

# 英美概况

(修订版)

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张奎武 主编

**SURVEY OF  
BRITAIN AND  
AMERICA**

吉林科学技术出版社

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# **英 美 概 况**

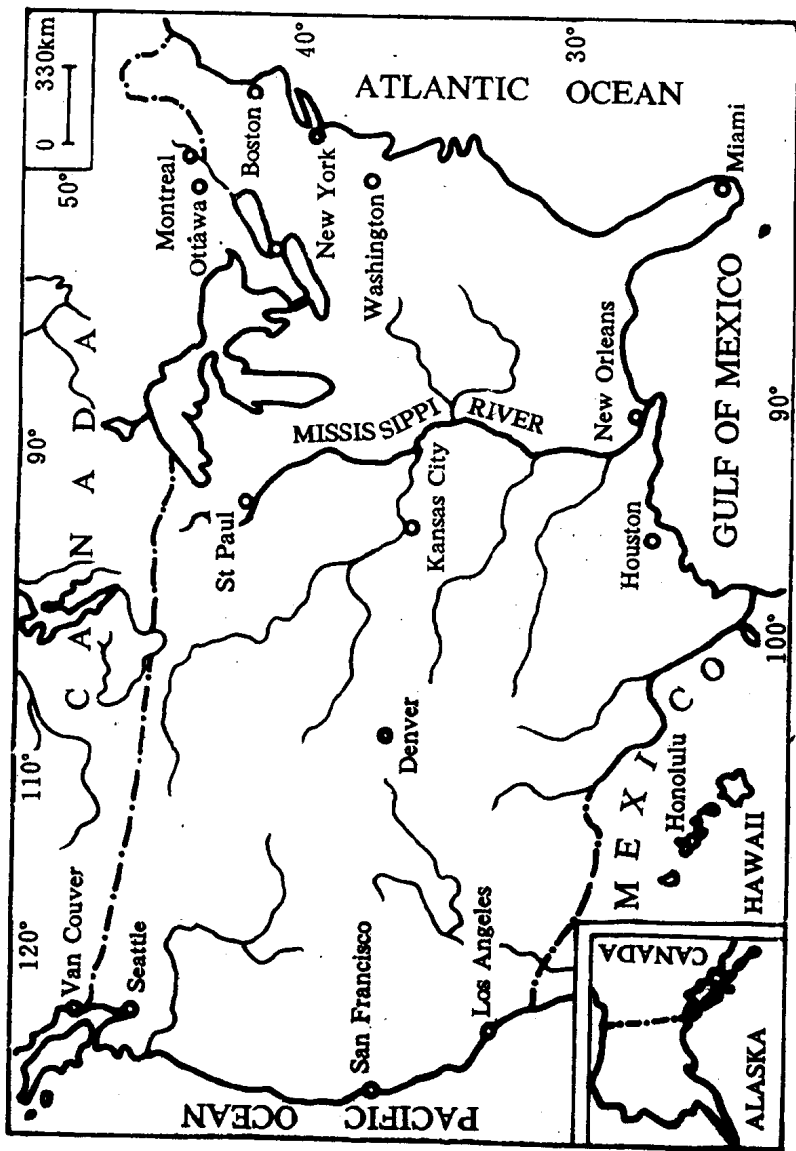
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## PART ONE GEOGRAPHY

### 内 容 提 要

美国是一个幅员辽阔，地理条件比较复杂的国家。在这一编里，我们只是简略地介绍一下美国地理的一般情况。

第一章扼要地介绍了美国大陆本土的自然地理轮廓。美国大陆自东向西形成三大自然区域——东部的阿巴拉契亚山地，中间的中部大平原和西部的科迪勒拉山系。这种自然环境构成了两侧高、中间低的地形特征。在这三大区域内分布着三大水系——大西洋水系、墨西哥湾水系和太平洋水系。重要的河流有密西西比河、哈得孙河、特拉华河、哥伦比亚河及科罗拉多河等。在美国东北部有世界最大的淡水湖群——五大湖和世界著名的尼亚加拉大瀑布。北美最大的咸水湖——大盐湖位于美国西部的犹他州。这一章还简要地介绍了美国大陆的气候类型和各个区域的气候特点，并谈到了美国丰富的矿物、森林和水力资源以及美国国土形成的历史。

