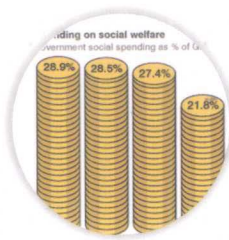


高校英语选修课教材



# AMERICAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

## 美国社会与文化

主编 王晓红

英美社会与文化丛书

世界图书出版公司

—— 高校英语选修课教材 ——

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西安 北京 广州 上海

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

美国社会与文化:英文/王晓红主编.—西安:世界图书出版西安公司,2010.3

ISBN 978-7-5100-1727-8

I. 美… II. 王… III. ①英语—阅读教学—高等学校—教材②美国—概况 IV. H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2010)第026889号

## 美国社会与文化

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责任编辑 陈康宁  
视觉设计 吉人设计

出版发行 世界图书出版西安公司

地 址 西安市北大街85号

邮 编 710003

电 话 029-87214941 87233647(市场营销部)  
029-87232980(总编室)

传 真 029-87279675

经 销 全国各地新华书店

印 刷 人民日报社西安印务中心

开 本 880×1230 1/16

印 张 26

字 数 600千字

版 次 2010年4月第1版 2010年4月第1次印刷

书 号 ISBN 978-7-5100-1727-8

定 价 39.80元

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# 前言

过去三十多年里,随着我国改革开放的日益深入和国际交流的不断扩大,人们不但对英语语言和文学的兴趣日渐浓厚,而且对英美文化的认识和研究也日益深入。越来越多的人认识到,如果不全面了解英美文化,就不可能真正掌握英语这门语言,也谈不上对英美文学的深入研究;在高校英语教学中,只注重语言知识和技能的远远不够,必须了解和研究英美文化知识。

基于这种认识,我们编写了这套“**英美社会与文化丛书**”。本丛书分为《**美国社会与文化**》和《**英国社会与文化**》两册,是一套关于美国和英国的社会与文化背景的教科书,旨在帮助高校英语专业学生和英语爱好者了解这两个国家的社会与文化概貌,开阔他们的视野,培养他们独立思考的精神和分析批判的能力,提高他们的英语水平和跨文化交际水平。

本丛书每册分别由十八章组成,内容涉及英国和美国社会与文化的各个层面,包括政治、经济、地理、教育、法律、宗教、文学、外交、价值观念、社会生活和文化传统等方面的基本知识。在每章课文后的注释中简要解释历史人物、重大事件、典故、语言难点和读者不易理解的词语。每章的开头有一至两篇汉语简介,起导读作用。每章后有若干思考题,还有一篇补充阅读材料,为读者提供更多的相关信息。此外,每章最后附有参考书目及相关网址,以方便读者学习和查阅。

本丛书具有以下几个特点:

**第一,内容全面。**本丛书概括地介绍了英美两国的社会和文化的各个方面,力争在有限的篇幅里比较全面地向读者展示比较真实的英国和美国,使读者在阅读过程中不仅扩大知识面和词汇量,而且在提高英语语言水平方面有所裨益,为他们日后进一步学习和研究英美文化打下良好的基础。

**第二,材料新颖。**本丛书注重历史与现实的结合,对一个专题既从历史的角度又从事物发展的角度进行介绍。例如,《美国社会与文化》一书中的第二单元简要介绍了 2008 年美国总统选举,第十一单元提到了 2008 年美国金融危机。

**第三,文字规范。**除了参考国内目前已出版的英美文化类书籍,丛书的许多内容从英美



原版图书、杂志中摘选,还有一部分资料网络。我们在选材时力求文字地道、规范、易懂,尽量做到知识性、权威性、趣味性、时效性并存。

本丛书是集体努力的成果。参加本丛书编写的成员有韩林烨、贺琳、李燕、马丽、孟利、仝楠、王博佳、王静、王晓红,均为西安外国语大学英文学院的英语教师。

本丛书既可用作高等学校英语专业英美文化的选修课教材,也可供具有同等英语水平的读者自学使用。

由于编者水平有限,丛书中难免存在许多不足,恳请同行及读者不吝指正。

编 者

2010 年 3 月

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## Chapter 1

## Basic Facts about U.S.A. — Its Land and People

## 导 读

## Introduction



美国的全称为美利坚合众国(the United States of America),总面积 930 万平方公里,从大西洋到太平洋,几乎横跨整个北美洲大陆,面积仅次于俄罗斯、加拿大和中国,居世界第四位。美国的人口约 2.5 亿,美国的官方语言为英语,货币为美元,国花是玫瑰,国鸟为白头雕(兀鹰),国歌为“星条旗之歌”(The Star Spangled Banner)。美国的首都是位于东海岸的华盛顿哥伦比亚特区(Washington DC)。美国是当今世界高度发达的国家,生产规模巨大,经济结构完整,国民生产总值长期居世界第一位。

