. It is also, to my mind, crowded with danger. The United States comes to these oppressed people, east and west, as a great deliverer. I believe that the highest service the American people can render to mankind and to liberty is to preserve unstained and unchanged the republic as it came to us from the fathers.²⁵

Even Andrew Carnegie, the stalwart Republican, offered his objections to McKinley's course. In an address to the President, Carnegie said, "Colonial possessions will weaken rather than strengthen this country. We go out of our way in search of trouble; . . . If Americans attempt to take the Philippines I hope the Insurgents will shoot them down."²⁶ Sharing this view, Macdonald attempted to warn residents about

²⁴ St. Cloud Times, 9 November 1898.

²⁵ St. Cloud Times, 16 November 1898.

²⁶ St. Cloud Times, 30 November 1898.

overextending American rule beyond its boundaries. His concern was political extension, an opinion formulated against European powers and their vast oversea empires. He believed they had difficulty in governing these distant possessions while simultaneously directing political solutions within the mother country. As a result, citizens suffered from inadequate government services, poor leadership, and economic hard times.²⁷

In 1899, Macdonald faced his largest challenge in altering the Republican course in the Philippines. His entire focus centered on the Philippines, bringing American troops home, and relinquishing United States control. He remained relatively quiet on the issues that produced his initial war favoritism. Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Hawaiian annexation became sideline elements to the Philippines even though their destiny was linked to American foreign policy. Despite his ambitious efforts, Macdonald appeared to know that by January 1899 Democratic objections faced a difficult challenge in gaining any compromise to McKinley's foreign policy. Even without local letters of support, Macdonald appeared to be on the defensive, struggling along with other Democrats to gain a political advantage. It was a stark contrast to Eastman, who favored a different path for the country.²⁸

Along with the President and fellow Republicans, the situation never appeared more optimistic. Republicans had a commanding influence in Washington from individuals such as Senators Davis and Frye to maintain the established political course. Theodore Roosevelt had preached this sentiment and was often quoted about its benefits. For example he said, "The simple truth is that there is nothing even remotely resembling

²⁷ St. Cloud Times, 16 November, 30 November 1898.

²⁸ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 4 January, 18 January, 1899.

imperialism or militarism involved in the present development . . .²⁹ Locally, Republicans had assisted in Stearns County's volunteer formation. Eastman and these individuals had to be pleased with McKinley's undertakings. For Stearns County residents at-large, it was difficult to determine their mood. Macdonald had adequately displayed opposition evidence that the volunteers had at least questioned their military role in the Philippines. Eastman, however, aligned himself loyally with the President. Lasting only less than four months, the rapid conclusion to war fostered the Republican cause among the public. Spearheaded by influential Republicans such as Senator Lodge and Davis among others, the policy continued, and the newspapers provided an excellent avenue to promote its implementation.³⁰

Alvah Eastman, Duty and American Responsibility

"McKinley's course in the war is one that every citizen must approve."³¹

- Alvah Eastman

Since April 1898, Alvah Eastman had dramatically changed his writing style in the *Journal-Press*. By the year's conclusion, St. Cloud's Republican editors appeared inspired by the President, his course for the United States, and the role of his political party in the country's future. A Republican foreign policy vision was apparent to local readers. Eastman's editorials and syndicated articles seemed confident with the Republican agenda and he aggressively faced his cross-town rival Macdonald, a dramatic change since earlier in the war. Eastman's stance focused on Philippine annexation

²⁹ Brands, p. 401.

³⁰ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 5 January 1899.

³¹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 8 December 1898.

aspects and the possible outcomes if the United States avoided this perceived responsibility.³²

Republicans, unlike their position earlier in the war, appeared organized toward their specific policy goals. Eastman portrayed this confidence and believed they had the backing of the American public. The *London Times*, reprinted in the *Journal-Press*, stated its analysis of the American situation in the Philippines. The paper said, "If the United States repudiates such a responsibility a very perilous state of things might ensue, because it would not be easy to dispute the right of other powers to terminate the state of anarchy. Therefore, many difficulties will be avoided by American annexation."³³ This justification certainly rationalized the importance of the Philippines to the Republicans. They feared a potential power vacuum for the region, as England, Japan, and Germany all had displayed interest in the Far East and the China markets. Republicans believed a war could possibly expand, with these countries leaving the United States in a difficult military position. They also were concerned with American international reputation, imperialism principles, and even Filipino welfare. Local party notables concluded a similar perception.³⁴

Page Morris, the Sixth District U.S. Representative reflected how these aims appeared to come together by this period. He stated in a speech before St. Cloud residents,

Looking back over all these stirring events, I say reverently I believe the hand of Providence was in it all, guiding us slowly but surely to that point from which the war was waged, not for selfish aggrandizement or revenge but for humanity and liberty . . .

³² *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 5 January 1899.

