**The path to America's future.**

**Questions about documentary-american experience panama canal**

1. What did America have to gain from the Panama Canal? Consider the economic, political, scientific, and cultural aspects of this question as they apply both to the U.S. and to the world. In what ways did President Theodore Roosevelt see the canal as "the obvious path to America's future"? What is your assessment of Roosevelt’s interest in the canal? Was he inspired? Arrogant? Visionary? Imperialist? Explain.
2. Roosevelt's visit to Panama. What motivated President Roosevelt to travel to Panama in late 1906? Why did the President choose to go to Panama during the wettest time of year, and what does this say about his character? What was unprecedented about this trip-and why was it the turning point in the history of the canal's construction? How did Roosevelt's visit affect Rose van Hardeveld and other observers?
3. Who was Ferdinand de Lesseps, and why was he selected by the French to build a canal in Panama? What were the key differences between conditions in the Suez region, where de Lesseps had successfully overseen the construction of a canal, and Panama? What became of de Lesseps' effort to build a canal in Panama? What lessons do you think other engineers took from de Lesseps' failure?
4. What made the railroad "the heart of the effort" during construction of the canal? What ingenious innovation did Chief Engineer John Stevens use to maximize the efficiency of the railroad? When Stevens realized that building a canal at sea level would doom the canal to failure, what solution did he come up with?
5. Who was Colonel William Gorgas, and what was his theory about how Yellow Fever could be eradicated? What led President Roosevelt to back Gorgas' theory? How was this public-health campaign -- the most expensive in history -- carried out? What were the logistics? What were the results? How did the eradication of Yellow Fever affect progress on the canal?
6. What was the "Panama Man," and how were advertising and marketing techniques employed to recruit workers? From what countries were most unskilled laborers who worked on the canal project recruited? Which workers were paid in gold? Who was paid in silver? What were the consequences of being a "gold worker" versus being a "silver Page 6 worker"?