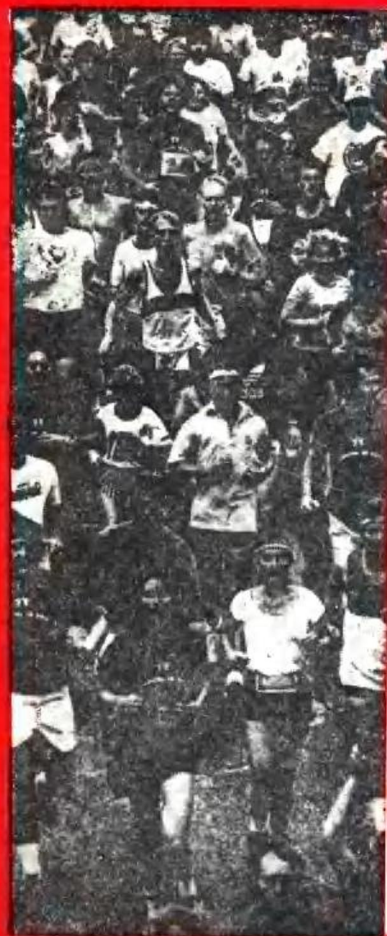


邓炎昌 主编

AMERICAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE



Volume 1



现代美国社会与文化

Higher Education Press

*American
Society and Culture*

Volume 1

现代美国社会与文化

(第一卷)

北京外国语学院美国学中心 邓炎昌 主编

15
高等教育出版社

American Society & Culture 1

American Studies Center
Beijing Foreign Studies University

(京) 112号

现代美国社会与文化

(第一卷)

北京外国语学院美国学中心 邓炎昌 主编

*

高等教育出版社出版

高等教育出版社激光照排中心照排

新华书店北京发行所发行

北京印刷一厂印刷

*

开本787×1092 1/16 印张15.5 插页2 字数440 000

1988年9月第1版 1991年7月第6次印刷

印数28 688—35 902

ISBN-7-04-001138-7/H·82

定价 4.70 元

前 言

近年来,越来越多的人渴望了解美国。美国在国际政治,国际经济,以及军事方面举足轻重的地位是一致公认的。但对这个国家的政治结构、经济生活、文化传统和民族特性,则众说纷纭,各执一词。有人说美国是“人间天堂”,但“天堂”里却不乏贫困与失业;有人把美国称为“自由之地”,但又有多少人在这里梦幻破灭;还有人把美国誉为“民主之楷模”,但美国的政治现实又使不少人对这种制度产生怀疑。这类反差强烈的社会现象在美国社会中不胜枚举。美国社会的复杂性和多元性要求我们对美国的历史、现状和发展趋势有个较为全面的了解。《现代美国社会与文化》正是根据读者的这一需要编写的。

《现代美国社会与文化》分为(一,二两卷)共25个单元,每个单元由3~5篇文章组成。全书共选用90多篇文章。

本书具有以下特点:

一、题材广泛。本书所选文章涉及美国社会与文化的各方面,分为美国史地、人口概况、社会价值观、青年与老年人问题、种族问题、政党的作用和政府官员的选举、法律制度、科学技术与社会发展,社会福利等25个专题。

二、全书除个别篇章由英国人所写外,均由美国人撰写。这些文章是美国人对自己国家的感受和看法,而非其他人对这个国家作出的评价。可以说是一部美国人谈美国的专集。

三、具有一定深度。本书多数文章选自美国出版的社会学、人类学、经济学、历史学等专著。作者大多是从事这些领域研究的专家、学者。因此本书除了给读者提供大量有关美国的一般情况和信息外,同时具有学术研究价值。

四、语言地道,浅显易懂。本书所选文章虽是原文,但考虑到读者英文水平不一,以及阅读中可能出现的困难,在每个单元之前有汉语简介;对文章中某些专有名词和难点作了汉语注释;并对个别过难过长的段落或句子,在尽量忠实原文的前提下,略作修改和删节。每个单元之后附有英文思考题,以利读者参考。

