THE UNITED STATES IN 2005
WHO WE ARE TODAY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS

SOCIETY & VALUES

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Newly naturalized U.S. citizens wave flags in celebration after taking the oath of citizenship in Los Angeles, California, on July 25, 2003.

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EDITOR, EJOURNAL USA: SOCIETY & VALUES
IIP/T/IS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
301 4TH ST. S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20547
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
E-mail: ejvalues@state.gov

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The United States in 2005 – who are we? Since there are almost 300 million U.S. citizens, there are millions of answers to this question. We, as editors, have taken on the near impossible with this journal: to describe in less than fifty pages who the people of the United States are today. We can say some things for certain, however.

The United States is growing, home to an ever more diverse population, with roots that now link us to every corner of the earth. Indeed, the languages we Americans speak, the places where we worship and the foods on our tables are a microcosm of the world. We cherish our freedoms and individuality and expect a brighter future for our children. At the same time, we debate vigorously among ourselves about how to preserve those freedoms, express our individuality, and guarantee a better tomorrow. "American" is an inclusive term and we apply it generously, because becoming an American is about embracing a set of ideals and pursuing a way of life, rather than embodying a particular ethnic group, religion, or culture. And though we are a mobile society, a connection or bond to place, often with the neighborhood or town in which we grew up, is important to us.

In this journal, we start by identifying the major attributes and values that best define Americans. In the first article, scholar Marc Pachter describes how these attributes and values, although not solely American, come together in the United States to form a uniquely American identity. Then demographer Audrey Singer analyzes the latest facts and figures to give us a demographic snapshot of the United States in 2005. Next we take a look at 13 Americans, some well known, most not. With these short profiles, we give you a glimpse of America's diversity, and of how some Americans live their everyday lives and what is important to them. We then turn to some of the social debates of the day. Such debates have been part and parcel of American society since our country's inception. Ironically, our respect for the individual and his right to express himself freely and passionately on contentious issues is one of the principal reasons our country has remained united for over 200 years. We conclude with two journeys home after many years: For one writer, the place called home is unrecognizable; for the other, little has changed. A number of sidebars illustrate some of the values that have characterized our country throughout its history.

THE EDITORS

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In this reprint from one of our earlier journals, the author reflects on what it was like to grow up in Piedmont, West Virginia. Correspondent Mark Jacobs brings us up-to-date on conditions in the small Appalachian mill town today.

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AMERICAN IDENTITY

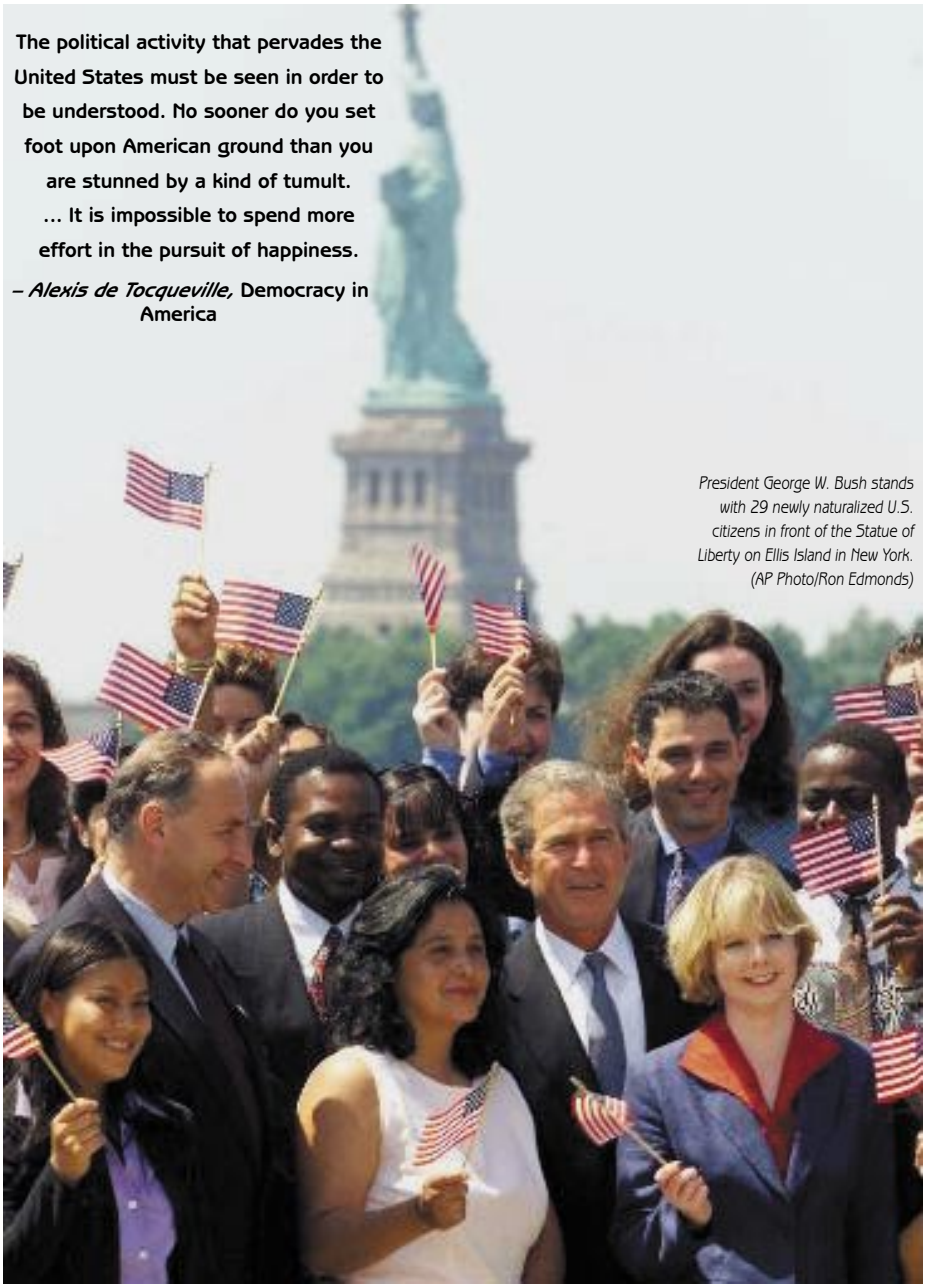
MARC PACHTER

The author examines the "enduring social contract" that underlies the United States of America and that defines the national community and culture. "From the start, there has been very little utopianism in the American political mainstream, little sense of an ideal State or an ideal human condition to be constructed through social planning," he writes. "It is, instead, the very condition of striving, of becoming, the experience of unfettered living, that excites the national imagination." Particularly revealing are certain words such as freedom, individualism, mobility, and pragmatism that "speak to the American spirit." The current national debate about American values represents not their repudiation, but a testing of their application to widened circumstances. The difficult question for American democracy to answer has always been the relationship between equality and freedom.

Marc Pachter is director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. Previously deputy assistant secretary for external affairs for the Smithsonian, Pachter has written and edited several books and been involved in numerous radio and television programs about U.S. cultural and historical issues. *This article is reprinted and abridged from* Identities in North America, The Search for Community, *edited by Robert L. Earle and John D. Wirth. Copyright © 1995 by the Board of Trustees of Leland Stanford Jr. University. All rights reserved. Used with the permission of Stanford University Press, www.sup.org.*

The political activity that pervades the United States must be seen in order to be understood. No sooner do you set foot upon American ground than you are stunned by a kind of tumult. ... It is impossible to spend more effort in the pursuit of happiness.