³³ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 25 August 1898.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

But while we rejoice in all these things, let us turn to and face with courage the new responsibilities and new duties with which we have been confronted. "But the question of the Philippines is different and altogether more difficult. For my part I do not believe that, having once freed them from Spanish dominion, we can require them to go back under it again. If we were forbidden by humanity to longer tolerate Spanish rule in the West Indies, surely we cannot be justified in establishing that rule in the Philippines. I do not believe that we can turn them over to European nations without producing difficulties and complications . . .³⁵

While perhaps explaining the difficult position the United States government was in regarding the Philippines, Morris' opinion prophesied future plans for the islands. For Macdonald and other Democrats, it challenged the very fabric of the country. From his viewpoint, it was this departure that raised the strongest opposition.³⁶

To bolster Eastman's editorial arguments against Macdonald's steady stream of evidence, he also included some of his own. He published details of a meeting held at the Baptist Church in Fairhaven, a southern Stearns County community. The agenda highlighted the current political issues and concluded that the President's policy during the war was the proper avenue for the country. Eastman reported,

It is clear that the people of this section, regardless of political beliefs are loyal American citizens and are proud of the man at the head of this nation, William McKinley. Now that they realize the necessity of endorsing the position of the administration on the Spanish question, Congressman Morris can rely upon an increased vote. The people of this section of Stearns County believe in patriotism.³⁷

The elections, supporting the President, and Eastman's attempt to further expand this Republican foreign policy all became essential in the Republican argument.

Eastman's logic for retaining the Philippines was rooted in his support for the President, economic potential, and imperialism for American foreign policy. He also

³⁵ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 27 October 1898.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

believed in assisting the people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines; but, like Macdonald, he looked upon these individuals as second class citizens. While Democrats shared humanitarian assistance elements, they disapproved of annexation and were clearly against political action in the Philippines. This was the principal difference between Eastman and Macdonald.³⁸

In December 1898 shortly before the peace treaty with Spain was finalized, Eastman addressed these controversial issues in a lengthy editorial aimed at the growing anti-imperial movement in New England. It was his climactic message for 1898, an answer to his critics and justification for his party's viewpoint. He addressed the local Stearns County audience by stating,

The great question now before the country is whether it is wise for this government to take possession of the Philippines. Some very able men do not believe that is for the best interests of this country. Other equally able and honest men are convinced that the expansion of our possessions will be of great benefit to the United States.³⁹

Eastman attempted to unify his readership as he persuaded them to Republican aims for the islands. Seeking the initiative, his opinion theorized Eastern objections to trade in the Pacific as an economic burden for their industrial base. He concluded his argument by writing,

This is a government of the people and each citizen has a right to express his views freely and fully. Senator Hoar of Massachusetts is the spokesman of New England, and he is against the position taken by President McKinley. That Hoar is not alone in his views was clearly demonstrated at the recent election. The Republicans lost congressmen in the east and made gains in the west. It seems beyond dispute that the possession of the Philippines will be of great advantage to the western half of the United States. This section of the country will naturally capture the large share of the Asiatic trade, . . . Those opposed to the expansion idea contend that we are entering upon a destructive policy. They do not however object to the annexation of Porto

³⁸ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 27 October 1898.

³⁹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 8 December 1898.

Rico, or extending the protection of the American flag to Cuba. The people of the west cannot see why this government has not the same right to extend its possessions in the Pacific as in the Atlantic Ocean.⁴⁰

The country's division on foreign policy, according to Eastman, was based geographically on international economic trade. He believed that anti-imperialists only objected to McKinley's Philippine policy while they endorsed Cuban and Puerto Rican involvement because Eastern commercial ports had access to this region. Despite the economic benefits for Western states in expansion, objections occurred. When newspapers focused their attention on the Philippines, Cuban issues became a secondary argument. Even Macdonald failed to revisit these Caribbean issues that were so vital to his prewar argument in April 1898.

Finally, Eastman rationalized his justification for American involvement in the Philippines and set the stage for economic growth. The country's prospects relied on its implementation. However, objections were evident and the most vocal opponents were eastern aristocrats. Eastman said in response,

If the statesmen of the east can show that the possession of the Philippines is any more in conflict with the constitution than the annexation of Porto Rico--or that it will not be for the advantage of the whole country to extend our possessions, their contentions should receive the serious consideration of all our people--but to say that we are incapable of governing the Philippines or any other of our colonies is an insult to the American people that will not be tolerated--at least here in the west.⁴¹

While the economic issue remained important among Americans to continue their prosperity, Eastman appeared to have solved the reason why Easterners opposed Philippine expansion. Economic expansion, especially for Western port cities and the

⁴⁰ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 8 December 1898.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Midwest served by the railroad, provided an opportunity for additional markets for Stearns County agricultural products. Over these objections, McKinley's implementation prevailed and Republicans gathered for their platform.⁴²

While Eastman defended the President's Philippine policy, he was keenly aware of his shortcomings and addressed his failure to disclose them to the American people. He wrote at the close of the year,

The president does not outline his policy regarding the Philippines, contending himself with the remark that this matter will properly come before congress when the treaty now being prepared at Paris shall be submitted. The president is as wise as he is able and brave, and never forgets that the people of this country are the real rulers, and he submits the acts of his administration for their consideration and approval--not presuming to dictate their decision. Like Lincoln, he believes in the wisdom of the people, and naturally the people have faith in him.⁴³

The President's ability and Eastman's conviction that the people were behind his actions enhanced Eastman's believability. The great presidents of the past, such as Lincoln and Washington, proved their wisdom during their encountered crises; Eastman believed McKinley would serve the nation as well. As McKinley's policy was implemented, the volunteers of Company M faced the implications firsthand. Their interpretation of these events suggested a reality different from Eastman's Republican viewpoint.⁴⁴

⁴² St. Cloud Journal-Press, 8 December 1898.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 8 December, 15 December 1898.