另外,本书还为读者提供了不少图片资料,以加深读者对内容的了解。

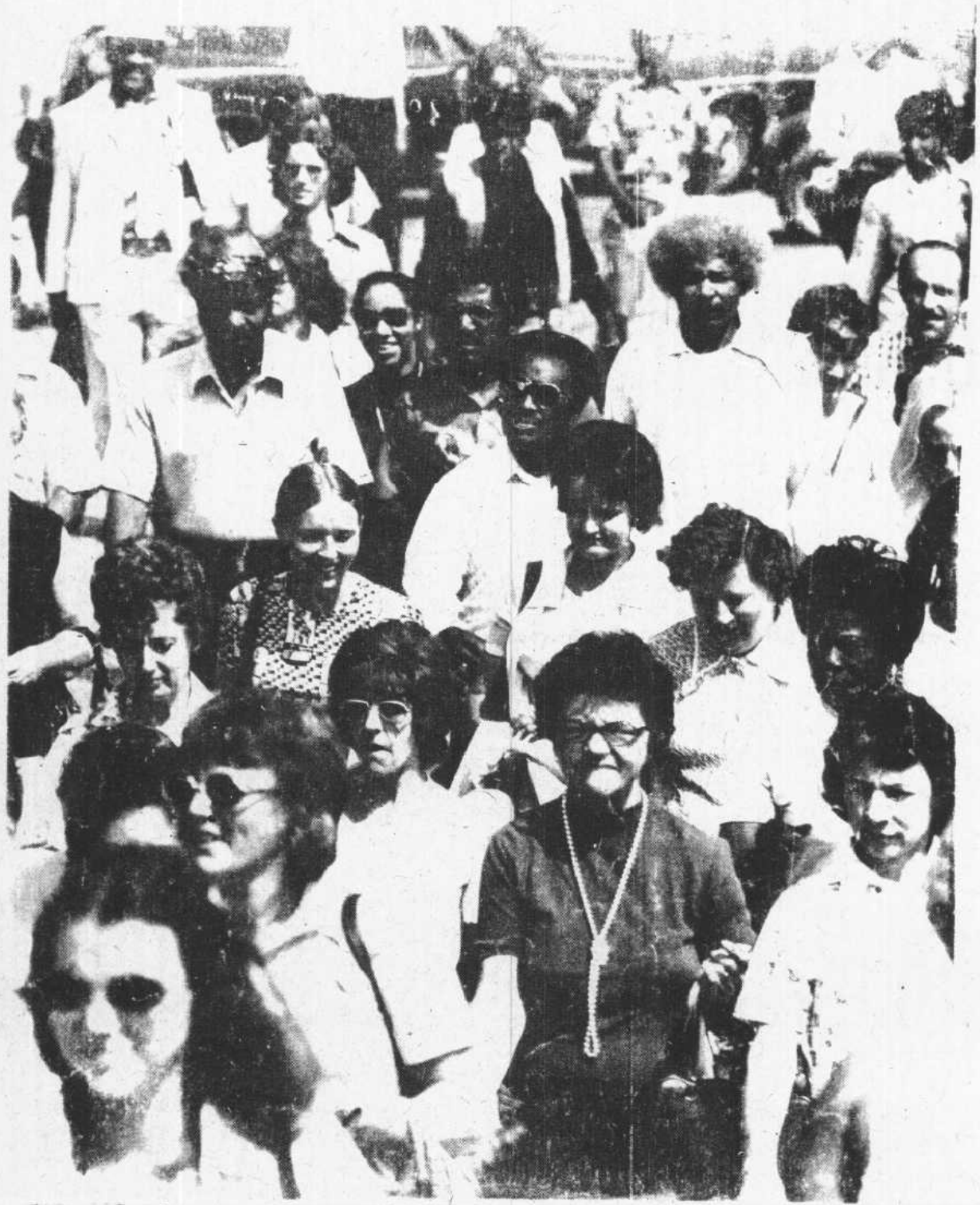
本书可以用作高等院校英语专业高年级美国概况教材,同时也适合具有大专程度英文水平的广大读者自学之用。

除主编邓炎昌教授外,参加本书编撰工作的还有北京外国语学院美国学研究中心的梅仁毅教授,吴青、林克美、朱炳和、朱永涛副教授,丁一江、何进、董彩霞、周迎智等教师。此外,研究生俞涓、夏玉和、贾秀东、黄少波、李怡岚、奚卫林也参加了此书的部分工作。

由于编者的水平和掌握的材料有限,本书难免有不足之处,望读者指正。

编 者

1987年12月



Land of Opportunity, Land of Paradox



Irish Americans March in St. Patrick's Day Parade

INTRODUCTION

The United States — a country which generally arouses curiosity and interest, a country about which people have varied opinions and which sometimes evokes strong emotions.

