

# TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

A partnership between Portland State University, Portland Public Schools and the Beaverton School District, funded by the U.S. Department of Education

## **HISTORICAL TOPIC: America Becomes a Pacific Nation (1790-1905)**

The United States became a Pacific power in the years around 1900. It annexed Hawaii and part of Samoa, built the Panama Canal, and acquired the Philippines. It also intervened in East Asia during the Boxer Rebellion, by advocating the Open Door to China, and mediating the Russo-Japanese War. These actions laid the basis for an ongoing American presence that has involved three Pacific-Asian wars, a permanent military presence in the western Pacific, and vastly expanded trade with Asian nations.

In Oregon, the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Orient Fair of 1905 provides a lens for exploring American relations with the nations and peoples of the Pacific in the realms of racial relations, trade, and diplomacy. Teachers and students can also explore the changing patterns of immigration that gave Portland the nation's second-largest Chinese population in the late 19th century and a substantial Japanese population in the early 20th century.

*The America Becomes a Pacific Nation topic contains the subtopics listed below. Each subtopic includes a narrative with highlighted text [resources] and notations indicating that additional support material is available for viewing and/or downloading including primary documents, maps, spreadsheet data and websites. To access the material go to the TAHPDX: Teaching American History Website and use the links available on the **TOPIC AREAS [America Becomes a Pacific Nation]** page or the **QUICK NAVIGATION** pages.*

Search TAHPDX on the internet or access the website via the link on the Community Geography page at <http://www.pdx.edu/ims/comgeo.html>.

### **SUBTOPICS:**

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- 6. America Becomes a Pacific Nation Bibliography

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 Curriculum Units developed for this topic (download using the TAHPDX website).

- 1. Nihonmachi: Japan Town Remembered (2004)
- 2. The Pattern of Chinese Presence in Oregon’s History (2005)
- 3. Immigrant Families of Northwest Portland (2006)
- 4. Hawaiian Annexation (2008)

## 1. The United States in the Pacific (1790-1890)

For politicians from Thomas Jefferson to William Seward, continental expansion was a step toward larger westward reach. Hawaiian adventurer George Washington Bates caught the spirit of the project in 1854: “It will not be long before such a mighty tide of wealth will roll between California and the Orient as shall render the Pacific the ‘highway of nations’ on a grander scale than the Atlantic is now. California will sit as empress over the Pacific.” In fact, the actual results of commercial dreams in the nineteenth century were limited. Geographic visionary William Gilpin dreamed of a “Cosmopolitan Railway” that would outdo the Union Pacific and Central Pacific by crossing North America, spanning the Bering Straits, and plunging westward through Siberia to China and Europe. These are both extreme statements of a westward ambition in which Americans not only expected to span a continent but also an ocean.

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**Book Resource:** Perry, John Curtis. 1994. *Facing West: Americans and the Opening of the Pacific*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers. Chapter 13: William Gilpin and the Cosmopolitan Railway.

### *American Commerce*

Deep in the high desert of eastern Oregon the Owyhee River flows through basalt beds and steep canyons into the Snake River. “Owyhee,” it looks like an Indian name, perhaps borrowed from the Paiutes or Shoshones or Nez Perce. Now try an experiment and speak it aloud, and a different possibility surfaces. “Owyhee” is actually a variant spelling for Hawaii, a trace of early contact between Anglo-Americans and the Pacific islands, and a preview of the importance of the Pacific world for Oregon and the United States.

First reached by Europeans in 1778, Hawaii by the early nineteenth century was furnishing seamen for European trading ships and workers for the fur trade of northwest America. Kanakas, the contemporary term for Hawaiian islanders, appear on the employment rosters of the Hudson's Bay Company. Hawaiians helped to build and operate Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River and even Fort Hall deep in present-day Idaho. Early census records of the Oregon Country record Hawaiians along with Scots merchants, French-Indian trappers, and pioneer farmers from Missouri and Illinois.

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**Web Resource:** *Crossing East: Kanaka Village* (<http://www.crossingeast.org/1kanakavillage.htm>). A website with links to video and NPR audio highlighting the role of Hawaiians in the early settlement of the Pacific Northwest.

**Book Resource:** *HBC [Hudson's Bay Company] Kanaka Village/Vancouver Barracks, 1977*. Seattle: Office of Public Archaeology, Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Washington, 1982. The final report on archaeological research at Fort Vancouver with detailed descriptions and drawings.

**Field Trip:** *Fort Vancouver and Kanaka Village* (headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company). Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (<http://www.nps.gov/fova/>).

Hawaii was part of the emergence of the eastern Pacific as a distinct realm of trade and economic exchange. On one side was the northwestern coast of America, the source of beaver and sea otter pelts acquired through trading and trapping and collected at European outposts like Sitka, Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, and the Columbia River. On the other side was Canton, the great mart for luxury goods like northwest furs and Hawaiian sandalwood. Ships from New England (as well as from Britain, Spain, and Russia) brought manufactured goods from the Atlantic to the Pacific, traded them for furs, re-provisioned in Hawaii, sailed on to China, and then back to the Atlantic. Captain James Gray on the *Columbia Rediviva*, the first European American to find the Columbia River, was thus the pacesetter for hundreds of later voyagers and voyages.

The European and American traders enlisted seamen at every point on their trade routes and carried workers from one island or continent to another. They simultaneously carried European diseases like tuberculosis, smallpox, and influenza that devastated island and northwest coast populations and made areas like Oregon and Northern California easy targets for English-speaking settlers in the 1840s and 1850s.

