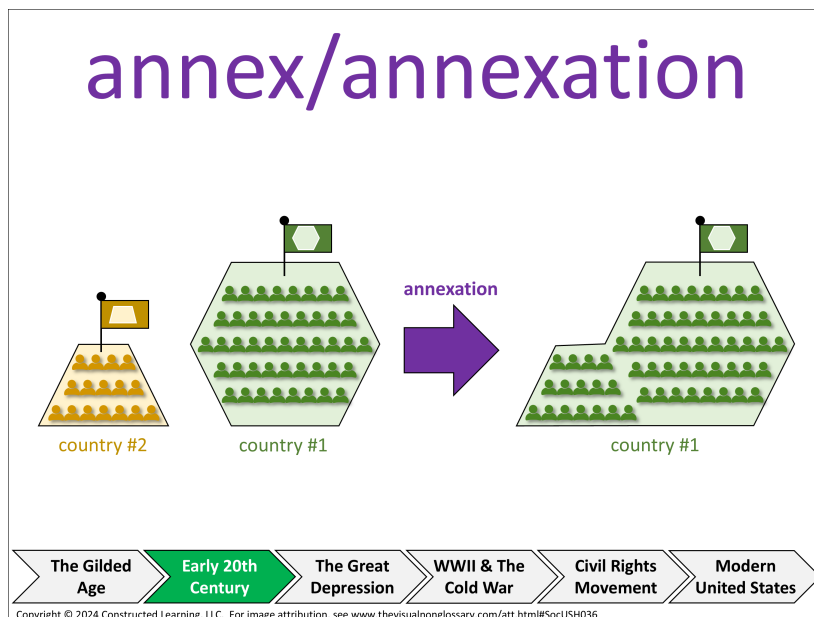


The Expansion of a Nation

The purpose for reading is to learn how annexation impacted new U.S. territories so we can understand why some people viewed it as unfair.

Look Out For:

- Who was annexed and how it happened
- What changed for the people in annexed territories
- Reasons the U.S. wanted to annex other places
- How people responded to annexation (support or opposition)
- Long-term effects of annexation on the U.S. and the annexed areas



In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the United States started growing by taking control of new lands. This was called **annexation**. It meant the U.S. made other places part of the country. Sometimes this happened after wars, and other times through deals or pressure. Many Americans believed **annexation** made the country stronger and more powerful. But others thought it was unfair to the people who already lived in those lands.

One big moment for **annexation** came during the **Spanish-American War** in 1898. The U.S. fought Spain and won. After the war, the U.S. took over places like Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. These were not just battle wins—they became U.S. territories. Some leaders said this would help the people in those areas. But others said it was a kind of **imperialism**, where a strong country takes over weaker ones without asking the people what they want.

At the same time, the U.S. also **annexed** Hawaii. Hawaii had been its own country with a queen and a government. American business owners didn't like the queen's

laws. They wanted more control over trade and land. In 1893, they used the U.S. military to help remove Queen Lili uokalani from power. Later, in 1898, Hawaii was made a U.S. territory, even though the Hawaiian people did not get to vote on it.

The U.S. wanted these new places for military bases, for ships to stop and refuel, and to make trade easier. Some leaders believed this would help the U.S. become more powerful around the world. But people in the **annexed** places often lost their own leaders and rights. They had to follow U.S. rules without being able to vote or speak up. That made many people question whether **annexation** was really fair.

Even today, people talk about what **annexation** meant for the U.S. and the places it took. It helped the U.S. grow, but it also brought problems and hurt many people who lost control of their land and government.

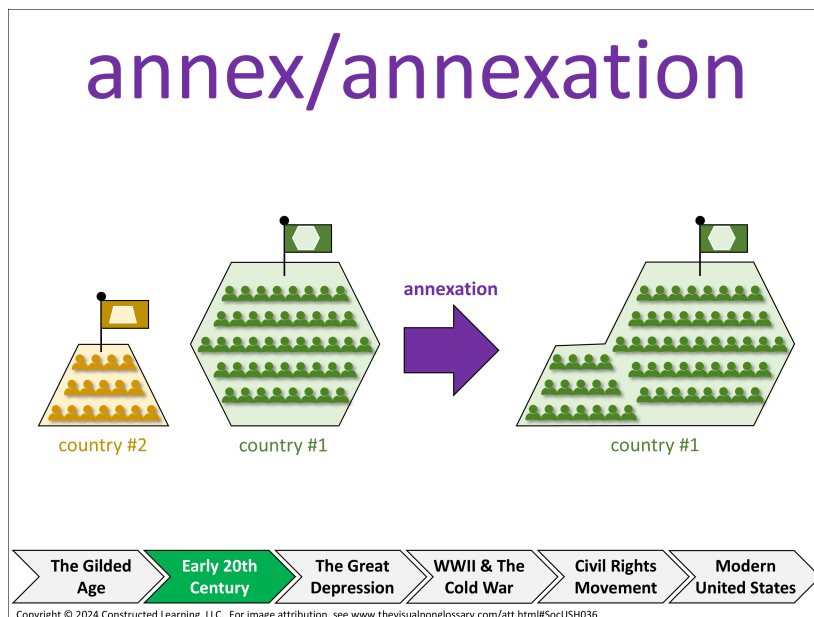


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In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the United States expanded its global presence through a process known as **annexation**. This meant taking control of new territories and adding them to U.S. governance and rule. Some of these expansions occurred through military conflict, while others happened through political agreements or pressures. **Annexation** was seen by many as a natural step in the growth of a powerful nation, but others viewed it as a controversial move that brought serious consequences for the people involved.

