

Process Paper

As we searched around for possible ideas we decided on a research topic the we found on Wikipedia, the USS *Maine*. Even though it might appear as if the Spanish-American War is the more important, we believe that the *Maine* was the major pivotal event that caused the War.

At first we looked around for more general, secondary sources about the USS *Maine* on the internet. However, as we came about books over books, and looked for primary sources, it was discovered that the explosion of the *Maine* led up to the Spanish-American War. Primary sources we were able to find includes newspaper articles, such as an article from *The Mason City Globe-Gazette*, published two days after the explosion. So therefore we began our research on both the *Maine* and the War, because the key is figuring out where the *Maine* fits into the larger picture. We looked in the bibliography of Warren Zimmermann's book, *First Great Triumph*, and found sources like *Blue Jackets of '98: A History of the Spanish-American War*, which showed how the *Maine* fit into the larger picture. So as we found, the *Maine* was actually a significant turning point that catapulted American into war with Spain. The explosion caused a change in public opinion, which contributed greatly to the decision to go to war.

At first we were working individually, until we decided that two people would be able to produce a better project than one person alone. So the main reason for our grouping together was not of enjoyment incentives, but rather for a more productive working environment.

The Spanish-American War turned the United States into a world power, it united the country which was axed apart by the Civil War, and promoted internationalism. This war was brought along by the explosion of the *Maine*, which had a huge effect on public opinion, which forced the government into war. Some believe that without the explosion, the U.S. would have never gone into war with Spain. Some newspapers, like the Chicago *Chronicle* quickly changed their position on the war to favor the audience. The *Chronicle* stated after the explosion, that Spain was responsible for the destruction of the *Maine* and that war was now necessary to avenge the lives lost in the explosion. However, there are some differences in opinions on how the public reacted, how much of the explosion was exploited by the government, and how much the press contributed to the general anger towards Spain. But what seems to be true is that there was a strong opposition to the war before the explosion. This opposition did not prevail, mainly because of the *Maine* explosion which strengthened the pro-war forces in the United States. In the end, the wave of anger caused by the *Maine* led the country into a war which turned the US into a world power.