Land of promise and opportunity,
Land of miracles and achievements,
Land of paradox and contradiction,
Land of oddities and absurdities,
Land of inequality and injustice.

These are some of the images that come to people's minds when the United States is mentioned.

Which of the above images is true? Which is an accurate description of the country?

Land of promise and opportunity? No one can deny the attraction of this country to those in need, to those denied the means to show themselves and get ahead, to those deprived of basic rights and to those oppressed. Since the days of the early settlers, thousands, and later millions, were drawn to America with the hopes that they would find land, food, jobs. Many were attracted to the land that seemed to open up possibilities for those with ability and initiative to get ahead. Still others went there seeking a place where they would be free to pursue their own beliefs, without fear of religious persecution or political oppression.

Land of miracles and achievements? No one can belittle the tremendous progress and changes that Americans have achieved. On land that only two hundred years ago was virtually uninhabited and undeveloped, one now finds thriving cities, bustling factories, elaborate transportation and communication networks, vast stretches of highly productive fields, immense herds of cattle and sheep — all contributing to a standard of living that is among the highest in the world.

Or one could mention such things as the telephone, electric light, automobile, combine harvester, computer, spaceship — just a few of the many important inventions produced or perfected by Americans.

And what other country can claim such a large number of Nobel prize winners — approximately 40% of the world's total since World War II?

Land of paradox and contradiction? One cannot help recalling the words of a great American humorist: "The United States is the only country that drove to the poorhouse in a car." — a reference to the Depression of the early 1930's, when millions of hungry Americans were driving around in their own cars looking for jobs and food, while mountains of potatoes and oranges were burnt and hundreds of thousands of gallons of milk were dumped into the ocean.

Or, if one wishes to talk about the present, one finds it hard to understand how the country with the world's highest GNP (gross national product) is at the same time also the country with the world's highest national debt. The amount of this debt staggers the imagination.

Land of oddities and absurdities? How else can one describe contests to see who can spit the farthest — yes, spit — in a highly civilized country? Or how can one explain contests to see who can eat the most hot dogs at one sitting, with the winner often ending up in severe discomfort and sometimes having to be taken to the hospital after winning the "honor."

Land of inequality and injustice? No one can ignore the plight of the Indians — Native Americans — who at one point virtually became extinct on the land that they originally inhabited. Yet it was the Indians who had earlier befriended the white settlers and had offered them their hospitality.

Nor can one forget the harsh treatment of the Chinese laborers after they had built the railroads to the west in the late 19th century. The contribution of these Chinese can be seen from this well-known statement made at the time: "Under every sleeper (of the railroad) lies the body of a Chinaman." Yet these same Chinese were cheated, robbed, humiliated and later excluded from this land to which they had given so much.

From this, then, it seems that all the images mentioned above are true, or at least partly true. It is not surprising then, that the United States has been at the same time praised and envied, ridiculed and scorned, denounced and condemned.

Such a complex nation, such a diverse and unusual one, obviously deserves our interest and attention. And when one considers that this country today is one of the most powerful on earth and is still considered dominant in the western world economically, politically, militarily, and technologically, then there is all the more reason for doing some serious study of the country.

The study of another nation, its society and culture, not only can be fascinating but also beneficial. Exposure to the ways and means of other societies and an understanding of the characteristics, attitudes, beliefs and values of other peoples often help us to see those of our own more clearly. Following this, comparison of the two cultures is inevitable. People naturally tend to reflect on the differences as well as note the similarities. What aspects of the other culture seem to be superior to ours? What aspects of our culture seem superior to the other's?

Such comparison often helps to promote social change. People become inclined to discard or modify things in their own culture which no longer seem valid or useful and to adopt those that appear better from other cultures.

Or comparison of different cultures may lead people to realize the need for certain changes, but with nothing that appears satisfactory, people may be forced to come up with new creations of their own.

