

# The Sinking of the Maine

Can You Solve the Mystery?

# The Background

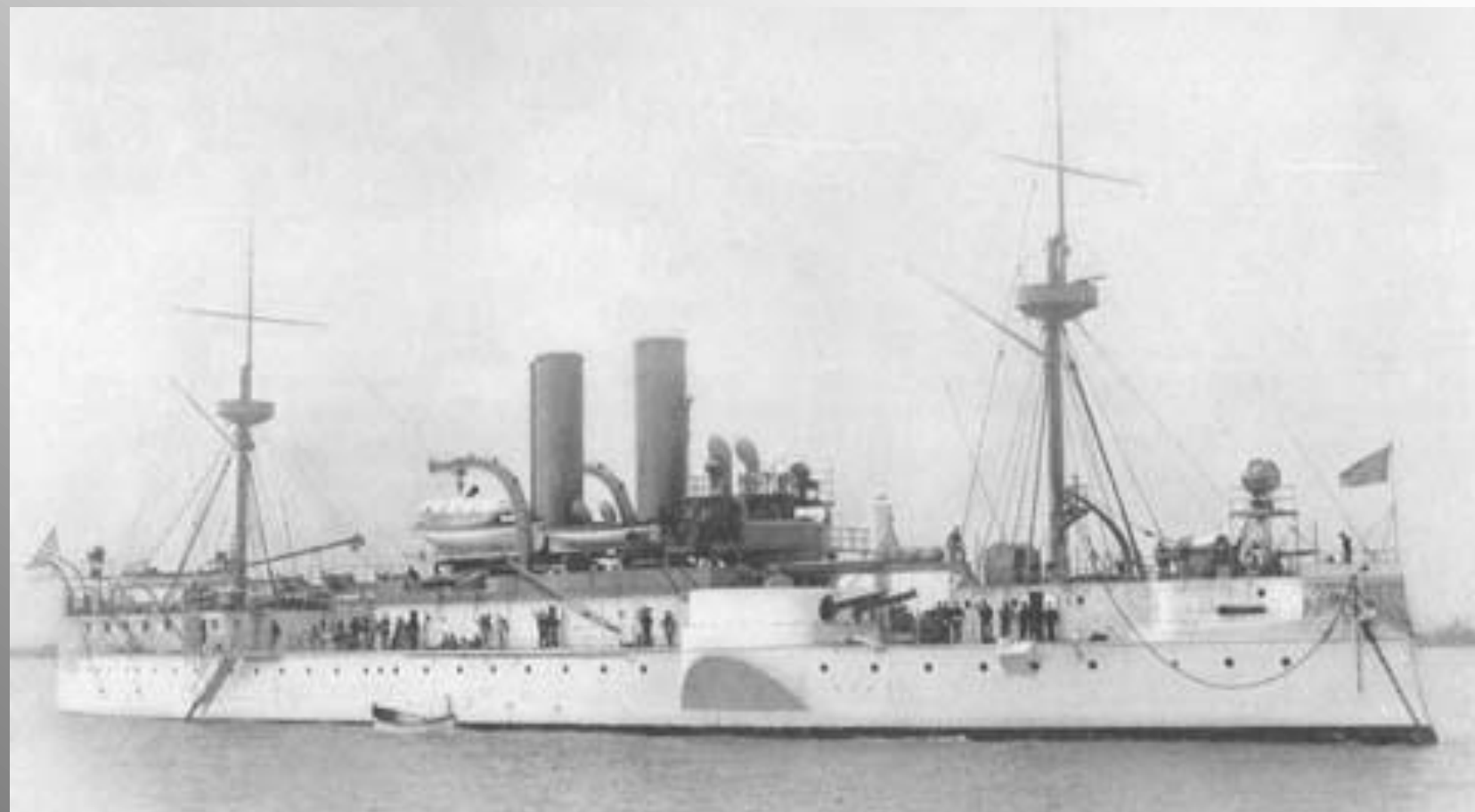
The Spanish-American War arose out of [Cuba](#)'s wish for independence from Spain. Spanish forces tried to put an end to the idea. They treated harshly any Cubans believed to be disloyal to Spain. Newspapers in the United States, eager to sell copies, regularly ran stories about the suffering. Americans began to demand that something be done.

The United States also had an economic interest in Cuba. Business investments on the island were estimated at 50 million dollars, and trade with Cuban ports was valued at 100 million dollars yearly.

