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Part I

USA: A Survey

Chapter One:

The Land and the People

The United States is a varied land — of forests, deserts, mountains, high flat lands and fertile plains. Almost every kind of climate may be found but the country lies mostly in the temperate zone. The continental United States stretches 4 500 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west. It borders Canada on the north, and reaches south to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico. A fast railroad train, traveling 96 kilometers an hour, takes more than 48 hours to cross the country.

A jet plane crosses the cóntinental United States from east to west in about five hours. Taking off from an Atlantic coast airport, the plane is soon flying over the gentle slopes of the Appalachian Mountains. Then, for hundreds of kilometers it crosses the fertile fields of the farm belt of the great Middle West. To the north, on clear days, passengers may see the five Great Lakes located between the United States and Canada. Continuing into the West, the plane flies over vast prairies and rough cattle–grazing country. Soon the snow–topped Rocky Mountains appear in the distance. After crossing these high ranges, the plane can almost glide down into the rich valleys of California and, finally, to a landing not far from the beaches of the Pacific Ocean.

Including the states of Alaska and Hawaii, the United States covers an area of 9 363 123 square kilometers. Alaska borders on northwestern Canada; Hawaii lies in the Pacific 3 857 kilometers from the San Francisco. Alaska is the largest in area of the 50 states, and Texas, in the southern part of the country, is second in size. Texas alone is larger than France, and Alaska is twice as big as Texas.

From the Appalachian Mountains in the East to the Rocky Mountains in the West, the center of the country is drained by the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and their branches. These rivers from a 19 000–kilometer system of waterways that are connected to the Great Lakes in the north by a canal. The Mississippi is one of the world's great rivers; it was known to American Indians as the " father of waters" . Water from the source of its main branch, the Missouri River, flows about 6 020 kilometers from the northern Rocky Mountains, to the mouth of the Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico.

Other important rivers are the Yukon in Alaska, 2 554 kilometers long; the Rio Grande, which flows for 3 050 kilometers and forms part of the United States–Mexico border; the Columbia, which rises in western Canada and continues in the United States for about 1 954 kilometers west of the Rocky Mountains; and the Colorado, which begins in the Rocky Mountains and flows southwest for some 2 320 kilometers. For 342 of these kilometers the Colorado flows through the magnificent Grand Canyon, carved through the ages by the river's waters. Other well–known rivers include the Hudson, which meets the Atlantic Ocean at New York City; the Potomac, bordering the national capital at Washington; and the Ohio, a branch of the Mississippi that flows west from the Appalachian Mountains.

The 'Melting Pot'

The United States has long been known as a "melting pot," because many of its people are descended from settlers who came from all over the world to make their homes in the new land, which was sparsely populated by native Indian tribes. The first immigrants in American history came from England and the Netherlands. Attracted by reports of great economic opportunities and religious and political freedom, immigrants from many other countries flocked to the United States in increasing numbers, reaching a peak in the years 1880–1914. Between 1820 and 1973, the United States admitted more than 46 million immigrants. The greatest num-

bers came from Europe, but many came also from Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Canada.

Some 825 000 American Indians, descendants of North America's first inhabitants, now reside in the United States. Most live in the West, but many are in the south and south and north central areas. Of the more than 300 separate tribes, the largest is the Navaho in the Southwest.

Black people were first brought to America from Africa as slaves (in 1863 President Abraham Lincoln freed all who remained enslaved). Their descendants now make up more than 12 percent of the population. They once lived mainly in the agricultural South but now are scattered throughout the nation. In the mid–western city of Chicago, for example, there are more than one million black residents — more than three times as many as in 1940. New York State has the largest black population — 2 170 000 an increase of more than three–quarters of a million in 10 years.

In Hawaii, more than a third of the residents are of Japanese descent, a third are Caucasians, about 15 percent are of Polynesian background, and the others are mainly of Filipino, Korean, and Chinese descent.

Every 10 years the United States makes a complete count, or census, of its people and industries. When the first count was made in 1790 the new nation had fewer than 4 million people, almost all living along the East Coast. Today, there are more than 236 million. In the past 20 years many people have moved to the western and southern parts of the country. The State of California on the Pacific Coast now has the largest population and the Atlantic Coast State of New York is second. The southern State of Florida, known for its pleasant climate, has almost twice the number of residents it had in 1950.

