

<<美国历史概况>>

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内容概要

本书按年代顺序分十章介绍从殖民地时间到二十一世纪美国社会和历史的演变，每章都配有相关年代美国的社会简介，并精先四五篇文章介绍美国历史上的重大事件、热点话题和知名人物，以帮助读者进一步了解每一历史时期的政治、经济和文化背景。

读者通过阅读本书，能理清美国历史发展的脉络，获得对美国历史全景式的认知，从而能更好地了解美国这个社会和文化多元的国家。

为使读者更好地理解 and 掌握各章的重点和难点，每章末尾还附了练习题和思考题。

本书所选部分材料和文章都在相当程序上反映西方学者对美国的认识，希望读者对其思想内容持客观和公正的批判态度。

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章节摘录

In rural areas , many people were poor. In inner cities , over-worked factory workers lived in crowded and unsanitary tenements. But , in general , at the beginning of the century people in the U. S. were able to buy more than they had in previous decades. More farm products were available in the cities : and therefore these products there were cheaper. With the rise of industry had come an increase in the variety and abundance of goods. There were department stores and mail-order catalogs. Shopping by telephone had begun. Electricity was reaching more people in the cities , the electric light having the advantage of being without soot or the need to ventilate - while a few feared it , blaming it for fires , explosions and electrocutions , and some claimed that it caused freckles. There were electric trolley cars on which to ride to work or to stores or on Sunday outings. Middle and upper class Anglo-Americans were feeling brash and optimistic. Despite centuries of Calvinist preaching about the depravity of man , they were cheerful. And among the cheerful in 1900 was the Republican president , William McKinley. He was running for re-election , and he boasted of the pride and prosperity that had come to the United States during his four years in office. City folks were enjoying more leisure. The middleclass had annual vacations , and many of them looked forward to going to a resort during the summer. On weekends they went to orchestral concerts in a park or city center. They went to vaudeville shows , to amusement parks or to a local baseball game. During the summer a family might go fishing or boating. Family picnics were also popular , as were community socials. Much in entertainment was home made. Very few people had a phonograph , but there was an abundance of store bought sheet music. And in place of the phonograph , girls of a family played musical instruments. Families frequently gathered around a piano , organ , or pianola for sing-alongs. The most popular song in 1902 was "In the Good Old Summertime , " which that year sold a million copies in sheet music , a song that evoked in many city people a nostalgia for the rural towns where they had strolled through shady lanes. Another popular song was "By the Light of the Silvery Moon. " Soon to follow were songs such as "Sweet Adeline , " "Ida , Sweet as Apple Cider , " and "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree. " People in middleclass families played lawn games such as croquet or lawn tennis. Young girls , along with their mothers , spent leisure hours at needle crafts , read religious novels. Some among the middleclass read westerns such as *The Virginian* , or they read sentimental sagas , or *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Some read *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* , or *The Red Badge of Courage* , and some read from among Horatio Alger's 135 novels. And people conversed more than they would decades later. Men courted women in the parlor or front porch of the young woman's home , sometimes singing songs , playing their banjo or guitar , or strolling to the village green. As yet , women did not go driving off in automobiles. The automobile , "or horseless carriage , " was just beginning to make its appearance in the United States , disturbing the city traffic of horse drawn wagons and bicycles. In San Francisco and Cincinnati a speed-limit was established at eight miles an hour. Debates in bars and at dinner tables arose over whether the horseless carriage or the horse was better transportation. Animal power , it was argued , was better on mud-slick roads. With automobiles , some said , city streets would have less horse manure and smell. At the turn of the century , more women were finding work outside of their homes-the result of enlarged office bureaucracies and the coming of the typewriter. Women had become a third of the nation's clerical workers. Women were also filling positions as telephone operators. Art teaching , once a male preserve , was now eighty-six percent women - but still managed by male principals and superintendents. Morality , Feminism and Class At the turn of the century , three quarters of the states forbade married women to have property in their own name. In these states a woman's property became her husband's upon marriage. In a third of the states , a woman's earnings belonged to her husband. And in all states except Wyoming , Utah , Colorado and Idaho , women were not allowed to vote-frontiers being less conservative on the woman's suffrage issue than the older , metropolitan areas , similar to Australia being ahead of England on this issue. Women active in the suffrage movement were described as neurotic , as suffering from an urge to imitate men , as hysterical or as homosexuals. It was argued that with their big sleeves , women would be able to hide numerous ballots and vote more than once. Widespread among Americans was a desire for self-improvement-a constant force though

the twentieth century. Since 1890 the number of students attending high school had been rising an average of around thirty percent a year , and high schools were increasing in number at an average of nineteen percent a year. The number of college graduates was also increasing : from a mere one percent of the population in the 1870s and on its way to eight percent by the 1920s. A part of the striving for self-improvement was religion. Many Americans gave credit to Christianity for the nation's prosperity , and they saw their own material successes as God's reward for their virtue , industry and thrift. While church attendance was declining in some of the more technologically advanced European societies , in the United States the number of churches being built increased and church memberships were growing. It was common among middleclass parents to try to put the fear of God into their children , and God and morality reached the children in the schools through the McGuffey Readers , with titles such as "Respect for the Sabbath Rewarded" and "The Bible the Best of Classics. " These books suggested that to succeed one had to be sober , frugal and energetic , and they suggested that prolonged poverty was a sign of God's disapproval.

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