

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT
Lesson Title - Criminal Actions by the U.S. During The Filipino
Insurrection: Investigating Sources
From Bill Powers

Grade – 11

Length of class period – 74 minutes

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

Given resulting war atrocities, should the United States have acquired the Philippines?
Were American actions during the Filipino Insurrection justified?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

Students will analyze primary sources.

Students will describe events and problems associated with the expansion to and control of the Philippines by the United States that could have been used as arguments by anti-imperialists.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) –
(please attach)

Primary Sources - "American soldiers in the Philippines write home about the war."

<http://www.nl.folksemantic.com/visits/54412>

Photograph of concentration camp (reconcentrado camp) for Filipino prisoners.
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sclphilimg/x-1060/PHLF031> (with permission of the University of Michigan, Special Collections Library); photo in this document

"Water Cure Described" - Discharged soldier tells Senate Committee how and why the torture was inflicted. New York Times, May 4, 1902.

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lodge_Committee_testimony_from_the_New_York_Times#The_Water_Cure_Described

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

Students will study the primary sources during which time they will note events and possible problems related to the control of the Filipino fighters and discuss their conclusions with a partner.

Students will individually prepare a summary of those events and problems that could justify anti-imperialist opposition to U.S. expansion.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

Evaluate student written summaries which address the following question: What arguments might an anti-imperialist make to justify their opposition to U.S. expansion during the Filipino Insurrection?

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of significant events and themes in United States.

American Soldiers in the Philippines Write Home about the War

During the U.S. war in the Philippines between 1899 and 1904 (which grew out of the Spanish-American War that had erupted in 1898), ordinary American soldiers shared the nationalist zeal of their commanders and pursued the Filipino “enemy” with brutality and sometimes outright lawlessness. Racism, which flourished in the United States in this period, led American soldiers to repeatedly assert their desire “to get at the niggers.” An anti-imperialist movement, which rejected annexation by the United States of former Spanish colonies like Puerto Rico and the Philippines, attempted to build opposition at home to the increasingly brutal war. Although few soldiers joined the anti-imperialist cause, their statements did sometimes provide ammunition for the opponents of annexation and war. In 1899, the Anti-Imperialist League published a pamphlet of *Soldiers Letters*, with the provocative subtitle: “Being Materials for a History of a War of Criminal Aggression.” Historian Jim Zwick notes that the publication “was immediately controversial. Supporters of the war discounted the accounts of atrocities as the boasting of soldiers wanting to impress their friends and families at home or, because the identities of some of the writers were withheld from publication, as outright fabrications.” But the brutal portrayal of the war that is found in these letters (excerpts from twenty-seven of them are included here) is supported in other accounts.

Private Fred B. Hinchman, Company A. United States Engineers, writes from Manila, February 22d:

At 1:30 o'clock the general gave me a memorandum with regard to sending out a Tennessee battalion to the line. He tersely put it that “they were looking for a fight.” At the Puente Colgante [suspension bridge] I met one of our company, who told me that the Fourteenth and Washingtons were driving all before them, and taking no prisoners. This is now our rule of procedure for cause. After delivering my message I had not walked a block when I heard shots down the street. Hurrying forward, I found a group of our men taking pot-shots across the river, into a bamboo thicket, at about 1,200 yards. I longed to join them, but had my reply to take back, and that, of course, was the first thing to attend to I reached the office at 3 P.M., just in time to see a platoon of the Washingtons, with about fifty prisoners, who had been taken before they learned how not to take them.

Arthur H. Vickers, Sergeant in the First Nebraska Regiment:

I am not afraid, and am always ready to do my duty, but I would like some one to tell me what we are fighting for.

Guy Williams, of the Iowa Regiment:

The soldiers made short work of the whole thing. They looted every house, and found almost everything, from a pair of wooden shoes up to a piano, and they carried everything off or destroyed it. Talk of the natives plundering the towns: I don't think they are in it with the Fiftieth Iowa.

General Reeve, lately Colonel of the Thirteenth Minnesota Regiment:

I deprecate this war, this slaughter of our own boys and of the Filipinos, because it seems to me that we are doing something that is contrary to our principles in the past. Certainly we are doing something that we should have shrunk from not so very long ago.

