

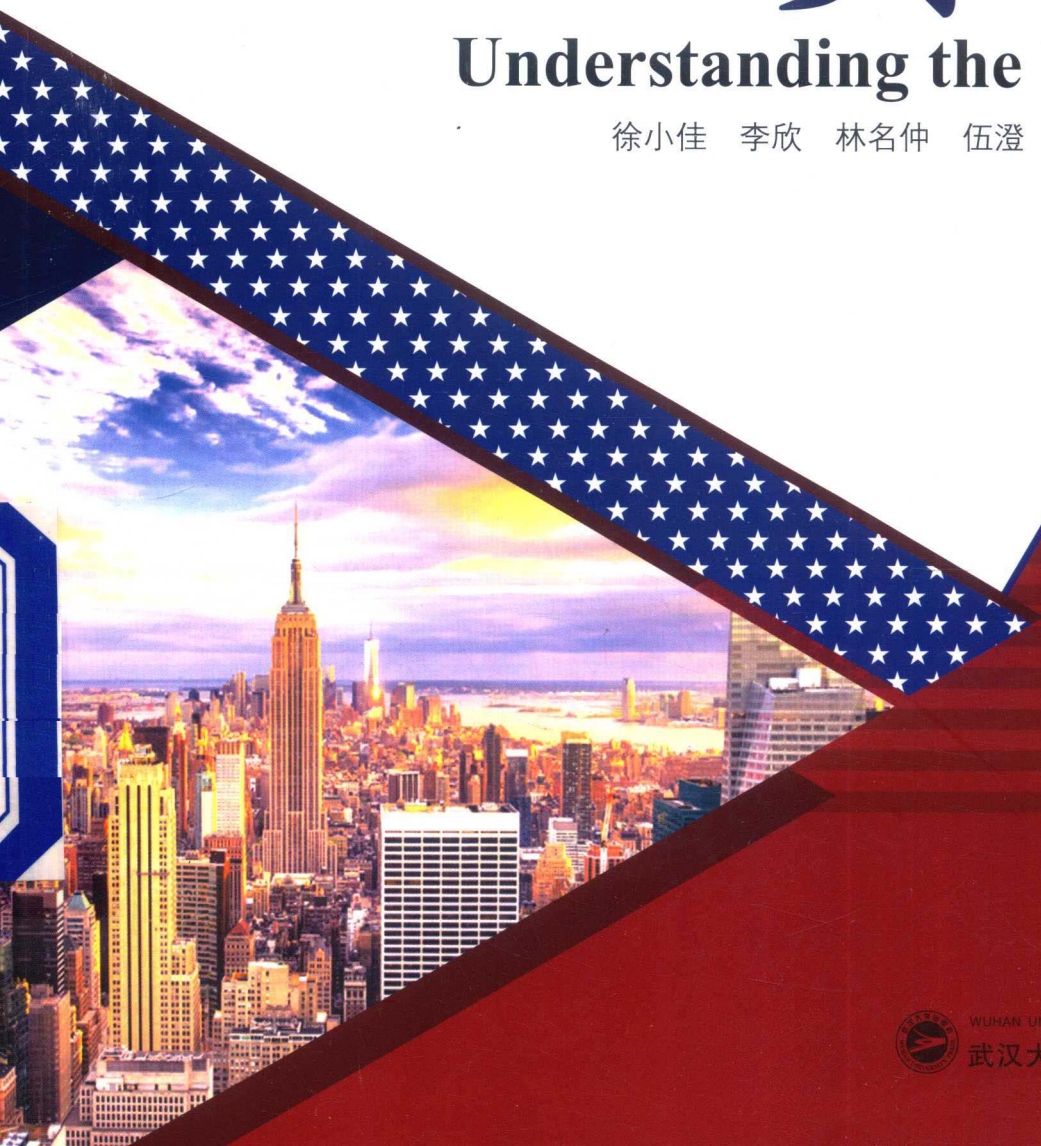
人文素质教育丛书

丛书主编 刘世平 王春阁

# 走进美国

Understanding the USA

徐小佳 李欣 林名仲 伍澄 郭萍 编



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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# 序 言



