

The background of the cover features a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The colors are vibrant, with the red and white stripes curving across the frame. The stars are visible in the upper left corner.

林静 编著

美国

文化读本

*Selected Reading in
American Culture*

厦门大学出版社

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Selected Readings in American Culture

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Foreword

To understand any complex culture by expecting simple understandings is a contradictory expectation. So, Lin Jing has undertaken for herself a difficult task, that of selecting readings that are representative of important aspects of American culture. Those who do wish to understand American culture, however, should always understand their own dilemma, for to truly understand America is as difficult as it is to say what makes a delicious soup tasty. You may examine each particular ingredient of the soup carefully, but no list of ingredients will ever tell you how the magic of cooking them together produces the special flavor of the final product. To explain even further, America is not only a blending of many cultural features, it is also a culture that contains many contradictions. Any generality about America or American life can probably also be contradicted by half a dozen particular examples.

Most foreigners have their own ideas of contemporary America they have formed from films, magazines and their own media. And while most people want to know what America is like today, it is impossible to understand the American of the year 2,000 without also knowing the events of 1604 or 1620 that brought the first settlers to the New North American World from Europe. Lin Jing has followed an intelligent plan in providing readings that give an interesting historical overview of elements that are peculiarly and accurately American.

In my own mind, one of the most delightful and insightful readings among those that follow is the piece by Mark Twain. It at once captures the idea present in America from the colonies onward, that Americans have always practiced the right to cleverly and humorously criticize their own

culture, their own ideas and ideals, and their own government. Part of the vitality of American culture, even though there remains a deep and powerful spirituality in our nation, is the refusal to hold anything as sacred that we know to be hypocritical. One aspect the pieces may not suggest forcefully enough, however, is that Christianity remains not only the dominant religious force in America, but it also provides the legal values, passed through British Common Law, that continue to ensure the basic freedoms all Americans enjoy.

Taken in sum, the following selection of articles does provide the student with a general framework of historical and current ideas that is useful and sound.



2 June 1999

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前 言

为帮助读者较为系统地了解美国文化及其背景，增强这方面的知识与修养，本书编著者编写了此书。

本书具有很强的可读性，选材的内容均为美国作家原文，选材科学，富有代表性和时代感，从“五月花”的惊险航行到美国的独立，从美国的开国元勋传记到现代青年的爱情故事，从自由的本质到管理的秘诀，从美国的政府制度到教育制度……，尽管篇幅有限，却能让中国读者受到教益和启迪，深切地感受到美国历史的脉搏，增加对美国文化的全面了解。

本书是一本集阅读、词汇与翻译练习为一体的实用型参考书。共有六单元二十篇阅读材料，每个阅读材料后有注释、词汇表及词汇和翻译练习。通过练习，切实有效地帮助读者在语篇环境中掌握关键词汇、词组的用法和提高翻译理解水平。

词汇练习围绕词汇表中出现的词（组）进行。翻译练习主要针对段落中比较重要的句子和含有常用句型的句子，目的是训练读者对所读材料的正确理解并提高英译汉水平。

另外，本书在选材和编写练习时也考虑到不同层次（从有一定英语基础的读者到研究生读者）的需要，难易兼顾。本书也可作为高校英语泛读材料。

本书编著者为执教多年、经验丰富的高校英语教师，她殷切希望本书能对广大英语爱好者，包括大学生及研究生了解美国文化、提高英语阅读能力等助一臂之力。

本书承蒙厦门大学外文系美国专家、文学博士 Gene Russell 教授的赞赏并欣然为之作序，在此深表谢意！

本书编著者
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Contents

Unit One

- Passage A Of Their Safe Voyage William Bradford
关于他们的平安航行.....(1)
- Passage B The American Revolution
美国革命.....(8)
- Passage C The Declaration of Independence
独立宣言.....(27)

Unit Two

- Passage A George Washington Thomas Jefferson
乔治·华盛顿.....(36)
- Passage B Grant and Lee Bruce Catton
格兰特和李.....(44)
- Passage C Lincoln Up Close Gore Vidal
走近林肯.....(55)

Unit Three

- Passage A Advice to Youth Mark Twain
对青年的劝告.....(66)

Passage B	The Nature of Liberty	H. L. Menken	
	自由的本质		(72)
Passage C	Running for Governor	Mark Twain	
	竞选州长		(82)
Passage D	Learning for Tomorrow	Alvin Toffler	
	为明天学习		(92)

Unit Four

Passage A	Three Days to See	Helen Keller	
	给我三天的光明		(101)
Passage B	Love Story	Erich Segal	
	爱情的故事		(109)
Passage C	The City	John V. Lindsay	
	城市		(123)
Passage D	Key to Management	Lee Iacocca	
	管理的秘诀		(132)

