Chapter 17: Freedom’s Boundaries, at Home and Abroad, 1890–1900

Essay Questions

1. The strife at Homestead reflected broader battles over American freedom during the 1890s. Defend this statement.
2. Explain why Americans increasingly came to feel that they were being denied economic independence and democratic self-government during the late nineteenth century.
3. How did the Populists seek to rethink the relationship between freedom and government to address the crisis of the 1890s? Why was their platform considered radical? How did their platform seek to guarantee freedom?
4. Chronicle the process that developed in the South of chipping away the freedoms granted to blacks during Reconstruction. Give careful consideration to how the Civil War was remembered by white America contributed to denials of freedoms to African-Americas. By 1900, what was the condition of African-Americans in the South? How did they respond to those conditions?
5. Comment on what Saum Song Bo stated in 1885, “But the word liberty makes me think of the fact that this country is the land of liberty for men of all nations except the Chinese.” Is he correct in his statement? Why or why not? Why might he believe he is correct?
6. By 1900, who was entitled to fully enjoy the blessings of American liberty? Be sure to include in your answer blacks, women, labor, immigrants, and colonial subjects.
7. America became involved in the Pacific region in the latter half of the nineteenth century because of commerce. Defend this statement.
8. George W. Bush commented in his 2001 inaugural address that America had gone out into the world to protect, not to possess; and to defend, not to conquer. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give examples to support your position.
9. Analyze the consequences of American rule in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. Did the citizens prosper? Enjoy freedom? Accept American rule? Comment on the consequences for the United States in regard to the statement made by Eric Foner in the text, “Thus, two principles central to American freedom since the War of Independence—no taxation without representation and government based on the consent of the governed—were abandoned when it came to the nation’s new possessions.”
10. Explain the various debates that the Spanish-American War triggered over the relationship between political democracy, race, and American citizenship. Be sure to include in your answer arguments made by imperialists and those made by the Anti-Imperialist League, employing the Voices of Freedom piece in your response.