根据《国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要(2010—2020)》和教育部《关于全面提高高等教育质量的若干意见》等文件精神,大学外语课程是高等学校人文教育的一部分,兼有工具性和人文性双重性质。就人文性而言,大学外语课程的重要任务之一是进行跨文化教育。语言是文化的载体,同时也是文化的组成部分,学习者学习和掌握外语这一交流工具,除了学习、交流先进的科学技术或专业信息之外,还要了解国外的社会与文化,增进对不同文化的理解,培养跨文化交际能力。人文性的核心是“以人为本”,弘扬人的价值,注重人的综合素质培养和全面发展。因此,高校应充分挖掘大学外语课程丰富的人文内涵,帮助学习者了解中外不同的世界观、价值观、思维方式等方面的差异,培养学习者跨文化意识,提高学习者社会语言能力和跨文化交际能力。

为了进一步提升学习者的人文修养,我们编写了人文素质教育丛书,旨在丰富学习者中外文化知识,培养学习者中外文化差异意识,帮助学习者提升文化和跨文化意识,提高跨文化交际能力。

《走进美国》(Understanding the USA)为人文素质教育丛书之一,是一本重点介绍美国历史与文化的中英文对照的教材,内容涵盖美国各主要历史时代、美国的人文、自然特征、当今美国的政治体制、教育体制、宗教信仰、经济贸易、社会福利、传统习俗、生活方式、礼仪举止、休闲娱乐、文学艺术等方面。教材主要以美国历史和文化为依托,旨在提升学习者的语言技能,扩展学习者的知识面,提高学习者的语言和人文素质修养。

为了帮助学习者更好地理解,各章节的文章除了配以汉语译文以外,还对一些重点知识做了简明扼要的注释,每章节后设有一些理解性的问题和思考题。

本教材主要用做高校外语通识课教材,也可供其他英语和文化爱好者阅读。

编 者

2017年1月

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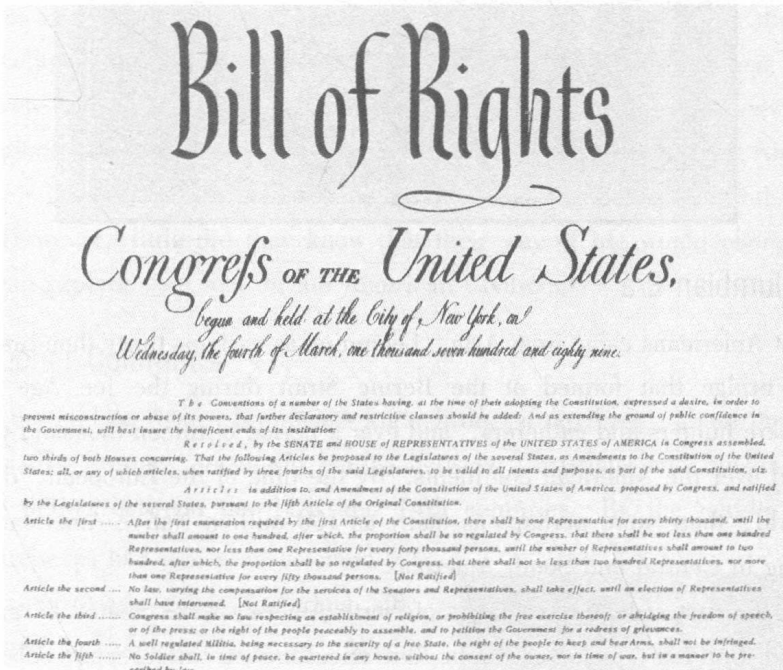
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## Chapter I