– *Alexis de Tocqueville,* Democracy in America



President George W. Bush stands with 29 newly naturalized U.S. citizens in front of the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island in New York. (AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)

Attempts to define the nature of American society often begin with a quotation from Alexis de Tocqueville's 19th century masterpiece, *Democracy in America.* It is remarkable that a book written about a country thought to be perpetually changing, relentlessly modern, and completely without a sense of tradition could be produced over 150 years ago and still seem so right as a current description. It is even more surprising that Tocqueville's study of a people principally rural, Protestant, and Anglo-Saxon (and enslaved African American) could have anything to say to or about the urban, industrial,

multicultural nation that hundreds of millions restlessly inhabit today.

If observations rendered in the first half of the 19th century are still applicable to the United States of the (early 21st century), it is reasonable to assume that there exists an enduring "core" nature of American society. But to understand it, one has to distinguish America's sense of nationhood from that of traditional societies, which draw their identity from bonds of faith, ethnicity, and memory. To speak of an American identity requires that we reexamine what it is that holds a national community together and what it is that constitutes a national culture.

Being fully American, as the United States defines its citizens, does not presuppose an ancestral linkage to the nation or to its predominant ethnic cultures or religious traditions. Americans, as individuals, participate in a multitude of historic cultures, but what they share with one another is something quite different. At the heart of their nationhood is an enduring social contract and the energetic process it sets in motion. It is the task of this essay to capture the sense of that contract and the evolution of that process.

Choice and Responsibility

Membership in the national community demands only the decision to become American, a political decision that contains within it a moral dimension as well. All Americans, including the native born, are assumed to be Americans by choice, not merely by historical legacy. A passion for "choice" may, in fact, be the central thrust and value of the society. It is the active mode of freedom and assumes not only an absence of political or economic restraint, but an opportunity to select from a rich menu of possibilities. At its most trivial, the culture indulges this value in the proliferation of an endless and often meaningless variety of consumer options.

At a deeper level there is, in the love of choice, a memory of the chance to escape the dead end of lives in ancestral cultures and to create in a New World the life one chooses to live. Many Americans repeat this pattern of migration, literally, by moving to the western states, or symbolically, in their professional or social lives, looking for new starts, for second chances. And while the tragic experience of Native Americans and African Americans has long mocked the national ethos of choice, they too have come to demand a right to shape their own destinies and to share in the possibilities assumed to be an American birthright.

America believes in self-creation and celebrates the "self-made man," and now "the self-made woman." At the heart of this faith is the conviction that inherited circumstances and forebears are far less important than the direction one chooses for oneself and the effort one invests in that choice. America's heroes "come from nowhere" and "make it on their own." Except for the stubborn and heretical barriers of race, to be discussed later, Americans assume of themselves and of others that their origins may enrich their lives but do not shape their destinies.

Though liberating as an assumption and an ideal, this concept of social and economic free will also places on the individual the burden of responsibility for his or her own fate. In a society that is in a perpetual state of becoming, there are no social or economic absolutes and no allowance for the inability to improve one's life, for whatever reason. When ambition is frustrated and prosperity denied, Americans see a perversion of the natural order of things.

Although a passion for choice is the engine of American individualism, it also provides a corrective to selfish behavior. From the vantage point of more traditional societies, Americans may seem to be a nation of atomized individuals in social free-fall; but, in fact, they have not eliminated a sense of social obligation. They have merely replaced its hereditary base.

Americans are joiners and volunteers and philanthropists. They embrace a series of obligations and responsibilities freely chosen, and thereby harness their individualism to social purpose. If Europeans, Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans marvel at the lack of a sense of extended family, ancestral ties, and class allegiance in the United States, so do Americans marvel at what they see as the ungenerous reluctance of members of traditional cultures to embrace nonreligious or nonfamilial opportunities for volunteerism and to provide financial support for good causes.

Eclecticism As a Value

American society has married an ethic of choice to an endless variety of traditions, ideas, and opportunities. The mix of peoples and customs encountered in American daily life and the dramatic interruption most communities have experienced in their emigration from their homelands has led to a practice of sampling and borrowing and intermingling of styles, rituals, and, above all, foods. This eclecticism, which may seem messy to more historically unified cultures, becomes in America a value and a signpost of vitality. It is what gives national shape, ultimately, to much of the country's art and literature. America's artists, writers, and architects have taken as their prerogative picking and choosing among elements in foreign and domestic cultures and combining them into a new American whole.

The dynamic at the heart of America's system of values, beliefs, and identity found its most lyrical early expression in the "inalienable rights" of all human beings, which the Declaration of Independence (in 1776) listed as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It was not happiness that the author of the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson, claimed for his countrymen and all humanity, but its "pursuit." From the start, there has been very little utopianism in the American political mainstream, little sense of an ideal State or an ideal human condition to be constructed through social planning. It is, instead, the very

condition of striving, of becoming, the experience of unfettered living, that excites the national imagination. The words that move Americans are revealing: "freedom," "mobility," "individualism," "opportunity," "energy," "pragmatism," "progress," "renewal," "competition." These are not dry, descriptive words; they speak to the American spirit.

Bill Clinton, in his successful 1992 presidential campaign, chose as his rallying cry one of the most evocative words in the American vocabulary: "change." Part of the attraction of change in American culture is rooted in the hope that every change will bring improvement. But the optimistic expectation that change represents progress ipso facto is far less important than a strong tendency to dislike and even to fear permanence in authority or policy. During the debate over the approval of the proposed Constitution, Thomas Jefferson warned that even permitting a president more than one four-year term, without guaranteed rotation, might lead to his becoming a virtual "officer for life." Jefferson's concern was based on the fundamental American assumption that sovereignty rests in the people and is only temporarily and conditionally bestowed on the officeholder.

Limits on Authority

The churning, antagonistic nature of the American process is meant to provide a guarantee against entrenchment. No party or individual can be trusted with authority for too long a period. People are corruptible; policies grow stale. When one party occupies the White House too long, a restlessness rises in the electorate. No one set of ideas or leaders will hold their allegiance over time. It is the dynamic of the system itself that brings Americans what they need and trust: a balancing of forces, a monitoring of truth through challenge and exposure, a reminder of the conceits and danger of power, of the benefits of change and growth and experimentation, and, not least, of the charm of starting afresh.

Paradoxically, then, America achieves its continuity through an insistence on change, and its stability through the incorporation of conflict. This is not simply the habit of a raucous electoral tradition, but a strategy built into the very framework of government. The historian Michael Kammen has described the system set in motion in 1789 by the framers of the Constitution as one of "conflict within consensus." As another historian, Marcus Cunliffe, puts it: "They built friction into the document, intentionally, as a safeguard against corruption and dictatorship."

This is certainly not a formula for efficiency. While American technology and management celebrate the ideal of efficiency, the nation as a political culture nurtures a profound distrust of long-term planning, of the concentration of power, of too-smooth national decision making. The constitutional government deliberately frustrates unified action through the separation of powers and a system of checks and balances. This political system can and does lead to conflict, frustration, and occasional gridlock in the absence of statesmanlike compromise or of the compatibility of political philosophy across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. But it also achieves a virtual guarantee against the usurpation of authority.

The political system promotes as well the balancing act of federal, state, and municipal authority, which leads to a strong reluctance at the national level to mandate policy in many areas. The United States has no one educational system, no ministry of culture, and, so far, no health system directly administered from Washington. Policy on these and other issues emerges principally through persuasion, coordination, coalition building, and negotiation across parties, constituencies, interest groups, and regions. A very strong role is played by the large private sector, which reflects the released energy of an open marketplace of ideas, programs, and resources; another significant actor is the suspicious press.

Equality vs. Freedom

Despite the tradition of restrained government, many Americans over the past century have proposed a new view of the State's role. If a society needs only to be released from the yoke of government to enjoy the benefits of freedom, then the task of political reform is complete when the worst tendencies of government are offset and social energies are released. But this assumes that the underlying political, social, and economic realities allow for equal participation in the full benefits of freedom, or, conversely, that only certain members of society qualify as active participants. Generations of American reformers have demanded that their society acknowledge those it has excluded and then use government as a guarantor of their freedom to share in the American promise. They have consistently been challenged by others, who fear the empowerment of government as an assault on freedom. In the end, the question for American democracy has been easy to pose but very difficult to answer: What is the relationship between equality and freedom?

