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前 言

我所编著的《美英报刊阅读教程》，承蒙广大读者厚爱，自 1994 年出版以来，已连续印刷 19 次。近些年来，不少高校同行建议我根据新的形势对原教材部分课文作相应替换更新，这使我萌发了修订《美英报刊阅读教程》的想法。

笔者从事高校英语教学已有 41 年，多年的教学实践证明，英语报刊是十分理想的教学资料。

报刊具有贴近时代、贴近大众、贴近现实、贴近生活的特点。作为教学资料，英语报刊具有以下四点显著优势：内容新颖、语言现代、资料丰富、词语实用。

伴随着国际交流的迅猛增加，英语报刊课程的重要性日趋突出，越来越多的高校为英语专业和非英语专业学生开设了这门课程。

教育部对英语报刊教学给予高度重视。教学大纲的四、六、八级阅读项目都明确将阅读英美报刊水平作为评定阅读能力的标准。

为了适应形势的需求，自 20 世纪 90 年代初以来我们先后编著出版了针对大学不同层次学生水平的完整的英语报刊系列教材（详见封底“主编主要著作介绍”）。这套教材的共同之处在于突出学生能力培养。

选材所坚持的标准是：题材覆盖面广、文章内容典型、语言质量上乘、知识含量丰富、使用时效较长。

为了突出能力培养，本书每篇课文之后共设七个栏目：

1. 课文生词(New Words)
2. 知识介绍(Background Information)
3. 难点注释(Notes to the Text)
4. 语言简说(Language Features)
5. 内容分析(Analysis of the Content)
6. 问题思考(Questions on the Article)
7. 话题讨论(Topics for Discussion)

教材除保留一般英语报刊教材所设的“课文生词”、“难点注释”和“问题思考”栏目外，还增设了“知识介绍”、“语言简说”、“内容分析”和“话题讨论”四个栏目。

“知识介绍”栏目根据课文内容，简明系统地提供文章相关专题的内容，旨在拓宽读者社会文化和科技等方面的知识；“语言简说”栏目结合课文，简单扼要地介绍报刊英语和现代英语的常见语言现象，意在帮助读者熟悉外报外刊语言的规律和特点。这两个栏目有助于学生构建和丰富外报外刊语言和文化的认知结构，引导他们步入轻松自如阅读英语报刊的理想境界；“内容分析”栏目提供课文内容和语言的多项选择练习，目的在于帮助学生培养深入理解、分析推断和综合归纳能力；“话题讨论”栏目提供与课文内容相关且有一定深度的宏观讨论题，意图在于培养学生的思辨能力和表述能力，增加口头交际实践的机会。

为了减轻授课老师的备课负担,本书配有教学参考手册,提供“内容分析”与“问题思考”两项练习的答案和课文篇章层次的分析。

本书凝结着许多人的深情厚谊和汗水心血,高校英语报刊教学界的许多同仁和我的博士生、硕士生们为此书献计献策,我的夫人郭荣娣同志为我创造理想的工作环境,全力保障我的教学和科研。尤为值得一提的是,本书在文化点的注释方面得到过美国朋友 James R. Jackson和 Elaine S. Jackson 的热情帮助。

在此,谨向为此书做出贡献的所有人士致以诚挚、深切的谢意。

由于功力不深、锤炼不足,书中定有不少疏漏和错误,竭诚欢迎并殷切期望高校英语教师和广大读者提供宝贵意见。



2007年3月6日

1

Uncle Sam's Islands

*Dotted across the Caribbean and the Pacific—and indeed the American mainland—are the islands of an empire on which the dollar never sets.*¹

AMERICA does not like to think it has colonies, and many of those who live in them wince at the very word. It is seldom used, except in Puerto Rico by people who want their island to be independent, whether from the United States or as part of it. Official language speaks of commonwealths or territories. But facts are facts. Military conquest and strategic need over the past 100 years or so have left America a modest, yet far-flung empire of islands². Most have governments and flags of their own, but none is free. And though they are sovereign territory of the United States, and use its currency, neither are they part of it. They have no direct say in its political process. Colonies they are.