Unit Five

Passage A	Political Parties in the United States		
	美国的政党		(140)
Passage B	The Chief Executive	Ernest S. Griffith	
	行政长官		(149)

Passage C	The Inaugural Address	John F. Kennedy	
	就职演说		(160)

Unit Six

Passage A	Where Do All New Words Come From?		
	新词都是从哪里来的?		(168)

Passage B	The Cultural Differences between America and Other Countries	Alison R. Lanier	
	美国与其他国家的文化差异		(175)

Passage C	Schools in the United States	Alison R. Lanier	
	美国的学校		(187)

Appendix One: Key to Vocabulary Work			
	词汇练习答案		(195)

Appendix Two: Reference Translation			
	参考译文		(201)

Unit One

Passage A

Of Their Safe Voyage *From Of Plymouth Plantation*

by William Bradford ^[1]

Those troubles [caused by the unseaworthiness of their ships] being blown over, and now all being compact together prosperous wind, which continued divers ^[2] days together, which was some encouragement unto them; yet, according to the usual manner, many were afflicted with seasickness. And I may not omit here a special work of God's providence. There was a proud and very profane young man, one of the seamen, of a lusty, able body, which made him the more haughty; he would always be contemning the poor people in their sickness and cursing them daily with grievous execrations and did not let ^[3] to tell them that he hoped to help to cast half of them overboard before they came to their journey's end, and to make merry with what they had; and if he were by any gently reprov'd, he would curse and swear most bitterly. But it pleased God, before they came half seas over, to smite this young man with a grievous disease, of which he died in a desperate manner, and so was himself the first that was thrown overboard. Thus his curses light on his own head, and it was an astonishment to all his fellows for they noted it to be the just hand of God upon him.

After they had enjoyed fair winds and weather for a season, they were encountered many times with cross winds and met with many fierce storms with which the ship was shroudly ^[4] shaken, and her upper works made very leaky; and one of the main beams in the midships was bowed and cracked, which put them in some fear that the ship could not be able to perform the voyage. So some of the chief of the company, perceiving the mariners to fear

the sufficiency of the ship, as appeared by their mutterings, they entered into serious consultation with the master and other officers of the ship to consider in time of the danger, and rather to return than to cast themselves into a desperate and inevitable peril. And truly there was great distraction and difference of opinion amongst the mariners themselves; fain would they do what could be done for their wages' sake (being now near half the seas over) and on the other hand they were loath to hazard their lives too desperately. But in examining of all opinions, the master and others affirmed they knew the ship to be strong and firm under water, and for the buckling of the main beam, there was a great iron screw the passengers brought out of Holland, which would raise the beam, into its place; the which being done, the carpenter and master affirmed that with a post put under it, set firm in the lower deck and otherways bound, he would make it sufficient. And as for the decks and upper works, they would caulk them as well as they could, and though with the working of the ship they would not long keep staunch, yet there would otherwise be no great danger, if they did not overpress her with sails. So they committed themselves to the will of God and resolved to proceed.

In sundry of these storms the winds were so fierce and the seas so high as they could not bear a knot of sail, but were forced to hull for divers days together. And in one of them, as they thus lay at hull in a mighty storm, a lusty young man called John Howland, coming upon some occasions above the gratings, was, with a roll of the ship, thrown into sea; but it pleased God that he caught hold of the topsail halyards which hung overboard and ran out at length. Yet he held his hold (though he was sundry fathoms under water) till he was hauled up by the same rope to the brim of the water, and then with a boat hook and other means got into the ship again and his life saved. And though he was something ill with it, yet he lived many years after and became a profitable member both in church and commonwealth. In all this voyage there died but one of the passengers, which was William Butten, a youth, servant to Samuel

Fuller, when they drew near the coast.

But to omit other things (that I may be brief), after long beating at sea they fell with that land which is called Cape Cod; the which being made and certainly known to be it, they were not a little joyful. After some deliberation had amongst themselves and with the master of the ship, they tacked about and resolved to stand for the southward (the wind and weather being fair) to find some place about Hudson's River for their habitation. But after they had sailed that course about half the day, they were amongst dangerous shoals and roaring breakers, and they were so far entangled therewith as they conceived themselves in great danger; and the wind shrinking upon them withal they resolved to bear up again for the Cape and thought themselves happy to get out of those dangers before night overtook them, as by God's good providence they did. And the next day they got into the Cape Harbor where they rid ^[5] in safety ...

Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. And no marvel if they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca ^[6] was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his own Italy, as he affirmed, that he had rather remain twenty years on his way by land than pass by sea to any place in a short time, so tedious and dreadful was the same unto him.

