Teaching with World Historical Gazetteer

Power and Possession: The Role of Place Names in Establishing Territorial Claims

A note on grade level - A high level of reading comprehension is required for the documents. It is recommended this activity be used for students in grades 10-12.

This lesson contains two parts: the first is designed to directly link the practice of naming places to colonial possession and the second part uses documents to examine attitudes about identity, sovereignty, and political power in a case study using Korea.

Rationale: This lesson is designed to establish the relationship between claiming territory and naming places within that territory to establish ownership. The lesson begins with the case of New Amsterdam and New England/New York because students will be familiar with the basic story and can get right to the discussion of the motives for naming colonial possessions. (This approach also provides an opportunity to use one of the datasets within the WHG.)
Using the **World History Gazetteer**, the lesson will illustrate how the British changed the names of New Amsterdam (city and entire territory) to New York and New England and the students will discuss the relationship between the original Lenape place name and those of the Europeans.

Once students have established the reasons for aligning place names with colonial possessions to establish legitimacy, the lesson will then move to the example of how the Japanese renamed Korean cities once they shifted from the annexation to the colonization of Korea.
(This lesson can stand alone or can be extended to Part 2, which examines the Japanese and Korean attitudes about place names, identity, and political power.)

Procedure: Part 1

Warmup: Students will look up the original meaning of the place name Manhattan. (The modern name Manhattan is derived from a Lenape word *Manna-haka*, sometimes written as *Mannahatta*, meaning "thicket where wood can be found to make bows".)

- Teacher will use the **Featured Dataset on Dutch History in the World Historical Gazetteer** to remind students of an example of place name changes which the students would have studied in American History and how naming places is related to claims of ownership.
- Click on the **Featured Dataset on Dutch History** and then click on **Browse Data**.

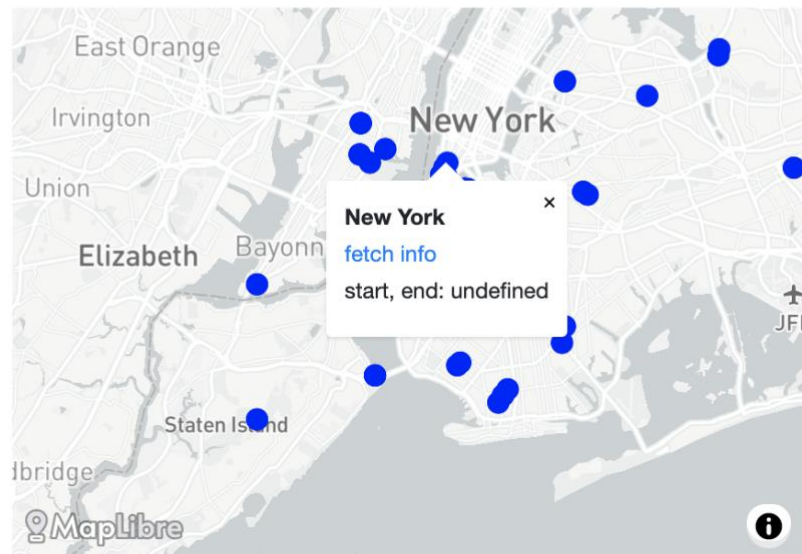This will bring up a map of Dutch settlements across the globe on the left-hand side of the screen.

● Enlarge the map and use the cursor to find New York City. (The map is a bit slippery to manipulate which is why I would have the teacher conduct this part of the lesson – in the interest of time. Given enough time, students could certainly do this.)

● Clicking on **fetch data** brings up the place name variants including Manhattan and Nieuw-Amsterdam. Identify the place name variants. (There is an English language option.)

