Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee

Links for World History, Culture & Geography

Places to Start

Browse by Topic: World History & Cultures: straight from the Library's home page, a great place to start browsing through teacher materials, collections, and exhibitions dealing with world history and cultures

World Digital Library: a database presenting photographs, prints, books, art, and other primary sources from several prominent world repositories—all with excellent viewing options and many with accompanying curator videos. Read a TPS-TN article about this database on p. 2 of our September 2009 newsletter.

Global Gateway: information about the Library's international holdings, some of which is not online; try "About the International Collections" for illustrated guides to various world regions, and "Research Guides and Databases" for country studies (secondary source material)

Places in the News: brief synopses, with maps, of current newsworthy locations across the world; great for teaching current events and geography

Huexotzinco Codex [1531; detail; also spelled Huejotzingo Codex]

Educator materials

From TPS-TN:

Agriculture Around the World: lesson activity for 7th grade social studies and physical science, featuring historic photographs depicting different forms of agricultural labor

The Legacy of Greece and Rome: 6-page primary source set highlighting Greek and Roman culture and architecture and the impact of classical history in the modern West

The Ancient World: January 2011 newsletter with lesson ideas and images touching on ancient religious texts, ancient Egypt, neo-Classical architecture, and more

World History & Cultures: September 2009 newsletter featuring lesson ideas on the Aztecs and international transportation at the turn of the 19th century

From the Library of Congress:

Around the World in 1896: lesson unit for 6th-8th graders focusing on late 19th-century technology, the relation of technology and culture, and western perceptions of eastern cultures

The Huexotzinco Codex: lesson plan for 3rd-8th graders combining social studies and math through an analysis of a 16th-century Aztec document (or view this lesson through the MyLOC portal here)

Waldseemüller's Map: World 1507: lesson plan for 3rd-8th graders combining history and geography through analysis of a famous world map (or view this lesson through the MyLOC portal here)

Hidden Treasures (short videos showcasing primary sources; for more, click here)

The Way the World Works: a look at geography and geology through some of the Library's map and globe collections (1 min 59 sec)

Columbus's Most Prized Possession: a closer look at the Library's copy of Christopher Columbus's "Book of Privileges," containing documents from Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain (2 min 23 sec)

The Book That Changed the World: a closer look at the Library's copy of the Gutenberg Bible, the first book created using the innovative technique of movable type in the 15th century which changed the world of books and printing forever (2 min 18 sec)

A Key to Victory: a discussion of maps used by the U.S. and British Allied forces before the invasion of Normandy during World War II (2 min 22 sec)

Selected Primary Source collections

From American Memory:

The American Colony in Jerusalem, 1870-2006: also see the exhibition

Around the World in the 1890s: Photographs from the World's Transportation Commission, 1894-1894: color-tinted photographs documenting various forms of transportation worldwide in the 1890s

Maps of Liberia, 1830-1870: maps of Liberia focusing on resettlement of American freed slaves

Taking the Long View: Panoramic Photographs, 1851-1991: mostly photographs of American scenes, but also including European sites, especially after WWI

Puerto Rico at the Dawn of the Modern Age: Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Perspectives: maps, documents, and photographs depicting Puerto Rico under Spanish and American oversight

Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: interviews discussing American diplomacy during the 20th century

The Spanish-American War in Motion Pictures: short films documenting the Spanish-American War—the first war to be filmed

From Prints & Photographs:

Abdul Hamid II Collection: photographs of people and places in the Ottoman Empire of the 1880s and 90s

Bain Collection: news pictures from the early 20th century, mainly from New York but also hundreds from Europe

Carpenter Collection: late 19th- & early 20th-century photographs depicting world travel and geography

Cartoon Prints, British: late 18th- & early 19th-century British cartoons, a portion of which are digitized

Fenton Crimean War Photographs: photographs taken during the Crimean War in the 1850s

Photocrom Prints: thousands of postcard-like images from Europe and the Middle East c. 1890-1910