The Pacific was also the hunting ground for the American whaling industry in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, the doomed Captain Ahab and the *Peqoud* circle the Pacific in search of the white whale. In doing so, they reenact the very real American whaling business in which ships from New England took round-the-globe voyages in search of whales to kill and render for oil for lamps and lubricants. While Europeans kept a major presence in Atlantic whaling, the Pacific whaling grounds belonged heavily to Americans.

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**Historic Map (primary document):** *A new map of the world: with all the new discoveries by Capt. Cook and other navigators: ornamented with the Solar System, the eclipses of the sun, moon & planets &c.*, by T. Kitchen (geographer), London, 1799. Shows a good view of exploration of the Pacific Ocean including

the use of Hawaii as a provisioning station (Source: Library of Congress, American Memory Map Collections).

**PDF Resource:** *The People Bought This and the Clatsop Became Rich: A View of Nineteenth Century Fur Trade Relationships on the Lower Columbia between Chinookan Speakers, Whites, and Kanakas* (by Susan Kardas, Ph.D. Dissertation, April 1971). Chapter 2B: "Importation and Fate of the Kanakas" contains a detailed description of Hawaiian culture at the point of Captain Cook's discovery of the Islands and its transformation through westernization and Pacific trade.

### ***Capitalists and Christianizers in Hawaii***

The American whaling business made heavy use of Honolulu and Lahaina as important supply stations in the 1830s and 1840s. In the process, it also helped to open the islands of Hawaii to Christian missionaries from the eastern United States. The Hawaiian monarchy and elite responded by modernizing and accepting many aspects of western society, including the privatization of land. The U.S. and European governments recognized Hawaii as an independent nation rather than seeing it as "primitive" territory waiting to be colonized.

Merchants from Britain and the United States developed close ties with the Hawaiian royalty and made Honolulu the hub of trans-Pacific trade. Investors, especially from San Francisco, developed the sugar industry and then pineapple plantations, bringing in workers from China, Japan, Portugal, and other distant places. When steamships replaced sailing vessels in the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Honolulu was poised for a boom that boosted its population from 15,000 to 45,000 over the 1880s and 1890s.

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**PDF Resource:** Jones, Stephen B. 1938. "Geography and Politics of the Hawaiian Islands." *Geographical Review* 28:2 (Apr. 1938), pp. 193-214. This article provides a good synopsis of the geography and settlement history of the Hawaiian Islands.

**PDF Resource (primary document):** Bates, George Washington (a.k.a. William Baker). 1854. *Sandwich Island Notes by a Häolé*. New York: Harper & Bros. This is a PDF from Google Books of a famous memoir of Hawaii by a Häolé (or outsider). Bates arrived in Honolulu in 1853 in the capacity of a roving correspondent for a San Francisco newspaper. Bates provides detailed descriptions of places and people with many illustrations (insightful, but with obvious anglo bias).

**PDF Resource:** Historic images of Hawaii (citations indicated on documents). From the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, these images provide a glimpse into Hawaiian culture and geography around 1875.

### **Historic Map Resources (primary documents):**

Chart of the Sandwich Islands (George Vancouver, 1798)

Hawaiian Group or Sandwich Islands, New Zealand, Galapagos Islands (G.W. Colton, 1856)

### ***Alaska***

When Secretary of State William Seward agreed to purchase colonization and trading rights in Alaska from the Tsar of Russia, the "Alaska" that he knew was the long arc of islands and

peninsulas that form the vast Gulf of Alaska. By a conservative estimate that takes only the largest islands into account, the acquisition tripled the Pacific coastline of the United States.

Maritime Alaska was the fur-trading region that the Russians had been exploiting since the 1770s. The United States kept its territorial capital at Sitka, the long-established Russian administrative capital (under the name New Archangel). The vast interior of Alaska was a mystery, and what counted were the furs, fisheries, and forests along the coast. This is the territory that railroad tycoon E. H. Harriman visited in 1899 with a boatload of artists and scientists, including John Muir, who became one of the first publicists for Alaska's scenic beauty.

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**Historic Map Resources (primary documents):**

Russian America (Alaska) Map 1867  
Alaska Map 1899

**PDF Book Resource:** Muir, John. 1915. *Travels in Alaska*. From Google Books, John Muir (the famous naturalist and writer of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) recounts his travels throughout Alaska in 1879-90, with illustrations.

**PDF Resource (primary document):** Copy of the Check for the Purchase of Alaska (1868).

### *Pacific Coast Gateways*

*San Francisco, California:* San Francisco was the focal point and power point for the Pacific United States from the California Gold Rush well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1848 and 1849, geography and human action built the city in harness together. San Francisco Bay was the natural place for ocean-going ships to pass their passengers and cargo onto shallow-draft steamers that plied the interior rivers to Maryville, Sacramento, and Stockton, the jumping off points for the gold mines. The small settlement of Yerba Buena beat out rivals like Vallejo and Benicia (each of which was briefly the state capital) by changing its name to San Francisco to match the well-known bay and then by the cumulative effect of its growing corps of merchants and businesses, its new wharves reaching far into Yerba Buena Cove, and its general reputation.

San Francisco merchants and investors built a regional empire on both sides of the high Sierra Nevada range in the heady years of the Gold Rush and the Comstock silver bonanza that followed. In 1860, San Francisco counted 57,000 people, Sacramento 14,000, and Maryville and Stockton between 5,000 and 10,000. Miners could get the basics in Downieville or Placerville, select from a much wider array of goods and services in Maryville and Sacramento, and buy nearly anything in San Francisco, the city for fine living on Nob Hill mansions and high living in saloons, brothels, and gambling houses.

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**Historic Map Resources (primary documents):**

Lithograph of San Francisco 1847 (Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4364s.pm000332>).  
Lithograph of San Francisco 1860 (Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4364s.pm000331>).  
Lithograph of San Francisco 1878 (Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4364s.pm000371>).