BATTLE OF MANILA, POLICE ACTION AND WAR WITH THE FILIPINOS

The sight which impressed me the most, the old hulks of the used-to-be Spanish fleet. The sight of those ships shows what American gunnery is like, and as we first saw them, our hearts thrilled with patriotism, to see what our brave boys had done in that old harbor before we came, . . .⁴⁵

- Lieutenant Limperich, Company M

The atmosphere, so positive as the volunteers began their military task, quickly changed for most Minnesota volunteers. The reality of war and its political consequences weighed upon them and altered their morale as they attempted to loyally serve their country. Local newspapers vied for any leverage in their mission. Meanwhile, the American diplomatic position, steered from McKinley to Commodore Dewey, offered only token support for the Filipinos that resulted in a strained relationship between the two countries. The Army's arrival did not change this strained situation. American forces required supplies such as pack animals that they were unable to bring in significant numbers aboard their transport vessels. Aguinaldo hesitantly agreed to these American demands but they were only the beginning. American dependency on the Filipinos for these small but vital military needs often contradicted their political attitude toward Aguinaldo and hampered his country's independence movement. From the Filipino perspective this presented two differing views: one as an assisting ally while simultaneously being left out of the post war negotiations with Spain. Aguinaldo's American impression for the political outcome remained skeptical. He fulfilled American requests distrustfully, hoping perhaps for an easier transition to hard-fought independence.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ St. Cloud Times, 14 September 1898.

⁴⁶ Ivan Musicant, Empire By Default, (New York: Henry Hoit and Company, 1998).

Minnesota volunteers embarked from the *City of Para* and landed south of Manila at Camp Dewey, a peanut field that became the main facility for American troops on the islands. John Bowe commented on the conditions at the camp, writing, "We were marched to Camp Dewey and camped in a peanut field. Remember waking up in the night and found the water following the peanut ridges and running down my back."⁴⁷ He also revealed the hardship at the camp that included weather-related events and the continued supply problems for American troops. He wrote,

It rained all the time we were at Camp Dewey. It was the wettest, muddiest, and most miserable camp that we had during the war. Under the circumstances, it was the best possible, and it was for the men we did not stay there long. The food consisted of desiccated potatoes and hard-tack. It was amusing about meal-time to see the men come out to get their canary bird dinner.⁴⁸

Supply reports were often contradictory as officers appeared to enjoy better rations than lower ranking volunteers. This influenced morale and resulted in aiding the Democratic case against American control of the islands. In another letter received by Senator Ripley Brower, the unidentified writer stated,

We laid out in the harbor of Manila a week and then we landed on one of the most God-forsaken places on this earth of ours. Sanitation! What there is of it consists of ditches on the surface and these only in the city and you can imagine in a climate like this where meat has to be eaten the same day it is butchered and the ground soggy and rain-soaked continually, . . .⁴⁹

Added to the depressing weather, other incidents also had the volunteers cautiously on edge as conditions deteriorated with the native Filipinos. Peter Schumacher,

⁴⁷ John Bowe, *With the Thirteenth Minnesota*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bowe, p. 31.

a Company M member from St. Cloud added in a letter home published in the *Times* about camp anxiety. He said, "I was on guard at Camp Dewey. We were there a whole week and only two reliefs a day. We were in almost constant fear of being attacked by the natives. They all carry big knives, and you have to be on the lookout, or they will run a knife into you almost any time."⁵⁰ Native mistrust, compounded with the drastic climate adjustment for American volunteers, resulted in a tense atmosphere for the volunteers. However, United States troops were quick to note their duty and successfully complete the task at hand. The reality to the circumstance weighed upon the soldier's fate. On the death of a comrade Bowe penned, "It was a miserable place to die in and a lonely place to be buried."⁵¹ These words perhaps characterized troop morale in August as the Americans prepared for the Manila assault against Spanish positions. It also prophesied the future.

Battle of Manila

As the volunteers prepared for their Manila assault, the men had not forgotten their mission. Minnesotans, as well as their fellow countrymen, believed in the war cause that brought them all together: the *U.S. S. Maine* and Cuban humanitarian conditions.

Bowe recounted when the battle started by writing,

Of course it was raining, but the rain in no way affected the enthusiasm of the soldiers, they had put ten thousand miles between themselves and home for the purpose of paying their little tribute to the memory of the *Maine*, and now was the time and here was the place, . . .⁵²

⁵⁰ *St. Cloud Times*, 26 October, 1898.

⁵¹ *St. Cloud Times*, 26 October 1898; Bowe, p. 40.

⁵² Bowe, p. 33.

The words, however, seemed different from the political debate occurring at home. Soldiers, distant from the scene, illustrated the extent of the developing event. When the Thirteenth departed Minnesota in May, foreign policy issues had not completely developed.⁵³ After a day of fighting, an armistice was agreed upon that offered a fitting conclusion to the four-month war. Unknown to the Minnesota troops, the prearranged battle restrictions certainly mystified one member of the Regiment. Peter Schumacher, Company M member, said, "I do not know how we took the city so quickly. The fortifications are the best I ever saw, and we only put in about eight hours fighting to carry them."⁵⁴ Despite the heroic efforts exerted that day, the Spanish War was over. A cease fire had been announced the previous day unknown to the participants in the Philippines.⁵⁵

The battle itself was a baptism for the Minnesota men under war conditions. Negotiations aside, members of the Thirteenth performed their duty, illustrating bravery, and truly believed in their cause to "Remember the *Maine*." Bowe recalled the action of Company M and Captain McKelvy,

Captain McQuade here got orders to take his company and support Captain McKelvy, who, with Company M, was scattered among the bushes, snipping away at the Spaniards in the trees and trenches immediately in front.⁵⁶

Much to the satisfaction of local residents, Company M performed with anticipated excellence. Captain McKelvy received high praise for his work in the field as

⁵³ Bowe, pp. 33-35.