Sergeant Elliott, of Company G, Kansas Regiment:

Most of the general officers think it will take years, and a large force of soldiers, to thoroughly subjugate the natives. And the unpleasant feature of this is that unless the conditions change radically there will be few soldiers who will care to stay there. There's no use trying to conceal the fact that many of the men over there now, especially the volunteers, are homesick, and tired of fighting way off there, with nothing in particular to gain. There is not one man in the whole army now in the Philippines who would not willingly give up his life for the flag if it was necessary, but it isn't pleasant to think about dying at the hands of a foe little better than a savage, and so far away from home. And the thought of its not ending for several years is not an especially pleasant one, either.

Charles Bremer, of Minneapolis, Kansas, describing the fight at Caloocan:

Company I had taken a few prisoners, and stopped. The colonel ordered them up in to line time after time, and finally sent Captain Bishop back to start them. There occurred the hardest sight I ever saw. They had four prisoners, and didn't know what to do with them. They asked Captain Bishop what to do, and he said: "You know the orders," and four natives fell dead.

Sylvester Walker, of the Twenty-third Regulars, February 20:

There has not been a night for the last ten days we have not had fighting. Our force is too weak, and we cannot spare any more men, and will have to wait for more troops. Then we will have hard fighting, for there are so many that, no matter how many we kill or capture, it doesn't seem to lessen their number.

Martin P. Olson, of the Fourteenth Regulars:

We can lick them, but it will take us a long time, because there are about 150,000 of the dagos back in the hills, and as soon as one of them gets killed or wounded there is a man to take his place at once; and we have but a few men in the first place, but we are expecting about 8,000 more soldiers every day, and I hope they will soon get here, or we will all be tired out and sick. . . . This is an awful bad climate and there have been from

two to four funerals every day. The boys have chronic diarrhea and dysentery, and it just knocks the poor boys out. You mustn't feel uneasy about me, because I don't think there is a Spanish bullet made to kill me; it is disease that I am most afraid of.

Fred D. Sweet, of the Utah Light Battery:

The scene reminded me of the shooting of jack-rabbits in Utah, only the rabbits sometimes got away, but the insurgents did not.

Capt. Albert Otis, describes his exploits at Santa Ana:

I have six horses and three carriages in my yard, and enough small plunder for a family of six. The house I had at Santa Ana had five pianos. I couldn't take them, so I put a big grand piano out of a second-story window. You can guess its finish. Everything is pretty quiet about here now. I expect we will not be kept here very long now. Give my love to all.

Ellis G. Davis, Company A, 20th Kansas:

They will never surrender until their whole race is exterminated. They are fighting for a good cause, and the Americans should be the last of all nations to transgress upon such rights. Their independence is dearer to them than life, as ours was in years gone by, and is today. They should have their independence, and would have had it if those who make the laws in America had not been so slow in deciding the Philippine question. Of course, we have to fight now to protect the honor of our country but there is not a man who enlisted to fight these people, and should the United States annex these islands, none but the most bloodthirsty will claim himself a hero. This is not a lack of patriotism, but my honest belief.

J. E. Fetterly, a Nebraska soldier:

Some think the insurgents are disheartened, but I think they will make a desperate struggle for what they consider their rights. I do not approve of the course our government is pursuing with these people. If all men are created equal, they have some rights which ought to be respected.

Arthur Minkler, of the Kansas Regiment says:

We advanced four miles and we fought every inch of the way; . . . saw twenty-five dead insurgents in one place and twenty-seven in another, besides a whole lot of them scattered along that I did not count. . . . It was like hunting rabbits; an insurgent would jump out of a hole or the brush and run; he would not get very far. . . . I suppose you are not interested in the way we do the job. We do not take prisoners. At least the Twentieth Kansas do not.