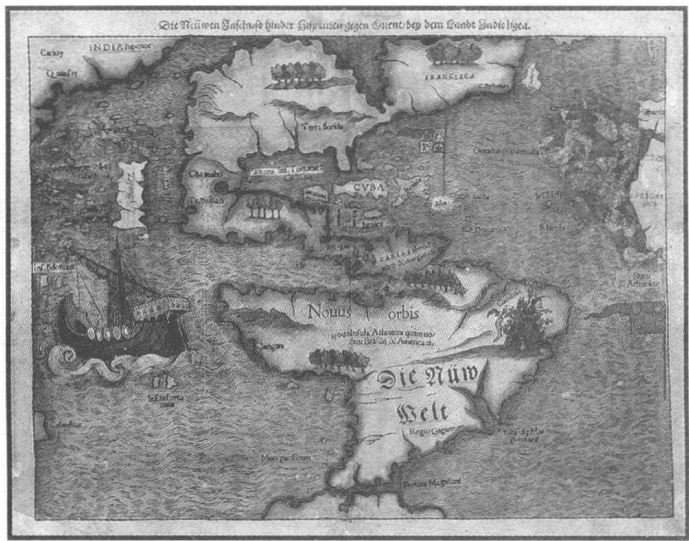
# A Brief History of the United States



## 1.1 Discovery of the New World

The New World is one of the names used for the western hemisphere, specially the Americas (including nearby islands such as those of the Caribbean and Bermuda). The term originated in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century after European made landfall in what would later be called the Americas in the age of discovery, expanding the geographical horizon of classical geographers, who had thought of the world as consisting of Africa, Europe, and Asia, collectively now referred to as the Old World (aka Afro-Eurasia). The Americas were also referred to as the “fourth part of the world”.





### Pre-Columbian Era

The first Americans came from Asia, beginning as early as thirty thousand years ago, over a land bridge that formed at the Bering Strait during the Ice Age<sup>1</sup>. The new immigrants were hunters and gatherers, and over a period of fifteen thousand years various groups spread over the American continents. By the time of the European “discovery” of the New World, there were perhaps as many as 100 million Native Americans, the vast majority living in Central and South America.

Some of the first sedentary societies of North America were created by groups known as the Mound Builders, believed to be the ancestors of the Creeks, Choctaws, and Natchez. The mound building societies formed enormous earthworks into various shapes and sizes. Some mounds featured multiple terrace levels on which hundreds of houses were built. The largest known mound had a base that covered nearly fifteen acres and rose to a height of one hundred feet. While circles, squares, and octagons were the most common mound shapes, some patterns resembled creatures such as hawks, panthers, or snakes. Many believe that the different shapes were religious signs or territorial markers for different tribes.

In South America, where the climate varies from cold mountain peaks to steamy rain forests, the Incas ruled much of the western coast. Perhaps more than 12 million people contributed to the creation of sprawling cities, terraced farmlands, extended roadways, and golden palaces. The Inca Empire covered nearly 2,500 miles and included regions of present-day Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and Argentina. Although, like other native

peoples throughout the Americas, they did not have their own written language or the use of the wheel, the Incas were extremely intelligent engineers. They built huge stone structures without mortar and designed suspension bridges that crossed deep mountain valleys.

Their well-organized political structure and close-knit hierarchical society enabled the Incas to become the largest civilization in South America by 1500. Like that of the Aztec empire<sup>2</sup>, the Inca Empire was essentially a coalition of tribes. However, unlike the strong-handed rule of the Central American culture, the Incas allowed local groups to govern regions independently. Each tribe gave its allegiance to the ruler, the Sapa Inca, whom they believed was the descendant of the sun-god. In return for their cooperation, the people were treated well and accepted into the paternalistic Incan society.

The majority of the Native Americans that inhabited South and North America respected their land and often paid tribute to gods to bring them bountiful harvests and protection. However, little did they know that their way of life would change drastically once European explorers set foot on the American Continent?

## Christopher Columbus

During the middle Ages, Europeans knew little, if anything, about the existence of the Americas. In Europe, territorial battles between Christians and Muslims dominated much of the period between the 11th and 14th centuries. By the middle of the 15th century, Europeans had grown accustomed to a variety of exotic Asian goods including silk, drugs, perfume, and spices. However, Muslim forces controlled key passageways to the east and forced European traders to pay huge sums for their ways. European consumers tired of the increasing prices and demanded faster, less expensive routes to Asia. During this era, as city-states and emerging nations fostered a new-found enthusiasm for expansion and exploration, Christopher Columbus was born in the Italian port of Genoa. The son of a wool-comber, Columbus spent his youth learning his father's trade. By his teenage years, he became a seaman and took part in voyages to England and



Ireland with Portuguese mariners.