The American people are always on the move — from one part of the country to another, from one city to another, from farm to city, from the city to the suburbs. One in ten Americans moves to a new home every year seeking new job opportunities, a better climate, or for other reasons, Many industries have scattered their factories, often far from the

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parent plant, and many of their workers have decided to try the new locations.

Today three out of four Americans live in towns, cities or suburbs; about 54 million live in rural areas. Two-thirds of all families live in separate households, and 64.2 percent own their own homes. The number of households has increased from 43 million in 1950 to about 65 million. This is due in part to medical discoveries which have greatly reduced infant mortality and extended life expectancy.

New York City is America's largest city. Its population was 7 million. At the same time, the population of its suburbs was nearly 10 million more. The city's 1 040 kilometers of waterfront give it the largest harbor in the world. It is visited by nearly 17 000 ships annually. Some 500 000 ship passengers and another 40 million air travelers pass through New York yearly.

Chicago is the second largest city, with 3 million inhabitants. Los Angeles, California, is third with a population of 3 million. Philadelphia, fourth largest, has about 2 million people, Philadelphia is important in American history, because the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were born there.

The nation's capital, Washington, is seventh in population with about 638 432 residents. Specially planned and built as a national capital, Washington was laid out by French architect Pierre L'Enfant late in the 18th century. A city of great beauty is also becoming a leading cultural center.

Some of the large cities, such as Chicago, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Detroit, Michigan, have lost population, to their suburbs (the surrounding areas just outside the cities) where there is more room for gardens and places for children to play. Shopping centers, schools, churches, theaters and community centers have been built in great numbers to serve the increasing numbers of people living in the suburbs.

Chapter Two:
Natural Resources

Water

The availability of water has been an important factor in America's growth. The nation is blessed with large supplies of fresh water except in the desert regions of the West. Such mighty rivers as the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Hudson and the Colorado irrigate the croplands of hundreds of miles of fertile valleys. The early development of a prosperous agricultural system and the later development of an industrial base were made possible largely by vast water resources.

Today the rivers and streams of America furnish 63 percent of the water supply for cities, towns and farmlands, 93 percent of the water used by industry, and almost all of the water used to create electric power. In the earliest days, the rivers were the most important means of transportation for people and commercial goods, and they are still major carriers of freight. Nowadays, as increasing water consumption threatens the reserve supplies, the United States Department of the Interior has been actively developing practical ways to convert ocean water into fresh water. A number of desalinization plants are already in operation.

Forests

About a third of the land area of the United States is covered by forests, and more than 240 million hectares is commercial forest land. Properly managed forests prevent flooding and soil erosion, and stabilize climatic conditions. Wood, resins and other forest products are the basic raw materials of several of the nation's largest industries.

Despite the heavy use of forest products, the nation now grows more timber than it cuts. Federal and state governments and industries have joined ina major tree–planting program.

About 91 million hectares of U.S. forest land is reserved by law as " National Forest" for the use of all the people.

These 155 protected forests provide Americans with large recreation areas and they also serve as essential watersheds and safe habitats for wildlife. In the West more than 3 600 000 cattle, horses, swine, sheep and goats graze on the open lands of the National Forests, which are rented as pastureland in order to control excessive plant growth.

Metals and Minerals

The United States is rich in most of the metals and minerals needed to supply its basic industries. Three–quarters of the ore comes from the Lake Superior region of the Great Lakes. Although much of the high–grade ore has been used, there remains enough low–grade ore to last for centuries. Industry already has developed practical methods for getting iron from taconite — a hard, ore–bearing rock found in virtually unlimited quantities in the Lake Superior region.

Coal is the second major natural resource found in large quantities in the United States. There are sufficient reserves to last hundreds of years. Most of the coal is used by steam plants to produce electricity, with about half of the nation's electric power coming from such plants. Much coal also is used in chemical industries for the manufacture of plastics and other synthetics.

Oil wells in the United States produce more than 3 200 million barrels of petroleum a year. The production, processing and marketing of such petroleum products as gasoline and oil make up one of America's largest industries. The Alaska pipeline, completed in 1977, stretches for 1 290 kilometers and pipes 1.2 million barrels of petroleum a day from the northern oil fields to a port on the south coast.

Natural and manufactured gas supplies more than 33 percent of the nation's power. Natural gas is carried by huge pipelines thousands of kilometers from oil and gas fields to cities and towns to heat homes and buildings and to operate industrial plants.