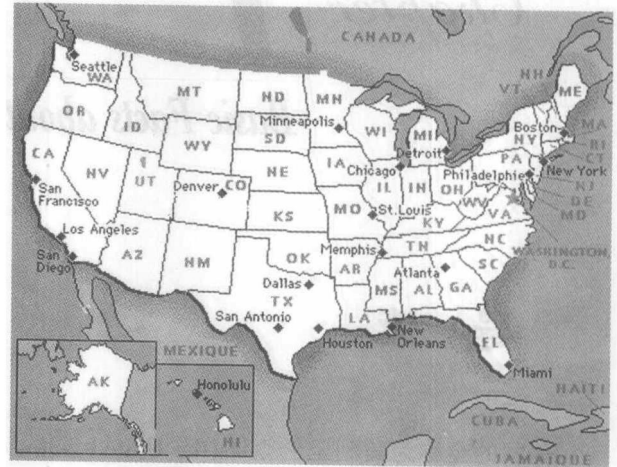
在短短的两三百年历史中,美国从一个殖民地一跃成为全世界瞩目的国家:经济发达、技术先进、国力强盛、民族富庶。当今的美国能在许多方面处于世界领先地位,决非偶然。其发展与兴盛有许多原因,其中包括自然资源的丰富,大批移民的涌入以及他们带来的开拓精神。

美国本土位于北美洲南部,东临大西洋,西濒太平洋,北接加拿大,南靠墨西哥及墨西哥湾。全境由东向西可分为三个地理区:大西洋沿岸平原及阿巴拉契亚山脉区;密西西比河盆地;太平洋沿岸及洛基山脉区。美国河流湖泊众多,水系复杂,主要有密西西比河、康乃迪克河和哈得森河。美国的气候大部分地区属温带和亚热带气候,仅佛罗里达半岛南端属热带。美国的农业、矿产和森林资源丰富,在世界上占有举足轻重的地位。农业用地(耕地和牧地)约为 4.3 亿公顷,占地球全部农业用地的 10% 左右。雨量充沛,土壤肥沃,粮食产量占世界总产量的 1/5,主要农畜产品如小麦、玉米、大豆、棉花、肉类等产量均居世界第一位。

## I . Postion and Geographic Division

The United States consists of 50 states, two of which are separated from the continental United States. Alaska (1.5 million skm), which faces Russia across the 80 kilometers-wide Bering Strait, is separated from mainland American by Canada while Hawaii (17000skm) lies about 3200 kilometers away to the west and in the Pacific Ocean. Besides the 50 states, the United States also includes a number of overseas territories. The main ones are Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. America's position on the globe and its relative position in relation to other countries both provide advantage for the country in its development. Main land America, lying within the northern temperate zone, grows large variety of agricultural products. The long coastline with many harbors and inlets not only facilitates foreign trade

and the fishing industry, but also bring much of the country within the influence of the oceanic air mass. America has no land neighbor which is strong enough to pose a threat to its security. This relieves the United States of the burden to maintain a large frontier army along its border. The two world wars played havoc with many nations. But they never spread into mainland America. As a matter of fact, Canada has been America's most important trading partner and the trade between America and Mexico is also climbing. The three nations have reached an agreement on establishing the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). There are still some technical problems remaining to be solved. But the door is open for wider cooperation based on mutual benefit.



So far as the geographical features are concerned, the large territory of the continental United States can be divided into three basic areas; the Atlantic Seacoast west to the Appalachian Mountains; the great Mississippi River Basin between the Appalachian and the Rocky Mountains; the Rockies west to the Pacific Ocean.

### **The Atlantic Seacoast West to the Appalachians**

Along the Atlantic Seacoast is a narrow plain which begins far up the coast and becomes wider as it goes south. In the Northeast, the land extending to the Atlantic coastline is hilly, rocky and mostly infertile. Much of it is covered by heavy forests. The coastline, however, is broken by many excellent harbors which were once important centers of commerce and trade in the early days of the country. The Middle Atlantic Seacoast, the most densely populated region in the U.S., is a flat and fertile region. Despite the fact that some of the largest cities in the world are situated here, there are miles and miles beautiful, open country all through this section. Many heavily wooded mountains and deep valley cut by wide and beautiful rivers can be found. Three important rivers, the Hudson, the Delaware and the Susquehanna, flow through this part of the country. In the deep south, the coast plain is very low and wide. The soil of this region varies greatly. Some parts along the coast are almost pure sand. Other sections contain some of the richest soil in the whole country. However, the weather, the land and the rivers that run through the south have made it, for most of its history, a great agricultural region.