By 1860, San Francisco was the ninth largest manufacturing center in the United States. The most important specialty was metal working by firms like the Union Iron Works to provide machinery and pipe for mining, and later for irrigation. Blankets and other woolen goods were important products, soon to be joined by sugar refined from Hawaiian cane. San Francisco and Sacramento furnished the “Big Four” entrepreneurs who organized and built the Central Pacific Railroad eastward from California to connect with the Union Pacific. San Francisco money poured into Nevada mining in the 1860s, with commercial banks to finance mining and refining and a stock exchange to trade Nevada stocks. The 1870s brought further investments in hydraulic mining in California, in newer western mining regions, in California wheat and California real estate. San Francisco’s commercial influence extended from BC to BC (British Columbia to Baja California). Goods and information came to San Francisco first, to be distributed by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, by Wells Fargo and Company, and later by the growing railroad system. “Capital and commerce center here,” wrote Samuel Bowles in 1869. “[I]t is the social focus and the intellectual inspiration, not only of California, but of Nevada, Oregon, and Idaho as well.”

*Portland, Oregon:* Portland was the first city to seriously challenge San Francisco’s sphere of influence, succeeding to a waterborne commercial system sketched out by the Hudson’s Bay Company. From 1825 to 1845, John McLoughlin had made Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River the center of a fur trading empire that fanned out to the four points of the compass. Trappers and traders followed the Columbia upriver to the network of interior trading posts and beaver streams, and downstream traveled north along the Cowlitz River corridor or coast to Puget Sound and south up the Willamette River.

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**Map Resource:** Hudson’s Bay Company – Fort Vancouver 1824-46 (Source: National Park Service).

**Graphic Resource:** Drawing of Fort Vancouver ca. 1845 (Source: National Park Service).

Within a group of settlements that included Fort Vancouver, Oregon City at the Falls of the Willamette, and hundreds of new farms hacked out of the Oregon forest and savannahs by the 2000+ Oregon Trail settlers of 1843–44, the site of Portland was Oregon’s first highway rest area. Native Americans and fur trappers had cleared part of a dry, sloping bank on the west side of the Willamette roughly halfway between Fort Vancouver and Oregon City. It was a good spot to cook a meal, spend a night, or repair equipment. Nevertheless, promoters William Overton and Asa Lovejoy claimed the square mile that would become downtown Portland because they saw the superiority of its site over local rivals.

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**Historic Map Resource:** Portland City Lithograph ca. 1876 (Source: Library of Congress)

**Graphic Resources:**

Willamette Falls ca. 1867 (Source: Washington Archives)

Oregon City ca. 1848 (Source: Washington State University)

The California gold rush turned a townsite into a city by creating a voracious appetite for Oregon wheat and lumber. Newly-platted Portland established itself as the head of ocean-going

navigation on the Willamette River. After gaining control of trade between western Oregon and California, Portland entrepreneurs looked eastward. From the 1860s to the present, metropolitan growth has been tied to the resources of the Columbia River Valley. Central to the city's prosperity was the *Oregon Steam Navigation Company* [web resource], a Portland-owned corporation that monopolized travel to eastern Oregon, Washington, and Idaho with a fleet of steamboats. Settlers east of the Cascades hated its high freight charges, but Portlanders liked the jobs and money that it funneled to the city. Contemporaries called it Oregon's "millionaire-making machine."

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**Web Resource:** History of the *Oregon Steam Navigation Company* ([http://www.pnwc-nrhs.org/hs\\_osn.html](http://www.pnwc-nrhs.org/hs_osn.html)).

*Victoria, British Columbia:* To the north of Portland, the Canadian city of Victoria was the first commercial center for Puget Sound in the United States, the Straits of Georgia in Canada, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca that divides the two nations and gives entrance to the North Pacific. Perched on the lower tip of Vancouver Island just far enough east for shelter from Pacific gales, Victoria was the first capital of British Columbia. Victoria ships crossed the Straits of Georgia to the Fraser River, plied the coasts of Vancouver Island to ocean-facing Nootka Sound or the east shore coal mines around Nanaimo, and sailed south through the islands and bays of Puget Sound. Victoria mercantile houses placed family members in the smaller cities on both sides of the border to act as agents for waterborne commerce. The ambitious American equivalent was Port Townsend, located on a point of land that juts into the entrance to Puget Sound from the Olympic Peninsula.

By the 1880s, Victoria and Port Townsend faced active competition from a long line-up of mainland towns. From south to north in the United States were Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle, Everett, and Bellingham. The big question was eastward railroad connection. Tacoma got the first transcontinental railroad, but Seattle soon had its own and began to slowly pull ahead in the Puget Sound sweepstakes.

## 2. Territorial Expansion

In the single decade starting in 1898, the United States went from a continental nation to an oceanic nation by acquiring Hawaii, Guam, part of Samoa, and the Philippines. The United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries faced competition for Pacific islands and coastal ports from Britain, Germany, France, and Japan, even as rivalry from Spain and Russia receded. Military strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that a maturing nation would naturally turn to the Pacific world after settling the North American continent, for to do otherwise would stunt its national growth. Brooks Adams, grandson and great-grandson of presidents, urged the expansion of Anglo-Saxon civilization across the Pacific as a necessary step in national progress and survival.

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**Map Resource:** United States territorial holdings in the Pacific (Oceana Map). Shows the islands and republics in the North and South Pacific and their territorial status.