Or, such comparison may lead to deeper appreciation of the positive aspects of one's own culture. This will often strengthen people's resolve to hold on to such things and perhaps even to spread them to other cultures.

The study of other cultures may be beneficial in still other ways.

For developing countries such as ours, the experiences and changes of the industrialized countries may help us —

to foresee problems brought about by modernization which have not yet emerged in our own society;

to provide us with options for dealing with such problems when they do emerge;

to avoid solutions that have proven unsuccessful or questionable;

to make better overall preparations to meet other new developments.

Obviously, when we consider our tasks of modernization and reform, when technological and social changes are bound to have impacts of tremendous importance, then it is of particular significance for us to know how a country like the U.S. has developed in the past few decades, what problems it has faced, what ways were used to deal with them, what changes the culture has undergone, and how the people have reacted to such changes.

This book is an attempt to introduce the reader to the United States. It intends to give a concise but fairly well rounded overview of present day American society ; not only a picture of surface phenomena, but insights into American culture and insights about the American people.

Various aspects of American life are presented through articles written mainly by Americans themselves, or by westerners familiar with the United States. Most were written by scholars or specialists on the topic or field. A number of articles were written by sociologists. This gives a perspective that goes beyond the common articles written for the average tourist , for the person with passing curiosity , or for the ordinary man-in-the street. A number of articles were also selected with the idea of presenting different, sometimes conflicting , points of view about the same topic. This , it is hoped, will help the reader to gain better understanding and to help him draw his own conclusions.

It should be stressed that the viewpoints of the various authors are not necessarily those of the compilers of this book. We may agree with all of some articles, only partially with others, and possibly disagree considerably with a few of the selections. To allow the reader to use his own judgment, we have generally kept the articles in their original form. If changes were made, they were to make the language easier or to make the articles more manageable for the reader.

Most of the articles in this book were used on a trial basis for the course "American Society and Culture " at the Beijing Foreign Studies University. Through selection and rejection based mainly on student opinion, the articles in this book were finally chosen. Our criteria for selecting an article were as follows:

1. Its suitability for giving accurate information about a topic or some aspect of the topic; it should help present a well-rounded picture of the whole; in this respect, we have sometimes

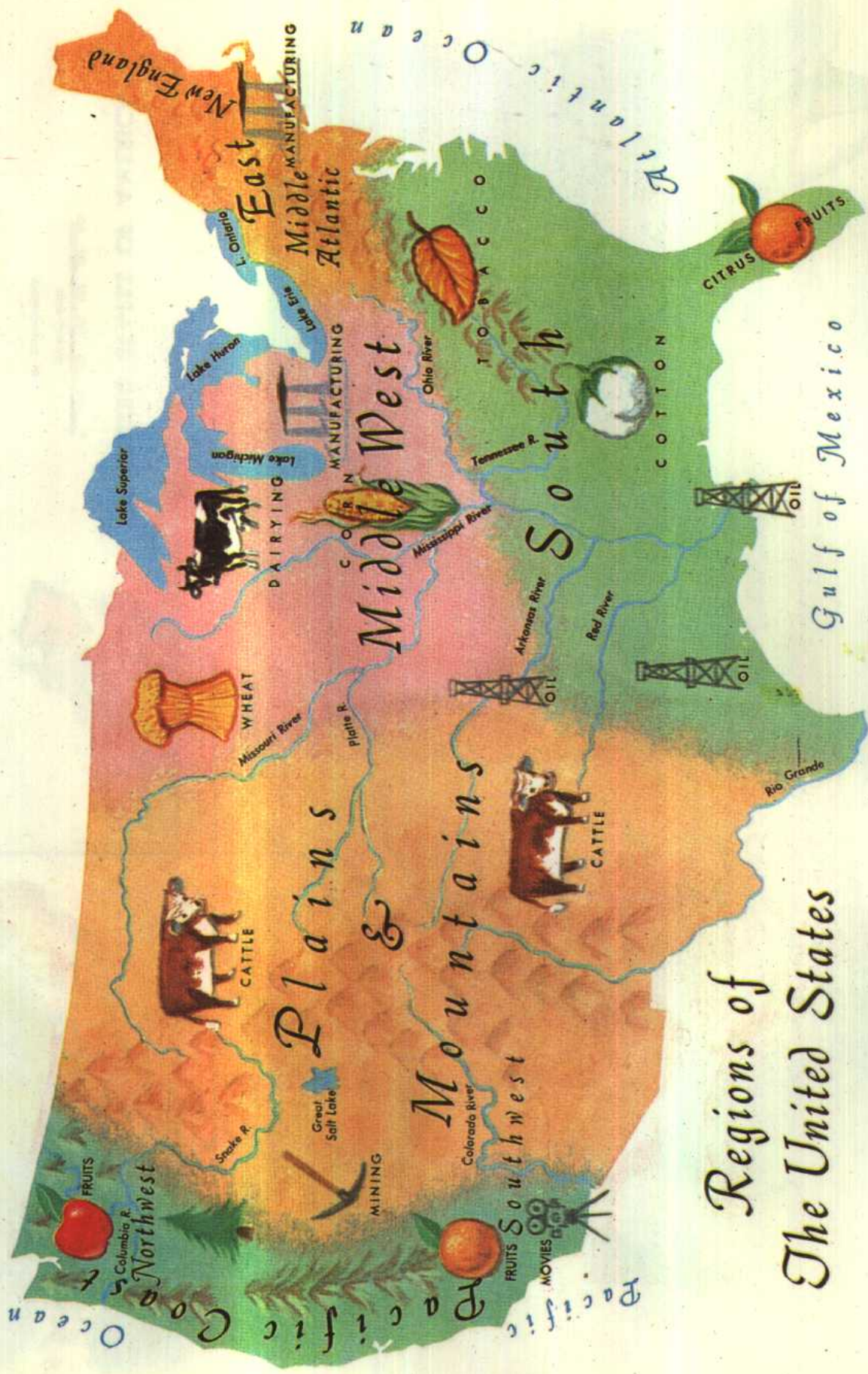
given preference to an earlier article rather than a later one if the former gives a more insightful or more comprehensive treatment of the subject;

