Three Groups Clash in South Africa
(Chapter 27, section 1)

Africans vs. Dutch vs. British: conflicts over land and resources

Zulus
1816: Zulu chief Shaka creates large, centralized state; successors could not keep kingdom together when British invaded. In 1887, the British conquered the Zulu and tried to claim their land.

The Dutch
1652: The Dutch arrived at the Cape of Good Hope to establish a stopover port for their naval and merchant ships sailing between the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands.

Dutch Settlers became known as the Boers (which is a Dutch word for “farmer”) or Afrikaners. The Boers gradually took Africans’ land and established large farms.

In the early 1800s, the British took control of the Dutch Cape Colony and began to clash with the Boers over British policies of land and slaves. In the 1830s, the Boers began to move north to get away from the British. This is known as the “Great Trek.” The Boers began to clash with northern groups (the Zulus) when they began to take away African territory.

The Boer War: 1899 – 1902

Gold and Diamonds were discovered in southern Africa in the 1860s – 1880s. Many adventurers from all over the world rushed to South Africa. The Boers tried to keep these outsiders from gaining political rights. A rebellion against the Boers failed; the Boers blamed the British, and war broke out.

In some ways, the Boer War was the first modern “total” war: The Boers launched commando raids and used guerrilla tactics against the British and the British retaliated by burning Boer farms and imprisoning women and children in concentration camps. Many black South Africans were also imprisoned in concentration camps.

Britain won. In 1910, the Boer republics were unified into a self-governing Union of South Africa, controlled by the British.

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain during WWII, got his start as a war correspondent during the Boer War. He went on to serve in the government and the British Army during WWI.
In this case study we shall examine some of the literature that expressed nineteenth century attitudes toward colonialism. Kipling's romantic view of the white man as a "civilizing missionary" endeared him and his works to the British people. They enthusiastically received the following poem, The White Man's Burden. Though it was written to encourage the United States to follow a policy of colonialization, the poem is typical of Kipling's attitude toward British colonialism.

Take up the White Man's burden—
   Send forth the best ye breed—
   Go bind your sons to exile
   To serve your captives' need;

   To wait in heavy harness
   On fluttered folk and wild—
   Your new-caught, sullen peoples
   Half devil and half child.

   The blame of those ye better,
   The hate of those ye guard—
   The cry of hosts ye humour
   (Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
   "Why brought ye us from bondage,
   "Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden—
   Ye dare not stoop to less—
   Nor call too loud on Freedom
   To cloak your weariness;
   By all ye cry or whisper,
   By all ye leave or do,
   The silent, sullen peoples
   Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
   Have done with childish days—
   The lightly proffered laurel,
   The easy, ungrudged praise.
   Comes now, to search your manhood
   Through all the thankless years,
   Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,
   The judgment of your peers!

What does the phrase "White Man's Burden" mean as used by Kipling?
What specific benefits to the natives does Kipling identify?

Not all Americans shared Kipling's enthusiasm for colonizing, especially after American troops were engaged for three years to put down a revolt in the Philippine Islands after the Spanish-American War—a revolt of the natives against their American "protectors." A New York newspaper printed the following query to Kipling.

We've taken up the white man's burden
   Of ebony and brown;

Now will you kindly tell us, Rudyard,
   How we may put it down?