⁵⁴ St. Cloud Times, 26 October 1898.

⁵⁵ Bowe, pp. 30, 33-35; St. Cloud Times, 26 October 1898.

⁵⁶ Bowe, p. 34.

Henry Fischer of St. Cloud described the reputation of the Thirteenth. He wrote in a letter home,

Capt. McKelvy is a very popular officer here, and all the boys like him very much. Capt. McKelvy is looked upon here as one of the best company officers on the island, and the boys of Company M and the whole Thirteenth have won a reputation, by the way they behaved on the 13th of August. The day before the battle we were called farmers, but after that it was very different.⁵⁷

Lieutenant Bruckart added,

Capt. McKelvy and all his men made a magnificent showing. Everyone of them was ready and willing to do anything and go anywhere. Not one at any time hesitated, but at all times were eager for the affray. It is indeed true that the St. Cloud boys did their duty and contributed materially to the success of the campaign and will continue to do well the work falling to their lot to the end.⁵⁸

These accolades were expected not only from the volunteers but from Stearns County residents themselves. Pride, performing their duty, and loyalty all were aspects driving both citizens and soldiers during this war.⁵⁹

The cease fire news reached St. Cloud newspapers in a rather quiet tone, perhaps reflecting its incompleteness. The proclamation was interpreted by Macdonald, and his insight illustrated the situation's complexity. He compared the difference from his experience in the Civil War and the current moment. He said, "Then the war had lasted for four long years, during which the Americans had fought Americans, . . . Today the same words are repeated: The war is over! But there is a difference, even though the

⁵⁷ St. Cloud Times, 7 December 1898.

⁵⁸ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 20 October 1898.

⁵⁹ St. Cloud Times, 7 December 1898, St. Cloud Journal-Press, 20 October 1898.

tidings are received with joyful acclaim. Let us all thank God that the war is over."⁶⁰ Macdonald's sentiment noted the Philippine question remained unresolved and its issue still needed further debate. Would United States citizens accept their new role on the world stage?

America had achieved its victory through tremendous public support. Republicans deemed their skills of leadership through the campaign, as evident in Eastman's postwar comments.

The *Journal-Press* also noted the conclusion of the war. Eastman wrote,

President McKinley's conduct in closing the war without bluster and fuss, but with that great determination to have it settled patriotically and right, was in keeping with his whole course during the trouble with Spain. Truly the good Lord is on the side of the Republicans, says Haldor E. Boen editor of the Fergus Falls Globe, . . . For once, Haldor, you are right, and the Good Lord and the Republican party constituted a majority of the American citizens--for which Bro. Boen should be duiy thankful.⁶¹

Eastman's perception echoed Republican guidance throughout the war and its rightful conclusion. As the peace treaty remained to be ratified, members of Congress like Massachusetts' Senator Hoar declared their objections.

Police Duty For American Troops

The war's conclusion brought a period of adjustment for the volunteers. Their mustering into the U. S. Army ran the course of the Spanish war for up to two years. Many volunteers expected to return home. Instead, a period of police work took place that involved processing Spanish prisoners, maintaining order, and enforcing the American political objectives by keeping the Filipinos out of Manila. Peter Schumacher

⁶⁰ *St. Cloud Times*, 24 August 1898.

⁶¹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 18 August 1898.

commented on the transition from battle conditions to this assignment. He said, "Things are more pleasant for us than they were a few months ago. We have cots to sleep on, and mosquito nettings around them to protect us. Other conveniences have been supplied until the regiment is in pretty good shape."⁶² After August, the ensuing months offered an interesting situation for the Minnesota volunteers. They provided security for city residents, processed Spanish prisoners, and attempted to provide a safe environment as commercial activities returned. As the McKinley Administration determined a political course for the islands, it became clear to the Stearns County company their stay in the Philippines was indefinite.⁶³

Reports and prospective rumors of going home became a common occurrence through the remainder of the year as noted in local St. Cloud papers. Peter Schumacher wrote, "I have no idea when we are coming home. I wish it was tomorrow, for we are all anxious to see Minnesota again. There is no telling when we will leave. It may be soon and may be months."⁶⁴ Lieutenant Limperich added,

We all expected to return to the United States when peace was declared but the prospect is now more remote than ever and I think that we will be kept here for some time to come. For two long months there has been hardly a word from home, not even newspapers. We are all anxiously waiting for mail from home.⁶⁵

According to published letters, troop members appeared to become interested in going home concluding their military service. However, other troop members disagreed.

⁶² St. Cloud Times, 30 November 1898.

⁶³ St. Cloud Times, 30 November 1898; Franklin Holbrook, Minnesota in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, (St. Paul: Minnesota War Records Commission, 1923), pp. 58-59.

⁶⁴ St. Cloud Times, 26 October 1898.

⁶⁵ St. Cloud Times 19 October 1898.