The coastal plain appears to be fenced in by the Appalachian Mountains that begin in Canada and reach all the way to Georgia and Alabama. These are old mountains with rounded tops and wooded hills, usually not exceeding 800 meters in height. Most of the mountain ridges are low enough to be easily crossed by modern roads. In parts of the Appalachians the land is not good for farming. But the Appalachians have much beautiful scenery, and there are many tourist resorts.

### **The Great Mississippi River Basin**

America enjoys abundant water resources, Today the rivers and streams of America furnish 63 % of the water supply for cities, towns and farmlands, 93% of the water used by industry, and almost all of the water used to create electric power. Unlike some other countries, America as a whole has little trouble as caused by the shortage of fresh water.

The Mississippi River Basin between the Appalachians and the Rockies is one of the largest areas of

flatland in the world, which takes up about half of the continental United States, and covers a distance of some 2, 000 kilometers in width.

The northeastern part of this region is called the Middle West. It lies in the general area of the Great Lakes. From east to west, the states in the Middle West are Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota. This region has great mineral resources, rich soil, a good climate for agriculture, fertile plains, low rolling hills, and no high mountains. It is one of the richest sections of the U.S.

The large area to the west of the Mississippi valley is called the Great Plains. It covers, from north to south, these five states: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. This area appears to be very flat, which rises gradually toward the west. Except for a few widely separated sections, there are no trees or forests in this whole region. The soil here is generally fertile. Wheat and corn are important crops in the plains states. But in the west sections, cattle raising is more important.

### The Rockies West to the Pacific Ocean

To the west of the great Plain lie the Rocky Mountains, “the backbone of the continent”. These majestic mountains stretch on the way from Mexico to the Arctic and form what is known as Continental Divide, or Great Divide, the most important watershed on the continent. The Rockies are more than twice as high as the Appalachians and high enough to receive more precipitation than the surrounding plains and plateaus. Consequently, they are mostly forested. The striking and varied scenery of the Rockies has given rise to the establishment of many national parks here. The most famous one is the Yellowstone National Park which covers an area of about 9, 000 square kilometers. It is in the northwest corner of Wyoming, but also takes up part of Montana and Idaho. Yellowstone has about 3, 000 geysers and hot springs. It also has mud volcanoes, fossil forests, and volcanic glass.

Between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Rocky Mountains there is a large area of high land called the Great Basin. Nearly all Nevada and large portions of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and California are included. This wide area receives little rainfall and much of it is desert. Death Valley is on the western edge of this region. The valley, 200 kilometers long and 86 meters below the sea level, is the lowest and hottest place in America.

Along the Pacific coast, from Washington to southern California, extend the Coast Ranges. One hundred miles farther east and parallel to them lie the Cascade and Sierra Nevada ranges. Between the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Ranges lies the valley of California, also called Central Valley, which is a highly productive lowland extending more than 800 kilometers from northwest to southeast. Since it consists chiefly of alluvium and easily irrigated, it produces enormous amounts of fruits and vegetables. It is important, too, for such basic field crops as sugar beets, beans, rice, and cotton.

### Climate and Weather

The United States is mainly situated in the northern temperate zone. But, owing to its large size and varied landforms, it has different types of climate in different areas.

The climate of New England is relatively cold. The winters are long and hard. In many parts of Maine, there is snow on the ground from early November to late May. The summers are short and warm. The fall, however, is a beautiful time of year. In the fall, the leaves of trees turn different colors, giving the hills and woods a bright look. This change of color is a memorable sight, and many people visit New England at this time of year just to ride through the woods and enjoy their beauty.

The climate of the Middle Atlantic States region is generally pleasant. There are four definite seasons. The winters are cold and snowy, and the springs are warm, with plenty of rain to help the growth of



crops. Summers are short and hot but pleasant, while the falls are cool.

The South enjoys a warm climate and abundant rainfall. Many of its states lie within the band that stretches across the entire southern third of the nation known as the Sun Belt. The climate, however, varies with the geographical position of each state. Virginia and North Carolina have a temperate climate like that of Maryland. In southern Florida, on the other hand, the climate is almost tropical. Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana all have warm climates with almost no cold or winter weather. Some states in this region are sometimes harassed by the disaster of hurricanes.