Their citizens are a diverse bunch: Caribbean blacks, Latin Americans, Pacific islanders, mainland expatriates, in all a little under 4m people. They live on more than 4 000 square miles of land: from east to west, the United States Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Palmyra, American Samoa, Johnston Atoll, the Midway Islands, Wake Island, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam. Here and there lie uninhabited outposts: guano-covered Navassa in the Caribbean, Kingman Reef and Jarvis, Howland and Baker Islands in the Pacific. The sun sets but briefly on this American empire, of which most Americans know little.

As empires go, this is a democratic one. The “big five” colonies—Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, Samoa and the Northern Marianas—have locally elected governors and legislators, like those of a fully fledged state. But they are not autonomous. To varying degrees, each possession answers to a branch of the federal government in Washington, DC, and is subject to American laws. All depend on the United States for their economic well-being. Yet none has a direct hand in the mother country's decisions, even when they apply to its own inhabitants. For these, though mostly citizens of the United States (bar some “American nationals” in Samoa), cannot vote for its president.³ All they elect to Washington is, for each territory, a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives⁴; the Northern Marianas, by their own choice, do not even do that.

Contented colonials

Arguing over what relations with America should be is consequently something of a national sport in its territories.⁵ In general, there is no great clamour for radical change, just a call for more autonomy and for the occasional exemption from some especially

inappropriate American law. Except in Puerto Rico, progress to full statehood is accepted as an unrealistic aim. Independence movements, where they exist at all, find little local support, Puerto Rico's main pro-independence party gets only about 6% of the vote in elections for governor, though its leader, Mr. Ruben Berrios Martinez, is one of the island's most dynamic politicians⁶.

Resentment against Washington's occasional high-handedness is more than offset by the benefits it provides.⁷ And it gives more than it takes. Uncle Sam, doubtless mindful of what happened to George III,⁸ does not claim federal income tax from residents of the territories, thus allowing the local authorities to claim the revenue. In some cases Washington provides grants for these local governments. Yet the colonials can claim many of the personal benefits on offer to taxpaying citizens in the 50 states.

Harder to put figures on, but no less palpable, is the economic benefit of being American. Virgin Islanders thrive on tourism from the mainland United States. Puerto Rico has recently had a higher annual growth rate than the mainland, thanks in part to investment in the island by American companies attracted to it by its combination of tax breaks⁹ and political stability. It is unlikely that independence would have brought any of America's possessions to their present economic level. The Virgin Islands' GNP per head (\$ 9 750 in 1986) is four times that of independent Antigua and Barbuda¹⁰ nearby.

The rights of American citizenship include the right to live and work on the mainland. More than 2m Puerto Ricans live in the United States proper, notably in New York. So, mainly in Hawaii, California and Washington state, do around 85 000 Samoans—more than twice the population of American Samoa itself.

Here, not least for the use of Americans, is a brief gazetteer of their empire.¹¹

Populous Puerto Rico

The “shining star of the Caribbean” has, on the face of it, the least excuse for being a colony¹² Surrounded by former European colonies now independent, Puerto Rico is the fourth largest island in the Caribbean, with a population of some 3.3m and a 1987 GNP of 18½ billion. Columbus landed here in 1493, and for 400 years it was a colony of Spain. Its history is evident throughout the island, from the splendid Spanish-colonial governor's mansion, La Forteleza, in San Juan¹³, to the shanties in the mountains. English is an official language, but in practice comes a distant second behind the other one, Spanish.

Yet Puerto Rico is American, and generally proud of it. It became an American colony in 1898 after the Spanish-American war. Its people became American citizens in 1917, and the territory was given “common wealth” status¹⁴ in 1952. Since then it has seen a vigorous but sometimes debilitating debate over the next step: whether to stick with this ill-defined, quasi-autonomous status, to become a full state or to go independent. Were it to become the 51st of the United States, Puerto Rico would rank 28th among them by population, but 51st in wealth; its income per head is only two-thirds that of Mississippi, America's poorest state today.