By the standards of the 18th century, the new nation had radicalized the idea of political consent by vesting final authority in the people, all of whom, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, were "created equal." But actual participation in the new political community of the United States was constrained in ways modern Americans would find intolerable and even inconceivable.

The Civil War of the 1860s corrected the obscenity of slavery in a free society and was followed by the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, which extended political rights to half the African-American population. The female half had to await the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which finally swept into the political community the largest group of disenfranchised Americans.

Political rights were further reinforced legislatively with the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But even after several years of deliberate, targeted

enforcement of basic political rights and the insistent demands of the civil rights movement, the most basic question of the nature of equality as a precondition of freedom remained unresolved in American culture (at midcentury). Fair and equal access to political rights, whenever finally resolved, would not itself guarantee for everyone full participation in the promise of American life. Any argument that this inequality of circumstance was due to "innate" limitations among the excluded communities and categories of Americans threatened the very idea of American individualism. The very idea that an individual could be boxed in by his or her fate, playing out narrow dramas of class, race, and gender, was abhorrent. If it was a matter, instead, of artificial barriers set up by society, some argued–particularly racism, but also sexism and social and economic factors–then the question became, what is the responsibility of the nation?

Reformers have generally argued their case for intervention within the framework of the American dynamic. Government was introduced as an active player in the economic life of the nation during the Progressive Era of the early 20th century and then, in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal Administration (in mid century), as itself a counterbalance to social and economic forces that threatened the fairness of the society. In the latter half of the 20th century, the social policy setting became even more activist in seeking to affect the terms on which Americans prepare, compete, and interact. More recently, social policy has reflected the fundamental question about the role of government: how best, and how much, to regulate economic and social arrangements in a society that prizes, indeed was founded on he principle of, individual freedom and to celebrate individual initiative, spark, and autonomy.

When most Americans speak of equality, they mean equality of opportunity, not of outcome. From the first, Americans have rarely argued for or demonstrated a commitment to a society with equality of property or condition. Part of the American dream is the belief, the "value," that individuals, differing as they do in initiative, energy, and talent, should enjoy the disparate fruits of their effort. There are meant to be no guarantees of equal results. Most Americans do not want a level society; they do, however, want a level playing field.

Or do they? It is a perpetual dilemma in American life that generalizations about the goals, values, and circumstances of the society break down when confronted by the stubborn heritage of a racial divide. But it is also true that Americans have long used acrimonious self-criticism, passionate rhetoric, and the clash of social forces to propel themselves forward. The jeremiads warning of the decline of individual communities or of the nation as a whole date back to the era of the Puritans, serving then, as in every succeeding era, as an incentive to change and action and as a measure of American impatience and stubborn expectations.

What is demanded by the mainstream activism of the late 20th (and early 21st) century is a fulfillment of the logic of American democracy. The question is not only political and economic, but cultural as well. Even if the expressed values of the society defined being American as participating in a social contract rather than a particular heritage, the assumption persisted that the true, the essential, American came of a certain racial and cultural background (Anglo-Saxon, later broadened to European), faith (Protestant, broadened, after years of hostility, to include Catholic and, even more reluctantly, Jewish), and, for purposes of political and economic status, gender (male). The early 20th-century idea of the melting pot asserted, at least for certain communities, that they did not have to be born to a particular heritage but were expected to become American culturally no less than politically–to lose, in effect, their marks of difference from the majority of Americans.

The argument for the recognition of the diversity of cultures and backgrounds as being fundamental, not only to

AMERICAN ORIGINAL
Religious Freedom

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was a powerful advocate of political and religious liberty and author of America's most cherished document, the Declaration of Independence. Its lines–"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"--are among the first that American schoolchildren memorize. Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1786) guaranteed freedom of religious worship and prohibited the state from compelling support, or expending public funds, for any particular religion. Jefferson was America's third president, from 1801 to 1809, having previously served as secretary of state and vice president, as well as U.S. minister to France. An accomplished architect, linguist, and naturalist, Jefferson said that he wished to be remembered for three things: as author of the Declaration of Independence, as author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and as the father of the University of Virginia.

American reality but to American ideals, has forced the society to debate anew the implications of its unusual notion of national community as process and interaction. From the 1960s, advocates of diversity have vied to create an apt metaphor for American society that would include rather than exclude or melt down. Each generation of Americans has pushed the notion of the American blend of opinions, peoples, faiths, cultures, and, most recently, languages to the point where many have feared that the center would no longer hold. So far the record of national cohesion gives hope for the future, but that future is far from being universally understood as guaranteed in the face of concerns among some members of the majority communities that the national fabric is unraveling and among some members of minority communities that they will never be genuinely welcomed into the American mix.

Testing of Values

In other respects as well, the current (debate about) American values represents not their repudiation but a testing of their application to widened circumstances. The growth of an American women's movement is a reminder that biology was assumed to exempt half of all Americans from political and then professional and economic inclusion in the dynamic of national life. The barrier of gender has not yet completely fallen, but it is under continuous attack. Also caught up in the continuing revolution in American expectations are fundamental social constructs like that of the family, which are continually susceptible to the ethic of choice and self-realization. As early as the 19th century, Americans transformed marriage traditions to allow the free choice of partners. This notion expanded over time to include the right to choose to live together "without benefit of clergy" or to marry and then divorce, and increasingly, even to a debate concerning the definition of what constitutes a family within or outside of legal frameworks. Increasingly, relations between children and parents and between younger and older generations test the boundaries of authority and consent to an extent unimaginable in earlier eras.

These are current American tendencies, but they are also, to a somewhat lesser extent, tendencies of all industrial democratic cultures. Americans must begin to wonder how much the culture that once defined them as unique has become, in at least some of its aspects, the culture of global modernism. It has been a shock to see (several Asian countries) hailed as the nations of the 21st century because of their technological and industrial advancement; to see West Europeans identified with the notion of a grand union of states and a dynamic commonwealth; and to see the emerging, if tortured, democracies of Central and Eastern Europe become identified with the aspirations of an excited electorate.

But for all that, Americans can see the advantage they have in their long history of political openness and change, tolerance of conflict, entrepreneurial energy, and cultural mix. Their flexible history can serve as a formula for stability during the ongoing shocks of global modernism, confirming rather than undermining national traditions. ■

The opinions expressed in this essay do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

THE CHANGING FACE OF AMERICA

AUDREY SINGER

The author looks at contemporary shifts in America's racial and ethnic composition, and shares some thoughts on the country's future diversity. In 1970, the United States could be defined, racially, essentially in terms of black and white. But during the past three decades, immigrants from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean have enriched the country's diversity. As a consequence, U.S. citizens increasingly are defining themselves in multiracial terms. The government continues to collect data on the basis of racial and ethnic characteristics out of a commitment to enforce laws that prohibit discrimination and guarantee equal treatment and opportunity. "One strong reason for optimism," concludes the author, "is America's past history of incorporating diverse groups into one society and one nation."

Above, immigrants arrive at Ellis Island in New York around the turn of the 20th century. About 16 million people came through Ellis Island from 1892 to 1924. (AP Photo)

Below, Francisco Saraula, 86, from El Salvador, left, was the oldest person among 433 immigrants to be sworn in as a U.S. citizen at this July 4, 2003, ceremony in Seattle, Washington. (AP Photo/Jim Bryant)

... there is no need of encouragement: while the policy or advantage of [immigration] taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for, by so doing, they retain the Language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them. Whereas by an intermixture with our people, they, or their descendants, get assimilated to our customs, measures and laws: in a word, soon become one people.