2. Its appeal to the ordinary reader; it should be authoritative and reliable, yet not too elementary; the contents should be of interest to most readers ;

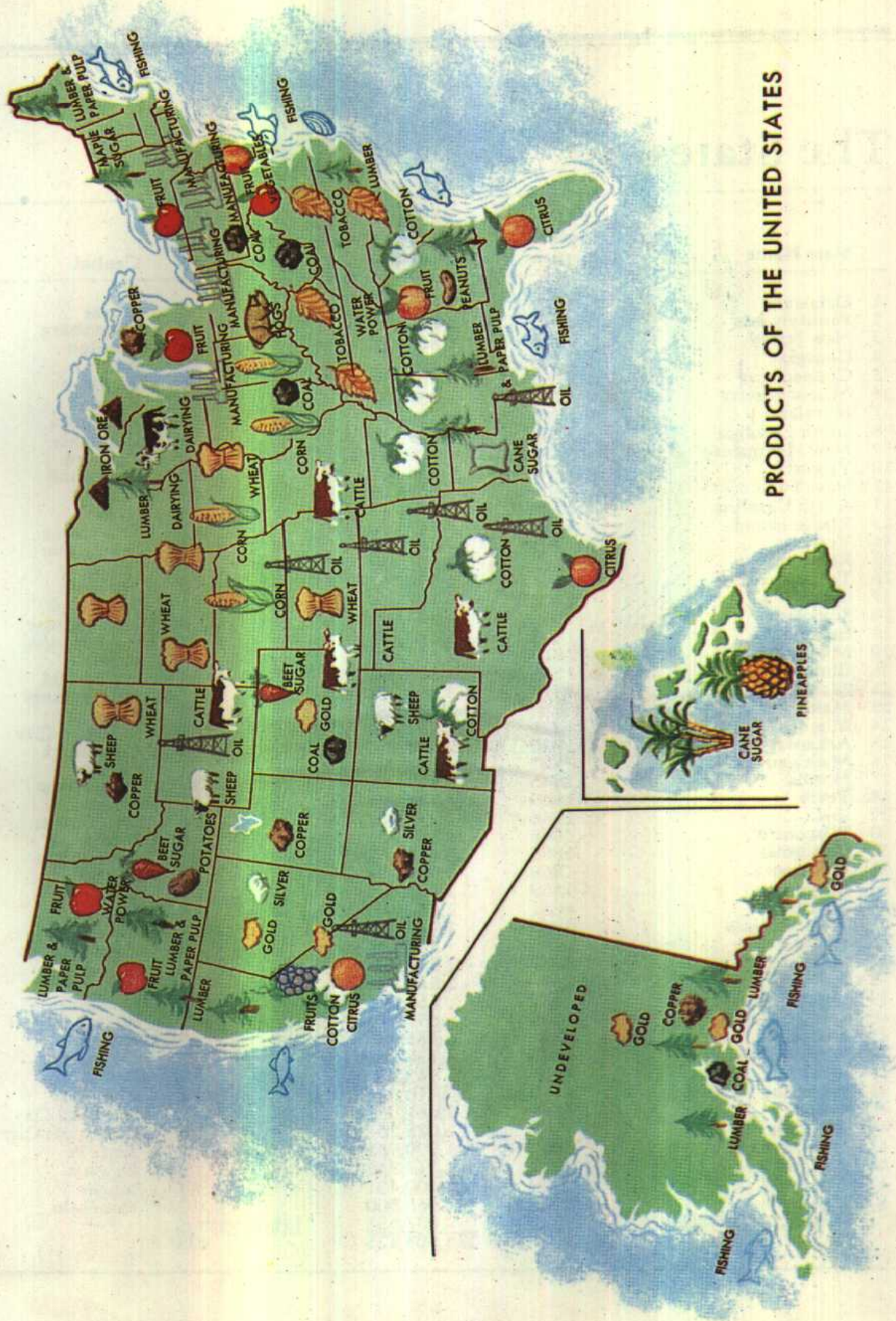
3. Its linguistic quality and degree of difficulty ; the level for which it is intended is college students of English, other college students with a fairly good command of English, and the general reader interested in the U. S. and with fairly good comprehension of the language;