The invention of the printing press around this time made information sharing much easier. Journals described the experiences of many explorers, including the travels of Marco Polo<sup>3</sup> to Asia almost three hundred years earlier. Europeans were captivated by his descriptions of incredible wealth and golden pagodas.

Columbus, too, became caught up in the excitement and read many books on navigation and geography. He eventually devised a plan to find a westward route to Asia. In 1484, he presented his plan to King John II of Portugal but was denied financial support. He spent years asking the rulers of various countries, including France and England, for assistance before Spain's Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand finally agreed to help. The monarchs wanted desperately to spread Christianity throughout the world and increase the Spanish presence over that of Portugal. Of course, the opportunity to acquire gold and riches greatly influenced their decision as well.

In 1492, acting on behalf of the Spanish crown in search of shorter routes between East and West, the Italian navigator Christopher Columbus sailed west from Europe and found the new continent. The tribal people who lived there then were what Columbus called Indians. They are thought of as the "the first Americans". The first successful English colony was founded at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Between 1607 and 1733, the British established 13 colonies along the Atlantic coast.

### After-reading Questions

1. *What's the meaning of the New World?*
2. *Who first came to America?*
3. *Use your own words briefly to summarize when and how the New World discovered?*

## 1.2 The War of Independence

The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), also known as the American War of Independence and the Revolutionary War in the United States, was the armed conflict between Great Britain and thirteen of its North American colonies. Early fighting took place primarily on the North American continent.

### Causes of the War

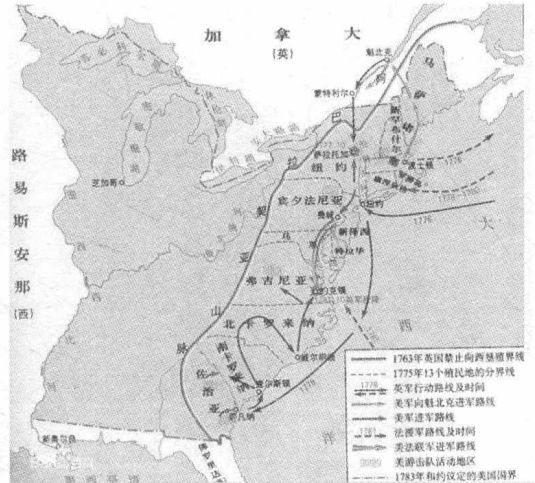
The first series of wars of independence that ended European control of both North and South America. The conflict between Britain and her American colonists was triggered by

the financial costs of the Anglo-French wars<sup>4</sup> of the previous thirty years, in particular the Seven Years War (1756-1763). A principal theatre of conflict had been in North America, where it was felt that the colonials had failed to play their part either financially or in the fighting. In the years immediately after the war, the army in North America consumed 4% of British government spending. This cost, combined with the victories over the French had increased British interest in their colonies. Ironically, those victories

had also removed one element tying the Americans to Britain — fear of French strangulation. In 1756, the French held Canada, the Ohio Valley and the Mississippi, isolating the British colonies on the eastern seaboard. By 1763 that threat had been removed.

The next increase in the tension came in 1765 with the Stamp Act and a trade act known as the Sugar Act<sup>5</sup>. The Stamp Act was a direct tax, levied on the paper required for legal transactions and on newspapers. The Stamp Act caused hostility in the colonies. In Britain they were considered to be subordinate to Westminster on all issues, in the colonies a new theory emerged that the Westminster Parliament had control over imperial issues, but not over colonial taxation. Combined with a boycott of British goods, the riots caused by the Stamp Act caused the fall of the government of Lord Grenville. The new government of Lord Rockingham repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, but at the same time passed a Declaratory Act confirming Parliamentary authority over the colonies.