Other basic metals and minerals mined on a large scale in the United States include zinc, copper, silver and phosphate rock — which is used for fertilizers.

Chapter Three:
Fields of Activity

Professions

Technological progress in recent years has brought about a sizable increase in the number of persons engaged in professional and technical work. Today 50 percent of employed persons have professional and technical occupations, compared with 37 percent in 1950.

In 1870, nearly 75 percent of professionals were in medicine, the ministry, law or teaching, compared with only 34 percent at present. These occupations have grown over the years, but at a slower rate than some of the newer professions. For example, there are four times as many doctors today as in 1870, while the number of persons in scientific,engineering and related fields has increased almost 30 times.

There are more than 3 million full–time teachers. The nation's public elementary schools employ 1.2 million teachers — well over half of them women — and several thousand principals and supervisors. Some 250 000 teachers are employed by private elementary and secondary schools. The colleges and universities employ about 840 000 scholars and educators.

There are about 2 million physicians, pharmacists, dentists and nurses. The educational requirements for these professions are high, ranging from at least two years of college level training for nurses to at least eight years of college study and hospital experience for physicians. More than 1 164 000 Americans are registered nurses, all but 15 000 of them women.

American physicians number 430 000 or one for every 526 persons. Physicians must complete seven or eight years of study and two years more to specialize in a particular field. They also work two or three years in a hospital before entering private practice.

Dentists must complete at least six years of college training before they are admitted to practice. Ninety percent of

the nation's 126 000 dentists are in private practice.

The United States has more than a million engineers who design and develop everything from household goods to space satellites. In addition to a bachelor's degree from an engineering school, many engineers obtain advanced degrees. Four–fifths of them work for private industry.

The age of science has created a heavy demand for persons trained in chemistry, physics, biology and mathematics. About 300 000 men and women work in these fields — a huge increase since 1930. About 150 000 are chemists; nearly 11 percent of them are women. About 19 000 of 48 000 physicists work for private companies and many also teach physics. The science professions require at least four years of college training.

There are 865 000 professional accountants and auditors, including about 17 300 certified public accountants (CPA's). To qualify as a CPA one must pass examinations and meet educational and experience requirements established by state laws.

There are about 400 000 lawyers, most of whom are in private practice. The Federal Government employs about 29 000 and a similar number work for state and local governments. Lawyers must have four years of college and three years of professional training in a law school. They must also pass an examination given by the state in which they want to practice.

Service

More people in the United States today are engaged in occupations other than manufacturing, mining or agriculture than at any time in the past. This trend is expected to continue over the next 10 years, especially in such rapidly growing fields as finance, banking and insurance.

Over 12 million are in service jobs in state and local governments, engaged in police and fire protection and office duties. Some three million work for the Federal Government.

Americans today are spending for services (things peo-

ple need or want that are intangible products) more than 40 percent of their incomes.

Banking and Finance

The Federal Reserve Board, an independent government agency, was established in 1913 to help stabilize and coordinate the nation's commercial banks. About 6 000 of the 14 000 banks belong to the system, which operates through a Federal Reserve Bank in each of 12 geographical districts. The member banks handle more than three–quarters of all U. S. bank deposits. The Federal Reserve Banks lend money to member banks for the cash reserves they are required to hold, issue paper money, act as check clearinghouses and provide other services.

The Federal Reserve Board can increase or decrease the percentage of cash reserve requirements, and can raise or lower the interest rates banks must pay for loans from the Federal Reserve Banks. Those powers enable the Board to influence the availability and cost of money for loans, and thereby to check inflationary or deflationary trends in the economy.

Most business and industrial activity in the United States is financed by loans from commercial banks and from insurance companies. The money for bank loans consists of deposits from businesses and individuals, and from bank investment profits. A portion of the investment profits is returned to depositors in the form of services and of interest on savings accounts. The money for insurance–company lending comes from the annual premiums paid by individuals and businesses for insurance policies.

Money saved by individuals is usually deposited for safekeeping in interest–bearing accounts in one or more of four types of private institutions: commercial banks, savings banks, savings and loan associations and group credit unions. Interest–bearing U. S. government savings bonds are also available and widely used. Almost all the private savings institutions buy insurance offered by federal government corporations to protect individual savings accounts up to $

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40 000 each.