## *Hawaii*

Hawaii joined with the United States in a manner reminiscent of Texas. European American settlers held steadily increasing economic power from the 1840s through the 1880s, squeezing out Native Hawaiians and enjoying access to the Hawaiian monarchy. By the 1890s, however, this indirect influence seemed inadequate to many, especially when Queen Liliuokalani in 1891 tried to limit the influence of American sugar planters. The result was a coup led by Stanford Dole with the help of marines from the U.S. cruiser *Boston*. The Americans who now ran the islands wanted annexation to the United States, because that would put their plantations inside the American tariff on foreign sugar. The large majority of Native Hawaiians preferred the monarchy, which had tried delicately to maintain balance between westernization and preservation of Hawaiian autonomy.

The annexation request of the Hawaiian oligarchy met mixed reactions in Washington. Because he did not consider the new government legitimate, President Grover Cleveland refused to annex Hawaii in 1894. His action came from a combination of moral scruples and the fact that many southerners in his Democratic Party had no interest in making a mixed race community part of the U.S. In the wake of intense internal lobbying, in the summer of 1894, Hawaii became an independent republic recognized by the United States Congress. Four years later, Republican President William McKinley reversed Cleveland's policies and signed a new annexation agreement in June 1897. However, anti-imperialist Republicans and Democrats delayed ratification. In July 1898, when Hawaiian bases were proving convenient in war with Spain, annexation was approved by a joint resolution of both houses of Congress (avoiding the need for a 2/3 ratification majority in the Senate).

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**Curriculum Resource (Drama):** The Curriculum Guide "Hawaiian Annexation" contains a dramatic script that highlights the issues and key players involved in the Annexation of Hawaii. The guide can be downloaded from the TAHPDX: Teaching American History website (curricula page).

### **Web Resources for the Annexation of Hawaii:**

*Teaching with Documents: The 1897 Petition Against the Annexation of Hawaii* (Source: US National Archives at <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hawaii-petition/>). This website provides more information about the debates regarding annexation of Hawaii, lesson plans, and links to primary documents that highlight the attempts by native Hawaiians to reject annexation.

*Nation Within: The Story of America's Annexation of the Nation of Hawaii* (PBS documentary) produced by Tom Coffman. To obtain a copy of this video, call 1-800-804-1711.

PBS American Experience: *Hawaii's Last Queen* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hawaii/>).

*The Annexation Of Hawaii: A Collection Of Documents*, University of Hawaii Special Collections (<http://libweb.hawaii.edu/digicoll/annexation/annexation.html>). This site includes links for the Blount Report, Congressional Debates, Anti-Annexation Petitions and many other primary resources.

## *Spanish American War*

The United States officially went to war with Spain on behalf of the people of Cuba in 1898, who had been struggling against Spanish colonial rule for a generation, and much of the American war effort was devoted to seizing Cuba by landing an expeditionary force. However, the U.S. also took the opportunity to send George Dewey's Pacific Squadron against the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. His smashing victory gave the U.S. de facto control of the Spanish Philippines.

As peace negotiations proceeded with the defeated Spanish, American opinion divided about the Philippines. Many Americans disliked the idea of acquiring a distant colony that was already filled with nonwhites. They feared racial complications, foreign entanglements, and the destruction of basic American values. Others saw both economic and geopolitical opportunity. They also argued that Germany or Japan was likely to step into the power vacuum created by the Spanish defeat, and that the alternative for Filipinos was not independence but the choice between a "good" colonial overlord (the U.S.) or a "bad" one (Germany was actively seeking colonies and Japan had recently taken over Korea and Taiwan). In the end, President McKinley decided for what he hoped would be "benevolent empire."

In fact, the U.S. ended up fighting a prolonged guerilla war against Filipino insurgents who, having helped kick out Spain, had no desire to be subordinated to the United States. The war dragged on over four years, killed hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, and gave the American army its own chance to practice repressive tactics not too different than those used by Spain in Cuba or the British against the Boers in South Africa.

In the long run, however, the United States was the first of the "white" imperial nations to begin to dismantle its empire. It promised independence to the Philippines in the *Jones Act in 1916* [pdf resource] and granted increasing autonomy that included a separate Filipino military establishment led by General Douglas MacArthur in the mid-1930s. Full independence was delayed by World War II and Japanese invasion, but came soon after the war ended.

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**Web Resources for Spanish-American War and Filipino Resistance:**

*The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War* (Source: Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/>). This presentation provides resources and documents about the Spanish-American War, the period before the war, and some of the fascinating people who participated in the fighting or commented about it. Information about Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Spain, and the United States is provided in chronologies, bibliographies, and a variety of pictorial and textual material from bilingual sources, supplemented by an overview essay.

*The Spanish-American War in Motion Pictures* (Source: Library of Congress at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/sawhtml/sawhome.html>). This site features 68 motion pictures produced between 1898 and 1901 of the Spanish-American War and the subsequent Philippine Revolution. The Spanish-American War was the first U.S. war in which the motion picture camera played a role. These films show troops, ships, notable figures, and parades, as well as reenactments of battles and other war-time events. The Special Presentation presents the motion pictures in chronological order together with brief essays that provide a historical context for their filming. Requires MediaPlayer or some other plug-in to play the movie clips.

*Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War* (Source: PBS at <http://www.pbs.org/crucible/>). In addition to a film about the war that can be ordered, this site offers a timeline of the major events before, during, and after the war; original 1890s sheet music popular during the War; photographs of the major figures involved; newspaper articles and headlines from 1890s newspapers; classroom activities for teachers and students; historical resources, including recent scholarship concerning the war, bibliographies; and links to other web sites.

*Spanish-American War – Weblinks* (<http://www.historesearch.com/spainamwarmil.html>). This site provides links to quality websites with information about the Spanish-American War (including Teddy Roosevelt letters and documents regarding the Rough Riders).