Posters: World War I Posters: vibrant posters from several countries involved in the war effort

Prokudin-Gorskii Collection: crisp color photographs documenting the diversity of people and places in the former Russian empire c. 1905-1915; also see the exhibition

Sikkim Photos (Kendall Collection): photos of people and places from an area of Himilayan India (formerly Sikkim) bordering Tibet & Nepal, taken during 1960s and 70s

Tissandier Collection: illustrations of aeronautics and balloon flight in Europe—particularly France—from the late 18th-early 20th century

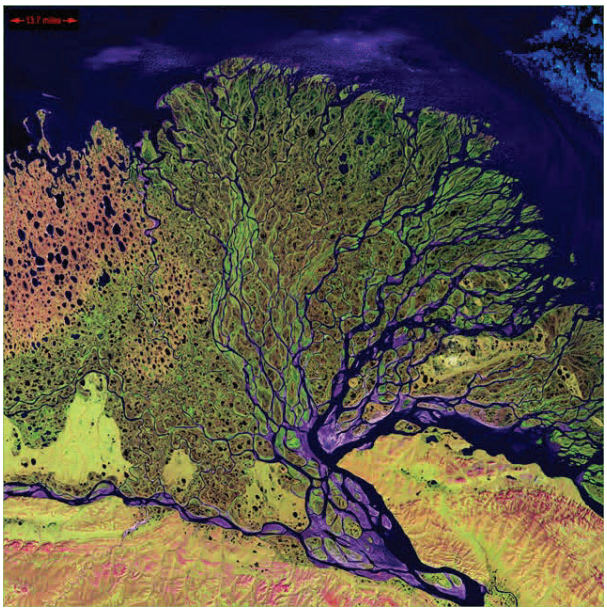
Exhibitions

1492: An Ongoing Voyage: discussion of the Mediterranean World, the "New" World, and the eventual clash between the two in the age of European exploration

Ancient Manuscripts from the Desert Libraries of Timbuktu: presentation of Islamic manuscripts from the 16th to 18th centuries from Timbuktu, the capital of the medieval empire of Mali in western Africa

Creating French Culture: Treasures from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: manuscripts, illustrations, and other objects with a narrative history of the topic, covering French culture from the late 8th century to the present

The Cultures & History of the Americas and Exploring the Early Americas: two related exhibitions examining the pre-Columbian society of Central America to the era of European contact, with print sources and material culture, including the famous Waldseemüller map of 1507



Lena Delta [2000] Kodak R3 facsimile map from Earth As Art

Earth As Art: A Landsat Perspective: great for teaching world geography, these beautiful images were taken across the globe by the Landsat satellites; also see the 3rd installment of this exhibition: Earth As Art 3

The Floating World of Ukiyo-E: Shadows, Dreams, and Substance: Japanese prints and drawings from the 17th to the 19th century; Ukiyo-E refers to "the floating, or sorrowful, world"

For European Recovery: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Marshall Plan: photographs, political cartoons, and other print sources revealing the impact of the post-WWII Marshall Plan, its support, and its opposition among European countries

John Bull & Uncle Sam: Four Centuries of British-American Relations: thematic exploration of British-American relations starting in the 16th century, looking at maps, documents, and prints from the Library of Congress and the British Library

Library of Congress Bible Collection: 18 Bibles from Europe and America, with a neat interactive feature comparing the Great Bible of Mainz and the Gutenberg Bible

Revelations from the Russian Archives: formerly top-secret documents revealing the inner workings of Soviet policy during the 20th century, including English translations; good sources despite the outdated look

Scrolls from the Dead Sea: The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Scholarship: fragments of Hebrew scripture dating from the 3rd century B.C.E. to the 1st century C.E., with translations

Voices from Afghanistan: letters from Afghani citizens written in 2010 sharing their thoughts and lives in the midst of conflict

World Treasures of the Library of Congress: Beginnings: art, manuscripts, books, and objects illustrating how different world cultures explain creation and the order of the universe