4. Its general relevance to Chinese readers or Chinese Society; it should have some general significance to China, either present or future, and not be totally irrelevant.

Obviously no one book can give a completely comprehensive picture or description of such a vast and complex nation. Many readers may disagree with our choice of topics; most likely a number will say we have left out important ones. Many may feel we did not use our best judgment in selecting the articles; we must admit that we did not always agree among ourselves. We were furthermore restricted by the limited amount of materials to choose from. Needless to say, we welcome suggestions and criticisms from our readers. And in spite of all its shortcomings, if the book has helped the reader to gain some insight and understanding about the United States and its people and has stimulated the reader to go further, and to study more, then in a modest way this book will have accomplished much of what it was intended to do .



Regions of
The United States



PRODUCTS OF THE UNITED STATES

The States

State Name	Date of Admission	Population	Number of Representatives	Capital
1 Delaware	1787	595,225	1	Dover
2 Pennsylvania	1787	11,866,728	23	Harrisburg
3 New Jersey	1787	7,364,158	14	Trenton
4 Georgia	1788	5,464,265	10	Atlanta
5 Connecticut	1788	3,107,576	6	Hartford
6 Massachusetts	1788	5,737,037	11	Boston
7 Maryland	1788	4,216,446	8	Annapolis
8 South Carolina	1788	3,119,208	6	Columbia
9 New Hampshire	1788	920,610	2	Concord
10 Virginia	1788	5,346,279	10	Richmond
11 New York	1788	17,557,288	34	Albany
12 North Carolina	1789	5,874,429	11	Raleigh
13 Rhode Island	1790	947,154	2	Providence
14 Vermont	1791	511,456	1	Montpelier
15 Kentucky	1792	3,661,433	7	Frankfort
16 Tennessee	1796	4,590,750	9	Nashville
17 Ohio	1803	10,797,419	21	Columbus
18 Louisiana	1812	4,203,972	8	Baton Rouge
19 Indiana	1816	5,490,179	10	Indianapolis
20 Mississippi	1817	2,520,638	5	Jackson
21 Illinois	1818	11,418,461	22	Springfield
22 Alabama	1819	3,890,061	7	Montgomery
23 Maine	1820	1,124,660	2	Augusta
24 Missouri	1821	4,917,444	9	Jefferson City
25 Arkansas	1836	2,285,513	4	Little Rock
26 Michigan	1837	9,258,344	18	Lansing
27 Florida	1845	9,739,992	19	Tallahassee
28 Texas	1845	14,228,383	27	Austin
29 Iowa	1846	2,913,387	6	Des Moines
30 Wisconsin	1848	4,705,335	9	Madison
31 California	1850	23,668,562	45	Sacramento
32 Minnesota	1858	4,077,148	8	St. Paul
33 Oregon	1859	2,632,663	5	Salem
34 Kansas	1861	2,363,208	5	Topeka
35 West Virginia	1863	1,949,644	4	Charleston
36 Nevada	1864	799,184	2	Carson City
37 Nebraska	1867	1,570,006	3	Lincoln
38 Colorado	1876	2,888,834	6	Denver
39 North Dakota	1889	652,695	1	Bismarck
40 South Dakota	1889	690,178	1	Pierre
41 Montana	1889	786,690	2	Helena
42 Washington	1889	4,130,163	8	Olympia
43 Idaho	1890	943,935	2	Boise
44 Wyoming	1890	470,816	1	Cheyenne
45 Utah	1896	1,461,037	3	Salt Lake City
46 Oklahoma	1907	3,025,266	6	Oklahoma City
47 New Mexico	1912	1,299,968	3	Santa Fe
48 Arizona	1912	2,717,866	5	Phoenix
49 Alaska	1959	400,481	1	Juneau
50 Hawaii	1959	965,000	2	Honolulu
District of Columbia		637,651	1 (non-voting)	
		226,504,825	435	

