

高等学校文科英语泛读教材

A Cultural Background for English Study

Book Two

英语学习背景知识

下 册

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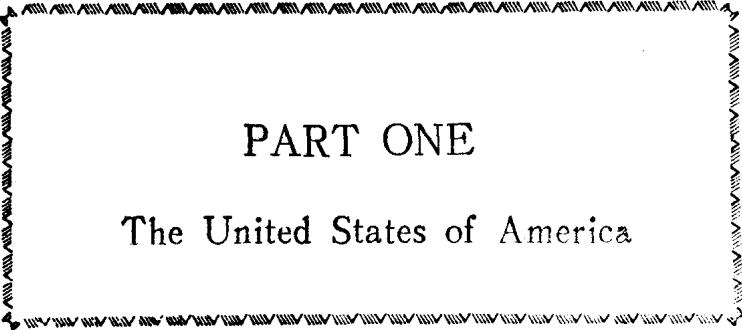
Contents

Part One The United States of America

I. The Main Regions	(2)
II. The Climate.....	(16)
III. The Two Major Cities	(22)
IV. Early America	(33)
V. The Government	(50)
VI. The Parties	(73)
VII. The Colour Problem	(81)
VIII. Higher Education.....	(94)
IX. Communications	(118)
Appendix—Names of the Fifty American States	(149)

Part Two Canada

I. The Way of Life	(152)
II. Early Canada	(155)
III. The Canadian Nation	(164)



PART ONE

The United States of America

1. The Main Regions

North America belongs to people who came there across the Atlantic, most from Europe, some as slaves from Africa. So when we look at this vast country there is good reason for beginning with the east coast, where the first and later immigrants landed. Beginning with the north we have first the area known as New England,¹ which runs from the Canadian shore to New York, with a coastline 800 kilometres long (in direct line) and stretching inland for 300 kilometres at its widest point.² This area is about the same size as England and Wales, and resembles old England in many ways. Some of the earliest settlement was here, and on the whole the country is small-scale, long established and urban. In character we can divide New England roughly into two parts. The southern section, consisting of the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, is the most 'English'. The ten million people of these states are as crowded as the English, and most

1. New England: 新英格兰(美国东北部Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island 和 Connecticut 六个州的总称)。 2. with a coastline...point: 海岸线长达 800 公里(直线距离), (新英格兰)向内陆伸展, 最宽处达 300 公里(即东西的宽度)。

live in towns—a quarter of them in and round Boston and another fifth (or nearly so) in the outer parts of the great sprawl¹ that runs up the coast from New York City. Boston already had a quarter of a million people 100 years ago, and in its central part many streets are well over 100 years old. In this old-established part the scenery is rather English, with flat country near the coast and hills up to 1,000 metres inland.

Northern New England is rather different, emptier, wilder, more picturesque. The states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont together have only two million people in an area as big as England. The southern parts of New Hampshire and Maine are suburban, but everywhere else, with lakes and hills up to 1,300 metres in Vermont, spectacular rocky coasts in Maine, this is more than anything² an attractive holiday country for the town-dwellers further south country for enjoyments like yachting, swimming, fishing, skiing and enjoying rural peace—particularly in the ‘fall’ (autumn),³ when the colours are glorious.

The southern end of New England merges into the suburbs of New York City, and to the west the great state that takes its name from the city at its southernmost tip.⁴

1. sprawl [sprɔ:l] 指无计划地扩展的地区。 2. more than anything: 特别是。 3. in the fall (autumn): 在秋季。英国把秋季称作 autumn, 美国称作 the fall (fall 前一般要加定冠词)。 4. The southern end of...tip. 新英格兰的南端和纽约市的郊区相连, 在西面则和一个大州接壤, 这个州是以它最南端的一个城市命名的(这里指的是纽约州)。and to the west the great state—and to the west New England merges into the great state

Some say that New York is the world's biggest 'town', but it is rather pointless to argue whether or not it is bigger than Tokyo. It all depends how many areas which are more or less attached are included. Manhattan Island includes everything that most people think of when they say 'New York': Wall Street and the office skyscrapers clustered around it, Fifth Avenue running up the centre of the island, with Broadway slanting from it, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Centre, the United Nations Building, the museums and central shops, Central Park (where at times it is dangerous to walk alone), the Negro quarter of Harlem, the docks and the slums behind them; but Manhattan has only around two million residents. New York City is composed of five boroughs:¹ Manhattan, Brooklyn (on the south of Long Island), the Bronx, Richmond and Queen's. Immense bridges join the boroughs with each other and with the suburbs in New Jersey across the Hudson. The city population of nearly eight million has not changed much for a long time, but the area of continuous town can be taken to include in addition about seven million people in New York State, New Jersey and southern Connecticut. In the mid-1970s the population fell rapidly.