Nobody was punished for the Boston Tea Party and in 1774 Parliament ordered Boston harbor closed until the destroyed tea was paid for. It then passed the Massachusetts Government Act to punish the rebellious colony. The upper house of the Massachusetts legislature would be appointed by the Crown, as was already the case in other colonies such as New York and Virginia. The royal governor was able to appoint and remove at will all judges, sheriffs, and other executive officials, and restrict town meetings. Jurors would be selected by the sheriffs and British soldiers would be tried outside the colony for alleged offenses. These were collectively dubbed the Intolerable Acts by the Patriots.



## Outbreak of the War



The first shots of the war were fired in Massachusetts. Here the most rebellious of the colonies was faced by General Thomas Gage. On 19 April 1775 Gage dispatched a column to seize an arms cache thought to be at the town of Concord, only 16 miles from Boston. Unluckily, at Lexington the British encountered a small force of American militia. It is not known which side fired the first shots of the war, but the militia withdrew and the British continued to Concord. However, it was the return to Boston that revealed the scale of the revolt and the weakness of the British position. Outnumbered by hostile forces, the British column was being slowly destroyed by sniping until it met up with a relief force at Lexington and was able to return relatively safely to Boston. On April 19, 1775, two sides faced off in initial skirmishes near the Massachusetts towns of Lexington and Concord, marking the beginning of the American Revolution.

## End of the War

On 15 June 1775 George Washington was appointed commander of the new Continental army. At the start of 1776 Tom Paine published *Common Sense*. This challenged the idea that reconciliation with Britain was possible and instead spoke out strongly for the idea of independence. On 4 July 1776, the Congress passed the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson. On the same day when Washington and his army received the news, they were greatly encouraged, although they were facing the difficult situation. The American army finally defeated the British and won

their victory of the war. Under the Treaty of Paris (1783) England acknowledged the independence of her American colonies.

The War of Independence gave birth to a new nation, that is, the United States of America. According to American Constitution, it was a republic and not a monarchy. Instead of being a unitary state it was a federation. It could be regarded as the world's first democratic federal republic.



### 1.3 The American Civil War

The American Civil War (1861-1865), also known as the War Between the States as well as several other names, was a civil war in the United States of America. The bloodiest conflict American history, the Civil War pitted brother against brother, family against family, state against state. Less than a century after the 13 original colonies celebrated their independent union, it splintered the young country along deep economic and ideological fault lines.



The root cause of the conflict lay in the South's economy, which depended on a system that utilized the labor of Black slaves to grow certain crops, particularly cotton and tobacco. As the United States expanded in the nineteenth century, the contrast between the economic systems of the North and South exacerbated tension. The election of Abraham Lincoln, leader of the Republican Party (which possessed strong abolitionist sentiments), brought the quarrel to a head in late 1860.

After the election of Abraham Lincoln, the states of the Deep South immediately seceded. Lincoln's call for volunteers after the South Carolina militia shelled the federal garrison of Fort Sumter in early April 1861 caused Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas to join the rebellion. Following secession, most Southern officers resigned

their commission and returned to their states to join the Confederate militia. In the North, however, the federal army maintained control over most of its officers, leaving the volunteer regiments for the most part in the hands of amateurs. On June 2, 1865, Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of Confederate forces west of the Mississippi signs the surrender terms. With Smith's surrender, the last Confederate army ceased to exist, bringing a formal end to the bloodiest four years in U. S. history.