Since the Great Plains stretch from the Canadian border to Texas, the climate in this region varies widely. North Dakota has extreme temperatures, strong winds, and low precipitation. Oklahoma, on the other hand, has a more temperate climate. The open treeless, unbroken land offers little protection against storms or against the rapid changes of weather that occur in this area. In winter, snow piles up to 6 meters high in some places. In summer, in these same places, both plants and animals may die from the extreme heat. In many parts of the plains states there is little rain. Water in such areas becomes more important than land. For thousands of farmers, a few inches more or a few inches less of rain during the growing season may make the difference between success and failure. Extended periods of very hot weather during a summer without rain may not only destroy crops but also turn the land into dust. This dust often turns into the infamous dust storms of this area, destroying farms and farm buildings and leaving the land bare of all fertile soil.

The climate of the Midwest is temperate. The region lies in a great valley between the Allegheny Mountains to the east and the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains to the west. This is a largely open country, and the wind blows freely, often bringing sudden and extreme changes in temperature. Midwest summers are sometimes very hot; winters are sometimes extremely cold.

The states west of the Rocky Mountains have sharply different climatic conditions. This is largely because of the effects of the mountain ranges and the Pacific Ocean. Winds from the Pacific bring plenty of rain, yet these winds are conditioned by the mountains along the coast. Generally speaking, the western slopes of the Coastal Mountains are cool, rainy, and cloudy. The part of Washington near the Pacific Ocean has the highest rainfall in the country. But after crossing these mountains, very little rain falls and deserts appear.

## Land Resources

The United States is rich in most of the metals and minerals needed to supply its basic industries. The nation produces more than 80 million tons of iron a year for its steel mills. Steel is vital to the manufacture of some 200, 000 other products. Three-quarters of the ore comes from the Lake Superior region of the Great Lakes. Although much of the high-grade ore has been used, there remains enough low-grade ore to last for centuries. Industry already has developed practical methods for getting iron from taconite a hard; ore-bearing rock found in virtually unlimited quantities in the Lake Superior region.

Coal is the second major natural resource found in large quantities in the United States. There are sufficient reserves to last hundreds of years. Most of the coal is used by steam plants to produce electricity, with about half of the nation's electric power coming from such plants. Much coal also is used in chemical industries for the manufacture of plastics, and other synthetics. Coal deposits are widely distributed in the country. Most of coal reserves are to be found in the Appalachians, the Central Plain, and the Rockies.

America has a large deposit of iron ore. The nation produces more than 80 million tons of iron a year. For many years, iron ore came primarily from the great Lake region of Minnesota and Michigan, but the mines were severely depleted during the two World Wars. The richer ores are exhausted, though

large amounts of lower-grade materials remain and form the basis of a thriving industry. Iron ores are also mined in Missouri, New York, Utah and Wyoming. Other basic metals and minerals mined on a large scale in America include zinc, copper, silver, and phosphate rock which is used for fertilizers.

America, very rich in oil, was once the largest oil producing country in the world. Oil wells in the United States produce more than 3, 200 million barrels of petroleum a year. The production, processing and marketing of such petroleum products as gasoline and oil make up one of America's largest industries. Most domestic production of oil and natural gas comes from offshore areas of Louisiana and Texas, and from onshore areas of Texas, Oklahoma, and California. Although the oil production in the U.S. is very large, her big consumption has made America insufficient in oil supply. The shortage of domestic supplies of energy was forcefully publicized by the Arab oil embargo of 1973-1974. Until this embargo most Americans did not realize that the United States does not have enough energy to meet its evergrowing needs.

Oil wells in the United States produce more than 3, 200 million barrels of petroleum a year. The production, processing and marketing of such petroleum products as gasoline and oil make up one of America's largest industries. The Alaska pipeline, completed in 1977, stretches for 1, 290 kilometers and pipes 1. 2 million barrels of petroleum a day from the northern oil fields to a port on the south coast.

America has also plenty of fertile soil. Farmlands in the United States make up about 12% of the arable lands in the world, and they are among the richest and most productive. Of the 2. 3 billion acres of land in the 50 states an estimated 300 million acres are planted annually. The country's very large acreage of highly productive farmlands could be expected to continue to supply the nation generously, with substantial surplus for export.

Natural and manufactured gas supplies more than 33 percent of the nation's power. Natural gas is carried by huge pipelines thousands of kilometers from oil and gas fields to cities and towns to heat homes and buildings and to operate industrial plants.

### Rivers and Lakes

The United States is comparatively rich in water resources. As befits a nation of continental proportions, the United States has an extraordinary network of rivers and lakes, including some of the largest and most useful in the world. In the humid East they provide an enormous mileage of cheap inland transportation; westward, most rivers and streams are unnavigable but are heavily used for irrigation and power generation. Both East and West, however, traditionally have used lakes and streams as public sewers, and despite efforts to clean them up, most large waterways are laden with vast, poisonous volumes of industrial, agricultural, and human wastes.