– George Washington, in a letter to John Adams, November 15, 1794

Since the United States was founded more than 225 years ago, the question of who belongs to the country has been central to the national narrative. Contemporary debates about the levels of immigration and assimilation echo George Washington's earlier sentiments. However, today's issues about who belongs and how immigrants should adapt have been transformed several times over by successive waves of immigration, during which the national self-image has had to adjust to and recalibrate for newcomers of different origins. In doing so, America has somehow managed to bring disparate people together socially, politically, and economically, while still allowing for individuals to claim their identities however they see fit. In the national consciousness, immigration seems to both reinforce and challenge the idea that America is a place where any

Audrey Singer is immigration fellow at the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program. She previously was an associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a member of the faculty of Georgetown University's Department of Demography. Singer has written extensively on U.S. immigration trends, undocumented migration, and the changing racial and ethnic composition of the United States, including the recently published The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways.

person can belong.

However, the velocity and diversity of contemporary immigration are rapidly changing America's racial and ethnic mixture. And once again, immigration is raising anxieties about a fractured America. Might the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the aftermath of war in Iraq, and concerns about the economy lead to an erosion of the public's receptivity toward immigrants? Or will America continue to see opportunities in fresh waves of diverse immigrants and overcome the challenges?

Further complicating inter-group relations is the fact that contemporary immigration rests atop historical layers of the peopling of the United States. In particular, the legacies of slavery and conquest are important components of contemporary diversity in America. And the discrimination, racism, and resulting inequality are uneasy realities of how such historical processes can go badly.

Today's immigrants provide an additional test of the elasticity of the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the United States. While the U.S. government has always regulated the number of people admitted to the country, it does little directly to assist immigrants once they arrive. For example, the federal government does not offer language classes and job-training programs to the majority of immigrants. The assumption is that immigrants will find their way with the assistance of family and friends. And if they need more help, they can turn to community groups and religious organizations. However, on the social and cultural front, adapting to a diverse, continuously evolving America presents challenges to immigrant newcomers and established residents alike.

How has immigration during the 20th century changed the racial and ethnic composition of the United States? This essay examines contemporary shifts in that composition, and then looks at the future of diversity in America.

The Ellis Island Family Heritage Awards were instituted in 2001 to recognize immigrants or their descendants who have made outstanding contributions to the United States in various fields. Pictured here are the 2004 awardees or their relatives.

Source Countries of Immigration

Twenty-first century America will inevitably look demographically different than 20th-century America. Already, the 2000 census shows that America is more ethnically, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse than ever before. Just 30 years ago, most Americans could be fairly easily categorized as either white or black. Today, the national portrait is being increasingly enriched with Asian, Latino, and multiracial people. High levels of immigration, intermarriage between groups, and the resulting offspring, as well as an important change in the methods by which the U.S. government collects information on its residents, all contribute to the incremental changes observed during the past few decades.

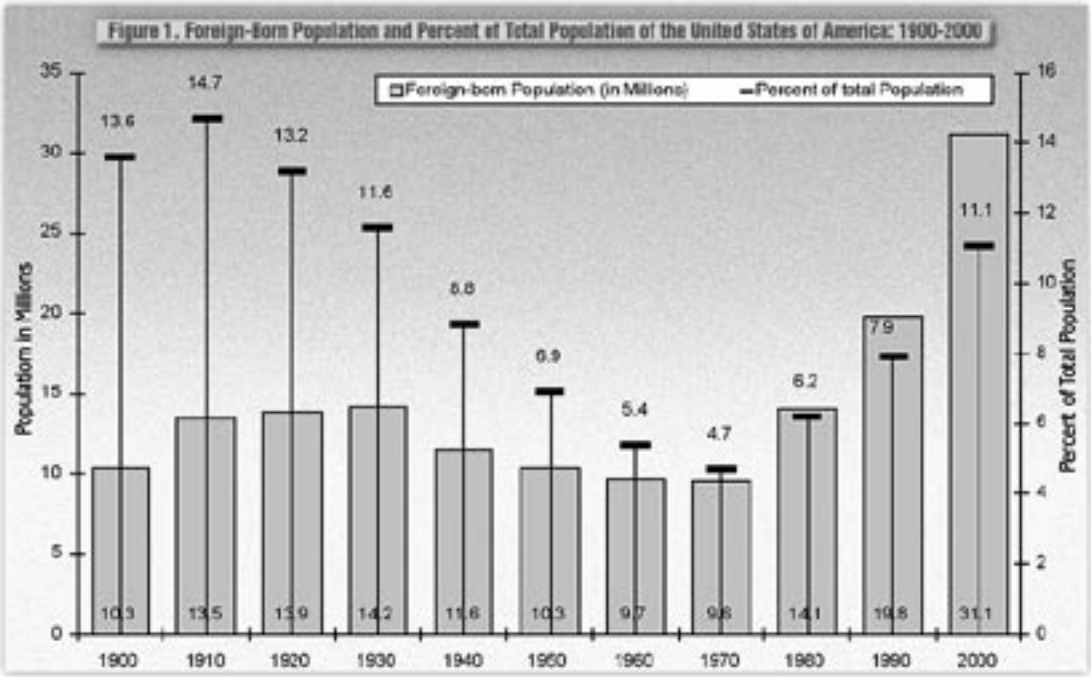
Figure 1 shows the history of immigration in the United States in the 20th century. The century ended with more than three times the 10.3 million immigrants with which it began. However, it is important to bear in mind that, in 1900, the U.S. population had a higher proportion of foreign-born residents (nearly 14 percent) than was recorded in 2000 (11.1 percent).

As indicated in figure 1, the immigrant population steadily increased during the first three decades of the 20th century, then began a decline in the late 1930s during the worldwide depression. Restrictive immigration policies during World War II kept legal immigration levels low through the next four decades. These lower levels of immigration, combined with higher fertility rates among U.S. residents and the resulting "baby boom," are reflected in the low proportion of immigrants in 1950, 1960, and 1970. However, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 repealed earlier national quotas on origin, which opened up immigration from regions other than Europe. During the 1980s and 1990s, immigration boomed: The foreign-born population of the United States more than doubled during those 20 years, going from 14.1 million to 31.1 million.

Perhaps as important as the trend

in immigration levels is the change in immigrant countries of origin. During the first two decades of the 20th century, 85 percent of the 14.5 million immigrants admitted to the United States originated in Europe, largely Southern and Eastern Europe. This stands in sharp contrast to the percentage that came from the countries in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa.

The social conflict and competition seen today–due to the shift in immigrant origins to countries with different ethnic backgrounds, languages, religions, and political traditions than the majority--is not unlike the circumstances that unfolded in the earlier decades of the 20th century. During that period, because of their perceivable differences, many Southern and Eastern Europeans were regarded with as much circumspection as are some of today's immigrants.

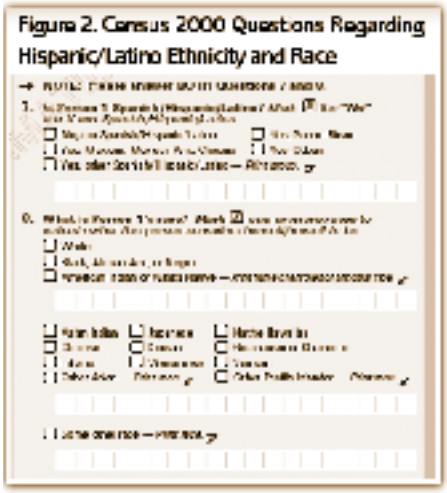


Source: Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1997, Current Population Reports, Special Studies p23-195, Figure 1-1; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000

Measuring Race and Ethnicity

It is difficult to capture the American racial and ethnic mosaic. One reason for this is that almost every U.S. census for the past 200 years has collected racial data differently than the one before it. Categories have changed over time, largely reflecting changes in political power and representation. Further complicating the situation was the make up of the form for the 2000 census.