In contradictory terms, Company M Member Ed Lentz recalled the police duty in a letter home. He wrote, "We are having a snap now, doing police duty in the city and Colonel Reeve is chief of police. I don't think we will go home for some time to come, and if the company does I am thinking of staying myself. One can get almost any kind of a job if he wishes to stay."⁶⁶ Republicans desired this opportunity for new markets. The Far East's economic potential surely enticed these individuals to bring American products to the region. The Filipinos had intentions of their own and without American consent were willing to fight for their independence.

Tension Between Americans and Filipinos

There is plenty of patriotism in this country, in spite of the unpatriotic talk of United States senators and lesser lights. This country can accomplish what any other country on the top of the earth can do long the path of right and liberty. It is not an experiment or an infant in arms, but the grandest nation of all time. If the insurgents should be reckless enough to kill a single American soldier this Philippine question would be settled, and settled right and their would be no division among the American ranks.⁶⁷

- Alvah Eastman

Volunteers assigned to the Philippines encountered an immediately strained relationship with the native Filipinos and Aguinaldo as a result of American political indecisiveness. Seeking their independence, the Filipinos had difficulties understanding American political and military policies. Meanwhile, McKinley pursued a policy of keeping peace and retaining control of Manila. Each side regarded the other suspiciously

⁶⁶ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 10 November 1898.

⁶⁷ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 2 February 1899.

as to their intentions due to communication problems, McKinley's policy direction to those in the field, and a determined Filipino independence effort.⁶⁸

For example, the *Journal-Press* published a letter McKinley had received from Aguinaldo that illustrated the difficulty newspapers had in reporting news from the Philippines. The insurgent leader addressed the President, "The Filipino group desire to inform the American government and people that the many rumors circulated regarding the strained relations between the Filipino and American forces are baseless, malicious and slanders of the enemy to both parties, are without any truth . . . The relations of our people and yours have been and will continue to be of the most friendly nature . . ." ⁶⁹ The positive attitude provided an optimism for future American-Filipino relations but was short-lived. Aguinaldo's sentiment was rooted in his appreciation for American democracy but was torn between Filipino self-government and American resistance to this position. Despite his perception of American resistance, he remained committed to his independence goal. For Aguinaldo his interpretation centered on American obligation regarding the "American mission in the Philippines accomplished" when the war with Spain concluded.⁷⁰

The unstable environment and McKinley's vague policy objectives pressured commanders and troops to determine their military policy. Others reported a similar account, as noted in a letter written home by Lieutenant Limperich of Company M. Limperich described how he perceived the Filipinos' attitude and the tension for

⁶⁸ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 22 September 1898.

⁶⁹ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 15 September 1898.

⁷⁰ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 22 September 1898.

American troops. He said, "Since the natives have learned that we mean business, they have been more docile and willing to listen to reason. They have been disarmed, and are not allowed to carry weapons of any kind in the city, for they hate the Spanish with the deadliest hate and take pleasure in killing them when they can."⁷¹

Anxiety between the two groups escalated to the point where war appeared a real possibility.

From the commencement of the hostilities, the Filipinos acceded to all American requests, but after bottling up the Spaniards in Manila, the Filipinos were completely ignored when the Americans advanced and thus deprived of the fruits of victory. Now after months of campaigning, the Filipino troops have been ordered beyond the suburbs, where they have no quarters and where supplies are difficult to obtain. The Spaniards, of late the enemies of the Americans, have been shown every consideration while the Filipinos, their friends and allies, are often treated as enemies.

This attitude certainly reflected the Filipino's desire to get along with the Americans.

However, it was apparent the United States was not going to allow the Filipinos their goal. Within three months, a war between the American forces and Aguinaldo's army began a new phase in United States history. Macdonald and Eastman pursued the complexity and controversy that proceeded the war to new editorial debate levels.⁷²

War With the Filipinos

On 4 February 1899 the tension between the Americans and Filipinos finally released as shots were fired in the evening hours. Regardless of who started the war, a major political division between Americans and Filipinos made it virtually inevitable. The result became a battle of will as American operations attempted to crush Aguinaldo's

⁷¹ St. Cloud Times, 19 October 1898.

⁷² St. Cloud Times, 16 November 1898.

independence goal, while the Filipinos sought their independence. Like their prior successful methods, the Filipinos continued their guerilla warfare style, while Americans encountered the same difficulties Spanish soldiers endured. Atrocities were committed on both sides in an effort to gain military control.

The war also resulted in an increased effort by the Anti-Imperial League to promote its negative consequences, raise public awareness, and receive newspaper coverage of their cause against imperialism. President McKinley spoke about his Philippine policy that laid the foundation for his argument. He said in an address,

I believe there is more love for our country, and that more people love the flag that ever before. That the flag does not mean one thing in the United States and another in Porto Rico and the Philippines. There has been some doubt in some quarters respecting the policy of the government in the Philippines. Peace, first, and then, with charity for all, establish a government of law and order, protecting life and property and occupation for the well-being of the people who will participate in it under the Stars and Stripes.⁷³

From McKinley's perspective, many Republicans shared these beliefs of righteousness.