### ***Guam and American Samoa***

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, nations projected power around the world with coal-burning battleships. To be a world power required port privileges and refueling opportunities around the world, or “coaling stations” in the terminology of the time. For the United States, with new responsibilities and commitments in the western Pacific, this meant acquiring Guam from Spain at the same time as the Philippines. It meant staking a claim to the Midway Islands in 1867. It meant occupying Wake Island as a stepping stone to the Spanish Philippines and formally annexing it in 1900. And it meant securing a naval station at the Samoan harbor of Pago Pago in 1878, joining Britain and Germany in a triple protectorate of Samoa in 1889, and splitting the several Samoan islands with Germany and formally annexing American Samoa in 1900.

### ***Constitutional Treatment***

Under the doctrine of incorporation, as legitimated by the U.S. Supreme Court, the inhabitants of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines were excluded from the American body politic because of their cultural differences. Congress established governments for Puerto Rico and the Philippines that were staffed with appointed imperial administrators. In Guam, mainly important as a naval base, the U.S. established a military government. In Hawaii, in contrast, which had many influential European American settlers, government followed the territorial model familiar from the American West, with local election of a legislature and expectations of eventual statehood.

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**Article Resource:** Coudert, Frederic R. 1926. “Evolution of the Doctrine of Territorial Incorporation.” *Columbia Law Review* 26(7). Provides a detailed analysis of the Doctrine of Incorporation as it applied to the Pacific territories acquired during the Spanish-American War.

It is instructive that concern about religious differences delayed the admission of Utah as a state until 1896 (long after adjoining Colorado and Nevada), and that concern about racial differences delayed the admission of New Mexico and Arizona until 1912 – the last of the Lower 48. The admission of Alaska in 1959 was much less controversial than the admission of Hawaii, whose multiracial society made many Americans uncomfortable.

### 3. Economics and Diplomacy

Growing commerce and accelerating economic connections between the United States and Asia were symbolized by the first trans-Pacific telegraph cable, which was completed in 1903. The cable put Asian markets and governments in direct contact with the United States. At the same time, the fact that the first trans-Atlantic cable had been laid thirty-seven years earlier shows the newness of Pacific connections.

#### *China*

The United States long viewed China as an important trading partner, dating back to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Japan defeated China in 1895, in a war that marked Japan's emergence as a military power. Japan took over Taiwan and gained economic privileges on the Chinese mainland. Russia, France, Germany, and Britain reacted by scrambling for their own spheres of influence and commercial advantage in the Pacific. Fearing that the U.S. would be frozen out, Secretary of State John Hay in 1899 called on European powers to maintain an *Open Door* [pdf resource] for all nations in their areas of influence. He repeated the call in 1900, after the U.S. joined other nations in suppressing the *Boxer Rebellion* [pdf resource], a nationalist reaction against foreign control of China. Over the next half century, the U.S. maintained a special interest in China as a commercial territory, as a sphere for missionary activity, and as an experiment in democracy after Sun Yat-Sen led a revolution that replaced the Chinese Empire with a republic.

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**Web Resource:** *Secretary of State John Hay and the Open Door in China, 1899-1900* (Source: U.S. Department of State at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/ip/17457.htm>). Short description of Hay's "Open Door" Notes regarding international trade with China.

#### *Theodore Roosevelt's Diplomacy*

War between Russia and Japan in 1904 had important implications for the United States. At stake were naval supremacy in the western Pacific and control of Manchuria. American opinion initially favored the Japanese, as the plucky underdogs fighting Russian tyranny. However, the spectacular success of both the Japanese navy and army raised fears that the balance of power would tilt too far in one direction. President Theodore Roosevelt therefore brought the two sides together at Portsmouth, New Hampshire to broker a peace treaty in August 1905 (and earn a Nobel Peace Prize – not something normally associated with the bellicose T.R.).

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**PDF Resource:** Angel of Peace (cartoon) 1905. Source: T.R. A Life in Cartoons (<http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/frames.html>).

**Web Resource:** *The Treaty of Portsmouth and the Nobel Prize*. (Source: Theodore Roosevelt Association at <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/nobelportsmouth.htm>). This site provides a detailed account of Roosevelt's mediation in the Russo-Japanese War with text of the Nobel Prize acceptance speech and a paper written by a Bryan Wagner, a Grant High School student).

The United States then asserted itself further by forcing the *Gentleman's Agreement* [pdf resource] on Japan in 1907 (requiring Japan to limit immigration to the U.S.) and by dispatching the White Fleet of new U. S. battleships on a fourteen-month round-the-world voyage in 1907-09. The “good will” trip was designed to show that the United States had continued to upgrade and expand its navy after the brilliant victories against the Spanish in 1898. It was also to demonstrate American military power vis-a-vis Japan, Germany, and Britain and build a sense of common interest with New Zealand and Australia as the other “white” nations of the Pacific.

### ***Panama Canal***

The Panama Canal project, which began with the American-assisted secession of Panama from Colombia and climaxed with the canal opening in 1914, linked Pacific cities with the world of Atlantic commerce. The United States, of course, was midwife to the birth of an independent Panama, which until 1903 was a dissatisfied province of Colombia. The U.S. then quickly reached agreement with the new government for the construction of a canal.

At one end, the creation of Panama and the Canal Zone and the digging of the canal were an installment in Caribbean ambitions that extend from the Monroe Doctrine through the Spanish-American War, acquisition of Puerto Rico, and repeated twentieth century interventions in countries such as Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. At the other end – the Panama City side – the canal was part of Pacific ambitions, with every west coast city expecting to benefit from the new waterway and from growing Asian trade. Journalists penned stories about “The Coming Supremacy of the Pacific” and “The Momentous Struggle for Mastery of the Pacific.” Chambers of commerce from San Diego to Seattle claimed that their city was the natural stopping place on the great circle route from the canal to Yokohama or Shanghai.