第二章简单介绍了美国人口的构成和分布情况。美国总人口约二亿五千六百五十五万八千（1993），其中白种人占百分之八十以上，黑人约占百分之十一点六，余为其他少数民族，包括印第安人、墨西哥人、波多黎各人、中国人、日本人及菲律宾人等。美国人口的分布很不均匀，将近半数人口居住在两大洋沿岸地区、五大湖地区和墨西哥湾沿岸地区。

第三章介绍了构成美国全部国土的八大区域——新英格兰地

区、大西洋中部地区、南部地区、中西部地区、大平原地区、西部地区、阿拉斯加地区与夏威夷地区。我们在本章内简述了各区的地理位置、自然特点、经济特点及该区内的主要城市，如大西洋中部地区所属六州被看做是美国的经济中心和工业心脏，纽约市为美国的最大海港城市等。

第四章概要介绍了美国的三大工业区及若干重要的农作物种植带。三大工业区包括东北部工业区、南部工业区和西部工业区。在这三大工业区中，最重要的是东北工业区，该区集中了全国四分之三的制造业和加工工业，经济发展水平在全国最高。在南部工业区中，石油开采业最为重要。该区为美国石油工业、飞机工业、宇宙航空、电子光学和棉纺织业的重要基地。自从40年代以来，美国西部工业，特别是与军事有关的宇宙航空、原子能、飞机制造和电影工业发展很快。从总的趋势来看，美国的工业重心在向西南转移，以休斯敦和洛杉矶为轴心的新的工业体系正在形成和发展。美国农业生产的特征是高度机械化、高度专业化与高度商品化，因此形成了若干比较明显的农作物种植带：乳酪带——东北部和五大湖地区；小麦带——中部大平原西部；玉米带——五大湖以南诸州；棉花带——东南部（东起大西洋沿岸、西至得克萨斯州东部）；水果、蔬菜带——太平洋沿岸南部地区。

最后一章介绍了美国若干重要城市，并简述了各个城市的历史、地理位置、经济特点、风景名胜以及它们在美国人民生活中的作用。这些城市包括首都华盛顿，东北部的纽约、芝加哥、费城、底特律、波士顿、匹兹堡、圣路易斯，西部地区的洛杉矶与旧金山，南部地区的休斯敦。



## **Chapter I A General Introduction to Physical Geography**

The United States is situated in the central part of North America with its two youngest states—Alaska in the northwestern part of North America and Hawaii in the central Pacific. The country is bounded by Canada on the north and by Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico on the south with the Atlantic Ocean on the east and Pacific Ocean on the west. The total area of the country is 9 372 614 square kilometers. The total population is about 256 558 000 (1993). The whole country includes 50 states and a federal district, the District of Columbia, which is the seat of the Federal Government.

### **1. Three Geographical Divisions**

The United States can be divided into three parts according to its geographical features; the eastern part, the western part, and the great central plain in between.

(1) The eastern part is made up of the highlands formed by the Appalachian Range. It holds one sixth of the national territory on the continent. These highlands are relatively low. The average altitude is only 800 meters above sea level. The range begins from north Maine and reaches to central Alabama, covering a distance of 1 200 miles. The average width of the upland belt is not more than 300 miles. Three components make up this upland belt, the Piedmont

Plateau in the east, the Appalachian Plateaus in the west and the Appalachian Range in the middle.

In the east of the upland belt lies the Atlantic Coastal Plain, which begins south of New York City, includes southward the entire peninsula of Florida, and merges with the wide Gulf Plain. The Atlantic Coastal Plain is bounded on the west by the "Fall Line" creating the passage to the Piedmont lying beyond, where the rivers are marked by water-falls and rapids.

(2) The western part consists of high plateaus and mountains formed by the Great Cordillera Range, extending from Canada through the western part of the United States to Mexico and further south. From west to east, this mountain system is composed of the Coast Range, the Cascades and the Rocky Mountains. The whole area of this part holds one third of the country's territory on the continent.

The Rocky Mountains reach from the Canadian border in Montana and Idaho, through Wyoming, Utah and Colorado, into New Mexico having an average altitude of more than 3 000 meters above sea level. The worldknown Yellowstone National Park is located in the northwestern part of Wyoming. It is the oldest national park in the world and the largest wildlife preserve in the United States. It covers 2 219 785 acres. Established in 1872, the park got its name from the yellow rocks lining the Yellowstone River section north of it. Yellowstone has thousands of hot springs and over 200 geysers (hot springs that shoot steam and boiling water into the air). Old Faithful is the most famous geyser in the park, erupting more than 100 feet in the air about every 73 minutes.

