New York and the Spanish-Speaking World

Nueva York: 1613-1945 and West Side Story

Educator Workshop
Fordham University
June 28, 2013
NUEVA YORK 1613–1945

September 17, 2010 – January 9, 2011
Essential Question:

How did Latin Americans and New Yorkers view one another in the second half of the 19th century?
CHURCH'S PAINTING,
THE
HEART OF THE ANDES,
ON EXHIBITION A FEW DAYS,
AT THE STUDIO BUILDING,
No. 15 10th-St. Between 5th & 6th Avenues,
FROM 8 A.M. TO 5 P.M. AND FROM 7 P.M. TO 10 P.M.
ADMISSION 25 CENTS.

JOHN W. OLIVER, Steam Printer, 43 Ann-Street, New-York.
José Martí’s mission for *La América*:

“To define, advise, alert, and reveal the secrets of the seemingly – and only seemingly – marvelous success of this country, and to promote, with clear and timely explanation and studies of applicable advances, the achievement of an equal – or perhaps greater, yes, greater and more lasting – success in our own countries.”
“…What comings and goings! What spendings of money! What opportunities for every pleasure! What absolute absence of any visible sadness or poverty! Everything is out in the open: the noisy groups, the vast dining rooms, the peculiar courtship of the North Americans – almost wholly devoid of the elements that comprise the bashful, tender, and elevated courtship of our lands – the theater, the photographer, the bathhouse – all of it out in the open.”

Jose Martí, from Coney Island
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Jose Martí, from Coney Island
How did Latin Americans and New Yorkers view one another in the second half of the 19th century?
THE DUTY OF THE HOUR:—TO SAVE HER NOT ONLY FROM SPAIN BUT FROM A WORSE FATE.
Making Political Cartoons 101

1. On scrap paper, write down the point you’re trying to make. Distill it to a few words, such as, “The US needs to annex Cuba.”

2. Brainstorm effective symbols, catch phrases, and/or figurative language that will illustrate this point.

3. Sketch your idea. You can include as many words as you’d like.

   Don’t be afraid to be sarcastic, exaggerate, or add a lot of details to help make your point.

4. Add a caption or title.

5. Color!
Post-WWII New York:  
*West Side Story*
Learning Objective

To locate Puerto Rican migration within the larger canvas of U.S. immigrant and migrant history, and to understand the challenges Puerto Rican migrants faced in mid-century New York.
The United States and its new Possessions.
“Arriving in America,”
circa 1900
Timeline of Puerto Rican Migration

- **1917**: Woodrow Wilson signs the Jones-Shafroth Act into law, giving U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans.
- **1922**: Pan-Am begins non-stop flights between Puerto Rico and Miami.
- **1930s**: Puerto Ricans migrating to U.S. begin settling in the East Harlem section of New York City.
- **1933**: Puerto Rican Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA) established to alleviate effects of economic depression.
- **1935**: Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration (PRRA) set up to stimulate economic recovery.
“San Juan, Puerto Rico. In the Huge Slum Area Known as ‘El Fangitto’ (‘The Mud’),” January 1942
“San Juan, Puerto Rico. People Carrying Water Home Because of the Failure of the Water System for Three Days,” January 1942
Timeline (continued)

- **1945** 13,000 Puerto Ricans reside in New York City. Puerto Rican migration to U.S. begins to mount in the decade following World War II.


- **1947** Over 20 airlines offer services from Puerto Rico to Miami and New York City.

- **1953** Puerto Rican migration peaks at over 69,000 in one year. NY Mayor Robert Wagner publicly announces that he and all New Yorkers will accept any Puerto Rican willing to work in the U.S.

- **1955** Nearly 700,000 Puerto Rican migrants have arrived in the U.S.
Puerto Rican Paradise?
Upon arrival in New York City, “he is met by friends or relatives and taken to their homes. They may live in a housing project, or a five-in-a-room slum ‘apartment’, but he is welcome; they know he will soon find work and arrive for living quarters of his own. Like those before him he will fill one of the lowest service jobs—janitor, hospital attendant, hotel worker. He will move into the cheapest housing; he may sometimes occupy a room in shifts with others, sleeping while they work. He begins the long climb out of the ranks of unskilled labor—a climb he hopes his children may complete.”


*Holiday Magazine*, February 1961