When war came with the Filipinos, Eastman was outraged. He said,

The attack by the insurgents upon Manila is just as inexcusable as an attack would be upon San Francisco. The United States forces captured Manila from Spain, and the insurgents had no more right to it than they have to St. Cloud. Had the treaty been ratified at once without opposition, there would have been no bloodshed at Manila. The insurgents are but ignorant victims in the hands of selfish, designing men, and some of these men are American citizens. Shame upon them!⁷⁴

It is important to remember that Eastman's imperial view was based on assisting the Filipinos. Like others such as McKinley, Eastman believed in fostering a relationship toward the Filipinos as they learned to govern themselves. However, the growing

⁷³ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 31 August 1899.

⁷⁴ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 16 February 1899.

dissension in the United States against the President's policy only hampered this implementation. In Eastman's mind, the Filipino attack damaged their opportunity for a gradual form of independence.⁷⁵

Macdonald also reached a discouraging conclusion. Describing his disappointment, he said,

For the first time in the history of the American republic, its army and navy was employed on Saturday and Sunday in battling against a people who are fighting for their liberty. For years they contended against Spain. They were then sold to America, but declined to accept the change of ownership, and now intend to continue the unequal contest. The end is not yet-it is far off.⁷⁶

Macdonald prophesied an American struggle, realizing the Filipinos will for independence and the American difficulty to supply an army 8,000 miles from the front. His intuition proved correct as the war lasted longer than the Thirteenth's military assignment.

CONCLUSION

Closing Thoughts from Macdonald and Eastman

"There seems to be a wide difference of opinion as to whether the war in the Philippines is over or is just getting started, those who know the natives best holding the latter."⁷⁷
- Colin Macdonald

Macdonald's efforts to reverse American foreign policy patterns had failed during Company M's volunteer service assignment. His sentiment to remove American control over the Philippine's due to traditional American governing patterns, Philippine

⁷⁵ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 16 February, 31 August 1899.

⁷⁶ St. Cloud Times, 8 February 1899.

⁷⁷ St. Cloud Times, 12 April 1899.

independence efforts, and fears of their inclusion as citizens all had rational reasoning for the period. His examples were profound. He highlighted Aguinaldo's numerous protests against United States actions and the limited role Filipinos had in their fate. He interpreted the events in a fashion to Carl Schurtz.

This looks very much as if we had merely changed places with Spain in the Philippines, and that we may find it necessary to kill a few hundred thousand natives in order to tame them. But as Mr. Cleveland says: The killing of natives has been a feature of expansion since expansion began.⁷⁸

Macdonald's awareness of American continental expansion was an interesting comment and one not previously mentioned by the Democratic editor. If he had not changed his impression of the Filipinos, he certainly respected their desire for self-government. Through his own war experience he also realized how difficult a task it would be to retain order in the Philippines under American control.⁷⁹

As time wore on in 1899, Macdonald became more abrasive against expansion, providing examples of American soldiers who were participating in a war they did not initially enlist. Macdonald's anxiety was further raised when General Lawton and General Otis requested additional troops to Philippine operations. These were danger signals for anti-expansionists because they fostered mistrust for the administration of McKinley's who assured progress in the war. Torn by the Filipinos seeking self-government and support for American troops, Macdonald was clearly distressed.⁸⁰

We have got the Filipinos so badly whipped that Gen. Lawton found it necessary to retreat and leave the eight towns he recently captured to be reoccupied by Aguinaldo.

⁷⁸ St. Cloud Times, 11 January 1899.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ St. Cloud Times, 8 February 1899.

And it may be mentioned incidentally that Gen. Lawton has publicly expressed the opinion that it will require an American army of 100,000 to pacify the Philippines.⁸¹

Macdonald became so angered with McKinley's tactics that in a later editorial, he added,

Our losses in Mr. McKinley's war in the Philippines are not bulletined for the public by the War Department, but they far exceed our loss in the war declared by Congress against Spain. The splendid valor, dash and endurance of our soldiers is the only redeeming feature of this unauthorized, unnecessary, un-American and apparently endless war of subjugation.⁸²

In eighteen months, Macdonald and his Democratic colleagues had completed an interesting political debate. He championed the war banner for Cuban humanitarian needs and the *U.S.S. Maine* explosion, seeking assistance and justice in both instances. What altered his political opposition had already formed before the war. Introduced in 1893 by Minnesota Senator Davis, Hawaiian annexation was an indication of American expansion prior to the Spanish War. While Cuba and the *U.S.S. Maine* provided concrete reasons for intervention, the Philippine situation changed the war's outcome. His objection was associated with the tremendous departure from past American experiences, a belief he held until the war's completion. The United States became a world power during this period, a position Macdonald was uncomfortable with. Macdonald thus represented this transition, a figure caught between his perception of how America should be versus its Republican push to become a great world power.⁸³

Alvah Eastman's case climaxed in 1898 for a changing American foreign policy and vision for new economic growth into the twentieth century. In speaking of the

⁸¹ *St. Cloud Times*, 21 June 1899.

⁸² *St. Cloud Times*, 26 April 1899.

