

PANAMA CANAL – Video Notes: MODERN MARVELS, THE PANAMA CANAL

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJh4SG-vTh8>

1. Panama has always attracted explorers and adventurers. In 1534, _____ engineers surveyed the isthmus (i.e., thin area of land) and proposed a plan for a canal that would link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
2. In 1879, Ferdinand de Lesseps focused on building a canal that spanned the _____ width of Panama. Unlike the Suez Canal, Panama was a savage, tropical terrain, swampy, overgrown land that would not easily bend to the will of man.
3. Problems began immediately. Due to an 8 month rainy season, the jungle grows at an astounding rate. This all had to be cleared by _____.
4. And the jungle was home to a savage variety of insects. 75% of workers that entered the hospital for treatment of smallpox, typhoid, yellow-fever (malaria), food poisoning, or snake bite died _____ and prematurely. Most of the illness was caused by malaria. The French didn't want to believe that malaria was caused by mosquitos.
5. By 1889, the Europeans had run out of money. They left behind rusty hardware and the corpses of more than _____ men. This was a \$300 million dollar catastrophe that nearly toppled the French government.
6. In 1898, Teddy Roosevelt led a military campaign in Puerto Rico. But Teddy was upset that badly needed support from west coast battleships was not available for his Caribbean campaign. He saw an immediate strategic need for a canal that would give the U.S.A. a _____ navy.
7. The Isthmus of Panama was the northern province of Colombia, and Colombia had no interest in granting the U.S. permission to build a canal. So Roosevelt helped start a revolution on the isthmus in 1903 where they declared their independence from Colombia. It took less than _____ to settle, and Roosevelt sent battleships to the area to make sure that Colombia's military stayed away.
8. Teddy could finally build his canal thanks to a hastily drawn agreement in which the United States would give the new nation of Panama \$10 million dollars for the right to build and operate a canal. No Panamanians ever _____ that agreement.
9. The plan was to dam Panama's mightiest river and create, what was then, the World's largest _____ lake. Then use a system of locks to raise and lower ships 85 ft. to the level of the lake for their transit across the isthmus.

10. Most of the men who built the canal were not American, but tens of thousands of desperately poor workers from _____ islands who had bad housing and worked for far less money.
11. There was only one thing equal between the Americans and Caribbean labor force: The possibility that tropical _____ would claim their lives.
12. Drainage ditches were cleared of standing water where mosquitoes breed. Swamp grass was trimmed to allow fish to eat the insect eggs. Ponds and puddles were sprayed with oil to kill the newly hatched insects. Living quarters were fumigated and insect screens were attached to windows. By _____ of 1905, yellow-fever (malaria) had been eliminated in Panama.
13. The work did not come cheaply. Every mosquito killed cost the United States \$10. And the government prescribed regular rations of quinine to prevent the spread of malaria. The Americans were labeled “_____” employees and the black Caribbean workers were labeled “silver” employees.
14. When canal construction began in full-force, new dangers surfaced. The hardest work was removing in “the cut” where full mountains were carved to make a path 8 miles long, 300 feet wide, and 50 feet deep. The men worked in 120° temperatures to blast away sliding hillsides and dig _____ train-loads of earth every day.
15. Millions of tons of soil was used to create a huge earthen _____ 1 ½ miles long and a ½ mile thick at the base to hold back the water of the man-made lake.
16. Meanwhile, in “the cut” 61 million pounds of dynamite was used to move the earth. The explosive force was equal to all the _____ used in all the wars the United States had fought up until that time.
17. It was not uncommon for workers to be ground under the wheels of the speeding _____. They were caught unaware due to the deafening noise at the work sites.
18. President Teddy Roosevelt was pleased with the progress. The Americans were digging, in a single day what the French had taken _____ to accomplish.
19. Digging the waterway through the mountains was a monumental feat, but that was only part of the processes. The locks that would raise and lower ships were equally mammoth structures. Their jobs were to raise the world’s largest ships to the height of a _____ building.
20. Even though the lock doors weighed 700 tons (1,400,000 lbs), they were so perfectly balanced that it only required the power of a 40 horsepower motor to open and close them, the same power in most industrial _____.

21. The Panama Canal represents a perfect balance between technology and _____, dreams and determination.
22. On May 20th, 1913 the excavation of “the cut” was complete. The digging was done. _____ months later (September), workers placed a last piece of dynamite into a dike holding back the main river.
23. By the time the canal officially opened in 1914, ten years after the work had begun, the story of the Panama Canal was buried on the back pages of newspapers because, just days before, _____ had erupted into World War I.
24. The United States finally entered the war, and with the passage of the Pacific Fleet through the canal in 1919, Teddy Roosevelt’s dream of a two ocean navy became a reality. But Teddy did not live to see this. He died a few _____ earlier.
25. “Canal Brats” are _____ of Panama Canal workers who lived in the American Zone.
26. With the basic canal construction finished and most of the workers shipped back home, the American presence in Panama became a _____ one – a strong defense of the canal would become an important asset to the United States.
27. What had been learned about controlling malaria during the construction of the canal was now taught to American G.I.’s through educational _____.
28. In Panama, there was a forced segregation between the Americans and the Panamanian people. If you were not an American citizen living in the Canal Zone, you were expected to be out of the Canal Zone after dark in the evening, unless you had _____.

QUESTIONS:

How did the building of the Panama Canal change the human aspects of the region?

How did the building of the Panama Canal change the physical/landscape features of the region?