Various Virgins

Step out of the airport terminal and you will swiftly see that the United States Virgin

Islands are not like anywhere in America: your taxi is driving on the left. The Danes, from whom the United States bought the islands in 1917 for 25m, to protect the Panama Canal from German submarines, drive on the right themselves, but succumbed to the influence of the British Caribbean. That tradition lives on, even though the cars obeying it are American ones, built the wrong way round.

A mile, at the nearest point, from the sleepy British Virgin Islands, the territory consists of about 50 small islands and three larger ones, at the northernmost sweep of the Lesser Antilles¹⁵. The bigger islands—St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John¹⁶—are home to about 106 000 people, 80% of them black and manifestly West Indian black. Two-thirds of St. John is a breathtakingly lovely national park; St. Thomas and St. Croix, also beautiful, are daiquiri-fuelled, yacht-clogged playgrounds for wealthy Americans.

The islands have next to no natural resources beyond their beauty and climate. But these are enough: more than 1.7m visitors come each year, many on cruise ships. They spend about 620 million—half the islands' 1.25 billion gross territorial product.

Sleepy Samoa

Across the Pacific, the citizens of America's only sizeable possession in the southern hemisphere are in no hurry for change. The last look American Samoa took at relations with the mother country was conducted by a "Second Temporary Future Political Status Commission."¹⁷ It reported, in 1979, that the way ahead was to take another look in 10—15 years time.

American Samoans are equally relaxed in their approach to democracy. It took three plebiscites to get them to agree that the territory should have an elected governor. Their legislature's upper house is appointed by village elders. Traditional garb is the norm,¹⁸ even among the most westernised Samoans. Existence is dominated by "Fa'a Samoa", a concept that literally means the Samoan way of life but that can be more usefully translated as that which mystifies outsiders.

The result is that American Samoa is the least assimilated of all the United States' colonies, and possibly the poorest—facts which, by and large, do not much bother its inhabitants. The colony's government is the largest employer, with 38% of the officially recorded labor force, followed by two tuna canneries with 37%. Estimated income per head is only 1 850—which is still 3½ times that of independent Western Samoa, 80 miles to the west.

Grumbling Guam

The largest and most southerly island of the Mariana archipelago, Guam is the most populous American possession in the Pacific, with about 130 000 people crowded on to its 210 square miles. A bit over 40% of them are native Chamorros, the rest Filipinos, other Asians and mainland Americans. Guam, once a Spanish colony, bills itself as the place "where America's day begins." In fact, it doesn't: tiny Wake Island, just to the west of the international date line sees the dawn a good hour earlier. Guam's sense of its place in the imperial sun is equally uncertain.¹⁹

Guamanians are proud to be American, and have little interest in becoming independent. But they are not content either with their current relations with the United States,

which resemble those of the Virgin Islands. Among the issues that rankle is Guam's inclusion in the protectionist Jones act, which requires that American ships be used between American ports. To islanders who live 3 700 miles west of Hawaii this seems inappropriate, for all its sixteenth-century Spanish imperial precedents.

In 1987 the islanders voted to ask the federal government to give their territory more autonomy and make it a commonwealth much like Puerto Rico. A bill to that effect has been introduced in Congress. But it is unlikely to make speedy headway, in part because the Guamanians ignored Washington's instructions to negotiate the matter first and vote later.

Much-disputed Marianas²⁰

Few Americans have ever heard of the Northern Mariana Islands. Plenty of Japanese have. Of 230 000 tourists in 1987, most came from Japan. There are many more today; the 16-island archipelago offers the nearest sun-drenched beaches to Tokyo, 1 400 miles to the north.

The Northern Marianas have had a long colonial history. The Spanish held them for 300 years until Germany took over in 1898 (when Guam was split off to become American). After the first world war the League of Nations entrusted the islands to Japan, which in turn lost them after fierce fighting in the second world war; one of them, Saipan, is home to Suicide Cliff, where thousands of Japanese soldiers and civilians killed themselves in 1945. The islands then became an American trust territory²¹.