First, Census 2000, for the first time ever, allowed individuals to identify themselves as more than one race (see



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

black, African American, or Negro; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; and "some other race." Allowing individuals to check more than one category expanded the handful of race categories to 63 possible combinations.

Second, the U.S. Bureau of the Census asked separate questions about race and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. Therefore, in addition to marking whether they considered themselves to be Hispanic, individuals chose a race category or categories in response to a separate question. The label "Hispanic" arose in the United States in the 1970s as a singular administrative label to address Spanish-speaking people of Latin American descent living in the United States. The Census Bureau adopted it in time for the 1980 census. However, both before and since that census, other labels have been used, including Latino, which the Census Bureau now uses interchangeably with Hispanic. Adding the Hispanic/Latino parameter to the race categories yields 126 possible combinations.

Keeping in mind these methodological issues, table 1 shows how America's ethnic and racial compositions changed during the last three decades of the 20th century by comparing white, black, and a third race category that combines "all others" into one group. (For the years 1970 to 1990, "other" refers to persons who identified themselves as something other than white or black–i.e., Asian, American Indian, or "other race." For 2000, the category included anyone who marked more than one race as well.) A separate panel tracks the growth of the Hispanic population.

In 1970, nearly 99 percent of all Americans were identified as either white or black. Thirty years later, that percentage had fallen to about 87 percent, with the white population declining from 87.4 percent in 1970 to 75.1 percent in 2000, and the black population increasing from 11.1 percent to 12.3 percent over the same period. The change in the white population was offset by the rise in the "other" population,

which increased from 1.4 percent in 1970 to 12.5 percent in 2000.

A more significant story is the 10-fold increase in children identified as neither black nor white in 2000, portending a more diverse future. Children were one and a half times more likely than adults to be identified as neither black nor white in 2000, reflecting the growth in offspring from interracial marriages and the relatively high birth rates among some immigrant groups. Children were also much more likely to be identified as multiracial (to have more than one race checked, most likely by a parent) in the 2000 census, about 4 percent as compared to 2 percent of adults. As these children become adults, the United States is likely to see a corresponding increase in multiracial identity as it becomes more socially acceptable and as the current cohort of multiracial children have their own children, who may then choose to identify multiracially.

In 2003, the Census Bureau made headlines when it announced that Hispanics now outnumber blacks in the United States. Due to higher immigration and birth rates, the Hispanic population trajectory should continue to outpace that of African Americans. The Hispanic population surfaced in the data beginning in 1980 with 6.4 percent (data were not separately collected earlier for this group) and rose to 12.5 percent of the total population in 2000 (table 1).

Table 1. U.S. Population by Race and Age, 1970 - 2000

RACE	1970	1980	1990	2000	Difference between 1970 - 2000
Total					
White	87.4	83.2	80.3	75.1	-12.3
Black	11.1	11.7	12.0	12.3	1.2
Other[a]	1.4	5.2	7.6	12.5	11.1
Children[b]					
White	84.8	78.6	75.1	68.6	-16.2
Black	13.7	14.7	15.0	15.1	1.4
Other[a]	1.5	6.7	9.9	16.3	14.8
Adults[c]					
White	88.9	84.9	82.2	77.4	-11.5
Black	9.8	10.5	11.0	11.4	1.6
Other[a]	1.4	4.5	6.8	11.2	9.9
Hispanic Ethnicity[d]	...	6.4	9.0	12.5	6.1[e]

Source: Census of Population 1980, Characteristics of the Population, Vol. 1, ch. B, Part 1.; *Census of Population and Housing, 1990: Summary Tape File 3 on CD-ROM; Census 2000 Summary File 1.*

[a] For 1970, 1980 and 1990, "Other" refers to individuals who marked any race other than black or white, which included American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut, Asian and Pacific Islander, and some other race. In 2000, "Other" refers to American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and some other race. In addition, the 2000 Census allowed individuals to mark more than once race. Those individuals are included in the "Other" category.

[b] Children defined as 0-17.

[c] Adults defined as 18 and older.

[d] Hispanic or Latino ethnicity is collected separately from race in the Census. Hispanics may be of any race; therefore race and Hispanic background are not additive.

[e] Difference between 1980 and 2000.

Moreover, the "diversity divide" is evident in individual U.S. states with fast-growing immigrant populations. Minorities already represent more than one-half of the population under age 18 in Arizona, California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas, as well as in certain metropolitan areas that have had large influxes of immigrants. Not surprisingly, the cities that have drawn immigrants in very high numbers changed over the century from such northeastern and midwestern cities as Philadelphia, Buffalo, and St. Louis, to southern and western metropolises such as Los Angeles, Miami, and Houston. And immigrant settlement within newly popular metropolitan areas has been increasingly suburban. In some places, such as Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, D.C., the recent and rapid growth of the immigrant population has been almost entirely outside the central city. The 2000 census reveals that in the last decade, race and ethnic diversity in suburban areas rose considerably due to growth of both the native- and foreign-born; non-whites increased from 19 percent to 27 percent of the population across all suburban areas.

Whose Racial Identity?

Immigrants come to the United States with an identity that may not have any relationship to federal standards of race classification. Some census categories are quite broad. For example, "Asian" refers to people with roots in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. It includes people who indicated in the 2000 census their race or races as Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, or "other Asian," or who wrote in entries such as Burmese, Hmong, Pakistani, or Thai. Like Latinos, most Asians identify more with their fellow countrymen than with the broad geographical categorization of "Asian" used by the federal government.

Given the rigidity of the race categories and the fluidity of racial and ethnic self-identification, it is not surprising that many people are resistant to census classifications. In completing the 1990 census, half a million people rebelled against an instruction to mark only one race and marked two or more instead. This contributed to the Census Bureau's allowing for multiple race responses in 2000. The simple fact is that many people–in particular those moving to the United States as adult immigrants and the offspring of interracial marriages–do not see themselves as fitting into one of a handful of race categories.

While there is widespread agreement that race and ethnicity are and should

be socially and individually defined, why does the federal government maintain the collection of such data? In large measure, it is because race continues to play a role in the equality of opportunity that exists in many spheres of American society. Major differences in economic, employment, social, and health trends by race exist, and the government's interest in collecting data on race aids in documenting these trends. Laws, policies, and programs that are designed to prevent racial discrimination, such as the Civil Rights Act and hate crimes laws, necessarily need these data.

The Future of Diversity

If the United States chose to stop all immigration today, racial and ethnic diversity would continue to increase for generations to come. Why? Because of two major trends: several decades of high immigration, and the willingness of Americans to look beyond race and ethnicity in choosing their mates. While the first receives a lot of attention, the second is rarely a subject of public notice, even though the rise in intermarriage has been exponential in the past 30 years.

The dichotomy of a black and white America has certainly changed, but how will the newer groups be incorporated into U.S. society? How will those from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and India redefine the racial and ethnic stratification that has developed around black and white lines? Will divisions become deeper, or will the current generation of children who are wholly more diverse than their parents forge a coherent nexus as they age and become adults themselves?

One strong reason for optimism is America's past history of incorporating diverse groups into one society and one nation. Immigrants, regardless of their origins, have largely been successful in moving up the social-economic ladder. This is a trend that should continue. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

AMERICAN ORIGINAL
Equal Rights

Inspired by India's Mahatma Ghandi in the use of nonviolent, civil disobedience, the **Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.** (1929-1968), led America's civil rights movement to eliminate legal and institutional barriers against African Americans and other minority groups. Between 1957 and 1968, King traveled more than six million miles, delivered more than 2,500 speeches, directed numerous protest marches, and was arrested more than 20 times, according to the Nobel Foundation, which awarded him the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964. The award came a year after King led a march on Washington, D.C., where, before a crowd of 250,000, he proclaimed his hope that "one day ... the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood ... that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." King was killed in 1968 by an assassin, who was subsequently apprehended and sentenced to life in prison.