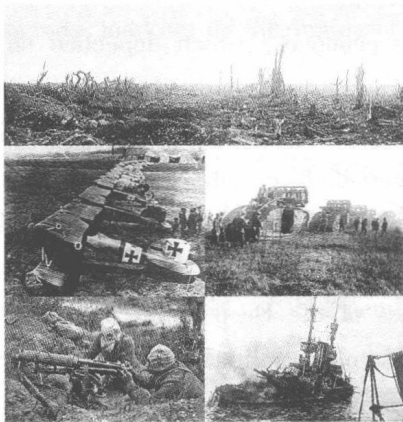
The American Civil War began on April 12, 1861. After four years of unprecedented violence that killed three percent of the population, the United States turned its attention to reintegrating the South, strengthening the federal government and enacting laws that, however imperfectly, abolished slavery and paved the way for civil rights. It decided that the country was not a collection of semi-independent states but an individual whole. The Civil War marked the history of the United States more indelibly than any conflict that preceded or followed it. In fact, not until the end of the Vietnam War<sup>6</sup> did the combined total casualties in all U. S. wars equal the Civil War's totals.

☞ *After-reading Questions*

1. *What are the triggers of the War of Independence and the Civil War?*
2. *Which famous declaration put forward during the War of Independence?*
3. *What changes did those two wars bring to Americans?*
4. *How long did the War of Independence and the Civil War last?*

1.4 The United States and WWI

World War I (WWI or WW1), also known as the First World War, or the Great War, was a global war centered in Europe that began on 28 July 1914 and lasted until 11 November 1918. It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history, and paved the way for major political changes.



The war drew in all the world's economic great powers, assembled in two opposing alliances: the Allies (based on the Triple Entente of the United Kingdom/British Empire, France and the Russian Empire) and the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Italy later joined the Allies, so did Japan and the United States.

The trigger for the war was the assassination of



Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. Within weeks, the major powers were at war and the conflict soon spread around the world.

At the beginning of the war in 1914, American policy was neutrality, but in fact it pursued a policy of pro-Ally partiality. It closely cooperated with them militarily but acted alone in diplomacy. The United States in World War I declared war on the German Empire on April 6, 1917. On June 26, the first 14,000 U.S. infantry troops landed in France to begin training for combat. After four years of bloody stalemate along the Western Front, the entrance of America's well-supplied forces into the conflict was a major turning point in the war. By the time the war finally ended on November 11, 1918, more than 2 million American soldiers had served on the battlefields of Western Europe, and some 50,000 of these men had lost their lives. The Great War affected all areas of life in America, including the antiwar sentiment that affected America's entrance into World War II. Although, America suffered some bad effects of the war, certainly it was nothing compared to Europe, where nations were divided and reformed, and entire countries scourged by warfare.

## 1.5 The United States and WWII

World War II (WWII or WW2), also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It involved the vast majority of the world's nations — including all of the great powers — eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis.

Americans in general, however, while not wanting to fight the war, were definitely not neutral in their sympathies and the acts were manipulated, to the frustration of genuine isolationists, to lend more support to the Allies than the Axis. Although the war began in September 1939, the United States did not enter the war until after the Japanese bombed the American fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. Between those two events, President Franklin Roosevelt<sup>7</sup> worked hard to prepare Americans for a conflict that he regarded as inevitable. In November 1939, he persuaded Congress to repeal the arms embargo provisions of



the neutrality law so that arms could be sold to France and Britain. After the fall of France in the spring of June 1940, he pushed for a major military buildup and began providing aid in the form of Lend-Lease to Britain, which now stood alone against the Axis powers. America, he declared, must become “the great arsenal of democracy”. From then on, America’s capacity to produce hundreds of thousands of tanks, airplanes, and ships for itself and its allies proved a crucial factor in Allied success. The brilliance of America’s military leaders, including General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and General Douglas MacArthur contributed to the Allied victory.

World War II was the mightiest struggle humankind has ever seen. It killed more people, cost more money, damaged more property, affected more people, and caused more far-reaching changes in nearly every country than any other war in history. More than 50 countries took part in the war. More than 55 million people died. The number of people killed, wounded, or missing between September 1939 and September 1945 can never be calculated. Main battlegrounds included Asia, Europe, North Africa, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and the Mediterranean Sea.

The war ended. Germany and Japan were defeated. The Soviet Union was strong in much of Eastern Europe. And the United States found it had become the world’s strongest military, economic, and political power.

## 1.6 The United States after World War II



### The Economy of U. S. after WWII

Following World War II, the United States began an economic boom and brought