

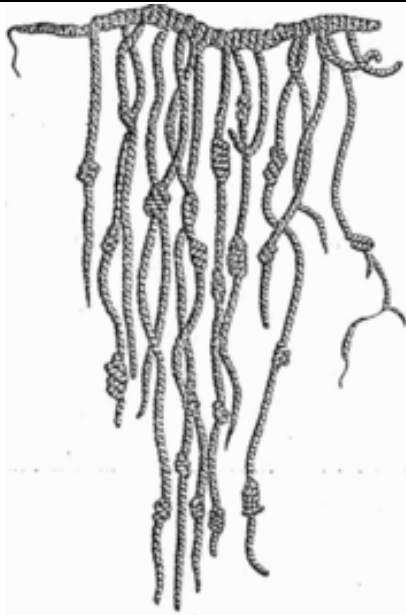
# Classroom Spice



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The Forgotten War	The First Lady of the World		
<p>Most Americans know very little about the Mexican-American War. Yes, some know there was a war in the 1840s, and that Mexico lost, but that is about it. Not much more information than dates and the U.S. being the winner is taught in American schools. The Marines, however, think of it every time they sing or hear the Marine Anthem. “From the Halls of Montezuma” actually refers to the Mexican-American War, as does the blood stripe down the sides of the Marine dress uniform. “Why,” you ask, “would this war mean so much to the Marines?” The Battle of Chapultepec in the Mexican-American War was one of the first major battles in which Marines saw action. And, while most Americans do not give the war much thought, Mexicans remember it with deep emotion and often resentment. They remember the Battle of Chapultepec with the same passion as the Texans remember the Alamo!</p> <p>Why was there a Mexican-American War anyway? While all previous American wars were fought for principle, this was for greed, specifically for more land. The Americans wanted a large part of Mexican Territory, and President Polk, under the philosophy of Manifest Destiny, felt that it was America’s right to claim the</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Continued on page 3)</i></p>	<p>Even though Eleanor Roosevelt was orphaned at age ten, and grew up to be extremely shy, various factors worked together to help her grow into her role as U.S. First Lady, and ultimately “First Lady of the World.” She lived with her grandmother after her parents died, until the age of fifteen when she was sent to a boarding school in London. Under the tutelage of Mademoiselle Souvestre, Eleanor gained self confidence and a sense of independence.</p> <p>When she was eighteen she returned to New York, and a few years later she married her distant cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Eleanor quickly took to social work, joined a number of activist organizations such as the Junior League, League of Women Voters, and the Women’s Trade Union League, and even taught immigrants at the Rivington Street Settlement House. Her attention was soon diverted to her family as over the next ten years she gave birth to five chil-</p>	<p>dren.</p> <p>The blossoming political career of FDR changed Eleanor’s life dramatically. As FDR served as assistant secretary of the Navy during World War I, Eleanor worked in the Red Cross Canteen at Union Station assisting service men and women and their families. Her exposure to the veterans led her to pressure the Interior Department to change its standards for hospitals. When FDR was stricken with polio it was Eleanor who worked to sustain his interest and effectiveness in politics. She quickly developed into a political activist interested in such issues as child labor laws and workmen’s compensation. Together with friends she formed Val-Kill Industries providing job opportunities for New York’s underemployed. Her activism soon moved into the print area and she became a writer for various journals, and eventually was a regular columnist. After FDR became president, Eleanor became the first First Lady to hold a conference, and made sure that it was only open to female reporters. Much to her husband’s initial chagrin,</p>	<p>she continued her activism: visiting the Bonus Army encampment; petitioning for more relief for the poor during the Great Depression through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration; advocating for a living wage, the right to organize, and safe working conditions; and working for adoption of anti-lynching legislation and abolishment of Jim Crow practices. She resigned from the Daughters of the American Revolution in protest when they prevented black singer Marian Anderson from performing in Constitution Hall and she then arranged for Marian to sing at the Lincoln Memorial for an audience of 75,000.</p> <p>The casualties of World War II, including those related to the Holocaust, haunted Eleanor. She felt immense responsibilities for the social woes of the world and carried the following prayer with her daily.: “Dear Lord, lest I continue in my complacent ways, help me to remember that somewhere someone died for me today</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Continued on page 4)</i></p>
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## What is a Quipu?