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**Map Resource:** Panama and the Panama Canal.

**Graphic Resource:** *Halt the Fortification of Panama* (1914). A leaflet from the Massachusetts Peace Society condemning the proposed military fortification at the Panama Canal (highlighting the debates occurring at the time concerning the role of the Panama Canal). Source: Library of Congress.

### **Web Resources:**

*Panama Canal Museum* (<http://www.canalmuseum.com/>). Contains information, downloads of historic documents and photos and links to current information.

*Troubled Passageway: Following Conflict through the Panama Canal.* From CNN, contains a short narrative about the history of the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone through it's return to Panamanian control (<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/panama.canal/stories/history/>).

### ***Gold in the Klondike***

The Klondike gold rush (1897) integrated Alaska with the rest of the United States. The major strikes were in Canadian territory, but access was from the Alaskan coast. Many of the prospectors were Americans. Once into the gold fields, moreover, the Yukon River flowed to the sea from Canada through American Alaska and brought the first substantial settlement in places

like Fairbanks and Nome (another mining area). The federal government would respond in the 1910s by building the Alaska Railroad from the coast north to Fairbanks (and creating the city of Anchorage in the process).

In the lower forty-eight, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce jumped to identify Seattle with the Far North in the minds of most Americans. Captured initially in the flush times, Alaska business stayed in the pockets of Seattle merchants, bankers, and boat builders and helped Seattle's population surpass Portland by 1910. The city's first steel-frame skyscraper was the aptly named *Alaska Building of 1914* [graphic resource], decorated with a frieze of terra cotta walrus heads, and as early as 1921, historian Ezra Meeker wrote that "without Alaska, Washington would not now have attained the commanding development that is her pride." Murray Morgan later said it even more directly: "In Seattle, gold spurred growth, and growth batted on growth."

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#### **Web Resources:**

*Alaska Club incorporates to promote Alaska on December 7, 1903.* From HistoryLink.org (Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History at [http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file\\_id=8707](http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=8707)). Describes Seattle's promotion of Alaskan business.

*Eric A. Hegg Photograph Collection – Klondike Gold Rush/Yukon Territory.* From the University of Washington Digital Photograph Library (<http://content.lib.washington.edu/heggweb/index.html>), this collection contains hundreds of photographs documenting life in the Yukon during the gold rush.

## **4. Immigration and Reaction**

The patterns that workers traced around the rim of the Pacific in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were as complex as the networks of commerce. Chileans, Chinese, and Australians joined the California Gold Rush along with east coast Americans. Asian laborers headed to the United States, but also to Peru, Mexico, and Canada. Immigrants from British India made their way to British Columbia via the United States when the Canadian government erected legal barriers to direct entry. Chinese immigrants used Canada as a route to the United States. By the end of the first century of substantial migration from Asia to the Americas in the 1930s, two-fifths of Japanese in the Americas had settled in Latin America (especially Brazil and Peru). Thirty-three percent of Chinese in the Americas lived in Latin America, 21 percent in Canada, and 46 percent in the U.S.

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**PDF Resource:** *A Historical Graph of U.S. Immigration (1820-1980).* Source: U.S. Census (1990).

### ***Chinese immigration***

The west-facing cities of the Pacific coast were the arrival points for hundreds of thousands of east-faring immigrants from Pacific islands and especially from southern China in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the 1850s into the 1880s they came in great numbers from the Pearl River district of China to build railroads, work mines, staff factories, and do the dirty work that kept cities going. The U.S. government officially tallied 310,000 Chinese immigrants by

1900. Another 70,000 arrived in the decades from 1900 to 1930, most of them either family members of Chinese Americans or “paper sons” who pretended to have family relationships.

### ***Anti-Chinese Movements***

English-speaking North Americans had as much difficulty in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as now in deciding whether to welcome or fend off immigrants. Labor agitation in the late 1870s and early 1880s against low-wage competition from Chinese workers began in San Francisco and spread to other western cities. It responded to increasing numbers of immigrants, with 40,000 in 1882 alone. The result was the ***Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882*** [**pdf resource**] in the United States, barring the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years. The act was then renewed several times until 1943 (when it was unseemly to discriminate against one of our allies in the war against the Axis powers).

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**Web Resources:**

*Chinese Immigration to the United States 1851-1900*. Source: Library of Congress Learning Page (<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/riseind/chinimms/chinimms.html>). Contains short summary with links to several primary documents and photographs.

*The Chinese in California, 1850-1925*. From the Library of Congress American Memory series (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/award99/cubhtml/>). A collection photographs, original art, cartoons, illustrations, letters, excerpts from diaries, business records, legal documents, pamphlets, broadsides, speeches, sheet music, and other printed matter.

### ***Chinatowns***

Continued violence in backwater towns like Rock Springs, Wyoming (1885) and in the growing cities of Seattle and Tacoma (1885-86) helped to push Chinese workers into Chinatowns in Vancouver, Portland (whose Chinese population swelled from 1700 to 7800 during the 1880s), and especially San Francisco (whose Chinese population reached at least 30,000). These were overwhelmingly male communities. Handfuls of merchants lived comfortably; thousands of workingmen crowded into cheaply built tenements and shanties. Honolulu’s Chinese worked as stevedores, servants, and factory hands. Although there was little functional difference between the Chinese workers and the transient white males who lived in adjacent skid roads, the lives of Chinese-born workers involved activities that white society defined as vices, particularly gambling and the use of opium. Police officials could stand foursquare for virtue by raiding fan tan rooms and opium parlors while ignoring the far more numerous gambling joints and saloons that serviced white customers.