Eastern New York State is really the same thing as the valley of the Hudson River, but the State extends 500

1. five boroughs: 纽约市的五个行政区。 *Manhattan* [mæn'hætən]: 曼哈顿(纽约市中心区)。 *Brooklyn* ['bru:klɪn]: 布鲁克林。 *Bronx* [brɒŋks]: 布朗克斯。 *Richmond* ['rɪtʃmænd]: 里士满。 *Queen's* [kwɪnz]: 昆斯。

kilometres to the west to Lakes Ontario¹ and Erie² and Canada, and finally Niagara Falls. The state is as big as England. Half of its eighteen million people live in or near New York City, while the rest are mainly concentrated in the line of Hudson valley towns and near the Great Lakes, leaving much of the hill and lake country empty. It has sometimes been argued that New York City might as well be a state on its own.³ To the south of the state is Pennsylvania, which also spreads out to the borders of the middle west, with well-separated areas of coal mining and heavy industry among its hills. Philadelphia, well up the Delaware River, is the metropolis of Pennsylvania, with five million people in its 'metropolitan area', or city plus suburbs. In the western part of the state the steel area around Pittsburgh is already across the mountains and on the Ohio River; water flows south to the Gulf of Mexico. Pennsylvania is the main part of the mid-Atlantic area, which includes New Jersey and Maryland, bounded at the south by the Potomac River. This is the clearest dividing-line in the United States, because across the river is the south.

It was on this border that the founding fathers chose the site for the national capital city of Washington. They set apart for it a square territory which they called the

1. Ontario [ɒn'teəriəu]: 安大略湖。 2. Erie ['iəri]: 伊利湖。 3. might as well be a state on its own: 自己就很可以算是一个州。

District of Columbia,¹ taken out of the states of Maryland and Virginia to form the national capital territory, outside the jurisdiction of any state and subject only to the control of the Federal Congress.

The whole of New England and the mid-Atlantic states together can conveniently be regarded as a single section of the United States, comprising eleven states together with the District of Columbia. This is the base from which America was built, and it still has more than a quarter of the whole population, in one-fifteenth of the land area.

The north-east as a whole is slightly smaller than France in area but larger in population. More than half of its fifty-five million people are concentrated in the coastal area of early settlement. The train from Boston through Providence,² New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore³ to Washington travels between buildings for most of the way, and the part from Philadelphia to New York, and a good way beyond in each direction, is almost solidly built up. With good roads and universal car ownership⁴ each of the big cities in this string spreads out its suburbs towards its neighbour, and people talk of this as megalopolis.

It hardly seems sensible to talk of Boston and Washington as parts of a single urban complex, when they are

1. They set apart...of Columbia: 他们为华盛顿划分出一块他们称之为哥伦比亚特区的地带。 2. Providence ['providons]: 普罗维登斯(港市)。

3. Baltimore ['bɔ:ltimo:]: 巴尔的摩(城市)。 4. universal car ownership: 普遍地(或人人)拥有汽车的情况。

600 kilometres apart, but this area contains the political capital of the United States as well as the commercial capital and most of the established centres of culture.

On southwards down the Atlantic coast are the tobacco and cotton states, with Washington on the border between south and north. This was slave-owning country before the civil war, and has not prospered much since then. Economically these south-eastern states are notoriously backward, with much rural poverty surviving among whites as well as negroes,¹ more recently they have attracted a great new wave of industrial development, helped by federal plans and hydro-electric power.

Rather different from the rest of the south is its most extreme part, the state of Florida, with its swamps and pine forests, its orange plantations, its beaches, inland springs and waterways in a Caribbean climate. Thousands of retired northerners live in Southern Florida, enjoying the warm winter climate and hoping not to see their homes destroyed in a hurricane some autumn. Miami, with its long row of huge holiday hotels, is now not only a holiday resort but also a great centre of prosperous new industries, as well as being the home of 400,000 refugees from Castro's Cuba.

Behind and through the eastern states runs the range

15. with much rural...as well as negroes: 不但在黑人中, 而且在白人中也仍然存在着许多农村的贫困现象。这是一个 with 后带有逻辑主语的分词结构 (或 with + 复合宾语) 做状语, 表示伴随情况。

of the Appalachian mountains,¹ beginning far south in Georgia and continuing, with slight interruptions, northwards to Vermont and Canada. Sections of the range have different names, but the different parts have much in common. Rounded hills and forests are the main feature. The highest point is only 2,000 metres above the sea.