Chief among U.S. rivers is the Mississippi, which, with its great tributaries, the Ohio and the Missouri, drains most of the mid-continent. The Mississippi is navigable to Minneapolis nearly 1, 200 miles by air from the Gulf of Mexico; and along with the Great Lakes — St. Lawrence system it forms the world's greatest network of inland waterways. The Mississippi's eastern branches, chiefly the Ohio and the Tennessee, are also navigable for great distances. From the west, however, many of its numerous Great Plains



tributaries are too seasonal and choked with sandbars to be used for shipping. The Missouri, for example, though longer than the Mississippi itself, was essentially without navigation until the mid-20th century, when a combination of dams, locks, and dredging opened the river to barge traffic.

The Mississippi River is the most important and longest river in the country. It flows about 6,400 kilometers from its northwestern source in the Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico. It drains all the central area of the USA and has a wide delta, and many tributaries. Before America completed her railway system, the Mississippi had been the most important artery of transportation in the country. On the river there is a famous town of Hannibal where the noted American writer Mark Twain was raised. His most popular and important writings are concerned with this area. His book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* tells the story of how the boy Huckleberry Finn and his black friend Jim, a runaway slave, sailed down the Mississippi on a raft.

The Missouri River, 3,725 kilometers long, is the main tributary of the Mississippi. It rises in southwest Montana and joins the Mississippi at St. Louis. Over its course it typically is a broad, silt-laden river, giving rise to its nickname "Big Muddy". The vast drainage basin of the Missouri and its tributaries covers an area of about 1,372,000 square kilometers. Many dams were built on the river for flood control, hydroelectric power, and irrigation.

The Ohio River, 1,500 kilometers long, is the major eastern tributary of the Mississippi. It runs from the rainy east and joins the Mississippi at Cairo, Illinois. It reaches the Great Lakes area, the most important region in America. Its drainage basin, including all tributaries, is about 327,000 square kilometers.

The Great Lakes — St. Lawrence system, the other half of the mid-continent inland waterway, is connected to the Mississippi-Ohio via Chicago by canals and the Illinois River. The five Great Lakes (four of which are shared with Canada) constitute by far the largest freshwater lake group in the world and carry a larger tonnage of shipping than any other. The three main barriers to navigation — the St. Marys Rapids, at Sault Sainte Marie; Niagara Falls; and the rapids of the St. Lawrence — are all bypassed by locks, whose 27-foot draft lets ocean vessels penetrate 1,300 miles into the continent, as far as Duluth, Minnesota, and Chicago.

The third group of Eastern rivers drains the coastal strip along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Except for the Rio Grande, which rises west of the Rockies and flows about 1,900 circuitous miles to the Gulf, few of these coastal rivers measure more than 300 miles, and most flow in an almost straight line to the sea. Except in glaciated New England and in arid southwestern Texas, most of the larger coastal streams are navigable for some distance.

## **Natural Resources**

### **Water**

The availability of water has been an important factor in America's growth. The nation is blessed with large supplies of fresh water except in the desert regions of the West. Such mighty rivers as the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Hudson and the Colorado irrigate the croplands of hundreds of miles of fertile valleys. The early development of a prosperous agricultural system and the later development of an industrial base were made possible largely by vast water resources.

Today the rivers and streams of America furnish 63 percent of the water supply for cities, towns and farmlands, 93 percent of the water used by industry, and almost all of the water used to create electric power. In the earliest days, the rivers were the most important means of transportation, for people and commercial goods, and they are still major carriers of freight. Nowadays, as increasing water consumption threatens the reserve supplies, the United States Department of the Interior has been actively developing

practical ways to convert ocean water into fresh water.

### **Forests**

About a third of the land area of the United States is covered by forests, and more than 600 million acres (240 million hectares) is commercial forest land. Properly managed forests prevent flooding and soil erosion, and stabilize climatic conditions. Wood, resins and other forest products are the basic raw materials of several of the nation's largest industries.

Despite the heavy use of forest products, the nation now grows more timber than it cuts. Federal and state governments and industries have joined in a major tree-planting program.

About 225 million acres (91 million hectares) of U.S. forest land is reserved by law as "National Forest" for the use of all the people. These 155 protected forests provide Americans with large recreation areas and they also serve as essential watersheds and safe habitats for wildlife. In the West more than 3,600,000 cattle, horses, swine, sheep and goats graze on the open lands of the National Forests, which are rented as pastureland in order to control excessive plant growth.

### **Territories and Other Areas**

Puerto Rico, an island of about 9,000 square kilometers in the Caribbean Sea, is linked to the United States as a commonwealth. Its 2,712,000 people are citizens of the United States. They elect their own governor and legislature. Puerto Rico's economic growth program in the past 20 years has brought the island prosperity and has drawn many visitors and students from developing countries. Nearly a thousand new factories have been built and are providing major jobs for Puerto Rican workers.