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
---------------------	----------

Unit 1	On Culture — Basic Concepts for the Study of Societies	1
---------------	---	----------

1. Basic Concepts of Culture 2
2. Culture 7

Unit 2	Basic Facts about the U. S. A.	15
---------------	---------------------------------------	-----------

3. The Land, the People, Natural Resources 16
4. America : A Look at the People 21
5. Here They Come! 24

Unit 3	American Values and Characteristics	31
---------------	--	-----------

6. Basic American Values and Beliefs 32
7. Values and Social Problems : A Consensus View 37
8. American Values at the Crossroads 42
9. Americans — as Other People See Them 47

Unit 4	Social Classes	55
---------------	-----------------------	-----------

10. A Classless Society ? 56
11. Inequality in the United States 62
12. The New-Collar Class 69

Unit 5 The Economy — Overview and Historical Perspectives **77**

- 13. How the United States Economy Works : an Overview . . . 78
- 14. The World of American Business . . . 84
- 15. Some Historical Perspectives on the American Economy : 1830–1930 . . . 89
- 16. From Riches to Rags . . . 93

Unit 6 Corporations, Big Business **101**

- 17. The Development of Giant Corporations . . . 102
- 18. Corporations, Profits and Advertising . . . 109
- 19. Corporate Powers and Military Corruption . . . 110
- 20. The Stock Market . . . 114

Unit 7 Labor and the Workers **121**

- 21. Labor's Contribution . . . 122
- 22. Labor Day and the American Worker . . . 125
- 23. Work and Alienation . . . 128
- 24. Work on the Assembly Line . . . 133

Unit 8 Agriculture and the Farmers **137**

- 25. Agriculture : An Overview . . . 138
- 26. The New American Farmer . . . 143
- 27. Hard Pressed Farmers . . . 147

Unit 9 The Family **153**

- 28. American Family Life . . . 154
- 29. The Changing American Family (I) . . . 157
- 30. The Changing American Family (II) . . . 160
- 31. One-Parent Family : The Troubles and the Joys . . . 167
- 32. Violent Families . . . 173

Unit 10 Education 177

- 33. American Education : Philosophy, Methods, Problems, Goals 178
- 34. Education and Equality 182
- 35. The Classroom Computers 187
- 36. Advice That Can Help You Succeed on Campus 189

Unit 11 Religion 195

- 37. Religion 196
- 38. Religion in American Life 200
- 39. The Strange World of Cults 204

Unit 12 Mass Media 211

- 40. News and Entertainment Media 212
- 41. Spreading the News 216
- 42. A Disturbing Journalistic Trend 228

Appendix I The United States of America	233
Appendix II Regions of the United States	234
Appendix III Products of the United States	235
Appendix IV The States	236