Most of America's Pacific trust territories have by now gone their own way into independence (under America's wing, of course). The Northern Marianas, in contrast, asked to join America's empire, being accepted by Congress as a commonwealth in 1976. They got a good deal. Their covenant grants them various exemptions from American legislation, notably the Jones act and laws on immigration and minimum wages²². Washington also gives the islands about 33m a year for development, for running the government and so on.

Democracy, DC

Beyond the "big five", America's empire consists of a variety of sparsely populated outcrops, most of which are military bases. Wake is run by the air force; the Midway Islands and Kingman Reef by the navy; Johnston Atoll by the Defence Nuclear Agency. Palmyra,²³ 1 000 miles south of Hawaii, is privately owned.

Two other dots on the map deserve mention, Palau,²⁴ in the Pacific, is the sole remaining trust territory handed to America by the United Nations. It will become independent in "free association" with America—when 75% of its people agree to America's terms, which, in several votes, they have so far refused to do.

And then there is the District of Columbia²⁵. The home of America's federal administration and legislature enjoys only slightly greater democratic rights than do Uncle Sam's other possessions. Its 620 000 residents murder each other with much greater freedom than, say, the backward Samoans, and can even vote for the federal president (and pay federal taxes). But they still have only a non-voting delegate in Congress. Whenever the

district gets uppity, as over abortion, or has other problems, such as its drug wars, Congress gets imperial and flexes its muscles.²⁶

From *The Economist*, May 6, 1989

I New Words

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| archipelago | [ˌɑ:kɪ'pelɪgəʊ] | <i>n.</i> | 群岛, 列岛 |
| assimilate | [ə'sɪmɪleɪt] | <i>v.</i> | 吸收; 使同化 |
| autonomous | [ɔ:'tɒnəməs] | <i>adj.</i> | 自治的 |
| Caribbean | [ˌkæri'bi:n] | <i>adj.</i> | 加勒比海的 |
| cliff | [klɪf] | <i>n.</i> | 悬崖, 峭壁 |
| daiquiri | [ˈdaɪkɪrɪ] | <i>n.</i> | 代基里酒 |
| Dane | [deɪn] | <i>n.</i> | 丹麦人 |
| dot | [dɒt] | <i>v.</i> | to spread things over a wide area |
| expatriate | [eks'pætriət] | <i>n.</i> | 移居国外者, 侨民 |
| Filipino | [ˌfɪlɪ'pi:nəʊ] | <i>n.</i> | 菲律宾人 |
| fully-fledged | [ˌfʊli'fledʒd] | <i>adj.</i> | completely developed, established |
| garb | [gɑ:b] | <i>n.</i> | (尤指特种) 服装, 装束 |
| high-handedness | [haɪ'hændɪdnɪs] | <i>n.</i> | 高压, 专横 |
| palpable | [ˈpælpəbl] | <i>adj.</i> | obviously and easily noticed |
| plebiscite | [ˈplebɪsɪt] | <i>n.</i> | 公民投票 |
| rankle | [ˈræŋkl] | <i>v.</i> | to cause anger and annoyance for a long time |
| resemble | [rɪ'zembl] | <i>v.</i> | to look alike or be similar to |
| wince | [wɪns] | <i>v.</i> | to draw the body away from sth. unpleasant |
| yacht | [jɒt] | <i>n.</i> | 快艇, 游艇 |

II Background Information

美国管辖岛屿

美国除北美大陆版图之外在加勒比海和太平洋还管辖一些岛屿。

一、加勒比海主要岛屿:

1. 波多黎各自由联邦(Commonwealth of Puerto Rico): 波多黎各于1509年沦为西班牙殖民地。1898年美西战争爆发后, 美军入侵又成为美国殖民地。1952年美国在波多黎各人民长期斗争压力下宣布波成为“自由联邦”。波名义上可以自行制定宪法、实行自治。但是, 美国仍控制其内政、国防、外交、关税等大权。
2. 美属维尔京群岛(The Virgin Islands of the United States): 16世纪先后沦为西班牙、荷兰、英国、法国和丹麦等国的殖民地。由于该群岛战略地位重要, 美国于1917年用2500万美元从丹麦手里买下。岛上居民从1927年起成为美国公民, 但不能参加美国大选, 仅在国会中设有一名无投票权的代表。

二、太平洋岛屿: 美国管辖的太平洋岛屿, 除夏威夷(美国一个州)以外还有以下主要岛屿:

1. 北马里亚纳群岛(Northern Marianas Islands): 该群岛在第一次世界大战前为德国殖民地。第一次世界大战后由日本委任统治。第二次世界大战后由美国托管。

1976年3月美国总统福特签署了《北马里亚纳联邦盟约》, 1977年10月美国总统

- 卡特批准“联邦”的宪法，规定从 1978 年 1 月起“联邦”成为美国的联合邦，其地位与波多黎各相当。
2. 关岛(Guam)是美国“未合并的领土”。1898 年美西战争后又被美国占领。1941 年被日本占领，1944 年被美国再次占领。1950 年美国通过法案，给予关岛自治政府地方权力，划归美国内政部管辖。关岛居民属美国公民，但不参加美国选举，在众议院也没有代表。关岛是美国在太平洋地区的一个战略空军基地和核潜艇基地。
 3. 东萨摩亚(Eastern Samoa)，又称美属萨摩亚(American Samoa)。1722 年荷兰人首先发现这里，法国、英国、德国、美国相继侵入。1899 年正式成为美属殖民地，现由美国内政部管辖。
 4. 威克岛(Wake Island)：战略地位重要，被称为“太平洋的踏脚石”，现由美国空军管辖。
 5. 中途岛(Midway Island)：1859 年由美国人发现，1867 年占领，现设有美国海空军基地。

III Notes to the Text

1. Dotted across the Caribbean and the Pacific. . . . are the islands of an empire on which the dollar never sets. —① Note the use of inverted order in the sentence. The subject of the sentence is “the islands of an empire.” ② the islands of an empire on which the dollar never sets (美元通用的岛屿帝国)。这里仿用“Britain was an empire on which the sun never set.”
2. a modest, yet far-flung empire of islands: 面积不太大，但散布在广阔区域的岛屿帝国
3. For these, though mostly citizens of the United States (bar some “American nationals” in Samoa), cannot vote for its president. 因为这些人虽然大部分是美国公民(除萨摩亚的一些美国侨民以外)，却无权选举总统。[bar—*prep.* (*formal*) *except*]
4. a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives: 众议院没有投票权的列席代表
5. Arguing over what relations with America should be is consequently something of a national sport in its territories. 争论托管地与美国应保持什么关系就有些像在托管地谈论美国国民运动一样。[意即托管地满足现状，对此争论不感兴趣。]
6. one of the island’s most dynamic politicians: 这个岛屿上最积极的政治活动家之一 [dynamic—active and determined to succeed]
7. Resentment against Washington’s occasional highhandedness is more than offset by the benefits it provides. 他们所获得的利益大大抵消了对美国政府偶尔专横的不满情绪。
8. Uncle Sam, doubtless mindful of what happened to George III. . . —① Uncle Sam refers to the U.S. Government. ② George III (1738–1820) was King of Great Britain and Ireland. He adopted a policy of coercion against the American colonists, imposing heavy taxes on them such as Stamp Act, Sugar Act and Tea Act. That led finally to the American Revolution, which brought about independence from Britain.
9. tax break: 暂停征税，休税
10. Antigua and Barbuda: 安提瓜岛和巴布达岛
11. Here, not least for the use of Americans, is a brief gazetteer of their empire. 这里特别为美国人提供有关他们岛屿帝国情况的简单介绍。[gazetteer—a list of names of

places]