The Panama Canal Zone, a strip of land in Panama extending eight kilometers on both sides of the Canal, was under American control from 1904 to 1978 under the terms of treaties between the two nations. On September 7, 1978, leaders of both countries signed a new treaty which placed 65 percent of the territory under Panamanian control immediately and remaining land by the year 2000. The continuing responsibility of the United States for defense and operation of the Canal will also be transferred to Panama by that date. Panama agreed to guarantee the neutrality of the Canal indefinitely, and the United States promised to continue payment to Panama for services and operating rights until 2000.

A number of Pacific islands also are under American control. The largest is Guam, which covers 549 square kilometers and has a population of about 85,000. Its Congress is elected by the people of Guam. The government is under the administration of the United States Department of the Interior, as is the government of American Samoa (197 square kilometers, population 27,000). Wake Island is administered by the U.S. Air Force, and the Navy Department has jurisdiction over the Midway Islands. The United Nations has given the United States responsibility for the island groups of the Carolines, Marianas, and Marshalls, in the Pacific.

## **II. American People — The "Melting Pot"**

The United States has long been known as a "melting pot," because many of its people are descended from settlers who came from all over the world to make their homes in the new land, which was sparsely populated by native Indian tribes. The first immigrants in American history came from England and the Netherlands. Attracted by reports of great economic opportunities and religious and political freedom, immigrants from many other countries flocked to the United States in increasing numbers, reaching a peak in the years 1880 — 1914. Between 1820 and 1973, the United States admitted more than 46 million immigrants. The greatest numbers came from Europe, but many came also from

Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Canada.

Some 825, 000 American Indians, descendants of North America's first inhabitants, now reside in the United States. Most live in the West, but many are in the south and north central areas. Of the more than 300 separate tribes, the largest is the Navaho in the Southwest.

Black people were first brought to America from Africa as slaves (in 1863 President Abraham Lincoln freed all who remained enslaved). Their descendants now make up more than 12 percent of the population. They once lived mainly in the agricultural South but now are scattered throughout the nation. In the midwestern city of Chicago, for example, there are more than one million black residents — more than three times as many as in 1940. New York State has the largest black population — 2, 169, 000, an increase of more than three-quarters of a million in 10 years.

In Hawaii, more than a third of the residents are of Japanese descent, a third are Caucasians, about 15 percent are of Polynesian background, and the others are mainly of Filipino, Korean, and Chinese descent.

Every 10 years the United States makes a complete count, or census, of its people and industries. When the first count was made in 1790 the new nation had fewer than 4 million people, almost all living along the East Coast. Today, there are more than 220 million. In the past 20 years many people have moved to the western and southern parts of the country. The State of California on the Pacific Coast now has the largest population and the Atlantic Coast State of New York is second. Another western state, Colorado, is growing almost twice as fast as the nation as a whole. Some other western states have had spectacular population booms: Arizona has more than doubled its population since 1950 while Nevada has tripled its population in the same period. The southern State of Florida, known for its pleasant climate, has almost twice the number of residents it had in 1950.

The United States now has more than 77 million young people (between the ages of 5 and 24) — 61 percent more than in 1950. And there are 20 million persons over the age of 65, two-thirds more than in 1950.

The American people are always on the move — from one part of the country to another, from one city to another, from farm to city, from the city to the suburbs. One in five Americans moves to a new home every year seeking new job opportunities, a better climate, or for other reasons. Many industries have scattered their factories, often far from the parent plant, and many of their workers have decided to try the new locations.

Today three out of four Americans live in towns, cities or suburbs; about 54 million live in rural areas. Two-thirds of all families live in separate households, and 64. 2 percent own their own homes. The number of households has increased from 43 million in 1950 to about 65 million. This is due in part to medical discoveries which have greatly reduced infant mortality and extended life expectancy.

The 1970 population count revealed that there were 156 cities of 100, 000 or more people; 20 years earlier there had been 107. Some cities have grown enormously — the population of Anaheim, California, rose from 15, 000 to 167, 000 in 20 years, and St. Petersburg, Florida, increased from 97, 000 to 216, 000. Some of the large cities, such as Chicago, Illinois, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Detroit, Michigan, have lost population, to their suburbs (the surrounding areas just outside the cities) where there is more room for gardens and places for children to play. Shopping centers, schools, churches, theaters and community centers have been built in great numbers to serve the increasing numbers of people living in the suburbs.

New York City is America's largest city. Its population, as reported in 1970, was 7, 895, 000. At the same time, the population of its suburbs was nearly 5 million more. The city's 1, 040 kilometers of waterfront gives it the largest harbor in the world. It is visited by nearly 17, 000 ships annually. Some



500, 000 ship passengers and another 40 million air travelers pass through New York yearly.