In the west of the Rocky Mountains lie two plateaus; the Colorado Plateaus in the south along the Colorado River and the

Columbia Plateau in the north, bearing the name of the Columbia River which runs through the plateau.

The Colorado Plateaus are threaded by many deep valleys or canyons among which the best known is Colorado Valley, also called Grand Canyon, in northern Arizona. It is one of the great natural wonders of the world. It measures about 277 miles long, up to 18 miles wide, and more than a mile deep. The walls of the Grand Canyon show layers that tell the story of the formation of the earth. Visitors can hike or ride mules down to the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon where the Havasupai Indians have lived for hundreds of years.

Between the two plateaus lies the Great Basin, including the whole of Nevada, a small section of Oregon and the southeastern part of California. It is the driest part of the country. Along the border between Oregon and Idaho is Hells Canyon, the deepest chasm in North America. The powerful Snake River has carved out depths of up to 2 408 meters here. Much of southeastern California is desert. The Sierra Nevada, in eastern California, is the highest mountain range in the continental United States. Beautiful waterfalls and steep mountains in Yosemite National Park offer spectacular views. Farther north along the coastline are forests of beautiful redwoods. These trees grow to heights of 91 meters and are the tallest living things on earth.

Along the Pacific Coast Line is the Pacific Mountain System which contains two major chains of mountains. The first chain includes the Cascade Range in Oregon and Washington, lower and broader, stretching southward until it reaches the Sierra Nevada, which is high and deep. Along the Pacific border is the second chain, which includes the California Coast Range, the Oregon Coast

Range, etc.

Between the two chains of mountains lies the broad and rich valley, the valley of California which is 450 miles long and 50 miles wide. In eastern California lies Death Valley, 85 meters below sea level. It is the lowest point in the whole of North America.

(3) Between the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachians lies the central plain which occupies one second of America's landmass on the continent. It stretches from the Great Lakes in the north to the Gulf of Mexico in the south. Drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries, it slopes towards the east where it merges with the Atlantic Coast Plain.

The western part of the central plain is also called the "Great Plains." This region stretches from central Texas to the Canadian border with 1 200 miles in length and 300 miles in width. The eastern part of the central plain is the central lowlands, which are the most important agricultural area in the United States. The Gulf Plains are a vast area of lowland, including all of Mississippi and Louisiana, the greater part of Florida, Alabama and Texas; and lesser areas in western Tennessee and Kentucky.

## **2. The Three Major River Systems**

The three river systems in the United States are the system of the Gulf, the system of the Atlantic and the system of the Pacific.

The Rocky Mountains form the most important continental divide in North America, separating the system of the Atlantic and the system of the Pacific.

(1) The Mississippi River is the longest and the most important river in the system of the Gulf. It flows from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, having the length of 6 262 kilometers and a

drainage area of 3 225 000 square kilometers. It is one of the greatest rivers in the world. The Mississippi has many tributaries, among which the Missouri and the Ohio are two of its largest ones. These rivers form an important inland navigation and irrigation system.

(2) There are no long rivers in the system of the Atlantic. The Hudson River, linked by canals with the five Great Lakes, flows through the state of New York, having a length of only 520 kilometers. It is, however, one of the main arteries for inland waterway traffic. The Delaware River forms the boundary of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Washington, the capital of the U. S. A., is on the Potomac River. The St. Lawrence River forms part of the boundary between Canada and the U. S. A., serving as an international river.

(3) In the system of the Pacific, there are two major rivers; the Columbia River and the Colorado River. They flow through the western plateaus and are rich in potential water power resources due to their swift currents. The Columbia River rises in Canada and flows through Washington State and forms part of the boundary between Oregon and Washington. It finally empties into the Pacific. The Colorado River flows through Colorado, Utah, Arizona and forms part of the boundary between California and Arizona and then pours into the Gulf of California.

The five Great Lakes lying between the boundary of Canada and the United States are; Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. Among the five, Superior is the largest freshwater lake of its kind in the world. Lake Michigan is wholly within the United States while the other four run along the national boundary between the U. S. A. and Canada. The five Great Lakes are open to navigation by large steamers.

The world-famous Niagara Falls are located on the U. S. -

Canadian boundary between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The width of the Falls is about 1 240 meters and the drop average 49 meters.