Burr Ellis, of Frazier Valley, California:

They did not commence fighting over here (Cavite) for several days after the war commenced. Dewey gave them till nine o'clock one day to surrender, and that night they all left but a few out to their trenches, and those that they left burned up the town, and when the town commenced burning the troops were ordered in as far as possible and said, Kill all we could find. I ran off from the hospital and went ahead with the scouts. And bet, I did not cross the ocean for the fun there was in it, so the first one I found, he was in a house, down on his knees fanning a fire, trying to burn the house, and I pulled my old Long Tom to my shoulder and left him to burn with the fire, which he did. I got his knife, and another jumped out of the window and ran, and I brought him to the ground like a jack-rabbit. I killed seven that I know of, and one more I am almost sure of: I shot ten shots at him running and knocked him down, and that evening the boys out in front of our trenches now found one with his arm shot off at shoulder and dead as h___; I had lots of fun that morning. There were five jumped out of the brush and cut one of the Iowa band boys, and we killed every one of them, and I was sent back to quarters in the hurry. Came very near getting a court-martial, but the colonel said he had heard that I had done excellent work and he laughed and said: "There's good stuff in that man," and told me not to leave any more without orders. Well, John, there will always be trouble here with the natives unless they annihilate all of them as fast as they come to them.

Tom Crandall, of the Nebraska Regiment:

The boys are getting sick of fighting these heathens, and all say we volunteered to fight Spain, not heathens. Their patriotism is wearing off. We all want to come home very bad. If I ever get out of this army I will never get into another. They will be fighting four hundred years, and then never whip these people, for there are not enough of us to follow them up.....The people of the United States ought to raise a howl and have us sent home.

Captain Elliott, of the Kansas Regiment, February 27th:

Talk about war being "hell," this war beats the hottest estimate ever made of that locality. Caloocan was supposed to contain seventeen thousand inhabitants. The Twentieth Kansas swept through it, and now Caloocan contains not one living native. Of the buildings, the battered walls of the great church and dismal prison alone remain. The village of Maypaja, where our first fight occurred on the night of the fourth, had five thousand people in it at that day,—now not one stone remains upon top of another. You can only faintly imagine this terrible scene of desolation. War is worse than hell.

Leonard F. Adams, of Ozark, in the Washington Regiment:

I don't know how many men, women, and children the Tennessee boys did kill. They would not take any prisoners. One company of the Tennessee boys was sent into headquarters with thirty prisoners, and got there with about a hundred chickens and no prisoners.

D. M. Mickle, Tennessee Regiment, at Iloilo:

The building had been taken possession of by a United States officer, and he looted it to a finish. I suspected something and followed one of his men to the place. I expected to be jumped on by the officer as soon as I found him there, as I was away from my post, but it seems he was afraid I would give him away; in fact, we were both afraid of each other. He was half drunk, and every time he saw me look at anything he would say, "Tennessee, do you like that? Well, put it in your pocket".....The house was a fine one, and richly furnished, but had been looted to a finish. The contents of every drawer had been emptied on the floor. You have no idea what a mania for destruction the average man has when the fear of the law is removed. I have see them—old sober business men too—knock chandeliers and plate-glass mirrors to pieces just because they couldn't carry them off. It is such a pity.

Theodore Conley, of a Kansas Regiment:

Talk about dead Indians! Why, they are lying everywhere. The trenches are full of them.....More harrowing still: think of the brave men from this country, men who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the freedom of Cuba, dying in battle and from disease, in a war waged for the purpose of conquering people who are fighting as the Cubans fought against Spanish tyranny and misrule. There is not a feature of the whole miserable business that a patriotic American citizen, one who loves to read of the brave deeds of the American colonists in the splendid struggle for American independence, can look upon with complacency, much less with pride. This war is reversing history. It places the American people and the government of the United States in the position occupied by Great Britain in 1776. It is an utterly causeless and defenseless war, and it should be abandoned by this government without delay. The longer it is continued, the greater crime it becomes—a crime against human liberty as well as against Christianity and civilization.....Those not killed in the trenches were killed when they tried to come out.....No wonder they can't shoot, with that light thrown on them; shells bursting and infantry pouring in lead all the time. Honest to God, I feel sorry for them.