Who Can Be a U.S. Citizen

With very few exceptions, persons who are born in the United States become American citizens regardless of their ethnic backgrounds or of the citizenship and national origins of their parents. In this respect, the United States differs from many other countries that do not automatically confer citizenship on persons merely on the basis of birth within their national jurisdictions.

Open acceptance has characterized the American nationality process since the nation's founding, despite changes to laws and regulations over the years. Prior to 1866, the citizenship status of persons born in the United States was not defined in the Constitution or in any federal statute. However, under the common law rule of jus soli *(meaning the law of the soil), persons born in the United States generally acquired U.S. citizenship at birth. The Civil Rights Act of April 9, 1866, which was ratified as the 14th Amendment to the Constitution two years later, formalized this arrangement, stating that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States."*

This principle of jus soli *remains in effect today. Certain individuals born in the United States, such as children of foreign heads of state or children of foreign diplomats, do not obtain U.S. citizenship under* jus soli. *Certain individuals born outside of the United States are born citizens because of their parents, according to the principle of* jus sanguinis. *The principal of* jus sanguinis *holds that the country of citizenship of a child is the same as that of his or her parents.*

In addition to acquisition of American nationality through birth, citizenship can be acquired through the naturalization process. Naturalization ordinarily requires that a person have "legal permanent resident" status and reside for a certain number of years in the United States. Laws and regulations regarding these means of acquiring U.S. citizenship are complex. The nearest United States embassy or consulate should be consulted if additional information is desired. The Congress of the United States is vested with the authority to enact legislation concerning United States citizenship. ■

PROFILES

We have profiled 13 diverse individuals whose lives, backgrounds, and occupations provide considerable insight into—but by no means a complete picture of—life today in the United States. The persons featured here include ordinary Americans as well as a few individuals of whom you may already have heard.

PROFILES

University Professor — Taking Advantage of Opportunities

In many ways, **Hibba Abugideiri**, a naturalized American citizen, epitomizes both the modern and the traditional. Her high level of education (she holds a Ph.D. in history from Georgetown University) and professional career (she is a professor of Middle Eastern history at George Washington University) show her to be a thoroughly modern woman, while her devout Islamic piety and reverence for family keep her firmly grounded in traditional values.

Born in Sudan in 1968, Hibba came to the United States with her parents while still a young child, so her father could pursue a doctoral degree in agriculture at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Her family had firmly intended to return to Sudan after her father completed his studies, since both of her parents believed strongly in using their U.S.-acquired educations to help develop their native land. They were prevented from doing so, however, when her father was blacklisted for political reasons and was not permitted to return. By the 1980s, her family had abandoned all hope of going back to Sudan; the entire family, including Hibba, became American citizens in 1984.

Hibba took full advantage of the opportunities afforded her in her adopted country, and she obtained bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from American universities. She has become a renowned expert in the fields of Middle Eastern and Islamic history, writing extensively on these subjects and teaching them at the university level. She has also shared her knowledge with overseas audiences, traveling abroad to numerous countries, including Malawi, Trinidad, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan, under the auspices of the Department of State's American Speaker and Specialist Program.

Hibba believes that her participation in the American Speaker and Specialist Program has not only enabled her to make a valuable contribution to her overseas audiences, but has also been personally and professionally rewarding. The warm hospitality and kindness of her overseas hosts, in small towns and villages as well as in large cities, is something that she will never forget.

She was also very impressed by the university students she met during her programs abroad, who were not only very knowledgeable about the United States and other countries, but who also had their own unique perspectives on the world. By attempting to see the world through the eyes of these students, Hibba says, she was able to gain a fresh perspective on her own experiences and a renewed appreciation of cultural diversity. As Hibba puts it: "We often take for granted the many advantages that we have in this country, so much so that we sometimes forget that people in other countries also have their own unique patriotism and love of country, which is rooted in their own cultures and histories."

Her "American success" notwithstanding, Hibba has never lost sight of traditional Islamic values, and she feels that these values are compatible with such secular American traditions as political freedom and equal opportunity. She is encouraged by the increasing political activism of American Muslims, who, she believes, have much to contribute to the American political process and can play a positive role in America's interaction with Muslim nations.

Nor does her Islamic faith make Hibba feel out of place in the United States. Indeed, she believes that many Americans are not satisfied with a completely secular, materialistic society, and are looking for a spirituality of some kind, whether derived from a traditional religion such as Islam or from some less traditional source.

When asked what advice she would give to a young person, either in America or abroad, Hibba said that she would urge that person to pursue knowledge in all of its forms, as this is the key to success in all walks of life, as well as to personal fulfillment. Hibba's own life has proven this to be true. – *Steven M. Lauterbach*

Hibba Abugideiri

College Student — Beating the Odds

Enes Elezovic, a 19-year-old Bosnian refugee who expects to earn U.S. citizenship this summer, is a freshman at Grand View College in his hometown of Des Moines, Iowa. When you've seen all that Enes has seen in his young life–when you've seen horror "up close and personal" as he has–the United States of America is a very agreeable place to be.

Enes was six years old, living in Mostar, Bosnia's second largest city, when war broke out in 1991. The Elezovics had a comfortable, affluent life. Enes's father, Sedat, had been a helicopter pilot in the Bosnian army for 10 years, while living at home with the family. His mother, Ljubica, or "Lu" as most know her, was a psychiatrist. His brother, Semir, now a junior in secondary school in Des Moines, was an infant.

The Elezovics are, by religion, a mixed family; Sedat is Muslim and Lu is Catholic. But for a long time, families could live with no fear of oppression for either religious or ethnic reasons.

And then? "The war started in Croatia, but we knew the Serbs and Croats were going to come to Bosnia because they wanted land," Enes says. The bombing would start "every day at about 6 in the morning," he recalls. "A bell would ring, and we'd all have to go to the basement. Planes would be bombing all around us. There was gunfire all the time. I was very frightened, and it was all so fast-paced it was hard to understand what was happening.

"Somehow we lived a half a year with the war going on all around us, but then we were told we had to get out. We had to pack and leave in one day. ... We had to leave behind almost everything we had. From what I remember, we had no idea if someone was going to try to capture us, or if they'd let us out of the country, or if we could even get into another country. We just had to leave."

An uncle, who had relocated to Achen, Germany, told the Elezovics to try to make it there. "We had to leave Bosnia without my dad, and we didn't really know if we would see him again," Enes says. "I have a lot of friends who lost their dads in the war."

After three days, Lu Elezovic and her two young sons made it out Bosnia and arrived in Achen. Six months later, Sedat joined them. Then, the family went about the business of rebuilding their lives in Germany, hoping that after being there six years, they would

qualify as German citizens.

"But then Germany decided there were too many refugees coming, so they changed the rule that you had to be there eight years for citizenship," Enes says. "Those who were living there with less time than that had to leave."

Hugo Smaljovic, a Bosnian friend who had settled in Iowa, contacted the family and suggested they join him. After an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Germany, the Elezovics were told they would be welcomed to the United States as refugees. On February 16, 1999, they arrived in Des Moines to become part of the community of nearly 3,000 Bosnian people who had re-settled in Iowa's capital city.

Enes enrolled in the Des Moines schools as a seventh grader. He was fluent in the Serbo-Croatian language the people had spoken in Bosnia and in the German he had learned in Europe, and he was fairly comfortable in the English that he had studied for four years in Germany.

He also knew another form of communication, one that is understood and loved around the world: football *(known as soccer in the United States)*. Enes had just started playing the game, as a six-year-old in Bosnia, when the war broke out, then he played for the next six years when his family was in Germany. In the Des Moines area, he quickly became a part of amateur teams, some with players his own age, others with adults. And at Roosevelt High School, he became a four-year starter on the varsity team. He grew to be 1.8 meters tall and weigh a trim 70 kilos, and he became one of those players who can seemingly run all day long without tiring. In his senior season, Enes was an all-state first-team selection. He was recruited by several colleges before choosing Grand View, where he plans to study international business.