One of the most significant periods of expansion came during and after the **Spanish-American War** in 1898. The war was originally fought to help Cuba gain independence from Spain, but it quickly became a broader conflict. As a result of its victory, the United States gained control over several former Spanish territories, including Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. These regions were not just military victories—they became parts of the growing American empire. The U.S. claimed that it would help these territories become more stable and prosperous, but critics

argued that this was just another form of **imperialism**.

Around the same time, Hawaii was also **annexed** by the United States. Unlike the Spanish territories, Hawaii had been an independent kingdom with its own monarchy and government. American business interests, particularly sugar plantation owners, had long played a major role in Hawaiian politics. In 1893, a group of American settlers overthrew Queen Lili'uokalani with the support of the U.S. military. Five years later, Hawaii was officially **annexed** without a vote by the Hawaiian people. It became a key military base and economic asset in the Pacific.

The reasons for these **annexations** were tied to both strategic and economic interests. The United States wanted naval bases, access to new markets, and a stronger presence in international affairs. Leaders believed that having these territories would help the country compete with European powers. Expansion was seen as a way to spread American values and increase national security. However, not everyone agreed with this vision. Critics worried about the impact of expansion on the people living in the **annexed** areas. These populations often lost political control and were subject to foreign governance without full rights or representation.

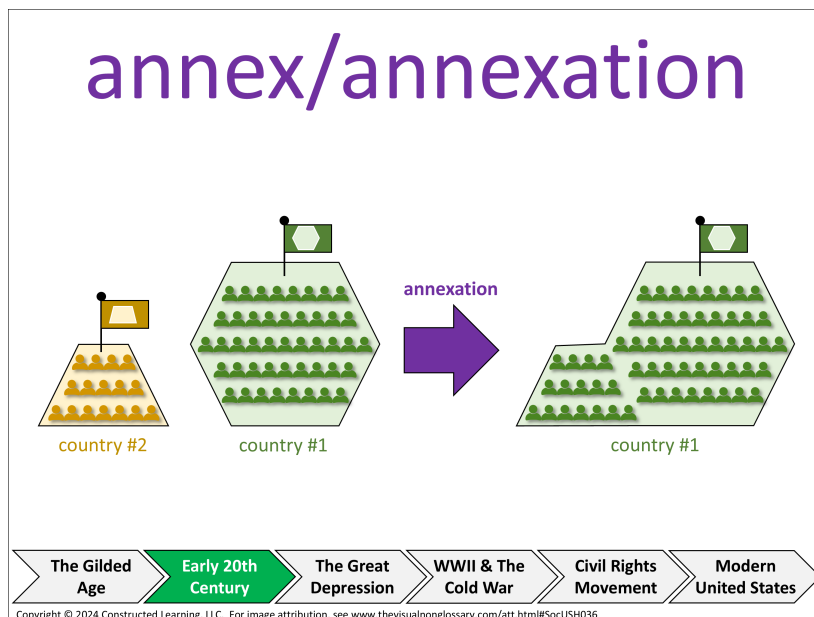
The legacy of American **annexation** continues to shape discussions about **imperialism**, national identity, and global responsibility. While it helped build the United States into a world power, it also raised important questions about freedom, justice, and the long-term effects of expansionism on both the **annexing** country and the **annexed** regions.

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At the dawn of the 20th century, the United States actively pursued a strategy of global expansion through **annexation**, a process that brought new territories under American control. While often justified in terms of economic interest, national security, and the desire to "civilize" other regions, this policy raised fundamental questions about democracy, consent, and international ethics.

A defining moment came with the outbreak of the **Spanish-American War** in 1898. Though the U.S. claimed to support Cuban independence, its victory over Spain quickly evolved into territorial expansion. The Treaty of Paris gave the U.S. control over Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. These acquisitions extended America's reach across the Pacific and Caribbean, signaling its arrival as a global power. Yet these gains came at a cost. In each case, residents of the **annexed** territories were subjected to U.S. governance without meaningful input or representation—a hallmark of **imperialism**.

The case of Hawaii followed a slightly different, but equally complex, path. Hawaii had long maintained its sovereignty as an independent island kingdom. Queen Lili uokalani attempted to protect native Hawaiian rights and limit the power of foreign influence, but American business interests—particularly in sugar—resisted. With support from U.S. marines, a group of settlers staged a coup in 1893. Although the overthrow was not formally sanctioned by the U.S. government at the time, it paved the way for the **annexation** of Hawaii in 1898, with no popular vote or consent from the Hawaiian people.

Supporters of U.S. expansion insisted that **annexation** was necessary for national growth. They argued that new territories provided essential military bases, opened foreign markets for American goods, and helped project strength in a competitive international landscape. They also claimed that the U.S. was bringing stability and progress to underdeveloped regions. However, these claims masked deeper concerns about the erosion of democratic values. Citizens in **annexed** areas faced the imposition of new laws and leadership without the right to vote or participate in decisions that directly impacted their lives.

The legacy of this expansionist era continues to influence U.S. foreign policy and the status of its territories today. Puerto Rico and Guam remain under U.S. jurisdiction with limited autonomy, and debates over self-governance, statehood, and identity persist. As historians reflect on this period, they grapple with the contradictions between the ideals of liberty and the realities of forced **annexation**, questioning how a nation founded on freedom reconciles its own imperial past.