⁸³ *St. Cloud Times*, 30 November 1898, 14 December 1898, 1 February 1899; *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 18 May 1899.

improved economic times since the Panic of 1893, the *Journal-Press* emphasized the country's prosperity in 1898. The following year continued the pattern of the Republican vision. As hostilities loomed between Americans and Filipinos, Eastman attempted to influence readers to these economic benefits the Philippines and the Far East offered businessmen. Eastman reiterated the past year and America's future. "That the excess of exports over imports gave the United States a larger net balance to its credit in the world's trade than was ever before known. That the country has entered on an area of unequalled prosperity. That the Republican party is the party of progress, of prosperity, of the people."⁸⁴ Others offered their opinion supporting this philosophy. Thirteenth Minnesota members including Fred L. Gregory, who commented, "If America keeps these islands, as she ought to, there are some of the greatest chances to make money in the world."⁸⁵ Republicans, under McKinley's leadership, only offered improved economic growth for years to come. In theory, this would eventually reach Stearns County residents through improved roads, access to markets for goods such as agricultural products and allow opportunities for prosperity.⁸⁶

Eastman's conclusions for American expansion developed slowly. Perhaps due to Republican organization to distribute information or McKinley's silence, his viewpoints took time to unfold. By mid summer 1898 his opinions quickly formed. Eastman preached what other Republicans had stated, the tremendous opportunity for continued economic prosperity while seeking influence beyond United States boundaries.

⁸⁴ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 5 January 1899.

⁸⁵ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 22 December 1898.

⁸⁶ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 5 January 1899, 22 December 1898.

Imperialism principles appeared in Eastman's column, illustrating confidence and sincerity not present before. Like that of Macdonald, the belief that this Republican position was the correct political policy provided a small window for compromise against Democratic disagreements.

Like the Democrats, Eastman featured the Philippines as a paramount issue of the war. He identified why the islands must remain under American control. He wrote,

The policy of the United States toward the Philippine islands is that the most blessed thing that can be done for their people, ... At the present time they are not fitted for independence and reasonably could not be expected to be. But instead of leaving them without any form of government, the United States will protect every man, native or foreign, in his personal and property rights, and will make the Filipinos a self-respecting and a self-controlling people.⁸⁷

The fostering of this paternal relationship signaled a key for the Republican philosophy. Through American guidance, Filipinos would be change from second class citizens to those worthy of self-government.⁸⁸

Despite the noble intentions perceived by Republicans, events in the Philippines dictated a difficult struggle for American implementation. During the summer of 1899, Eastman realized the war was not going well for American troops. Morale had plummeted among the volunteers as was evident from the Minnesota contingent's correspondence home. Their words spoke of longing for home, while questioning

⁸⁷ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 12 January 1899.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

McKinley's military and political philosophy. Eastman commented on the situation by stating,

But evidently the resistance has been greater and more prolonged than was anticipated. The rebels, being in a country familiar to them and with a climate to which they are accustomed, can maintain a sort of guerrilla war for an indefinite time unless an army large enough to crush all resistance and occupy all territory captured is placed in the field. The country will not only sustain President McKinley but will applaud the action.⁸⁹

However, the depressing circumstances in the Philippines were short-lived for Eastman. Forever an optimist, his positive attitude appeared again to clarify why American troops continued their campaign. He said,

Is the present outlook gloomy? We believe not, in fact, it is brighter than at any period since the trouble with the insurgents began last February. America regrets that it is compelled to fight the natives, as our troops did not come here for that purpose, but to assist them. The situation is not gloomy; as we view it only regrettable, while the future is full of bright promise.⁹⁰

Eastman's conclusion and justification were quite simply compared to the actual circumstance. He appeared shortsighted about the Philippine independence movement and its arguments within the United States. He condemned these Americans as unloyal, a charge he often raised against Macdonald himself. His intentions, whether derogatory or not, illustrated his progressive passion to improve the nation's welfare. The strong belief to exert America as a world power conflicted with that of Democrats such as Macdonald. Yet he believed the Republican Party would make the United State a better nation in the century ahead.⁹¹

⁸⁹ St. Cloud Journal Press, 22 June 1899.

⁹⁰ St. Cloud Journal, 31 August 1899.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Company M Returns Home, the Conclusion

As the volunteers made their way home in October 1899, Stearns County's direct link to political Philippine debated had ended. The local editors concentrated on their joyous return but were left with mixed emotions. The limited public reaction can only be analyzed by the brief statements uttered during their "Welcome Home" ceremony held in St. Cloud's Empire Park. The words remained uncontroversial and were limited to pride, loyalty, and duty. Fred Schilpin, representing the St. Cloud Mayor, stated,

You return to us laden with honors. Through the many trying days of your service in the far off Orient you have upheld the glory and the honor of this city, your home, the state and the nation. We are proud of the record of the Granite City boys and for this we are glad to see you. You have performed the full measure of your duty.⁹²

Judge D. B. Searle followed Schilpin and stated these words,

We have also watched and tried to follow you in your confusing marches through the swamps of the Island of Luzon, on the firing lines against towns with jawwrenching names. And comrades, you would sympathize with us, I know, if you could have seen us bending over maps as I have, and rude newspapers, representing those new islands on the other side of the earth trying to figure out where our boys had fought the last battle with the little brown soldiers.⁹³

The statements certainly reflected a deep commitment by local residents to their volunteers' endeavors. Searle's words conjured visions of a enthusiastic public, stooping over maps trying to follow related newspaper reports and the places they occurred. Schliplin's remarks referred to the importance of duty and honor that were so important to local residents. In his words, they upheld the tradition. However, neither Searle nor Schliplin remarked on the war's political consequences. This omission, whether

⁹² St. Cloud Journal-Press, 19 October 1899.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

overshadowed by sheer jubilation or from the company's successful return was understandable.⁹⁴

For the local press, the arrival home of the volunteers politically did not settle the developed division. The war continued well into the twentieth century, ending during President Roosevelt's term in 1901. The resulting bloodshed symbolized a tragic venture with hopes for a optimistic future. For Democrats the war's ugly side did little to rationalize Republican intentions of good will, democracy and freedom. These would occur in time, but for the participants of this period it was a distant reality.⁹⁵

The Spanish War's merging of forces, including the *U.S.S. Maine* incident, Cuban reform, Monroe Doctrine, and imperialism, all influenced American policy and public acceptance. Newspapers, both smaller presses and major metropolitan giants, spread these to a receptive audience. The local Stearns County readership had less time to react to these rapidly developing events, but their support was nonetheless evident.