12. The “shining star of the Caribbean” has, on the face of it, the least excuse for being a colony. 从表面来看,这颗“加勒比海上的明珠”最没有理由成为殖民地。
13. San Juan: 圣胡安〔波多黎各首府〕
14. “commonwealth” status: 这里指波多黎各自由联邦(Commonwealth of Puerto Rico)。〔美国在 1952 年迫于波多黎各人民斗争压力宣布波成为“自由联邦”,但实际上仍是殖民地。〕
15. the Lesser Antilles: 小安的列斯群岛
16. St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John: 圣托马斯岛、圣克罗伊岛和圣约翰岛
17. Second Temporary Future Political Status Commission: 第二届临时政治地位商讨委员会
18. Traditional garb is the norm. 人们通常着传统服装。
19. Guam's sense of its place in the imperial sun is equally uncertain. 关岛对于自己在帝国中所处的地位同样也不清楚。
20. Much-disputed Marianas: 兵家必争的马里亚纳群岛〔dispute—v. to fight for control and ownership〕
21. trust territory: 托管地
22. minimum wages: 法定最低限度工资〔美国从 1974 年起对收入低的工人实行最低工资法。通常以小时为时间单位,目前美国联邦法定最低工资为每小时 5.15 美元。〕
23. Kingman Reef: 金曼礁; Johnston Atoll: 约翰斯敦岛; Palmyra: 巴尔米拉岛
24. Palau: 帕劳群岛
25. the District of Columbia: 哥伦比亚特区〔美国首都华盛顿所在地区。1791 年美国国会决定,从马里兰州和弗吉尼亚州划出一块土地作为首都所在地,称哥伦比亚特区。从此国会及联邦政府全部机关都设在此。该特区为联邦直辖区,不属任何州管辖。〕
26. Congress gets imperial and flexes its muscles. 国会就会显出威严,展示武力。〔flex one's muscle—to show one's power〕

IV Language Features

报刊英语特色

报刊英语主要受以下五个因素制约:大众性,简洁性,趣味性,时新性和客观性。

报刊是大众传媒,写作必须适合广大读者水平,语言必须通俗易懂。

办报人十分珍惜版面,力求在有限的篇幅内提供尽可能多的信息,读者看报珍惜时间,希望在很短的时间里得到所要的信息,这就迫使新闻写作人员养成文字简洁的风格。

报业一向注重趣味性。如今,报刊又面临电视、广播、网络传媒的巨大挑战,要稳住报业市场就得加强趣味性,因而新闻报道必须写得生动有趣。

时新性是新闻价值之一。新闻报道在提供最新消息的同时也传播了相关的新词。此外,不少新闻写作人员为了增加文章的吸引力,在语言上刻意求新,因而新闻英语具有新颖活泼的特色。

客观性是重要纯新闻报道所遵循的准则,没有客观性报道就要丢掉可信性,也就会失去读者。客观性要求新闻报道文字准确具体,避用情感词语和夸张手法。

初读英语报刊的人往往会遇到很多困难。之所以如此,主要是因为他们对报刊英语特

点了解不够。譬如,新闻标题短小精悍,在句式和用词上都有相应的省略手段。又如,新闻报道为了节约篇幅,采用一系列手段浓缩、精练句式。较常见的有前置定语、名词定语、身份同位语前置、词性转化、借代、缩略词等。再如,为使语言生动、活泼,报刊常常使用比喻和成语活用手段。新闻刊物不仅是报导新闻的媒介,而且是“使用新词的庞大机器和杜撰新词的巨大工厂”。这些特点会给读者带来理解上的困难。为了帮助读者克服这些困难,本书把新闻英语特色分成若干细目,结合每篇课文,逐一进行介绍。