Most of the money deposited in these individual savings accounts is used by the institutions to finance the purchase, building or remodeling of private homes.

Agriculture

Nature was generous in giving the United States plenty of fertile soil, along with a climate that is mostly moderate, twenty percent of the land area of the United States is farmland. Some 160 million hectares are harvested cropland, and about 360 million hectares are permanent pasture land. Almost 235 million hectares of the cropland is irrigated.

There are about 2 480 000 farms. The average size is 168 hectares, but in the eastern part of the country many farms are much smaller and family members do most of the work.

Over the past 50 years farm population has decreased greatly, so that by 1978 only about 8 million persons lived on farms. Nevertheless, there has been a tremendous increase in production. Besides providing ample food for its own people, for years the United States has sent millions of kilograms of food to other countries. The principal crops are corn (maize), wheat, cotton, tobacco and fruit.

Scientific methods of farming including development of sturdy, disease–resistant hybrid seeds, and the use of machines are responsible for the production increase. Over 1 million machines (combines) for harvesting grain, and some 5 million tractors are in use. In fact, tractors have reduced the need for work animals so much that 32 million hectares once used to grow feed for the animals are now available for other crops.

Use of fertilizers, chemicals to control or destroy weeds and harmful insects, and improved methods of controlling plant and animal diseases has boosted farm production. Modern methods of freezing, canning, storing, packaging and marketing farm products avoid waste and spoilage and make it possible for consumers to enjoy perishable foods not only during the growing season but year – round.

Fishing

Each year an estimated 140 000 commercial fishermen in the United States catch about $ 2 000 million worth of fish from 90 000 fishing boats. More than half of the fish caught are used for food. The remainder is converted into fish meal for animals or fish oil for industrial use and export.

A third of the fish for human use is marketed fresh or frozen, some of it is canned, and a small portion is salted or smoked. The average American eats about five kilograms of fish each year.

Electric Power

The production of electric power in the United States has doubled every 10 years for the past half–century. Today, nearly every home has electric lights, and 99 percent of the nation's farms have electricity.

Total annual production of electrical energy used for light, power, heat and air–conditioning is over 2 292 800 million kilowatt hours. About half of it is used by industry. American homes have many kinds of electrical equipment that make the housework easier.

Most of the electric power is produced and sold by privately owned companies. A federal government project, the Tennessee Valley Authority, uses hydroelectric power to generate a large part of the electricity used in several south–eastern states.

In 1957, atomic energy was used for the first time to produce electric power for industry. In 1982, nuclear plants produced twelve percent of the national total.

Manufacturing Industries

Some 20 million Americans are employed in manufacturing, including nearly 5 million engaged in the manufacture of machinery (excluding electrical and transportation equipments). Other industries with more than a million workers each include production of food and related products, clothing, metal goods, electrical machinery, wood products and furniture, textiles and printing, publishing and

paper products. Canned fish and lumber are the chief manufactured products of the State of Alaska, and those of Hawaii are sugar and canned pineapples.

In recent years there have been great increases in the number of engineers and scientists employed in American industries. There is new emphasis on research and development of labor–saving machines. For example, electronic "brains" now do in a few hours mathematical problems that once took weeks of human effort. Some of the oil and chemical industries are built almost entirely around self–acting controls. Machines are doing more and more of the work of processing, assembling, packaging and distributing products. Industry today turns out more products at greater speed and with less labor, to meet the demands of the rapidly increasing population.

For the American economy as a whole, the total value of the year's output of goods and services (Gross National Product) in 1981 was $2 925 500 million.

The growing use of machines to perform routine tasks in agriculture, industry and other fields has brought about a shift of workers to new employment. Though some have been displaced because of automation, most have been absorbed by new industries and by growth of service and leisure businesses and industries.

Other changes have taken place. Today industry reinvests twice as much of its profit in modernization and development as it did a century ago. New industries are formed as new discoveries are made. Atomic energy, for example, has created a wide range of new activities. So has the invention of plastic materials which are used in many products. Electronics has become a major industry, employing more than a million people. About 80 percent of the products of one leading electronics firm did not exist 10 years ago. Scientists head many small electronics companies.

Throughout American industry greater emphasis is being placed on management training. Schools, such as the Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration are training young people for business and industrial

leadership.

