

Tales from the Chihuahuan Desert
Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism
National Endowment for the Humanities and The University of Texas at El Paso
2017 Summer Institute for Secondary School Teachers (Grades 6th–12th)

1. Title and Author of Lesson Plan

Title: “Smokestack Memories: A borderlands history during the Gilded Age”

Credit: University of Texas at El Paso Library - Special Collections Department

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Francesca Alonso is from El Paso, Texas. She teaches U.S. History dual credit at Northwest Early College High School in Canutillo, Texas, a community outside of El Paso. She has taught for six years at an early college high school. She has a Bachelors of Art and Masters of Arts in History from the University of Texas at El Paso. Her areas of interest ranged from US History, Pre-Columbian History, 20th Century Imperialism, Post-Colonial Literature to Postmodern Art. Participating in the *NEH Summer Institute: Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism*, provided her with resources to bridge the gap between the grand historical narrative of the United States and the regional history of the borderlands.

Joseph “Joey” Louis Leff is from El Paso, Texas. He teaches Dual Credit/AP US History at an early college in Clint, Texas. Joey loves the outdoors and is usually on his dirt bike on the weekends when he is not coaching the mock trial team, debate team, or tutoring. He loves reading History but is beginning to enjoy many fictional works as much as the work from Eric Foner or H.W. Brands. He plans to use the knowledge gained from the NEH program to target and develop activities about identity and geography about the southwest in his dual-credit and AP courses. Joey can be reached at Joseph.Leff@clint.net

2. Content or Subject Areas with Keywords :

Social Studies/U.S. History/Texas State Social Studies/A.P. U.S. History

Key Words:

Immigration, Assimilation, Gender, Borderlands History, Industrialization, the West, Labor,

3. Grade Levels and Time Required

Grade Levels: 7th, 8th, and 11th Grade

Time Require: 3- 90 minute classes

4. Instructional Objectives and Student Learning

TEXAS TEKS

§113.41. United States History Studies Since 1877 (One Credit), Beginning with School Year 2011-2012.

(a) General requirements. Students shall be awarded one unit of credit for successful completion of this course.

(b) Introduction.

(2) To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as biographies, autobiographies, landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court, novels, speeches, letters, diaries, poetry, songs, and artworks is encouraged. Motivating resources are available from museums, historical sites, presidential libraries, and local and state preservation societies.

(c) Knowledge and skills.

(3) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in the United States from 1877 to 1898. The student is expected to:

(B) analyze economic issues such as industrialization, the growth of railroads, the growth of labor unions, farm issues, the cattle industry boom, the rise of entrepreneurship, free enterprise, and the pros and cons of big business;

(C) analyze social issues affecting women, minorities, children, immigrants, urbanization, the Social Gospel, and philanthropy of industrialists; and

(D) describe the optimism of the many immigrants who sought a better life in America.

5. Guiding Questions

Include 1 to 3 fundamental questions that will guide the lesson for students to then answer with conceptual knowledge. Consider those we have studied in our Institute.

1. How did industrialization influence immigration to the US Mexico Borderlands? (focusing on mining and railroads)
2. Describe the experiences of the immigrates/migrates along with US Mexico Borderlands?
3. How did industrialization influence immigration?

6. Materials and Resources

What will teachers and students need in terms of materials and artifacts, or previous materials, to complete this lesson? Provide readings and resources with fair use.

1. *Smelertown making and remembering a Southwest border community* by Monica Perales
2. Image(s) (Note: Images linked to the sources. Print before lesson)
 - a. El Bajo neighborhood *See attached materials
 - b. Workers ID Card *See attached materials
 - c. [ASARCO postcard](#)
 - d. [Otis Aultman took this photo of the ASARCO plant. The copper smelting plant opened in 1910 and closed in 1999.](#)
 - e. [EDWIN BROOKE JONES\(man with rifle\)](#)
 - f. [Smelter Church](#)
 - g. [FATHER LOURDES F. COSTA](#)
 - h. [Collapse of the ASACRO Smoke Stacks](#)
3. Maps(See attached materials)
 - a. ASARCO and affiliate properties in the western United States and northern Mexico map-Pareles page 37
 - b. Railroad along the US MX border and TX and NM-pg 49
 - c. Smelertown and surrounding area-page 64
4. Oral Histories from UTEP Oral History Page: No.(s) 905, 914, 915
5. US History Textbook

7. Introduction. (Note: Students should have knowledge about the Gilded Age before introducing these lessons)

The second industrialization also known as the *Gilded Age* from about 1870s-1900s is one of the most significant time periods in American history. From the bessemer process to the refining of oil, the United States experience a rapid industrial change. The United States aggressively made efforts to “close the western frontier” through Indian wars that would led to the Dawes Act, the Transcontinental RailRoad, Homestead Act, and the mining of minerals and metals. This are only a fews events that would led to the transformations of the western frontier by United States industry.

