

# Puerto Rico

Did you ever wonder what we're doing with a little island in the Caribbean? Well..

On September 23, 1868, hundreds of men and women in the town of Lares—stricken by poverty and politically estranged from Spain—revolted against Spanish rule in Puerto Rico, seeking Puerto Rican independence. That rebellion was quickly put down, but unrest continued.

On the evening of 15 February 1898, an American battleship, USS Maine, exploded suddenly without warning and sank quickly in Havana harbor, killing nearly three quarters of her crew. Popular opinion in the U.S., fanned by inflammatory articles printed by William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, blamed Spain. The phrase "Remember the Maine, to Hell with Spain!" became a rallying cry for action, which came with the Spanish–American War later that year. (Later investigations, by the way, seem to point to a coal bunker fire causing the explosion, rather than sabotage).

After the ratification of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, ending the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico came under the military control of the United States, and the U.S. has ruled the small island ever since. The Jones Act of 1917 made Puerto Rico a United States territory which is "organized but unincorporated." Puerto Ricans were also collectively given a restricted U.S. citizenship.

On July 4, 1950, President Truman signed Public Act 600, which allowed Puerto Ricans to draft their own constitution, establishing their own internal government structures; it also renamed the body politic as the "Commonwealth of Puerto Rico."

Today, Puerto Rico continues to struggle to define its political status. It remains an unincorporated organized territory of the United States. Its ambiguous status continues to spark political debates which dominate Puerto Rican society, and occasional moves to make it the 51st state have failed. Unlike Hawaii, it has little economic and strategic value in the grand course of things, and it seems very unlikely that statehood will occur in my lifetime.

[[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Puerto\\_Rico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Puerto_Rico)]