Most American industry is located in the eastern part of the country, but the West and South are now turning more and more from dependence on agriculture. And industries are spreading out, building modern factories far from the home plant, closer to natural resources, markets, and a supply of skilled labor. Many of these plants have garden-like surroundings and large parking areas for the workers' automobiles. Industries have been able to scatter their factories because power sources are now widely available, transportation facilities are plentiful, and rapid communication systems make it possible for main plants to keep constantly in touch with branch factories.

Transportation

The automobile is the most popular means of transportation. More than 123.46 million passenger cars are in operation. About 10 million passenger cars, trucks and buses come off the assembly lines every year, and the manufacture of motor vehicles and allied production is a $ 200 000 million industry.

The automobile has brought many changes in American life — for example, the remarkable growth of the suburbs in the past 25 years. Many persons who work in the cities now enjoy country living because of good roads and the use of the automobile.

Heavy use of the nation's highways has created a demand for roadside businesses of various kinds, including outdoor movie theaters where audiences watch films from their automobiles, and convenient roadside hotels known as " Motels." Motels are usually located on main roads near cities and at seaside and other resort areas. They are made up of a series of bedroom-and-bath units and nearby parking spaces. Many of the units are equipped with television and air-conditioning. Restaurants and swimming pools are available at most of the large motels. The number of motels has grown so rapidly in recent years that their total annual income has surpassed that of American hotels.

Throughout the United States there are some 5 270 000 kilometers of hard–surface roads, and more than 1 million kilometers of other roads. A 68 400–kilometer interstate system of freeways crisscrosses the country, linking all major cities.

Buses have replaced streetcars for public transportation in most cities and towns. The suburban areas usually have railroad or bus transportation to neighboring towns. Buses are often used by travelers for long trips. Fares are less than on railroads or airlines, and many of the large, modern buses provide restrooms on board.

The airplane is a popular means of travel, with 12 700 civil airports and more than 246.7 million passengers a year. There are 37 scheduled airlines. Twenty–six regional control centers direct air traffic between cities.

About a decade ago, the U. S. Government took over most of the railroad passenger routes from private companies which were losing money on passenger service. Consolidation of routes and modern equipment provided by the government have improved passenger service, but it still does not break even financially.

Commercial cargoes are transported by highway, water and rail. One recent innovation is "containerized" cargo. At the factory, crates of goods are placed in large metal containers on wheels, the containers are sealed and hitched to trucks to be taken to railroad centers or ports, where large cranes lift them onto freight cars, barges or ships.

The Mississippi River has always been a freight carrier. Transportation by water to the North Central region was helped greatly when the St. Lawrence Seaway was opened by the United States and Canada in 1959. Large ocean vessels can now sail directly to cities on the Great Lakes. About 40 percent of all water transportation in the nation's interior is carried on the Great Lakes.

Foreign Trade

Principal U. S. goods in the export trade are machinery, agricultural products, automotive products, aircraft and

chemicals. The leading U.S. imports are petroleum and petroleum products, automotive products, foods and beverages (including coffee), machinery, and iron and steel products.

In 1982, U. S. exports were valued at $ 206 044 million and its imports at $ 253 033 million.

Communications

Radio and television have become major communications media. Almost all domestic broadcasting is done by private organizations. The government does no domestic broadcasting and has no control over the contents of programs. In 1981 some 488 million radios were in use and 96 percent of American homes had television. Today 8 531 radio and 972 television stations bring entertainment, news, educational and cultural programs to the people. Hundreds of stations broadcast in languages other than English. Also, there are more than 1 million special–purpose radio stations that serve the needs of public safety, aviation, industry, sea and land transportation. More than 355 200 Americans hold licenses as amateur radio operators.

The postal system, operated by an independent agency of the Federal Government, employs some 656 000 workers at nearly 40 000 post offices handling 97 000 million pieces of mail a year. The mail is delivered to every residence daily except Sundays. Farm homes are served by 31 000 rural mail delivery routes.

Much of the personal as well as business communication is carried by the nation's more than 200 million telephones. Both local and long distance can be dialed directly without placing the call through an operator. Limited international dialing began in 1970.

Radiotelephones are widely used by police and firemen in emergencies. Some 35 000 persons use radiotelephones in their automobiles to keep in touch with their homes and offices.

U.S. telegraph systems are owned and operated by private companies under the general supervision of the Federal Communications Commission, a government agency which

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