In the backdrop of the *Gilded Age*, the United States was looking beyond its borders for territorial and economic gains. As a result of the Spanish American War in 1898, the United States acquired the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico as well as economic control and oversight of Cuba due to the Platt Amendment. The United States also annexed Hawaii and began trade with China. Mexico also became of interest making El Paso, Texas the gateway border city along the U.S. Mexico borderland.

Copper and lead-silver traveled to El Paso from mines throughout Mexico. Rail lines connected mines to major railways such as the Mexican National Railroad, the Santa Fe,

and Southern Pacific. El Paso became central to processing the minerals crossing borders. In 1887, a smelter was established in El Paso which would become known as ASARCO. The purpose of this lesson is to understand and contextualize the global, national, border, and regional impact of industry during the *Gilded Age*.

“*Smelertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community* traces the formation, evolution, demise, and collective memory of one of the largest single-industry Mexican American communities on the U.S.-Mexican border from the closing decades of the nineteenth century through the end of the twentieth century. Formed at the base of the American Smelting and Refining Company, Smelertown served as home to thousands of Mexican-origin ASARCO employees and their families.”

Work Cited.

Monica Perales, *Smelertown making and remembering a Southwest border community*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.), 2.

8. Instructional and Lesson Activities (ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EXPLAIN)

Activity 1: 90 minutes

Map Analyzes: US Mexico Borderlands: Regionalizing the Railroads during the Gilded Age 1870-1890

Opening: approximately 8-10 minutes

Project the current US Union Pacific [Map](#). Ask students the following: why are railroad important? Students will examine the map and write a reflection on their understanding of the map. Student will share their reflections with the class. Write down key terms that are being used on the board.

Procedures: approximately 45-50 minutes

Students will analyze railroad and mining maps from the El Paso borderlands' region. Use the maps provide to demonstrate the influence of industry and border crossings. Provide each group with a copy of the maps. Provided each student with map analysis [worksheet](#) for each map. Students will complete the analyze worksheet. (Note: Materials)

Assessment: approximately 15-20 minutes

Once students have completed their map analysis worksheet. Have students reflect and discuss their findings with their group. (Think/Pair/Share)

Further and deepen students understanding through a class discussion. Ask students the following questions based on the information they have gathered and learned.

- 1) Which borders are being crossed?
- 2) Based on the maps, how do policial border change?
- 3) What are the transnational borders industry?

- 4) How might industrialization influence immigration and migration during the Gilded Age?

Write students responses on the board as they share their answers.

Modified Lesson: Model lesson by showing students how to read a map. As a class analyze one of the maps. Students will answer the questions as a group. Note: Adjust lesson according to students' needs.

Extended:

- a. Expository Essay: Students will write a 1-2 page essay based on the analysis worksheet.
- b. Technology integration: To understand the continuation of the influence of railroads as being binational and crossing borders have students interact online with the following map: [Present Day Interacted Map](#)
- c. Research:
 - i. Students will research their own family's history in connection to mines and railroads. Students will create 5-10 questions about immigration, occupation and family origins. Once questions have been approved, students will work in pairs to conduct an oral history of a family member.
 - ii. The interview can be recorded with a cellphone, or recorder. Encourage students to take notes during the interview. Students must transcribe the interview.
 - iii. Student will create a "counter cartography map". Students will map their family's history in connection to industry and railroad. By mapping their family's history, they will be able to address the guided questions: How did industrialization influence immigration to the US Mexico Borderlands? Describe the experiences of the immigrates/migrates along with US Mexico Borderlands? How did industrialization influence immigration?
 - iv. Student will present their work to the class and community (if possible) with a 5-10 minute presentation using any form of media such as powerpoint or video.

(Note: Prior to lesson review with students the oral history "[Principles and Best Practices](#)" from the Oral History Association.)

Works Cited:

Perales, Monica. *Smelertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community*. N.p.: U of North Carolina, 2010. Print.

"Principles and Best Practices." Oral History Association. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 July 2017.

"Maps of the Union Pacific." *UP: Maps of the*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 July 2017.

"Where Do We Move Freight?" *Ferromex*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 July 2017.

Activity 2: 90 minutes

Images of ASARCO during the Gilded Age Gallery Walkthrough

Opening: approximately 8-10 minutes

Project an image industrialization from 1870-1900s. (The image can be an image of a smoke stacks, child labor, tenements housing, and the raid roads). Ask students the following: Based on the image describe industrialization and its effects on society? Students examine image and write a reflection answering the questions. Students will share their responses with a partner and further discussion with the class.

Procedures: approximately 45-50 minutes

ASARCO gallery walkthrough.

Be sure to print and display photographs around the classroom before the lesson.

Students will analyze photographs of ASARCO from 1880s-1900s to understand the impact industrialization had on society. Provide each student with a copy the Document Analysis [worksheet](#) for each photograph. Students will complete the analyze worksheet independently.