Chicago is the second largest city, With 3, 367, 000 inhabitants. Los Angeles, California, is third with a population of 2, 816, 000. Philadelphia, fourth largest, has about 2 million people. Philadelphia is important in American history, because the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were born there.

The nation's capital, Washington, is ninth in population with about 800, 000 residents. Specially planned and built as a national capital, Washington was laid out by French architect Pierre L' Enfant late in the 18th century. A city of great beauty and a center of world affairs, it is also becoming a leading cultural center.

In a gathering of friends in the United States, in a meeting of a business or educational organization, or at a public meeting, the family names of the people present might reveal something about the diversity of national backgrounds that they represent: The mixture of national backgrounds would differ somewhat in different parts of the country. Many Scandinavians live in Minnesota, and there are many Irish in Boston, Massachusetts. New York City is the traditional "melting pot". The South is heavily British and these people have been in America for many generations. Many Spanish and Mexicans are found in the Southwest. Yet a mixture of nationalities is characteristic of the fabric of American society. Mills, O'Fallon, Tognozini, Zimmerman, Hoshida, Havlika, Zimanski, Gruber, or Ten Brink — all are American names, and the country is a blend of all the cultural strains these names represent. Americans are fully conscious of their differences in ancestry. This feeling of identity with the cultural background of one's ancestors along with a pride in being an American has long been a characteristic of the American people. American culture is the product of many different cultures blended together to form something new.

This new culture is not just a modification of the culture of one European country or a mixture of several. The English came first and for many years were predominant. British institutions have influenced the formation of American ones. But this original British character has been modified first by life in a new land and then by the coming of people from other countries. Though in 1790, when the first census was taken, 69 percent of the population was of British origin, even then the American people were no longer British. Something had happened to them in the new land.

Since 1790 the British predominance in national background has been greatly modified. The most common American family names such as Jones, Brown, Smith, and Johnson are English. However, for a majority of Americans England is no longer "our old home" as it was for the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne a century ago. The great immigration from other countries began in the early nineteenth century. Before 1860 the people came largely from northern and western Europe or Canada. The potato famine in Ireland brought one-fifth of the population of Ireland (1, 500, 000 people) to the United States between 1840 and 1855. In the 1850s the Germans were the chief immigrants. In the latter part of the nineteenth century new streams from other areas came in. In 1870, 123, 000 Chinese entered the United States, largely to work as laborers on the west coast. Between 1880 and 1910 most of the migration came from Southern and eastern Europe. During this period the United States received 3, 000, 000 Italians, 2, 000, 000 Russians, and 1, 500, 000 Jews, 71 percent of whom came from Russia. The mingling of all these people in a new country has produced a new culture, some aspects of which we shall discuss in the paragraphs that follow.

The time at which these various groups came has influenced the extent to which they have mixed into American society. Many of the more recently immigrating groups have found employment as factory workers in large cities, and people from a given country tend to find housing in the same area. San Francisco has its Chinatown complete with its own telephone exchange and daily newspaper. The Polish

and Italian sections of Chicago are second only to Warsaw and Milan in the number of inhabitants from those countries. Los Angeles has a Mexican population second only to Mexico City. New York has a larger Jewish population than any other city in the world. More than half of all New Yorkers are either foreign-born or of foreign-born parents. In that city there are sections called "Little Italy, " "Little Poland, " and "Little Russia. " It is therefore no surprise that in New York city newspapers are published in two hundred languages besides English. Wherever such national groups are gathered, it is only natural that they remain a group apart. They speak their native language among themselves and preserve their old customs. Thus older groups in the United States tend to regard these recent immigrants as foreigners, a tendency disappearing as the groups become assimilated. Since recent immigrants came largely from southern Europe or countries such as Greece, Italy, or the Slavic countries, it is the Italians and Greeks or Hungarians and Slavic people who are commonly so termed. The older groups are often made up of people originally as poor as or poorer than the newcomers; but because they have been in America longer, they have been able to develop the resources of the area and rise to positions of dominance in the community.

In spite of this tendency, however, America is not deeply divided socially according to national background or the length of time one's ancestors have lived in this country. This is particularly true after the first generation. Immigrants gradually become assimilated. Differences of national background have become more a matter of pride than of social distinction and do not hold groups apart from the community.