In northern Utah, there is a lake called the Great Salt Lake. It is the largest inland salt lake in North America.

### 3. Climate

The climate in the United States varies from coast to coast. Temperatures change from 20 degrees centigrade below zero in winter to nearly 25 degrees centigrade above zero in summer. Taking the country as a whole, we may classify the climate in the country as one of continental or as one of mild subtropical zones with only the southern part of Florida being tropical.

The south, the southwest and California have a warmer climate with moist air. But in the western plateaus including Nevada, Arizona, Utah and parts of Idaho and Colorado, days are hot and nights cool. The weather is dry and there is little rain for the breezes of the Pacific lose their moisture as they hit the mountains.

In the northeast (New England) and the areas around the Great Lakes, the weather is hot in summer and cold in winter. There is much rain and snow.

The Gulf Plain and the southeastern part enjoy warm weather and moist air.

In the central plain, the weather is hot in summer and cold in winter during which there is much snow.

Almost through the middle of the country, north and south, runs a well-known 50 centimeter Rain-fall Line, in the east of which there is comparatively more rain so agriculture is easy; but in the west of which there is much less rain (less than 50 cm. a year) with

the exception of the coastal areas along the Pacific. These areas are especially favored by the prevailing winds, which gather the rains as they leave the ocean.

The Cascade and the Sierra Nevada Mountains, due to their locations close to the coast, catch the largest share of the rain coming from the ocean before it can go further inland. So there is too little rain available for almost the whole western half of the country.

#### **4. Natural Resources**

The United States is rich in natural resources in deposits, forestry, water power, etc.

The following deposits rank first in the capitalist countries; coal, natural gas, aluminum, zinc, silver, molybdenum, uranium and zirconium. There are also large reserves of iron ore, phosphorus, copper, gold, sylvite and sulfur.

What the country is short of is deposits in manganese, chromium, nickel, tin, cobalt stibium, diamond and mica, which have to be imported from abroad.

One fourth of the country's territory is covered with forests which mainly concentrate upon three areas; the area along the north western coast of the Pacific, the area in the south and the area in the north.

America has rich water power resources, the total of which is about 130 billion watts. These resources come mainly from the Columbia River, the Colorado River, the Ohio River, the St. Lawrence River and the five Great Lakes.

#### **5. Territory**

The United States today is the fourth largest country in size in

the world. When the colonies gained their independence and set up the new country two hundred years ago, there were, however, only thirteen states, located along the Atlantic in a narrow strip.

Along with the rapid growth of the country, the external expansion and aggression proceeded on for more than a century, resulting in the United States of the present size.

Besides the original thirteen colonies, the area west to the Mississippi River became part of America in the Treaty of Paris between Britain and the U. S. in 1783.

In 1803, the United States took advantage of the European War and purchased the vast area of Louisiana from Napoleon I with \$ 15 000 000. The national territory was doubled with this addition.

In 1819, the Spanish colony of Florida became part of the country's territory.

Texas, having belonged to Mexico, was annexed by the U. S. in 1845. As a result of the U. S. -Mexican War breaking out in 1846, a vast area of the Mexico's territory, some 944 825 square miles was turned to the U. S. The area embraces the present states of Texas, Colorado, California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and part of Wyoming. Half of the entire territory of Mexico was thus lost.

In 1867, America purchased the present state of Alaska from Russia at a price of \$ 7 200 000. It is now the largest state in the country, more than 1 500 000 square kilometers.

The Hawaiian Islands, which fell into the U. S. ' control in 1889, are situated in the Pacific and became the fiftieth state of the Union in 1959.



*Exercise 1. Answer the following questions:*

- (1) How is the American territory on the continent divided?
- (2) What are the general features of the American territory of the continent?
- (3) What are the features of each of the three divisions?
- (4) What are the major characteristics of each of the three river systems?
- (5) What are the types and the features of the climate in the U. S. ?

*Exercise 2. Explain the following terms:*

- (1) the District of Columbia
- (2) the Fall Line
- (3) the Appalachian Range
- (4) the Cordillera Range
- (5) the Great Basin
- (6) the great central plain
- (7) the Great Plains
- (8) the Mississippi River
- (9) the five Great Lakes
- (10) the Niagara Falls
- (11) Yellowstone National Park
- (12) Grand Canyon
- (13) Old Faithful