The image and reality of Chinatown changed at the turn of the century. Immigration for family unification (including the ruse of “paper families” in which immigrants claimed fictitious family relationships with Chinese already in the U.S.) slowly evened the gender imbalance that made Americans uneasy. In multiracial Honolulu, Chinese merchants and manufacturers had a strong enough voice to block discriminatory laws. Twentieth century Chinatowns began to capitalize on their exotic character through tourism managed by Chinese businessmen themselves. After the

San Francisco earthquake, Chinese entrepreneurs carefully rebuilt in “oriental style” with upturned eaves, bright red and green paint, balconies, lanterns, and pagodas.

Portland had two clusters of Chinese residents in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The majority lived downtown, between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the waterfront. There were a few buildings with “Chinese” architecture, but no single block was exclusively Chinese. Instead, they lived intermingled with other immigrant and working class groups in the waterfront blocks. A second, smaller cluster lived between downtown and the West Hills (the present Goose Hollow neighborhood), cultivating vegetables and fruit that they could sell throughout the city. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, some Chinese residents, businesses and institutions began to locate north of Burnside, an area they shared with Japanese and European immigrants and transient laborers. The most successful merchants and professionals began to move out to new eastside neighborhoods, leaving community institutions and businesses behind as “Chinatown.”

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**Maps and GIS Data:** *Portland's Chinatown.* This powerpoint presentation shows the changing geography of Chinatown in Portland Oregon as well as the concentration of ethnic groups in “Oldtown” Portland from the period 1863 to 1926. This data can also be used via an ArcExplorer GIS project. GIS-ready data can be downloaded from the Teaching American History Historic GIS Data webpage.

### ***Japanese and Filipino immigration***

As Chinatown was slowly being demystified, new streams of West Pacific migrants were arriving from Japan and the Philippines. Japanese workers had free entry to the United States after 1894. Nearly 30,000 arrived in the 1890s and 130,000 in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of Japanese immigrants were agricultural workers in Hawaiian sugar and pineapple plantations, southern California orange groves, central California grain and vegetable fields, and northern California, Oregon, and Washington orchards.

Filipino immigrants arrived on the West Coast after the transfer of governance from Spain to the U.S. A number of them worked as stewards and orderlies in the navy and merchant marine, giving them entry into domestic service, hotel, and restaurant jobs in the U.S. Although their numbers were relatively small, they were enough to establish identifiable communities in the largest cities such as Seattle and Los Angeles.

White Americans disliked the entrepreneurial competition from Japanese who excelled in niche markets like truck farming, produce sales, and hotel keeping. In addition, white westerners were increasingly prone to articulate sexual fears, for the early twentieth century was an era of “white slavery” panics and anti-prostitution crusades. Filipino men, on their own as migratory workers or personal service workers, were depicted as sexual aggressors on the hunt for white women. They were welcome to use the hotels, shops, and pool halls of Little Manilas in Seattle and Los Angeles for a sense of community, but generated hostility when they danced with white women in taxi-dance halls. The possibility of racially integrated classrooms stirred fears of sexual mixing among school children. “I am responsible to the mothers and fathers of Sacramento County who have their little daughters sitting, side by side, in the school room with mature Japanese,” roared one California legislator. “I have seen Japanese of twenty-five years old sitting

in their seats next to the pure maids of California.” The Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907 that curtailed labor migration from Japan to the United States was triggered by the decision of the San Francisco School Board to place the city’s ninety-seven Japanese students in a separate “oriental” school.

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**Article PDF Resource:** Boyd, Monica. 1971. “Oriental Immigration: The Experience of Chinese, Japanese and Filipino Populations in the United States.” *International Migration Review* 5(1), pp. 48-61.

## 5. Cultural Responses

Americans dealt with the world of the Pacific through their imaginations as well as through trading agreements and treaties. Herman Melville originated the South Sea romance in *Typee* and *Omoo*, paving the way for later generations to thrill over *The Mutiny on the Bounty* and even to ponder the television mysteries of “Lost.” Jack London made the North Pacific and its borderlands the scene of adventure in *The Sea Wolf* and *The Call of the Wild*. The distinctive aesthetic of traditional Japan beckoned writers and artists after an American naval expedition “opened” it to western trade and travel in the 1850s, but its fast-rising military power caused some Americans to think twice about the supposed “manifest destiny” of the United States.

### *“Yellow Peril” Literature*

Americans and Canadians not only legislated against Asians and formed common anti-Asian organizations like the Asiatic Exclusion League of North America but also stoked their antipathy with blaring headlines and scare stories in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Los Angeles Times* (“The Yellow Peril: How Japs Crowd Out the White Race” . . . “Japanese a Menace to American Women”) and apocalyptic novels. Pierton W. Donner in *The Last Days of the Republic* (1880) feared invasion by Chinese hordes who would overrun the continent and raise the standard of the emperor over the Capitol. For Homer Lea in 1909, the newly ascendant Japanese were the threat that required an expanded military establishment. In *The Valor of Ignorance* he mapped out how Japan might successfully seize Hawaii and the Philippines, land at Gray’s Harbor on the Washington coast to conquer the Northwest, and continue by taking San Pedro and then San Francisco itself. In 1915, J. U. Giesy in *All for His Country* depicted a Mexican invasion that would draw off American forces, opening California to invasion from Japan, with house servants as a “fifth column.” By 1921, when Peter Kyne published *Pride of Palomar*, Mexicans were in good graces again, with Bolsheviks in Siberia now the distraction from the Japanese threat.