His parents, now both 42 years old, have made the transition to American business very well. Sedat is now a supervisor in a manufacturing plant. Lu is a successful realtor. They own three houses, so they have rental income. And the whole family works together in their own company, Tip Top Cleaning, which does home and office custodial work and also cleans up construction sites.

Three summers ago, Enes's parents told him they wanted him to accept a job doing manual labor in a warehouse where many of the Bosnian adults in Des Moines have starter jobs. "My parents weren't forcing me to work as much as they were giving me a clear picture of how life is," he explains. "We worked from like 6 at night until 5 in the morning. When I saw how hard our people were working just to support their families, it gave me a whole new respect for them."

Enes says that, like many young Bosnians who came to the United States as refugees, family is the most important thing to him. "Because of what we've been through, I have total respect for my parents. With the war, they had to find new ways of life, new jobs, new friends, new countries. It's tough to try to survive in a different society. You've got to be able to adjust to different values."

Enes quotes his father telling him that freedom and now the opportunity for a college education in America "are like being given a key. My dad tells me, 'Now, you've got to insert that key, then turn it to the left to lock it up, or the right to open it up–that's a decision you have to make.' "

Enes says his concept of the American dream is a little different from what he thinks some Americans consider it to be. "In my view, it's not all about money," he says. "It's more about being happy at whatever you're doing–and never giving up." – *Chuck Offenburger*

Enes Elezovic

Science Teacher — Defying Convention

Helen Fitzhugh lived through almost the entire 20th century. She was born in December 1910 and, at age 94, is still going strong, looking forward with her customary enthusiasm and optimism to what the 21st century will bring. Helen is a short, energetic woman, full of zest and intellectual curiosity. She loves living in the Kendal retirement community in Oberlin, Ohio, where she is close to Oberlin College and its world-renowned Conservatory of Music. She can often be seen in the audience at lectures and concerts, sitting close to the front so she won't miss anything.

Her life has been not only long but also full of adventure and accomplishment. "I come from strong immigrant stock," Helen says. "My parents were Joseph Vassau, whose French-Canadian family settled in Wisconsin in the mid-1800s, and Theresa Hirsch, whose Jewish family from Germany also came to the United States in the mid-1800s and established a mercantile business in Montana. At some point–I'm not sure when or where this happened–the two families met, and three of the Vassau sons married three of the Hirsch daughters. At the time of his marriage, my father was working as a cattle buyer for a meat-packing company in St. Paul, Minnesota."

Some years earlier, in 1862, the U.S. Congress had passed the Homestead Act, which gave a grant of 64 hectares of public land to settlers who agreed to stay on the land for five years and make improvements to it. Joseph Vassau applied for a homestead and was given one in North Dakota, about 24 kilometers from the Canadian border near Willow City, a town of about 500 people. He and his wife moved there, built a house, planted a large garden, and kept two or three cows, doing enough farming to feed themselves. Joseph continued to work for the packinghouse. "Life was difficult for my parents," Helen says, "and the winters were bitterly cold, but they persevered." Their five children were born on the homestead–four boys and then Helen, the baby of the family.

After Helen finished her eighth grade of school in Willow City, the family moved to a small town in southeastern Montana. At her new school, Helen says, "the science teacher suggested that I might be interested in his courses." She loved them, but the other students were startled because, in those days, science was thought of as not being "suitable" for young

PROFILES

girls. Helen became the top student in her class, however, and was sent to the state science contest, which she won, beating out a number of uncomprehending boys.

Deciding that the schools in Montana were not good enough for his bright and inquisitive daughter, her father sent Helen to live with one of her older brothers in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She took all the science courses the secondary school there had to offer and then went to the University of Minnesota, where she majored in science and mathematics. The chemistry professor, however, made things so difficult for Helen and the other women students that she finally quit and transferred to Colorado University.

By then, the 1930s, the Great Depression had begun, and "money was tight." Helen got a teaching certificate, since that was a career that welcomed women, and found a job teaching in a one-room rural schoolhouse in Eastern Colorado. She lived with a farm family and taught 8 to 10 students in all the elementary grades. She taught there for a couple of years, going to school herself during the summers to finish her college degree.

Helen was then offered a job in Green River, Wyoming. "I accepted," she says, "and found to my delight that I would be teaching science to all of the lower grades in the school. Then, at the hotel where I was living, I met Edward Fitzhugh, Jr., who was working for the Union Pacific Railroad, checking the company's land holdings for mineral deposits. The two of us spent many an evening in the drug store attached to the hotel, getting acquainted."

They were married in August of 1942. "Soon afterward," she says, "Ed was called to Washington, D.C., to work for the Bureau of Mines. World War II was well under way, and the U.S. government was looking for people to help them find the minerals they needed for the war effort." Helen got a job there herself almost immediately, teaching science and then chemistry. "With so many men in the military," she says, "women with a knowledge of science were suddenly in demand."

After the war, Helen and Ed lived for a few years in New York State, where their children, Ann and Ned, were born, and then moved to Cleveland, Ohio. There, Ed became chief geologist for Republic Steel Corporation. Through the years, he traveled more than 500,000 miles for the company, looking for minerals in South America, Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East.

"Once our children were old enough that I could be gone part of the time," Helen says, "I started traveling with my husband. She eventually visited every country in South America, as well as China, Japan, Russia, and parts of Europe.

After Ed died in 1989, Helen continued to live in Cleveland until 2001, when she moved to Kendal at Oberlin. The community's health care system will take care of her for the rest of her life, although she seems much too vigorous to be needing it anytime soon.

As she looks back over almost a century of life, Helen is glad she lived when she did. "We had to work hard for what we got," she says, "and we were happy to do so. We didn't expect someone to just give it to us." Helen also has a strong belief in "treating others the way I'd like to be treated myself. I always try to ask myself if what I'm about to do or say will hurt someone else. You know, 'do unto others' is a mighty good way of looking at life–for countries as well as for people. If we could just live that way, we'd all be a lot better for it." – *Robert Taylor*

Helen Fitzhugh

Landscape Supervisor — Doing the Right Thing

"Let me tell you about the American dream," says 34-year-old **Reymundo Govea**. It's the opportunity I got to work, go to college, prove myself, get married, buy a house, and live in a nation that is free."

Reymundo was 14 years old when his uncle encouraged him to leave his home in San Joaquin, Mexico, population 40, and move to Houston, Texas, to go to school. Moving would also reunite Reymundo with his father, who was in Houston working to earn money for his wife and four sons in San Joaquin. Reymundo obtained a temporary visa to visit Houston, decided to stay, and entered the sixth grade. He did not speak English.

"Even though I struggled with the language, school went well for about eight months," he says. But Reymundo discovered he liked having money for himself and to send home, so he quit school to work in restaurants in Houston. About a year later, a cousin working in Baltimore, Maryland, for The Brickman Group, a national landscaping services provider, persuaded the 16-year-old Reymundo to come to Baltimore. Reymundo saved his money and bought a plane ticket.

"When my cousin took me to Brickman's to apply for a job, I told them I was 18 years old because I really wanted to work there," he says. It was 1986, and the only papers needed for employment were an identification card and a social security card, which Reymundo had obtained in Texas. He was hired and assigned to a crew mowing the grass at a large apartment complex.

Reymundo will never forget his first day on the job. The apartment complex was bigger than anything he had ever seen, and all the buildings, roads, and lawns looked alike. He was told where to mow and where to meet the rest of the crew when he finished. "I pushed the mower around one building, then another and another, and then realized I was lost. I left the mower and started walking, hoping to meet up with my crew. We were finally united, but then we had to find my lawnmower."