F. A. Blake, of California, in charge of the Red Cross:

I never saw such execution in my life, and hope never to see such sights as met me on all sides as our little corps passed over the field, dressing wounded. Legs and arms nearly demolished; total decapitation; horrible wounds in chests and abdomens, showing the determination of our soldiers to kill every native in sight. The Filipinos did stand their ground heroically, contesting every inch, but proved themselves unable to stand the deadly fire of our well-trained and eager boys in blue. I counted seventy-nine dead natives in one small field, and learn that on the other side of the river their bodies were stacked up for breastworks.

Colonel Funston, Twentieth Kansas Volunteers:

The boys go for the enemy as if they were chasing jackrabbits.....I, for one, hope that Uncle Sam will apply the chastening rod, good, hard, and plenty, and lay it on until they come into the reservation and promise to be good "Injuns".

E. D. Furnam, of the Washington Regiment, writes of the battles of February 4th and 5th:

We burned hundreds of houses and looted hundreds more. Some of the boys made good hauls of jewelry and clothing. Nearly every man has at least two suits of clothing, and our quarters are furnished in style; fine beds with silken drapery, mirrors, chairs, rockers, cushions, pianos, hanging-lamps, rugs, pictures, etc. We have horses and carriages, and bull-carts galore, and enough furniture and other plunder to load a steamer.

N. A. J. McDonnel, of the Utah Battery, February 22d:

The enemy numbered thousands and had courage, but could not shoot straight. People can never tell me anything about the Rough Riders charging San Juan. If these natives could shoot as accurately as the Spanish, they would have exterminated us. Fighting goes on all along the lines, many natives are killed, but we capture very few rifles, as they seem to have men to take them. Official reports say over four thousand two hundred natives have been buried by American troops. How many they have buried themselves and how many more are dead in the brush no one knows.

Frank M. Erb, of the Pennsylvania Regiment. February 27th:

We have been in this nigger-fighting business now for twenty-three days, and have been under fire for the greater part of that time. The niggers shoot over one another's heads or any old way. Even while I am writing this the black boys are banging away at our outposts, but they very seldom hit anybody. The morning of the 6th a burying detail from our regiment buried forty-nine nigger enlisted men and two nigger officers, and when we stopped chasing them the night before, we could see 'em carrying a great many with them. We are supposed to have killed about three hundred. Take my advice, and don't enlist in the regulars, for you are good for three years. I am not sorry I enlisted, but you see we have had some excitement and we only have about fourteen months' time to serve, if they keep us our full time, which is not likely. We will, no doubt, start home as soon as we get these niggers rounded up.

Anthony Michea, of the Third Artillery:

We bombarded a place called Malabon, and then we went in and killed every native we met, men, women, and children. It was a dreadful sight, the killing of the poor creatures. The natives captured some of the Americans and literally hacked them to pieces, so we got orders to spare no one.

Lieut. Henry Page, of the Regular Army:

After a stay of about eight months among these people, during which time no opportunity has been lost to study their qualities, I find myself still unable to express a decided opinion about the matter, but I can unreservedly affirm that the more evidence collected the greater my respect for the native and his capacities.....The recent battle of February 5th was somewhat of a revelation to Americans. They expected the motley horde to run at

the firing of the first gun. It was my good fortune to be placed—about ten hours afterward—near the spot where this first gun was fired. I found the Americans still held in check. Our artillery then began to assail the enemy's position, and it was only by the stoutest kind of fighting that the Tennessee and Nebraska Regiments were able to drive him out. The Filipinos' retreat, however, was more creditable than their stand. Perfect order prevailed. One of their companies would hold our advance until the company in their rear could retire and reload, when in turn this company would stand until the former had retired and reloaded. A frequent exclamation along our lines was: "Haven't these little fellows got grit?" They had more than grit—they had organization.....In each town a church, a convent or priest's home, a "tribunal," which is courthouse, jail, and record office all in one, and a school, constitute the public buildings. The schools were neat, substantial buildings, which testified that the Spanish made an honest effort to educate the masses. The Filipino is very anxious to learn, and the new government of Aguinaldo used every effort to start afresh these schools. The number of natives who speak Spanish, as well as their native tongue, and who also know how to read and write, is remarkable. No school teacher has been appointed in San Jose, and the school buildings are held by the American officers. In spite of this discouragement there is a private school flourishing in a native hut.