The Spanish-American War was significant in several ways for Stearns County, and its ramification certainly ushered in a more global element to their lives. True, economic conditions were the primary national influence for these hard-working residents. The Civil War also had introduced many residents to its implications, but the population was relatively small compared to that of the Spanish American war period. This war brought the world to central Minnesota, an international event that literally altered their lives and their political perceptions. The war's focus on economic, military and social issues ushered in a new age. The call to service was one outcome. In

⁹⁴ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 19 October 1899.

⁹⁵ Carol A. Mayer, Editorial Opinion in Minnesota's German Language Weeklies, 1890-1920, (Graduate Thesis, St. Cloud State College, 1974).

volunteering for military service, Stearns County residents exposed themselves to the unknown by fighting for the Cubans and honoring the *U.S.S. Maine* tragedy. In doing this, they accepted national policy as the loyal obligation while both Republicans and Democrats accused each other of being disloyal.

Newspapers were the source to bring this issue home to area residents. Macdonald and Eastman promoted the war's benefits while arguing against opposing political views. When war was near, area Republican politicians and Civil War veterans reacted and pursued to utilize their influence on the state level to gain acceptance in one of the three National Guard Regiments. Democrats like Macdonald also offered support. The successful petition paid dividends as the Stearns County company gained access to the state's top regiment. The Company's leader, James McKelvy, was a respected military veteran and came from a predominant Republican family. Out-county support appeared equally supportive, even in Democratic strongholds, as volunteer numbers swelled beyond recruiting goals.

The unclear political policy paved the way for local newspaper debate. While both editors favored Cuban intervention, their reasons quickly changed and adapted to the appearance of the Philippines and McKinley's foreign policy. For years the issues for war had presented imperialism and economic expansion. Macdonald failed initially to see their union together with military aims. Lewis Burlingham, a Thirteenth Minnesota member, described the political atmosphere for the soldiers of the front. "Why did U.S. go to war with Spain . . . why did she take this white elephant on her hands...then she turns around and does what Spain was doing when we interfered . . . all done for greed.

This war here is nothing but a damn political and religious affair . . ."⁹⁶ Whether true or not, these words were a powerful example of how economic aims coincided with political ambitions.

While outside forces such as the Civil War or Catholic Church affected local residents, local newspapers during the Spanish war period intensified their efforts to bring economic and political issues to area readers. The most important example was the Philippines. Virtually unknown by the local editors as the war developed, they questioned the very fabric of the country's foundation. Did it make sense to become involved in this distant land? Democrats believed imperialism was a departure from political traditions, an overextension of government, and the admittance of undesirables to United States citizenship. Republicans supported a continued American expansion equating its continental growth, military development, and global status. How newspapers developed the story certainly influenced the way rural Americans looked at their country and into the twentieth century.

As the Thirteenth had paraded through the streets of the Twin Cities, President McKinley offered his view of the future. He said,

The increase of our territory has added vastly to our strength and prosperity without changing our Republican character. It has given wider scope to Democratic principles and enlarged the area for Republican institutions. The Philippines, Porto Rico and Guam, met with some opposition in the senate, but was ratified by that body by more than two-thirds vote; while in the house . . . was made with little or no opposition. As in the case of the Louisiana purchase and Alaska, the opponents of the treaty were in the minority, and the star of hope to an oppressed people was not extinguished.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ "Remembering America's Splendid Little War; Spanish American War Collections at the Minnesota Historical Society; *Minnesota History* (Quarterly of the Minnesota Historical Society, 56/3, Fall 1998), p. 137.

⁹⁷ *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, 19 October 1899.

For Stearns County residents and the rest of America, truly a new century changed their role in the world, bringing it closer to their everyday lives.⁹⁸ Company M's arrival home signified this change. With a gathering at St. Cloud's Empire Park, local citizens welcomed home their volunteers. The scene was quite different from their departure. The speakers reflected on their noble service but failed to mention the political ramifications of their service.

The future only further challenged these residents in the twentieth century and newspapers played a significant role in public perception. Their contact with an international event through the Spanish American War, economic expansion, and American role in politics influenced their lives beyond what was experienced during the war. Likewise, the Catholic Church's effort to eliminate German from religious services was another way to Americanize these independent residents in the Midwest. World War I brought the emotions of fighting their old homeland, while the State of Minnesota's aggressive campaign to swear American loyalty further added to their changing world. International forces to state regulations continued to influence their actions. Prohibition would assault their cultural values in another twenty years. It truly was a dawn of a new century, one perhaps Father Francis Pierz would not have recognized fifty years previously.

⁹⁸ St. Cloud Journal-Press, 19 October 1899.

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