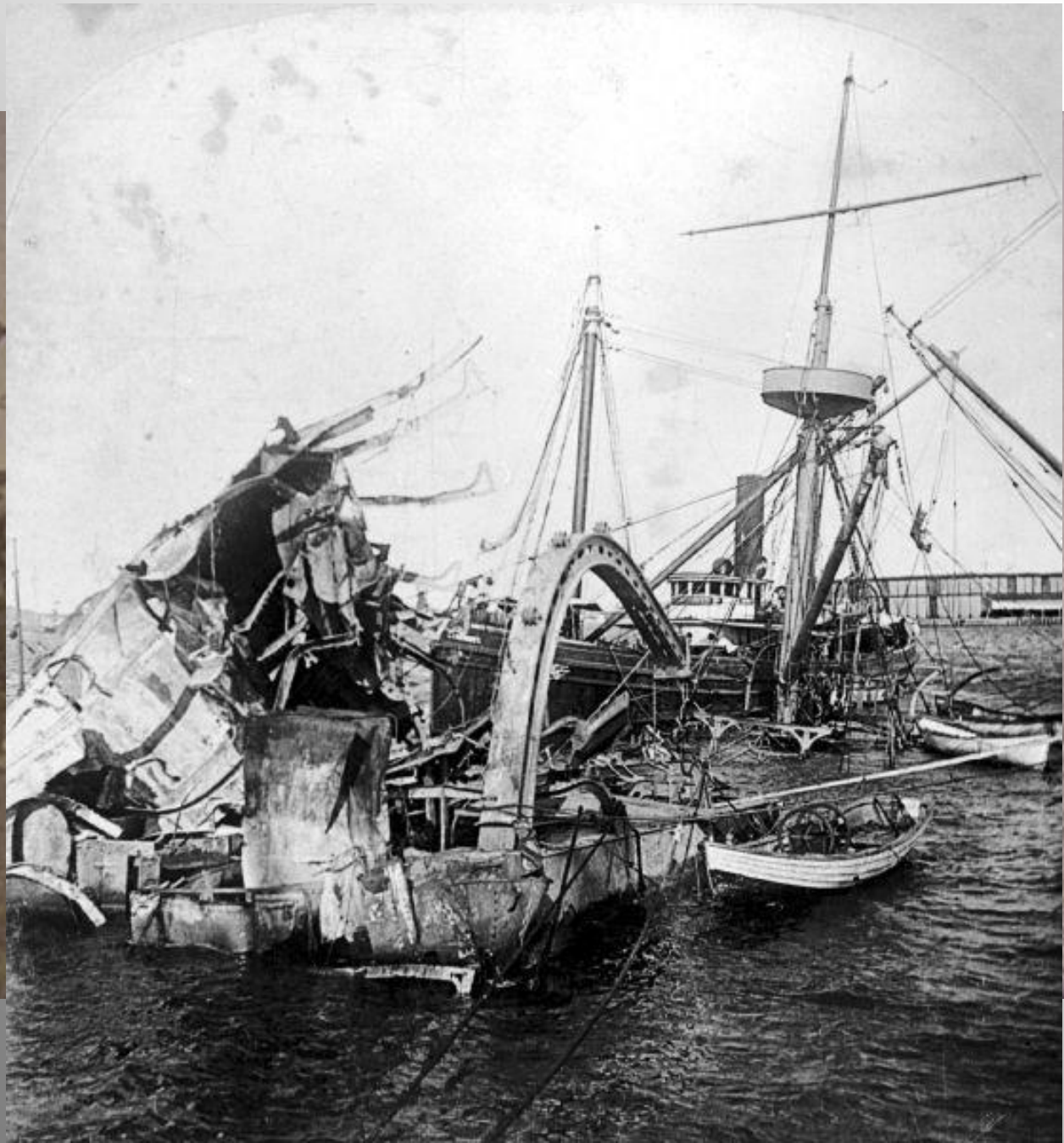


Although both the American public and Congress called on the president to get involved, Grover Cleveland wanted to stay out of the conflict between Cuba and Spain. The next U.S. president, William McKinley, also did not want to bring the United States into the conflict.

Spain tried to reach an agreement with Cuba in the autumn of 1897, but the offer was rejected. Riots broke out in December, and the United States sent the **battleship *Maine*** to Cuba to protect U.S. citizens and property.



On the night of February 15, 1898, a huge explosion destroyed the *Maine*. This event caused Americans to become even angrier. The United States blamed Spain for the explosion.



# The Facts

- The Cuban people were fighting for their independence from Spain's rule.
- American businesses in Cuba were being destroyed. American business investments on the island totaled nearly 50 million dollars.
- Trade into Cuban ports totaled nearly 100 million dollars.
- President William McKinley sent the Battleship Maine to Cuba's Havana harbor. The goal was to protect the lives and property of Americans in Cuba.
- On the night of February 15, a huge explosion rocked the *Maine*, killing 260 Americans.



*What is your theory?*