### *Pacific Opportunities*

Some westerners may have feared China and Japan, but others saw Asia as economic opportunity. California-based history publisher Hubert Howe Bancroft summed a century of armchair ambition in *The New Pacific* (1900). He ended his boosterish inventory of western resources with the ancient trope of the westward course of empire and the newer American trope of searching for new frontiers. The twentieth century, he proclaimed, would be the century of the new Pacific, with North Americans shouldering aside tired Europeans and the wealth of the

Pacific surpassing that of the Atlantic. The vision was one of classic liberalism, with free trade in goods and ideas lifting the strongest individuals and nations to success.

*The far west facing the far east, with the ocean between, have lain hitherto at the back door of both Europe and America. Now by magic strides the antipodal No-man's-land is coming to the front to claim a proper share in the world's doings. . . . We have no longer a virgin continent to develop; pioneer work in the United States is done, and now we must take a plunge into the sea. Here we find an area, an amphitheatre of water, upon and around which American enterprise and industry . . . will find occupation for the full term of the twentieth century, and for many centuries thereafter. The Pacific, its shores and islands, must now take the place of the great west, its plains and mountains, as an outlet for pent-up industry. Here on this ocean all the world will meet, and on equal footing, Americans and Europeans, Asiatics and Africans, white, yellow, and black, looters and looted, the strongest and cunningest to carry off the spoils.*

### ***Cultural Connections***

An artistic fascination with things Chinese and Japanese complemented the economic interests. Artists and designers learned from East Asian painting styles and they drew decorative motifs from traditional Chinese and Japanese art and crafts. Missionaries brought back collections. European and American writers set dramas in East Asian locales. Museums of East Asian art appeared in Pasadena, California and Eugene, Oregon. The ambivalence was clear in the 1930s. At the same time Pearl Buck was depicting a noble and sympathetic China in *The Good Earth* (1931), Buck Rogers was battling future Mongol invaders in the comic pages and movie serials

### ***World's Fairs***

The first world's fairs on the West Coast looked both westward to Asia as well as eastward toward the rest of North America. The Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Oriental Fair in Portland (1905) was keyed simultaneously to a history of continental expansion and to Pacific ambitions. The most impressive structure was the Forestry Building of huge unpeeled logs, but most of the foreign exhibits were from Asia.

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### **Web Resources:**

*The Lewis & Clark Centennial Exposition* (1905) from the Oregon History Project (Oregon Historical Society) A short summary with photos and links to additional documents. Source: [http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/narratives/subtopic.cfm?subtopic\\_ID=326](http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/narratives/subtopic.cfm?subtopic_ID=326).

*1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition*. A comprehensive history with photos and graphics of the exposition particularly as it affected the city of St. Johns (from Positive Spin at <http://www.positivespin.us/NL4.htm>).

The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Fair in Seattle in 1909 stated its economic orientation in its name. The Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915 was intended to stake that city's claim to the new trade routes and the U.S. Navy.

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**Web Resources:**

*Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition 1909.* A slideshow with photos and graphics of the exposition (from HistoryLink.org online encyclopedia of Washington State History at [http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file\\_id=7082](http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=7082)).

*Panama-California Exposition 1915-1916.* A website containing 2000 images of postcards from the exposition (from sandiegohistory.org at <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/pancal/index.htm>).

It was San Francisco, the first and foremost capital of the Pacific West, where the message was most clear. A Chicago company that billed itself as “builders and operators of public utilities” created a model of the Panama Canal for the San Francisco’s Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 (the direct competitor with San Diego). The model covered five acres with oceans at each end, lighthouses, dams, Panamanian cities, and working locks.

*It is housed in a special building containing a large oblong amphitheatre that surrounds the model. The model remains in place, and the seating for 1200 people revolves slowly around the model, powered by electricity, making the circuit in 23 minutes. Each chair on the moving platform has a telephone receiver and gets a continual lecture, which is delivered from 60 phonographs that play into telephone transmitters.*

This is the city that Edward Hungerford had just visited and described as fully cosmopolitan, a city where Portuguese, Italians, and Japanese mingled with eastern bankers and sourdoughs from Alaska. Its residents claimed that “Hong Kong or Manila or Yokahama seem nearer to us than Chicago or St. Louis.” The contrast within California was fixed in San Francisco opinion: “Los Angeles is western,” argued a Bay Area businessman. “We are not. We are ‘the Coast,’ and be exceeding careful, young man, how you say it.”

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**Web Resource:** Panama-Pacific International Exposition 1915 (from sanfranciscocomemories.com at <http://www.sanfranciscocomemories.com/ppie/>). Contains a comprehensive history with numerous graphics and photos.

## **6. America Becomes a Pacific Nation Bibliography**

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### ***General studies of American political and economic activity in the Pacific:***

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Arthur Dudden, *The American Pacific from the Early China Trade to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Walter McDougall, *Let the Sea Make a Noise: A History of the North Pacific from Magellan to MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

Arrell M. Gibson and John S. Whitehead, *Yankees in Paradise: The Pacific Basin Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993).

Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) analyzes San Francisco's economic roles and opportunities with a critical eye.

***Aspects of the Chinese American Experience:***

Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

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Diana Ahmad, *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007).

Marie Rose Wong, *Sweet Cakes, Long Journey: The Chinatowns of Portland, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).

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Yen le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

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Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).

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Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

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Matthew Bokovoy, *The San Diego World's Fairs and Southwestern Memory, 1880-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

Carl Abbott, *The Great Extravaganza: Portland's Lewis and Clark Exposition* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 2004).