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Collection Summary   Browse Data: Dutch History

Title: New York
Variants: Nieu Jorck; New York; Nieuw-Amsterdam; Manhattan;
Manahtoes; Manahata; Manhattos; New York; New York;
Types: colony / village; (villages ↗)
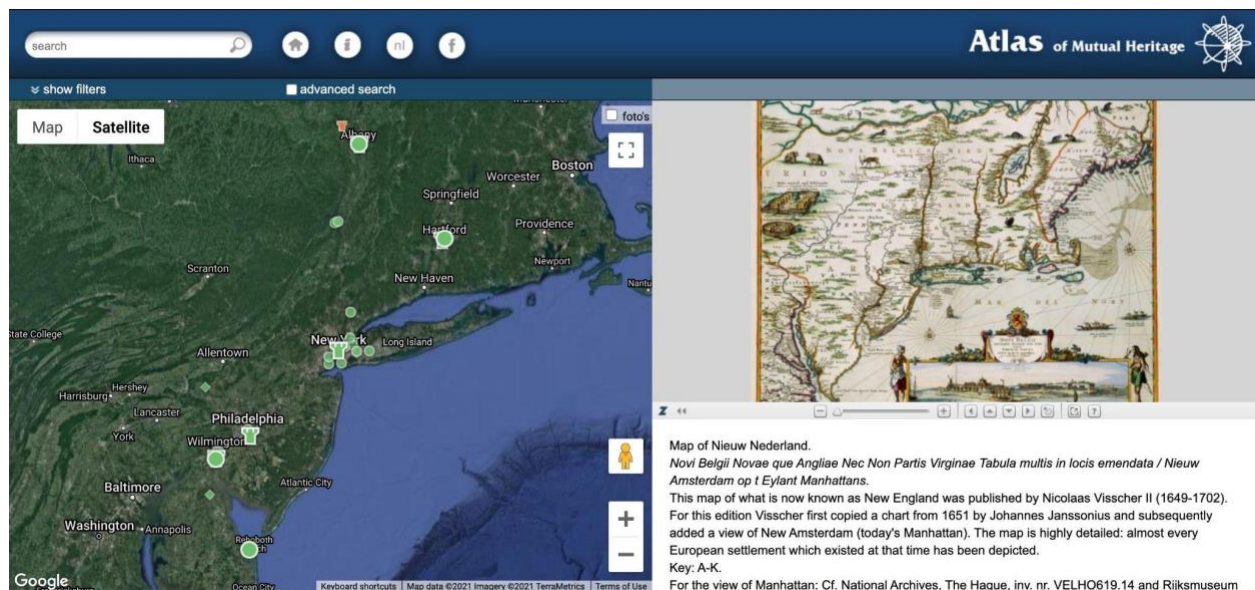Links: wp:New York City ↗, wp:Category:New York, New York ↗,
viaf:266415900 ↗, tgn:7007567 ↗, bnf:11880105b ↗, loc:n79007751 ↗,
gn:5128581 ↗, gnd:4042011-5 ↗, wd:Q60 ↗,
Parent(s): New York State;
Description: Locality associated with Dutch West India Company. In 1626
kochten de Nederlanders het eiland Man (Manhattan) voor goederen ter
waarde van 60 gulden van de Indianen. Fort Amsterdam was al een jaar
eerder op het uiterste puntje van het eiland gebouwd. Er ontwikkelde
zich de plaats Nieuw-Amsterdam. Zo ...
When: earliest: 1624; latest: 1664

- Return to Dataset Summary and scroll through the data sets on the right-hand side and click on the one titled **Atlas of Mutual Heritage.** Under the dataset summary, navigate down to "webpage" and click the link. This will bring you to a new site. There is a button near the top left corner to put the site in English (en or nl).
- Use the map to locate New York City (located in present day Manhattan) and click on that to bring up a set of images (58) on the right. Then select the image of a map of New Amsterdam (column one, 3rd image down) to show the extent of the Dutch land holdings at the time the map was drawn. The map can also be enlarged to get a closer look at New York City and Manhattan specifically.