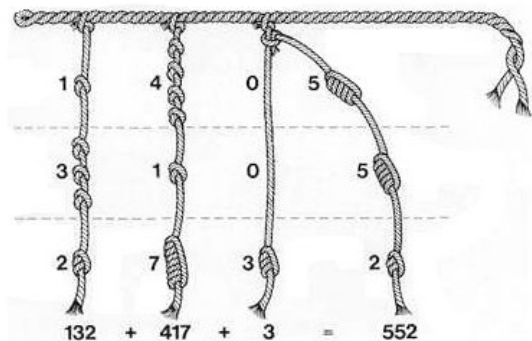
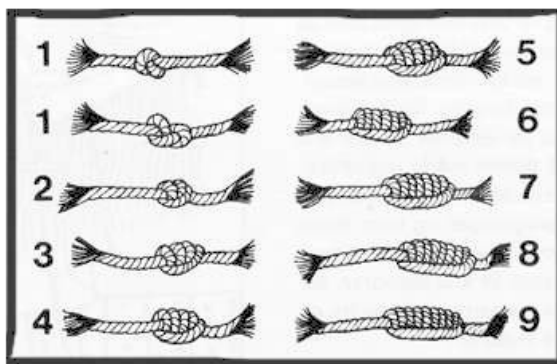


A quipu is a counting and record-keeping device commonly credited to the Incas. However, recently a quipu was found at Caral and is judged to be nearly five thousand years old. Caral is the one of the few civilizations in the world which apparently developed without a form of written communication and is a precursor to the Inca civilization. Quipus are the only known pre-Columbian system of transmitting information, and are still in use today in some regions of the Andean mountains of Peru.

A quipu was made of a base cord, with brightly colored wool or cotton strings and knots. The type of fiber, the colors, the size and length of the knots, whether the strings were twisted to the right or the left, the patterns, and the method of joining held the key to the encoded information. Those who were specially trained to read the quipu were called quipucamayocs, “keepers of the quipu.” When the Spanish arrived in 1532 and found the Incan quipus they were suspicious of their power and ability to communicate and thought they were from the devil, and thus attempted to destroy all quipus. Over the next fifty or more years they destroyed thousands, with only a few hundred surviving to today.

Scientists and historians have not completely deciphered how quipus worked. Aside from being reasonably sure that they were a counting method, some believe that they also may have represented maps, and/or been a memory device to help remember ancient legends. Two scientist have started using a computer to try and decipher the code, and appear to be making headway. In terms of counting, it is theorized that quipus used a positional decimal system: a knot in a row farthest from the main strand represented one, next farthest ten, etc. and the absence of knots on a cord implied zero.

The upper left photo is from Wikipedia. the following are very simple examples as show in *Glossary of Terminology of the Shamanic & Ceremonial Traditions of the Inca Medicine Lineage as Practiced in the United States*, editor Patt O’Neill. <http://www.incaglossary.org/appc.html>



(Forgotten War—cont'd from page 1)

land, by any method. He was given the opportunity after the U.S. annexation of Texas in 1845 and a dispute over where Texas ended and Mexico began. The U.S. claimed the border was the Rio Grande, while Mexico claimed it was the Nueces River. So when President Polk sent troops into the disputed area, Mexico retaliated. President Polk then told Congress that American blood had been shed on American soil and requested a declaration of war, which Congress supported.

U.S. troops were sent with the capture of Mexico City as their primary goal. The Battle of Chapultepec was designed to take the castle at Chapultepec and give Mexico a moral, as well as military defeat, since it was the Mexican military academy (similar to our West Point). Of the 200 cadets who were at the academy most were only 13-19 years of age. There were also 1,000 adult Mexican troops to defend the fortress but they were significantly outnumbered by the American troops. Most everyone in the Castle was killed or captured. In particular, six cadets refused to surrender and were killed, with one of them wrapping himself in the Mexican flag and throwing himself off a balcony to his death to keep the Americans from capturing the flag. The Mexicans call the six dead cadets "Niños Héroes," Hero Children, and feel very deeply about this battle.

The Mexicans acknowledged defeat and signed the Treaty of Guadalupe ceding the territory which today makes up New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, Texas, and part of Colorado to the U.S. for \$15,000,000.

While most Americans did not know that the war was based on a lie, many did eventually believe it was an unjust war. U.S. Grant, who fought in the war, wrote "I do not think there was ever a more wicked war than that waged by the United States on Mexico." In his first major national political speech a young Congressman, Abe Lincoln, came out in opposition to the war. Perhaps more people should remember this war, the good and the bad.

## The Literature Connection

A great easy read book *Lipman Pike: America's First Home Run King*, by Richard Michelson, ISBN 978-1-58536-465-7, is of course about the Jewish baseball player, Lipman Pike. See the story below, "America's First Home Run King," for more information on Lipman. The Teacher's guide that is available through Sleeping Bear press offers a wide range of language arts and social studies activities that go along with the story.

A fun, informative book elementary students will enjoy.

