

# Cuba and the United States 1898-1900

## Introduction:

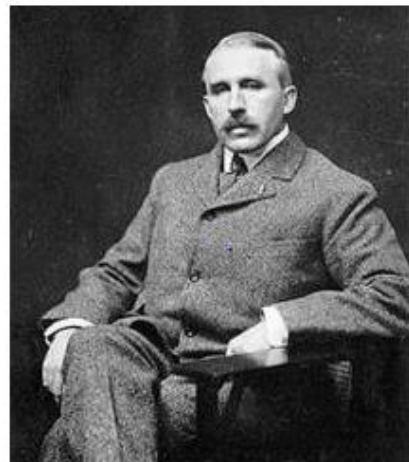
Cuba received the bulk of U.S.' attention. By the Teller Amendment U.S. recognized Cuba's independence and promised not to interfere in their domestic matters. This was followed by the military occupation of Cuba from 1898 to 1902.

**General John Brooke** - first military governor of Cuba 1898 to 1900

**General Leonard Wood** - second military governor of Cuba 1900 to 1902



*General John Brooke*



*General Leonard Wood*

## Positive Effects of Military Occupation

Both governors gave Cuba what they thought of as the blessings of American civilization which they felt that the new nation of Cuba was so privileged to receive.

### Sanitation

1. A refuse disposal system was instituted
2. A sewage system was put in place
3. The streets were cleaned

### Health

1. Hospitals and asylums were built

2. A rigid health care program aimed at eradicating malaria and yellow fever

### **Education**

1. Schools were built
2. The University of Havana was reopened
3. Textbooks were sent to various schools

### **Social Services**

A relief program was instituted

### **Public Utilities and Works**

1. The telegraph and phone system were repaired and extended
2. Roads and bridges were built
3. The Havana harbour was widened
4. Railways and docks were constructed

### **Development of the Economy through Trade and Investments**

Cuban exports to the U.S. increased. In 1899 the total value of export was **\$34.4M**. This more than tripled by 1901 to the tune of **\$118M**. Cuban imports from the U.S. increased. In 1899 the total value of import was **\$36.8M**. This almost tripled by 1901(**\$97.5M.**)

### **Negative Effects of Military occupation**

#### **Criticisms against Military Occupation**

1. The Cuban army was disbanded in order to prevent conflict between the Cuban and American troops!
2. Cubans were relegated to few jobs and junior positions in the Public Service and Government as more and more Americans were imported to run the government.
3. The haughty U.S. ignored Cuban tradition and culture and experience. They refused to appreciate that the Cubans had a lifestyle and a culture before they came. A lifestyle and a culture that they cherished. But the U.S. did NOT

understand this. It was hard for them to even conceive that anyone would hesitate to give up their 'backward uncivilized' culture in exchange for the superior culture! So they doggedly forced their culture upon the people.

4. Much colour prejudice was evident in the dealings of the Americans with the Cubans. As a result there was a colour ban in Cuban restaurants and hotels that wanted to attract and cater exclusively to the United States and the Cuban upper class that supported this type of behaviour.

5. The American soldiers practiced prostitution. Even young girls were involved in this illegal activity.

6. The textbooks used in the schools were written, printed in and sent from the U.S. in many instances, they were merely Spanish translations of American publications, painful reminders of the displacement of Cuban culture and its subsequent replacement.

7. In the road building programmes, only American equipment was used. And of course, the contracts for the constructions of such roads and other public works were reserved for American engineers.

8. The military government opened and operated the National Bank of Cuba.

The U.S. would not withdraw its troop or end the military occupation unless the Cubans signed the Platt Amendment and include it as part of their Constitution. This document gave the Americans complete control over Cuban affairs. The Cubans were reluctant to sign it. It seemed as if they were just changing one master (Spain) for another (America).

But they had no choice, it was sign or continue military rule of Cuba. They signed.

### **Terms of the Platt Amendment**

Cuba could NOT:

- (a) conclude treaties with foreign powers
- (b) borrow money in excess of what its normal revenues could repay
- (c) completely control its internal affairs in such matters as sanitation and health
- (d) refuse the U.S. bases and coaling stations
- (e) allow any other country to have a base in Cuba

**(f)** prevent the U.S. from intervening in Cuba for the 'protection of life, liberty and individual property'.

The Platt Amendment governed American relations with Cuba until it was withdrawn in **1934**. The economic control of Cuba's resources and wealth still continued. Many of the Cuban Presidents that were elected were mere puppets and 'yes man' for the U.S. Military occupation was enforced at least four times before 1959.