V Analysis of the Content

1. What the author means by “Sleepy” Samoa is that _____.
 A. Samoans like to sleep
 B. Samoans always look as if they want to sleep
 C. Samoans feel no hurry for change
 D. Samoa is a tranquil place
2. Which of the following islands has the longest history as a colony?
 A. Puerto Rico
 B. Guam
 C. the Northern Marianas
 D. American Samoa
3. From the article we know that America’s poorest state is _____.
 A. Alaska
 B. Mississippi
 C. Louisiana
 D. Idaho
4. Which of the following islands has the strongest sentiment for independence?
 A. Puerto Rico
 B. American Samoa
 C. Guam
 D. the Virgin Islands
5. The author’s overall attitude towards the US policies concerning the islands is _____.
 A. highly critical
 B. unknown
 C. rather positive
 D. objective

VI Questions on the Article

1. What rights and benefits do the people on those islands enjoy according to the article?
2. What difference exists between the US Virgin Islands and America in traffic?
3. What kind of economy brings the Virgin Islands the greatest benefit?
4. Of the island colonies, which one is the least assimilated?
5. Which island is the place where America’s day begins?
6. Give a brief account of the colonial history of the Northern Marianas.
7. To whom are the Northern Marianas more familiar, Americans or Japanese? Why?
8. What additional political rights do the people in the District of Columbia have?

VII Topics for Discussion

1. Is it beneficial for those islands to remain under America’s control?
2. Is America’s empire of islands a democratic one?

2

The Wild West's Legacy of Shame¹

By John Halford

THE LEGENDS of the Wild West still color many people's impression of the United States of America.² Unfortunately, the romanticized Hollywood cowboys and Indians³ have given a distorted picture of what really happened.

Certainly, America's western expansion was in many ways an epic of courage and endurance. Dogged pioneers opened up new territory and forged a nation from the wilderness. This is the stuff of legends.⁴ But there was a dark side to this story. For the Indians it was a sad, bitter tale of misunderstanding, greed and betrayal—and we should know that too.

Before 1990 fades from memory, let's pause to remember December 29 as the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Wounded Knee⁵. This "battle" (it was more of a massacre⁶) marked the completion of the conquest of the North American Indians by the United States government.

Not Enough Indians

In the early days of settlement along the Atlantic shore the colonists and the Indians got along together. Their ways of life were different, but there was room for both.

The Indians were not unorganized hostile savages. The various tribes were often confederations or nations, and at first, the new settlers treated them as independent powers. But as European settlement gathered momentum, mistrust began to build.⁷

It was not long before the newcomers outnumbered the native peoples (it has been estimated there were only about a million Amerindians in the continent north of what is now Mexico). In the struggle between the French and the British for control of North America (1689–1763), and in the later Revolutionary War⁸ (1776–1787) between the British and the Colonists, the Europeans tried to win the support of the Indians.

They became pawns in the white man's struggle to control North America. Those who found themselves on the losing side suffered reprisals by the victors.

By the end of the 18th century, the independence of the United States was established, and George Washington⁹ admonished Congress: "We are more enlightened and more powerful than the Indian nations. It behooves our honor to treat them with kindness and even generosity."¹⁰

But that's not what happened. Might became right,¹¹ and from the beginning of nationhood of the United States, the native people were exploited, forced from their homelands by the relentless European expansion—usually after signing agreements and

treaties they did not really understand.

The white man's concept of land ownership was alien to the Indians. They thought they had agreed to share, only to find that they had signed away the rights to live in their traditional territory.

Eventually, the government decided it would be in everyone's best interest for the two peoples to live apart. The Indian Removal Act¹² of 1830 gave the president power to relocate all the Eastern Indian tribes west of the Mississippi, on land the new Americans thought they would not need.

None were to be exempted—even those tribes who had made an effort to learn the white man's ways were forced to move. The Cherokees, for example, were settled farmers, had developed an alphabet, and even published a newspaper in their own language.

But the Cherokees, along with the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles, were rounded up and herded off to "Indian Territory."¹³ One in four Cherokees died during the forced winter migration¹⁴ along what became known as the "Trail of Tears."