*A School Like Mine: A Unique Celebration of Schools Around the World* by Penny Smith and Zehavit Shalev (ISBN 978-0-7566-2913-7) does a wonderful job of exposing the reader to numerous children in North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australasia (Australia, New Zealand, and other south Pacific islands). The beautiful photographs and accompanying text show a glimpse of the children's home lives, cultures, and most specifically their school days. It helps the reader see the similarities and differences among schools



around the world. When studying world geography it would be a great reference book to see the life of children in specific countries. The introduction explains the School-in-a-Box project sponsored by UNICEF, which sends mini schools to places that are recovering from a disaster such as floods, earthquakes, or tsunamis. It may

inspire students to raise money for this or other service projects. Even part of the proceeds from the book itself go to the UNICEF project. It is most appropriate for middle school and up.

Award winning author Patricia Polacco has written a touching, insightful story based on historical facts of a run away slave family, the Crosswhite Family. *January's Sparrow* tells the story of a slave family which is about to be separated and sold. The parents choose to risk their lives, and that of their children, running to freedom to stay together. It follows their story over several years, so it is somewhat longer than many of her other books. The opening scene is somewhat

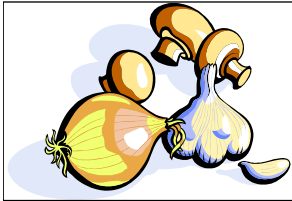
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## America's First Home Run King

Lipman "Lip" Pike was born in 1845 in New York City to Jewish parents of Dutch decent. Games with a ball and bat have existed for hundreds of years. However, it was Alexander Cartwright's codification of rules in 1845, called the Knickerbocker Rules, which evolved into the modern day rules for baseball and the formation of the National Association of Base Ball Players (designed for amateurs) in 1858 which helped to make baseball America's favorite pastime. Lip, who was a natural athlete, was one of those who loved the game and became baseball's first recognized professional player in 1866 earning a salary of twenty dollars a week. He was a left hander, and played virtually every position, but mostly out-

fielder. He was a player, player-manager, and manager. He was baseball's first homerun champion, hitting six homers in one game in 1866. In his 1872 season his league-leading six home runs may not seem that impressive until you realize that the whole National Association only had 35 homers that year, so Pike made up 17.1 percent of the Association's homers. Known also for his speed, Pike once raced a horse in a 100-yard sprint and won. Lip was also known as the first American Jew to gain national fame as a sports icon.





University of Science &  
Arts of Oklahoma  
Multicultural  
Resource Center  
1727 W. Alabama  
Chickasha, OK 73018

Phone (405) 574-1291  
[facmatherj@usao.edu](mailto:facmatherj@usao.edu)

Current and archived issues are  
available at our website:  
<http://usao.edu/classroom-spice>

### In This Issue...

First Lady of the World; Forgotten War; Quipu; Home Run King; Lit. Connection; Pyrotechnics

## Pyrotechnics in 1859?

Twenty-one year old Martha Coston began working on pyrotechnics in 1847. It was not until after seeing a fireworks show that she thought to incorporate some of that technology into her invention. So in 1859, she was able to patent a system of red, white, and green pyrotechnic signal flares. The U. S. Navy bought the rights for the night signal flares for \$20,000 and used them as ship-to-ship and ship-to land communication during the Civil War saving many lives.

*(Eleanor—Cont'd from page 1)*  
and help me to remember to ask am I worth dying for.”  
When FDR died during the War, Eleanor initially assumed she would slowly disappear from public life and once said “the story is over.” This, however, proved far from the truth. She found herself swamped with groups trying to convince her to run for office or serve on committees or boards, but in some way to continue her social service. She proceeded to write her column, do public speaking, and write books. She found herself appointed by President Truman to head the U.N.’s Human Rights Commission and to a vital part in drafting its Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1950, she hosted a TV and radio show feature such guests as Albert

Einstein and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. President Kennedy later reappointed her to the U.S. Delegation to the U. N as chair of the first Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and as a member of the National Advisory Committee of the Peace Corps.

Eleanor was the first activist First Lady and changed the role of first ladies for the future. She was a humanitarian, and civic leader who advocated for political and social change. She worked for the poor, women, minorities, immigrants, and those who were disadvantaged, not only in the U.S. but around the world. Her international work during World War II and later with the U.N. and the Peace Corps deservedly earned her the title “First Lady of the World.”

*(Lit. Connection—Cont'd from page 3)*  
graphic, and thus is definitely more suitable for middle school and older. It shows the strength and determination of the human spirit, the kindness of strangers, and the goodness of both black and white during this turbulent period, ISBN:978-0-399-25077-4.

On a completely different topic *Tight Times* by Barbara Shook Hazen is a book to which, unfortunately in today’s tough economic times, many children can relate. It is a about a family which is barely making it financially, and suddenly the father loses his job. It shows some of the everyday sacrifices that result, and the difficulty children have in grasping what is going on. This is written for lower elementary students, ISBN 978-0-14-050442-2.