Regional rather than national differences often characterize the people of certain areas and add another element of diversity to the population of America. The works of American poets, authors, musicians, and artists often reflect their ancestral background or portray typical features of the region where they live. Exaggeration of regional differences forms the basis of much American humor. The New Englanders who have lived for generations on rocky soil have had to labor hard to gain a living from their farms. They have a reputation, not wholly correct, for being silent and stern and careful with their money. Texas is so big that Texans think of everything connected with the state as being equally large: all ranches are as big as counties and every man is at least 8 feet tall and lights his cigar with a thousand-dollar bill. It is true that Texas is favored in natural resources, but neither the state nor the people are quite as big as the natives would have you think.

In certain isolated mountain regions, particularly in the East, there are people whose poor farms and lack of contact with the outside world have bred poverty and provincialism. The people are called "mountaineers, " and the popular conception is that they never wear shoes, are always fighting with the neighbors, and will shoot a stranger on sight. There are elements of truth and of exaggeration in this picture also.

With all of these groups making up the American people, it may seem surprising that American society is as uniform as it is. American culture has typical features, and perhaps one of the most characteristic is the blending of all the diverse strains to produce distinctive American customs and ideals.

From its very beginnings America has been a magnet to the people of the earth. They have been drawn to its shores from anywhere and everywhere, from near and far, from hot places and cold places, from mountain and plain, from desert and fertile field. This magnet, three thousand miles wide and fifteen hundred miles long, has attracted every type and variety of human being alive. White people, black people, yellow people, brown people; Catholics, Protestants, Quakers; Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians, . . . Jews; Spaniards, Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, Bohemians, Italians, Austrians, Slavs, Poles, Rumanians, Russians — and the list is only just begun;

farmers, miners, adventurers, soldiers, sailors, rich men, poor men, beggarmen, thieves, shoemakers, tailors, actors, musicians, ministers, engineers, writers, singers, ditchdiggers, manufacturers, butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers.

First came the Norsemen; then an Italian sailing in behalf of Spain; then another Italian sailing in behalf of England; then Spaniards, Portuguese, English, French; then an Englishman sailing for Holland. All of them discovered parts of America, explored a bit, then raised their country's flag and claimed the land. They returned home and told stories (some of them true) of what they had seen. People listened and believed and came. Millions came within three hundred years, sometimes at the rate of a million a year.

This unique immigration of peoples was not accomplished without difficulties and dangers. To cross the ocean in modern steamships over nine hundred and seventy-five feet long weighing over eighty thousand tons, is one thing. But to cross the Atlantic in a sailboat perhaps ninety feet long and twenty-six feet wide, with a tonnage of only three hundred was quite another thing. For over two hundred years the earlier immigrants poured into the United States in just such boats as these. Remember, too, that in those days there were no refrigerators — fish and meat had to be salted to be preserved, and very often the crossing took so long a time that all the food rotted.

Here is a portion of a letter written by Johannes Gohr and some friends, describing their trip from Rotterdam to America in February, 1732. "We were 24 weeks coming from Rotterdam to Martha's Vineyard. There were at first more than 150 persons — more than 100 perished. "

"To keep from starving, we had to eat rats and mice. We paid from 8 pence to 2 shillings for a mouse, 4 pence for a quart of water. "

Gottlieb Mittelberger came to this country in 1750. Here is part of his story:

"That most of the people get sick is not surprising, because in addition to all other trials and hardships, warm food is served only 3 times a week, the rations being very poor and very small. These meals can hardly be eaten on account of being so unclean. The water which is served out on the ships is often very black, thick and full of worms, so that one cannot drink it without loathing, even with the greatest thirst. Great hunger and thirst force us to eat and drink everything, but many do so at the risk of their lives. . .

"When the ships have landed at Philadelphia after their long voyage no one is permitted to leave them except those who pay for their passage or can give good security; the others who cannot must remain on board the ships till they are purchased, and are released from the ships by the purchasers. The sick always fare the worst, for the healthy are naturally preferred and purchased first, and so the sick and wretched must often remain on board in front of the city for 2 and 3 weeks, and frequently die. . .

"The sale of human beings in the market on board the ship is carried on thus: everyday Englishmen, Dutchmen, and high German people come from the city of Philadelphia and other places, some from great distance, say 60, 90 and 120 miles away, and go on board the newly arrived ship that has brought and offers for sale passengers from Europe, and select among the healthy persons such as they deem suitable for their business, and bargain with them how long they will serve for their passage money, for which most of them are still in debt. When they have come to an agreement, it happens that adult persons bind themselves in writing to serve 3, 4, 5 or 6 years, for the amount due by them varies according to their age and strength. But very young people, from 10 to 15 years must serve until they are 21 years old. "

The last part of this letter is particularly valuable, because it introduces us to a system then very common. Many of the people who wanted to come to America didn't have the money to pay for their passage. They therefore agreed to sell themselves as servants for a period of years to whoever would pay