

# KANSAS HISTORY

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Members of the Twentieth Kansas Infantry near Tuliajen River in the Philippines, March 25, 1899.

Signed on December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris officially ended hostilities between the United States and Spain, held out the promise of independence to nearby Cuba, and established an American empire that included Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. The Twentieth Kansas Volunteer Infantry's "adventure," however, had just begun. Although the Spanish phase of the war had ended in August, U.S. policy called for military occupation of the Philippines, and the Twentieth, which reached the islands just days before the treaty was signed, was to help fill that role. Not surprisingly, many Filipinos, who had been fighting along side American forces to gain their own independence, were not pleased, and the Kansas troops soon found themselves in a problematic situation.

Some Filipinos cooperated with the U.S., but Emilio Aguinaldo and his followers declared their independence once again on January 5, 1899, and a month later launched an armed revolt against U.S. rule in the Philippines. Thus, just two months after its arrival, the Twentieth was called into action against the insurgents. Troops from several other states, including Nebraska and Colorado, saw similar duty during the first year of the insurrection. Although the Twentieth would be back in Kansas within the year, this nasty conflict lasted until mid-1902, despite the fact that Aguinaldo's capture on March 23, 1901, seriously damaged the guerrillas' chances for success.

Thoughtful Kansans contemplated and some even questioned the advisability of annexation and the creation of an imperial U.S. on moral, constitutional, and practical grounds. Kansas soldiers

carried out their duties and were properly recognized for their services to the state and nation; but even they were conflicted at times, and some questioned the validity or the real necessity of the assignment once Spain had been defeated. A couple days after the August 1898 armistice and long before shipping out for the Philippines, Private Henry C. Ruppenthal of Russell County, confided in his diary: "Men want to be discharged from service but officers want to stay with a good job." Nine months later, after enduring four months of combat, another Twentieth Kansas private, Ralph Weaver of Rantoul, wrote: "started petition to be mustered out in San Francisco; and was almost unanimous in every company."

The outfit's voyage home was still several months away, however. In September 1899, as the long awaited journey began, Private Todd L. Wagoner, Company F, Twentieth Kansas, contemplated what might be the most reflective question to emerge from the ranks. In the privacy of his journal, the private asked: "Fellow Americans, can you not see the inconsistency of patriotism being the prevailing spirit in the heart of the American soldier, 8,000 miles from home, fighting a people in no way responsible for the cause in which we had enlisted; fighting a people who loved their own homes as we loved ours?"

This is the fourth in a four-part series of photographs on the inside front cover of Kansas History highlighting the state's role in the Spanish-American War.

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COVER: *The USS Maine in Havana harbor where its sinking in 1898 helped ignite the Spanish-American War. An article on the Twenty-third Kansas Infantry's involvement in the war begins on page 256. BACK COVER: Abolitionist John Brown being led to his execution. The pre-Civil War conflict is the subject of an essay by Nicole Etcheson.*

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Volume 21

Winter 1998-1999

Number 4



p. 223



p. 235



p. 256

STORIES FROM THE HEARTLAND: AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN WICHITA, KANSAS

by Judith R. Johnson and  
Craig L. Torbenson

220

GILDED AGE SENATOR: THE ELECTION, INVESTIGATION, AND RESIGNATION OF ALEXANDER CALDWELL, 1871-1873

by Robert S. LaForte

234

"TO SERVE FAITHFULLY": THE TWENTY-THIRD KANSAS VOLUNTEER INFANTRY AND THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

by Christopher C. Lovett

256

NOVELISTS REVISIT TERRITORIAL KANSAS: A REVIEW ESSAY

by Nicole Etcheson

276

REVIEWS 283

BOOK NOTES 289

INDEX 290

