TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2016

WELCOME!
Teaching with Primary Sources—Middle Tennessee State University, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.
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NEWS

• Are you planning to attend TCSS in March? If so, join us on the next day for a special workshop on Saturday, March 11th at the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville. This workshop, formerly scheduled for April 22, will explore strategies for using primary sources in the elementary classroom. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

• Looking for more sources on imperialism? Be sure to check out our newest primary source set on American Imperialism!

• Elementary teachers, learn more about how your students can contribute to “The Technicolor Adventures of Catalina Neon,” a bilingual, illustrated poem that is an ongoing project of U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

From the Cape to Cairo / Keppler, [1902]
The symbolism in this cartoon is fairly obvious: the white female figure of Britannia leads the charge against the dark forces of barbarism. This imagery may strike us as racist today, but what was going on in the world in 1902 to make cultures clash in this way?

THEME: IMPERIALISM
This month’s newsletter deals mainly with political and military imperialism, focusing largely on the period around the turn of the twentieth century, when the United States officially asserted its imperial interests for the first time when it annexed the Philippines.

The word “imperialism” is often used in an intensely negative way. Remind your students that attitudes among the public to imperialism has changed greatly over the past century, and has always been varied. One way to talk about this may be to ask your students if political imperialism still has uses (think of missile bases and armed forces stations). How has imperialism changed with the advent of globalized trade and military deals among countries?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

• December 2 (Knoxville) - “Introduction to Civics and Government” Workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

• January 26 (Nashville) - “Primary Source Strategies for Middle and High Schools” at the Martin Professional Development Center from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for Metro Nashville teachers in grades 6 to 12.

• February 23 (Nashville) - “Strategies for Finding and Using Primary Sources in Elementary Grades” at the Martin Professional Development Center from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for Metro Nashville teachers in grades 2 to 5.

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**Lesson Idea—Panama Canal**

Dating to 1513 when the isthmus was discovered by European explorers, the idea of building a canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans was discussed. By the late 1800s, the French had begun efforts to build such a canal. The challenge of disease, landslides, and engineering difficulties became too much for the French and the United States stepped in with an offer to pay the French to take over the project. President Theodore Roosevelt saw the canal of particular importance to American interest moving both economically as well as militarily.

Have your students start by reading secondary sources on the history of the canal such as this or this. Next have your students review Chronicling America’s feature on the topic. Have your students then begin constructing a timeline of the building of the canal. If you are doing this in World History class, you may elect to start the timeline earlier to include all of the French efforts on the project. Students should identify additional newspapers articles in Chronicling America, images taken during U.S. construction, maps, etc. Direct your students to search from the Library’s homepage. You may wish to divide your students up into small groups and give them smaller periods of time to focus on or give different groups different tasks to complete the timeline. Once it is completed, have your students discuss why the canal was so important to U.S. interests. How did it expand our sphere of influence in Latin America?

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.24) and World History & Geography (W.87).

**Lesson Idea—“The White Man’s Burden”**

“Take up the White Man’s burden / Send forth the best ye breed / Go bind your sons to exile / To serve your captives’ need.” When the United States wrested the Philippines from Spain during the Spanish-American War in 1898, Filipino independence fighters led by Emilio Aguinaldo believed they could now establish an independent republic. However, the U.S. annexation of the Philippine Islands quashed independence and instead set up the U.S. as a new global imperial power, leading to the Philippine-American War in 1899-1902.

In response to America’s new global status, English poet Rudyard Kipling wrote “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands” in 1899. With a new overseas empire, the U.S. was now to take its place with Great Britain and continue the process of civilization upon newly conquered, non-white peoples.

Have students read the poem. Does Kipling believe “the white man’s burden” to be a good or bad thing? What are the positive and negative consequences of bearing this burden? Why did Kipling feel the need to comment in this way on the U.S. involvement in the Philippines? (Note: you may need to have a discussion about the overt racism in the poem and its ties to imperialism.) Next, have students examine the accompanying illustration in The San Francisco Call of Feb. 5, 1899. Analyze the imagery, making particular note of contrasts and symbols. Why would this poem have been printed in several American newspapers in 1899?

Not everyone was in support of U.S. imperialist actions in the Philippines. Students can read these quotes by Mark Twain and discuss what his opinion was concerning the “white man’s burden.”

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school World History & Geography (W.21, Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Consider).
American imperialism is traditionally taught as having lasted from the late 19th to the early 20th century. As with most historical eras, this demarcation of time proves misleading. The roots of American imperialism go all the way back to the founding fathers; for example, Thomas Jefferson saw expansionism as a path to establishing national security. Furthermore, American imperialism did not stop with the end of WWI. The United States still possesses many of the territories it acquired after the Spanish-American War, prompting discussion on the right to self-rule and the political morality of owning territories.

This lesson idea centers around Louis Dalrymple’s “School Begins” illustration for the political satire magazine Puck. Have your students analyze the cartoon using the Primary Source Analysis tool. It might be helpful for the teacher to download the image in a TIFF file, which allows for increased zoom and better viewing. Go over the key themes of the source with the class. What immediately jumps out at you? Who are the children sitting on the front row? What do they represent? Who are the children sitting in the back row? How are the children on the back row different from the children on the front row? In what ways do the African American, American Indian, and Chinese child in the background of the picture relate to American imperialism? Does the paragraph on the blackboard represent what students would call “traditional” American thought? Why do you think the author chose an educational setting for his political cartoon? How would you define the author’s political viewpoints based on this image?

For an extension activity, it may be useful for students to research current United States territories and determine whether imperialistic elements are still present. Each student could then present on her/his respective territory. In addition, you could hold a “meeting” in which students determine if the acquisition of territories should be considered constitutional.

FEATURED FEATURE—NEW LIBRARY HOME PAGE

As we noted in last month’s news, the Library of Congress has updated its home page with a more mobile-friendly design. You will still find the search box at the top of the page that will help you quickly access primary sources as well as all of the other wonderful features available through the site.

The teachers page is still featured in the center of the page or you can access it by clicking on the icon just left of the Library’s logo at the top of the page under the “Education” tab.

This new design allows the Library to spotlight individual collections, special features, and trending items. In the Trending section, you can also see popular search topics such as the Declaration of Independence, slavery, and immigration. At the bottom of the page, look for a gallery of time-pertinent images (e.g., presidential portraits, Thanksgiving images, etc.). We are excited to see how this new design allows the Library to highlight their collections and make the Web site more user-friendly.
One theory that affected imperialism’s rise to prominence in American society was Social Darwinism. Read this newspaper’s take on Social Darwinism as it relates to Germany during WWI (1st and 2nd columns). Now read “Bryan Makes Twelve Speeches” in this newspaper. What are similarities between Social Darwinism and Manifest Destiny? Differences?

Before Teddy Roosevelt built the Panama Canal or the United States annexed Hawaii, the Monroe Doctrine laid the foundation for imperialism in the U.S. Have the students read the above document. In what ways would the Monroe Doctrine be effective? Ineffective? After reading this, would you consider American foreign policy to be isolationist or something else?

Have your students analyze this photograph. When do they think this picture was taken? Why do they think that? In addition, have your students look up the military bases and territories the United States has around the world. Why does the U.S. have so many bases and territories? Could this be considered imperialism? Why or why not?

Thomas Jefferson favored expansionism as a way to provide national security. Have your students examine this political cartoon. Encourage them to think about how political figures are used to back causes. For more on Jefferson’s view on expansion, see this exhibition.