Assessment: approximately 15-20 minutes

Once students have completed the analysis worksheet. Have students reflect and discuss their findings with their group and as a class. (Think/Pair/Share)

Further and deepen students understanding through a class discussion comparing industrialization along the U.S. Mexico border to other industrial cities such as, New York, Detroit, and Pittsburgh

(Note: Students would have already learned about the Gilded Age from a previous lecture, class reading, or lesson.)

Modified Lesson: Model lesson by showing students how to read a map. As a class analyze one of the maps. Students will answer the questions as a group. Note: Adjust lesson according to students' needs.

Extension:

- a. Expository Essay: Students will write a 1-2 page essay based on the analysis worksheet.
- b. Images: Contextualize the lesson by providing additional images of industrialization from across the U.S. from 1870s-1900s.
- c. Readings: Assigned chapter one "Making a Border City" and chapter two "Creating a Smelertown" from *Smelertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community*. This will allow students to have a complete understanding of El Paso regional history in the context of Industrialization from 1880s-1900s.
- d. Research: Students will compare an industrial city with El Paso, Texas during the Gilded Age. Provide students with a list of possible topics to focus on, such as monopolies, Robber Barons/ Captains of Industry, tenements housing, immigration,

labor issues, international influences. Students will create a visual presentation that comparing the two cities and the impact of industrialization.

Activity 3: The Role of Oral Histories Lesson

Oral History lesson will be the final part of a three part lesson series which covers the Asarco plant in El Paso, Texas.

Lesson Procedure:

Open

Provide students with a photo of the Asarco Smokestack destruction or project the photo on an overhead. (If applicable) Give students five minutes to answer the following question on a scratch paper or a part of their notes. Ask several students to share their answers aloud to the class:

“What does the photo say about this community?”

Photo site: https://si.wsj.net/public/resources/images/NA-BV924_ELPASO_G_20130414181328.jpg



Students will be grouped together in 3's to read their own distinct oral histories. Students should have access and will be required to read their own oral histories as homework. The groups of threes will have to choose or be assigned their own specific oral history interviews which can be viewed below. The following oral histories can be found on the UTEP Oral History page and are labeled as: (905, 914, 915)

<http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/do/search/?q=asarco&start=0&context=4603065&facet=>

Note to teacher:

The purpose of the oral history activity is to provide different experiences amongst workers and families of Asarco workers. Furthermore, it sheds light on the bigger experiences of

industrial workers at the turn of the century and how race, class, gender, and religion all provided contradictions and nuances throughout the industrialized world.

Procedure continued:

Students will all possess a role as either an interviewer (this individual just asks questions) Note: question rubric and tips will be provided below, an interviewee from the oral history site as either 905, 914, and 915 that will only provide answers from the questions posed by the interviewer, and lastly a scribe. The scribe will document the questions and documents provided by the interviewee. After interview students will then rotate and will be in charge of a new role as either an interviewer, interviewee, and scribe. Complete cycle until all students have finished all three roles.

Note: Interviews should last roughly around 20 minutes. Below are the questions that the interviewer should ask the interviewee.

INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS:

When were you born?

Where were you born?

Describe your family background

Where was your family from?

What did your parents do for a living?

Describe the community you grew up in.

Describe any economic hardships your family experienced.

Was your family affected by war?

How does your family and you remember the Asarco plant?

Describe the role of your mother

Describe the role of your father

What was your relationship with religion?

Procedure Continued:

After students have completed all three cycles of interviews, a discussion amongst the three students will commence. Time necessary for discussion (15 minutes) The purpose of the discussion is to help facilitate any misconceptions and confusion of the individual interviews. Questions that students can ask and identify are: What similarities were found amongst the three? What were the main divisions amongst the three? Furthermore, it will help the students make connections among the three individual interviews.

Closure:

To close the lesson students will have a small writing assignment that will address: How do the lives of the three individual interviews detail life at Asarco? (students should provide six examples from the three individuals)

9. EXTEND/ELABORATE: Additional Learning Noted in each of the three lessons

10. EVALUATE: Assessment: Within each Lesson

11. Accommodations and Modifications: Within each lesson

12. College and Career Readiness (optional)

Using the document developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the following [College and Career Readiness Standards](#) (CCRS) complement the lesson plan in English/language arts and social studies:

13. Additional Resources

[University of Texas at El Paso Digital Commons](#)

[University of Texas at El Paso Institution of Oral History](#)

[The Portal to Texas History](#)

Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America. by Vicki L Ruiz

Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America (2014) by Ngai Mae

14. References (or Works Cited)

Perales, Monica. *Smelertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community*. N.p.: U of North Carolina, 2010.

15. Reflection

Our immersion in the program with the readings and lectures made us realize the cultural, economic, and ethnic significance of the ASARCO smelting plant. We believe the ASARCO plant not only presents life on the border but also the evolution of industrialization throughout North America.

We decided to collaborate on a unit that student taking a U.S. History course struggle with the most, the Gilded Age. By focusing on ASARCO we hope that students will have a better understanding of impact of industrialization. We were inspired to contextualize and regionalize this time period of U.S. History and give meaning to students who have little or no knowledge of early industrialization along the borderlands.