Broken Promises

Under the agreement, land to the west of the Mississippi was to be the Indians homeland for "as long as the grasses grow, and the waters flow." Or rather, until the restless young nation wanted the land for itself.

Even before the treaties were ratified, the "permanent Indian frontier" was moved farther west. Over the course of decades, agreements were renegotiated, broken, amended, re-ratified and broken again.

The dispossessed eastern tribes, pushed farther and farther west into the Great Plains¹⁵ region, became refugees in the territory of the still free and culturally different Indian nations of the Plains.

The Plains tribes were the quintessential storybook Indians—proud, fierce, magnificent horsemen, skillful hunters and fearless warriors. For centuries they roamed the magnificent wilderness that was to become Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas.

Romanticized history has portrayed them as noble savages who blocked the path of the bold pioneers.¹⁶

Not really. The Plains Indians also tried to accommodate the relentless encroachment on their hunting grounds. As the white man pushed ever westward, fencing the land and decimating the buffalo herds, the Indian nations struggled to hold on to their way of life.

They signed treaties, they tried to move out of the way. When cornered they fought back, bitterly and desperately, until, exhausted and discouraged, they would accept the terms of yet another fragile treaty, soon broken.

The Indian wars were an ugly episode in the history of the United States. Both sides fought grimly, usually mercilessly. They plundered, tortured and slaughtered; often the victims were unarmed women and children.

The conquest of the West, usually portrayed as a valiant struggle, was in reality a cruel, particularly vicious war.

Indian braves¹⁷ were not always the noble warriors of legend, and the U. S. cavalry often acted out of ruthlessness rather than courage and chivalry.

Unfortunately Hollywood Westerns¹⁸ have made heroes out of some rather blood-thirsty characters. The real heroes were those voices of reason on both sides who tried to stop the bloodshed.

The way of life of the two peoples, however, had become so different, and the feelings of mistrust and hatred too strong. The struggle ended near Wounded Knee Creek¹⁹, South Dakota, where the last desperate remnant of Sitting Bull's Sioux²⁰ had been rounded up after leaving the Pine Ridge Reservation²¹.

On the bitterly cold morning of December 29, 1890, as the Indians were being disarmed, a young brave (who may have been deaf) refused to hand over his rifle. In the ensuing struggle, the weapon discharged.

The soldiers opened fire, and when it was over at least half the Indians lay dead or seriously wounded in the snow. Skirmishes continued even into the early years of this century, but Wounded Knee represented the end of Indian resistance.

The Trail of Tears

The once proud Indian nations became an embittered minority, confined to reservations, second-class citizens in their old homelands. Some, like the Navaho and the Sioux, endured, to preserve a strong identity.

Other tribes withered and died, remembered only by a name on the map, or the faded artifacts in a dusty corner of a pioneer museum. The Indian Citizenship Act²² of 1924 guaranteed full citizenship to all Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States, and today, all American Indians have full civil rights.

Yet most still choose to live apart, preserving what they can of their way of life. Significant numbers have shared in the American dream²³. But for many others, reservation life has meant despair, frustration and alcohol abuse.

The bountiful and practically empty New World²⁴ had ample room for both peoples to work out their differences peacefully. But history shows that native people are seldom treated fairly by a stronger civilization.

Arguably, the North American Indians may have fared better than some other indigenous peoples on other continents. They were never the victims of a deliberate policy of slavery, or genocide, as has happened elsewhere. But that is not the point.

The United States was founded on the lofty principles of freedom and justice for all. But lofty principles ought to be lived up to. The Bible tells us that righteousness exalts a nation, not broken treaties, greed and exploitation. Might is not necessarily right for a God-fearing nation (as the United States of America claimed—and claims—to be).

The Bible teaches that a treaty is a treaty, not to be taken lightly, and certainly not to be unilaterally abandoned when its terms become inconvenient.

The story that ended at Wounded Knee 100 years ago is a stain on America's record. We tell that story, not to open old wounds, not to fan new flames of resentment. But to remind us how easy it is for a people flushed with success to become desensitized to the