- Students will be asked to discuss the difference between the naming of Manhattan by the Lenape and the subsequent naming by the Dutch and the British (moving from descriptive to names that established ownership and a relationship to the "homeland"). What is the relationship between claiming territory and naming or changing place names? Why was it a priority for colonizers to name or rename a place?
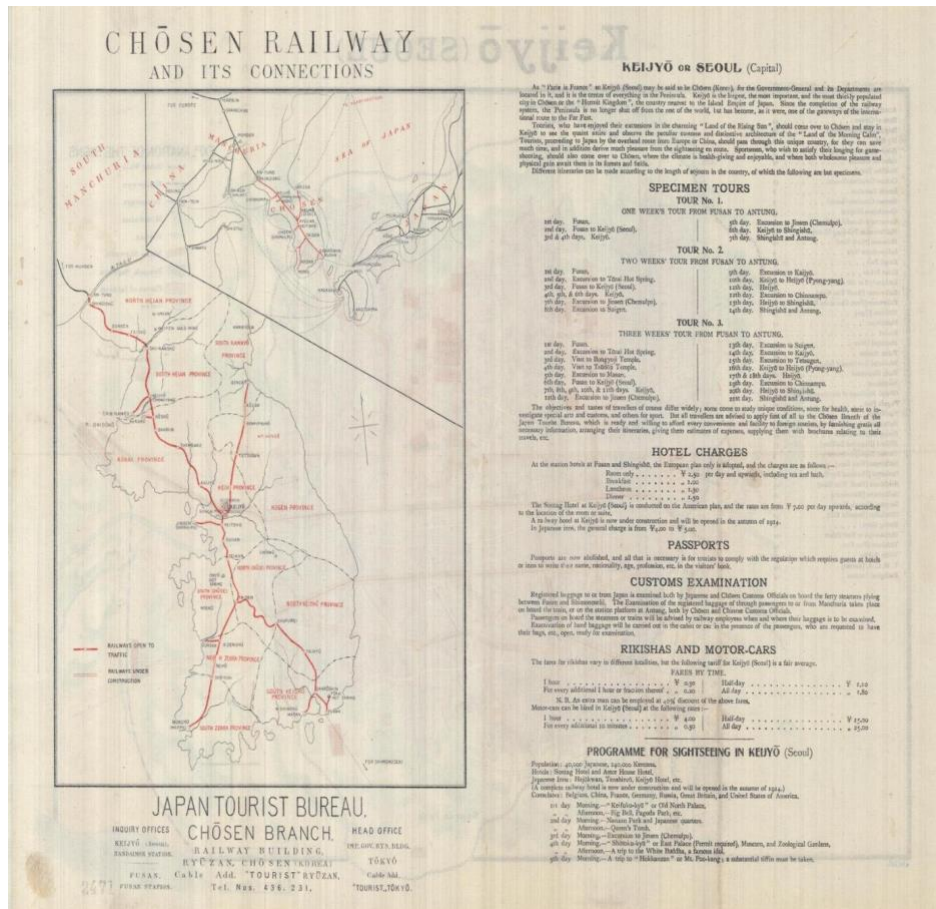
Small group work:
- Students will be assigned to a small group and will be given a short list of Japanese place names in Korea and directed to use the **World History Gazetteer** to identify the current names of those cities.

1. Keijo (Seoul)
2. Heijo (Pyongyang)
3. Jinsen (Inchon)
4. Fusan (Busan/Pusan)
5. Suigen (Suwon)

- Continuing in small groups, students will examine two documents from the Library of Congress https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2018/05/maps-of-seoul-south-korea-under-japanese-occupation/
 (which can be enlarged for easier reading) and answer the following questions:

1. **Document A** was published by the Japan Tourist Bureau and it uses both Japanese and Korean place names. Why do you think both names are included? Is there any indication of the attitude previously discussed about place names and colonial legitimacy?

2. Identify two or three statements in the description of these places and activities (Documents A and B) that reveal Japanese attitudes toward Korea and Koreans.

DOCUMENT A

DOCUMENT B

Short comparison activity using the **World History Gazetteer.**
- Choose one of the following countries:

1. India
2. Vietnam
3. Democratic Republic of the Congo
4. Russia/Russian Federation

- Using the WHG, find the place name variants of at least three cities. (Capitals, major cities, and ports work especially well for this.)
- Use these place name variants in web searches to discover the reason for the place name changes.
- Write a short essay in which you compare the reason for the place name variants in your chosen country with the reason for place name changes in Korea.