The mountains were a barrier to early movement westwards for the early generations, but beyond the mountains the vast central plain stretches all the way to the Rocky Mountains,² with the water from the Ohio and Missouri Rivers joining the Mississippi to flow down to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. Half the area of the United States lies in this vast basin bounded by the Appalachians on the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west, with, to the north, the scarcely perceptible watershed which divides the Mississippi waters from those that flow north into the Great Lakes;³ and St Lawrence.⁴

The north-eastern part of this great basin is known as the Middle West. The term is confusing because in fact it describes the north-eastern quarter of the United States except for the states close to the Atlantic. But in 1776 all

1. Behind and through... Appalachian mountains: 阿巴拉契亚山脉环绕并横贯这些东部的州。因介词短语在句首,故主谓倒装谓动词 runs 放在主语 the range 的前面。 2. the Rocky Mountains: 落矶山脉。 3. the Great Lakes: 北美洲五大湖,即:苏必利尔湖(Superior),休伦湖(Huron),密执安湖(Michigan),伊利湖(Erie)和安大略湖(Ontario),是世界上最大的淡水湖群。 4. St Lawrence [ˌsɒnt 'lɒrɒns]: 圣劳伦斯河。

this area was still west of the fully-settled territory of the original states. The great 'mid-western' plain was first developed for farming, and Chicago, with its navigable water routes east across the Great Lakes to the St Lawrence River, and its central position, soon became its chief town. Now Chicago is an industrial and commercial city comparable with Paris or London, dominating the five industrial mid-western states east of the Mississippi. Each of these five states, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and (with more diffusion)¹ Ohio, includes huge, sparsely-populated open spaces. Together they have a total area slightly greater than France, but more than half of their forty million people live in a dozen industrial cities with their suburbs. The biggest of these (next to Chicago) is Detroit, Michigan, home of the great American gods, Ford, General Motors and Chrysler.² More than two million people live in its suburbs, and the two million in the city proper³ produce more murders each year than the whole of Britain or West Germany. By the standards even of the Atlantic states these great Western inner cities may be new, but parts of their central areas already suffer from decay.

Further west still the great plain which occupies the

1. with more diffusion: (与其他四州相比人口)比较分散。 2. Ford, General Motors and Chrysler: 福特汽车公司, 通用汽车公司和克莱斯勒汽车公司(美国三大汽车公司)。 3. in the city proper: 在城市市区(不包括郊区)。 proper 是形容词, 此处放在所修饰的名词后面, 意为“本身”。

middle of the United States from Canada down to Texas is empty, featureless country, where one can drive for hours with little change of scene, and where the vastness of America is palpable. The plains run from the Gulf of Mexico in the south up to the Canadian border and beyond—an endless open space comparable with Siberia. Few places in the world can compare with these great plains for uniformity and monotony, and they are only part of a continuous system which goes northwards to the barren lands of the Arctic. The eastern part has a moderate rainfall, but in general the rainfall declines towards the mountain barrier of the Rockies in the west. Although there are great extremes of cold in winter and of heat in summer the plains are more favourably placed than those of Siberia. Running from thirty to forty-nine degrees north they can produce wheat in large quantities, and the endless space is good for the use of mechanisation on a huge scale. One can well imagine the sense of isolation of the early settlers in this region, but the new developments of road transport have changed all this for the modern farmer. The four states forming the heart of the plains, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas, have a combined area nearly as great as France and Italy together, and only five million inhabitants including those who live in and around the two big cities on the Missouri river, which joins the Mississippi from the west at St Louis.

At the southern end of the plains is the huge state of

Texas, largest in the Union until surpassed¹ in size by the addition of sub-arctic and arctic Alaska. Texas is relatively arid, and has always had a distinctive quality, first with its cowboys and cattle, then with the rapid development of oil and industry. The population is growing fast and has now surpassed that of Pennsylvania, making Texas the third most populous state in the Union, but most of the state is still empty, with the people concentrated in a few big cities, famous for their millionaires, their brashness and their violence.

To the west the plains merge into rising land, the cattle country of the old wild west, the Rocky Mountains and the great deserts, much emptier yet than the plains. An area as big as Europe has fewer people than the Netherlands. Yet in some of these deserted areas, such as the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada, we can now see new jobs multiplying and new inhabitants pouring in. Some of these areas have had ups and downs² in the past, mostly because of some spectacular gold rush³ which produced a sudden boom town,⁴ now deserted. Nevada had nearly as many people in 1880 as in 1920, after some fluctuations, but the population has quintupled in the last thirty years.