Robert D. Maxwell, Corporal Co. A, Twentieth Kansas:

Sometimes we stopped to make sure a native was dead and not lying down to escape injury. Some of them would fall as though dead and, after we had passed, would climb a tree and shoot every soldier that passed that way. Even the wounded would rise up and shoot after we passed. This led to an order to take no prisoners, but to shoot all.

Source: *Soldier's Letters*, pamphlet (Anti-Imperialist League, 1899). Reprinted in Philip S. Foner and Richard Winchester, *The Anti-Imperialist Reader: A Documentary History of Anti-Imperialism in the United States*, Vol. 1 (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984), 316–323.

Photo of Concentration Camp for Filipino Prisoners



The Water Cure Described

Discharged Soldier Tells Senate Committee How and Why the Torture Was Inflicted.

New York Times May 4, 1902

WASHINGTON, May 3.—L. E. Hallock of Boston, Mass., formerly a Sergeant and later a private in Company I, Twenty-sixth Volunteer Infantry, testified to-day before the Senate Committee on the Philippines concerning the practice of the water cure in the Philippine archipelago.

He told of the infliction of the cure upon a dozen natives at the town of Leon, Province of Panay. He said they were captured and tortured in order to secure information of the murder of Private O'Herne of Company I, who had been not only killed, but roasted and otherwise tortured before death ensued. Capt. Glenn, in charge of a scouting party, had first secured a confession of participation in this crime by one native who had implicated twelve others. These were, the witness said, taken to Leon, where his company, under command of Capt. Gregg, was stationed, and there on the 21st and again on the 23d of August, 1900, the cure was administered by members of Company I under the orders of First Sergeant Januarius Manning.

Hallock added that he had witnessed the that while it was in progress Capt. Gregg was at company headquarters, less than 100 yards distant.

"Did Capt. Gregg know of the torture?" Senator Rawlins asked.

"All the command knew it, and I don't see how he could have helped knowing it."

"What was the effect of the punishment?"

"The stomach would swell up, and in some cases I witnessed blood come from the mouth."

Asked what became of the Philippine prisoners to whom the cure was administered, he replied that they were placed in a guardhouse 20 by 25 feet in size, in which there was one window, and in which there were at times eighteen men confined. The twelve prisoners were kept for four or five months, and then they tried to escape. That effort had been successful on the part of some of them, but five or six fleeing prisoners were shot and killed. One of them had been killed while trying to get away when the squad was taken to the river for a bath, and the others when out at work, in a general rush for liberty.

"Were all the prisoners who did not escape killed?"

"I think so, with one exception; I think one was given his freedom."

Senator Lodge brought out the details of the murder of Private O'Herne. The witness said that in June, 1900, O'Herne, with two other members of the company, had been sent to Iloilo for mail, and that on their return on June 30 they were ambushed by 100 natives, and O'Herne's companions captured. O'Herne had made a dash to get away, and after escaping from the attacking party, had fallen in with other natives supposed to be friendly, but that instead of proving to be so they had devoted the entire next day to his torture and death, beginning at daylight by cutting him with bolos and then roasting him all day by a slow fire, not finishing up until night. All these details had, the witness said, been gathered from the confessions of the men to whom they had given the cure.

Replying to other questions, he said he had not known any one to die under the water cure. The prisoners were generally fed on rice and coffee, with an occasional meal of hard tack. He said they were all "fat." He also said he understood the orders to be to treat the natives well.

In reply to a question from Senator Burrows, Mr. Hallock said he had seen the bodies of four of the native prisoners who had been shot by the soldiers while trying to make their escape, but that he had not seen the actual shooting.

The committee then went into executive session, and Senator Lodge laid before it the cablegram from Gen. Chaffee concerning Major Gardener, which was later read in the Senate. The committee decided not to request the appearance of Major Gardener pending the investigation in the Philippines.