But here I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor people's present condition; and so I think will the reader, too, when he well considers the same. Being thus past the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no friends to welcome them nor inns to entertain or refresh their weather-beaten bodies; no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor. It is recorded in Scripture as a mercy to the Apostle and

his shipwrecked company ^[7] that the barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows than otherwise. And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men—and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah ^[8] to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upwards to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face, and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue. If they looked behind them, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed and was now as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world ...

What could now sustain them but the Spirit of God and His grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: “Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice and looked on their adversity. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because He is good: and His mercies endure forever.”

Notes

[1]. William Bradford (1590—1657), one of the Pilgrim Fathers, elected governor of Plymouth Colony (1621—1657). His great history *Of Plymouth Plantation* is not only the history of the colony but his own story, revealing his

great devotion to the colony and the religious cause it represented. The history also reveals many qualities of the leader who saw Plymouth through its worst years.

[2]. divers: several

[3]. let: omit, leave undone

[4]. shroudly: an old form of the word *shrewdly*, here used to mean “severely”.

[5]. rid: here, the past tense of “ride.”

[6]. Seneca: a Roman statesman (14? B.C.—A.D.1965).

[7]. The Apostle (门徒) and his ship wrecked company: Acts (使徒行传) 28 in the Bible records the kindness shown to St. Paul and his shipwrecked companions by the natives of the island of Milita.

[8]. Pisgah: the mountain in Jordan from which Moses (摩西) viewed the Promised Land.

Vocabulary

unseaworthiness (*n.*) 不适于航海

haul (*n. v.*) 用力拖 (拉)

afflicted with 受折磨

fathom (*n.*) 呔

compact (*adj.*) 紧密的; 压紧的

tack (*n.*) 航向; 换向 (*v.*) 改变 (帆船) 航向

providence (*n.*) 天意

shoal (*n.*) 浅滩, 沙洲

profane (*adj.*) 亵渎神灵的; 不敬神的 (*v.*) 亵渎

entangle (*v.*) 使纠缠; 使卷入; 缠住

lusty (*adj.*) 强壮的; 精力充沛的

therewith (*adv.*) 此外, 又; (古) 随即

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 2. profane | b. stop the flow of |
| 3. lusty | c. various |
| 4. haughty | d. firmly and closely packed together; solid |
| 5. grievous | e. an uncivilized person |
| 6. staunch | f. showing disrespect to God or for holy things |
| 7. sundry | g. bad fortune; trouble |
| 8. fathom | h. appearing proud |
| 9. barbarian | i. very seriously harmful; severe |
| 10. adversity | j. a measure of the depth of water |

Exercise B

Fill in the blanks with the following:

hue therewith grating afflict with entangle
 hazard (v) fathom perish providence tack (n.)

1. It's awful to be _____ a sense of inferiority.
2. It seemed like _____ that the doctor happened to be passing just at the time of the accident.
3. He _____ all his money to save the business.
4. The coin fell through a _____ at the side of the road.
5. The boat sank in 20 _____.
6. The captain ordered a change of _____.
7. The bird became _____ in the net.
8. He is a speaker, and a fluent speaker _____.
9. Almost a hundred people _____ in the hotel fire last night.
10. The diamond shone with every _____ under the sun.

Exercise C

Translate the underlined parts of the article into Chinese.

Passage B

The American Revolution

The American Revolution ^[1] broke out on April 19, 1775. Only twelve years earlier, in 1763, the British and the American colonists had rejoiced together as one people in ^[2] their great victory over France. Subsequent events, however, led to armed combat between England and her colonies. The initial tensions and misunderstandings began over the sudden British restrictions on colonial expansion into the newly won lands in the West. They were added to by conflicting trade policies which widened to include arguments over taxation. Finally the whole controversy exploded into the arena of basic political rights. In the short interval of 12 years, the breaking point had been reached, and only war could decide the issues.

One of the first problems facing England after the Seven Years War ^[3] was that of organizing the territories won from France. In her policies Britain wanted to be friendly and just to the French and inhabitants of Canada and the Ohio Valley. But here she came into conflict with the interests of the American colonies which were eager to exploit the new territories for themselves. Needing new land because of increasing population, various colonies claimed their charters gave them the right to expand into the western areas. As a result, colonists were already pouring westward through the mountain passes. The British government feared that these pioneers would provoke the Indians into war. In fact, a bloody Indian uprising in 1763 confirmed these fears and forced England to take action. Consequently, the Crown issued a proclamation which, among other things ^[4], forbade colonial settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains ^[5]. Thus at one stroke, England threatened the western land claims of the colonies and attempted to control western expansion. Though never effectively enforced, the proclamation was considered by the colonists to disregard their right to occupy western lands.

Also serious in its effect on the colonies was England's new financial