The desert states have boom towns again, and the boom is not based only on unrestricted gambling or easy divorce

1. until surpassed=until it was surpassed 2 ups and downs: 繁荣和衰落, 兴衰. 3. gold rush: 淘金热. 4. a sudden boom town: 突然繁荣起来的城镇.

laws.¹ Being easily accessible to California² is an advantage, and with their remarkable scenery they have obvious attractions for holidaymakers. They can still identify themselves with the old wild west, at the same time as they give conducted tours of canyons and breath-taking shapes of mountain and rock under ever-blue skies. For all their newness these areas represent a little of the American's image of his country.³ Here the frontier seems real, and in a sense it is, though now mixed with air-conditioning.⁴

But for the fullest, most significant representation of the modern American image we must go to the Pacific coast and to the southern part of it in particular. Steinbeck's Okies in *The Grapes of Wrath*, driven out of the dust-bowl land of Oklahoma,⁵ saw this as the promised land because of the hope of some work picking fruit. But now it is not just oranges that bring people west, nor just Hollywood.⁶ Roaring, fast-growing America has its centre-

1. unrestricted gambling or easy divorce laws: 赌博不受限制或离婚比较自由的法令。 2. Being easily accessible to California: 通往加利福尼亚的交通便利。这是一个动名词短语,作主语。 3. For all their newness...his country. 这些州尽管出现了新面貌,却多少还能代表美国在美国人心目中的形象。for all = in spite of 4. Here the frontier seems real...with air-conditioning. 尽管现在也有了空调设备,这里的边疆风光显得是真实的,从某种意义上来说,也确实是这样的。frontier 在美国历史上指殖民者逐步向西开拓的较荒野的地区。 5. Steinbeck's Okies...Oklahoma: *The Grapes of Wrath* (愤怒的葡萄) 是美国著名作家斯坦贝克 (John Steinbeck, 1902-68) 1939 年发表的小说。Okies: 流动农业工人,这里指小说里的乔德 (Joad) 一家人。乔德一家因在俄克拉何马州受风沙灾害而迁移到加利福尼亚州来。 6. Hollywood: 好莱坞 (美国的电影业中心,位于加利福尼亚州洛杉矶市的西北郊区)。

piece here, and each year until 1970 half a million people joined the search for the Californian dream. Glorious mountains, sea with majestic cliffs as well as inviting expanses of sand, scenery which leaves the east coast and the mid-west looking very dull by comparison, warm winters, sunshine, the world's biggest trees (Redwoods) — these are only part of the story. The oranges and grapes and fertile land are still important, but the electronics industry, aeroplane factories, defence plants of many kinds, and a whole new industrial complex¹ are more important still. The trouble is that southern California is being ruined by its own success. In what was once the best area of all, around Los Angeles, there will soon be ten million people in one continuous urban development 100 kilometres across; and there are more motor-cars than in the whole of Asia and the Soviet Union. Northern California, with San Francisco as its centre, is less brash, more sensitive, its people less prone to follow political or religious extremists or cranks. California's population, now the biggest in the Union, passed 20 million in 1970, but then immigration slowed down.

Surprisingly, the northern Pacific states of Washington and Oregon, which only became states in 1889, have not progressed as rapidly as California, although they too, like British Columbia,² have everything in their favour.

1. a whole new industrial complex: 一套完整的崭新的工业联合企业。

2. British Columbia: (加拿大)不列颠哥伦比亚省。

They do not want to grow too fast. They are just above the average for the whole country in wealth and population-growth. Boeing's factories at Seattle¹ suffered from the decline in the growth of air travel in the mid-1970s, but these north-western states, along with Wyoming and Idaho, work to preserve their natural advantages.²

In all this western part, although fruit-growing was the first activity and is still immensely flourishing, life is mainly urban, based on specialised industries demanding high-level skill and training. In the far west everything man-made is new, and although, as everywhere else, city streets and suburban houses look much the same as in all the rest of the United States, the newness belongs unquestionably here. This is a land made by modern man for his enjoyment, although the process brings unpleasant features with it, such as a crime rate double the national average. But without the west modern America would not be complete;³ both geographically and sentimentally there is a sense in which it all leads out to California.⁴

California has one place whose fame goes back to the early days of the great rush to prosperity and growth:

1. Seattle [si'ætl]: 西雅图(港市)。 2. work to preserve their natural advantages: 设法保护它们优越的自然条件。to preserve... 是表示目的的不定式短语, 修饰 work。 3. But without the west...complete: 这是虚拟语气的句子。without the west 相当于一个条件状语从句: if there were not the west。 4. both geographically...California: 在地理上和感情上, 从某一种意义来说, 美国的一切都通向加利福尼亚。it 指 modern America。