Reymundo's first supervisor was tough and strict: "He taught me how to mow, trim, rake, and plant, and to do it well. I had to go back and correct anything I did wrong."

Reymundo was determined to learn as much as possible so he could advance, and a couple of years later his hard work paid off. He was offered the chance to supervise a work crew. "I was excited about the promotion," he recalls, "but then I had to admit that I had lied about my age when I was hired. I know I shouldn't have done that, but I needed the job to help my family." By then he was 18, and Brickman agreed to let him keep his job but required him to get a work permit and driver's license, which he did. He also started working toward his "green card" (to establish permanent residence in the United States) and U.S. citizenship, which he received in 1995.

During his first few years in Baltimore, Reymundo worked during the day at Brickman's and studied English at night. It was difficult, but he knew he had to learn the language to advance. And he did. About five years after getting lost in the apartment complex, Reymundo became a maintenance superintendent for Brickman's, making him responsible for the supervision of six crews of five or six men each, mostly young Hispanics also hoping for a chance to prove themselves. His advice to them is the same advice he had been given: "You can succeed if you are disciplined and willing to do what it takes to get the job done right."

Reymundo believes that most moral and ethical problems on the job can be avoided "as long as I tell my crews what I expect of them professionally and personally, and what will happen if they break that trust. Fortunately, I have had very few problems of that kind." There is little doubt that Reymundo loves his work: "This is the best job. I get to work outside with the guys and with management, and I'm proud of what we do."

Reymundo has been with Brickman's for 18 years and is considered an exceptional employee. Mark Lucas, Brickman's Baltimore branch manager, says: "Reymundo stands for the people; he's ethical, caring, a hard worker, and a joy to be around." Reymundo is featured in Brickman training videos, and he often speaks to groups of employees about his life. "I remind people not to take the awesome privileges we have in this country for granted," he says.

Much has changed in the 20 years since Reymundo immigrated to the United States. "Technology is the biggest change, and it took me a while to get used to the computers," he says. "There are also Spanish-speaking people everywhere now and lots of Spanish shops."

Reymundo is married and has a stepson. Whenever he can, he advises young people to "get an education; if you work hard, you can make something of yourself." When he's not working or watching the Baltimore Ravens football team, Reymundo helps his neighbors, many of whom are older, with their landscaping and yard work.

About 10 years ago, Reymundo brought his mother and brothers to live in Baltimore. "My family and faith are the most important things in my life," he says. – *Cathy Lickteig Makofski*

Reymundo Govea

Orchestra Conductor — Balancing Freedom and Responsibility

Born of Japanese-American ancestry in Honolulu, Hawaii, **Michael Jinbo** has become a leading figure in American classical music. He is music director of the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians in Hancock, Maine, and conductor of the Nittany Valley Symphony in State College, Pennsylvania. When he is not at either of those places, he lives in New York City.

Michael's great-grandparents left Japan for Hawaii sometime in the late 1800s. Succeeding generations of his family lived in a Hawaii that was a monarchy until 1893, became a territory of the United States in 1900, and was admitted to the Union as the 50th state in 1959. Statehood came just three years after Michael was born, in May of 1956, so he doesn't remember a time when he did not think of himself as an American citizen, although others were not so sure. Michael went to a music festival in California while he was in secondary school, and a number of people there asked if this was his first visit to the United States. "I didn't like that much," he recalls.

Michael first became interested in music in elementary school. "I attended public schools as a child," he says, "and in the fifth grade we were all given a musical aptitude test to assess our sense of pitch and rhythm. Based on the test, certain students were offered the opportunity to learn a stringed instrument in group 'string classes' in the sixth grade. I remember knowing instantly that I wanted to do that, even though I had had no classical music exposure in the home. The thought of playing the violin appealed to me."

He continued in public school string classes through the sixth and seventh grades and then started taking private violin lessons in the eighth grade. "Although I was a 'late starter' for a string player," he says, "I progressed very quickly and became one of the best of my age in Hawaii. I ended up being concertmaster (first violinist) of the Hawaii Youth Symphony and Hawaii All-State Orchestra by the time I finished high school. As a concerto competition winner, I played a solo with the Honolulu Symphony in my senior year."

After he graduated as valedictorian of his secondary school class, his college applications were accepted by five major universities. He

ended up choosing the University of Chicago "because of the amount of aid I received," he says. "When taking into account the quality of the school, the cost of tuition, and the amount of financial aid awarded, UC ended up being the best school my family could afford, and even then only with great financial hardship."

Michael was concertmaster of the university-community orchestra for all of the four years he was at the university, and in his senior year, he started conducting. "A friend of mine offered to give me a small youth orchestra that she was no longer interested in conducting," Michael says, "which was a part-time job. I took the one conducting course offered at the university, got a few guest conducting opportunities, and put together some concerts on my own."

After receiving a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Chicago and a master's degree in conducting from Northwestern University School of Music, Michael first attended the Pierre Monteux School in the summer of 1983. (Monteux, one of the great conductors of the 20th century who was born in France and became an American citizen in 1942, founded a summer school in 1943 that still draws conductors and orchestra musicians to Maine from all over the world. At the time Michael began attending, the school was under the direction of Charles Bruck, who had been a pupil of Monteux's in Paris and took over following Monteux's death in 1964.)

Michael Jinbo's career quickly flourished. "In 1990," he says, "I was offered the position of music director and conductor of the Nittany Valley Symphony in Pennsylvania. Since it was a part-time position, I commuted from Chicago, where I was living, when necessary. I continued to work as a freelance violinist in Chicago as well. A couple of years later, I won an audition for a job as assistant conductor with the North Carolina Symphony. Finally, in my mid-30s, I was working full-time as a conductor."

In addition, Michael continued to go to Maine each summer to study with Bruck at the Monteux School, eventually becoming Bruck's assistant. When Bruck died in the summer of 1995, in the middle of the six-week session, Michael took over the classes, finished the session, and was subsequently named music director by the school's board of trustees. He resigned from his position with the North Carolina Symphony, but is now in his 15th season with the Nittany Valley Symphony and will celebrate his 10th anniversary as music director of the Monteux School in the summer of 2005.

Michael's success has been proof of what he sees as the American dream: "This is a country that gives us the freedom to be what we want to be and do what we want to do, so long as we accept the responsibility and limits that have to coexist with that freedom."

Michael realizes, though, how much things are changing. "Not just our country but the entire world now seems to move so much faster and to be so much more complicated," he says. "I feel that as Americans, we are not viewed the way we used to be by the rest of the world, nor do we view ourselves the same way either. There are so many strong feelings and antagonisms between different types of people, which I find very sad."

But he remains hopeful. "We can regain our sense of ourselves," he says, "if we will just follow a few simple rules: Do your best, try always to think the best of other people, and learn how to be resilient. Maybe the last of these is the hardest." – *Robert Taylor*

Michael Jinbo

International Businessman — Managing the Risks

Stephen Johnson, who has lived in Singapore for the past 13 years, is currently director of Asiawerks Global Investment Group. Steve has a unique family background, as well as an intriguing life story. He was born in the state of Michigan to a father who is a full-blooded Native American of the Saginaw Chippewa tribe and a mother of Polish-Catholic and Russian-Jewish heritage. His parents had met as students at the University of Michigan.

As a teenager, Steve's skill in American football, as well as his excellent academic record in secondary school, caught the eye of recruiters from several Ivy League universities, including the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he played on and captained the American football team in addition to pursuing his studies. The University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in finance at the Wharton School, educated Steve in ways that went beyond the purely academic; as he puts it: "I learned many lessons there, most of them outside of the classroom. It (the university) was a melting pot of people from all walks of life, all pushing each other to achieve great things."

Steve learned about the value of hard work outside the classroom as well. During most of the summer vacation months of his college years, he worked in construction six days a week and up to 12 hours per day. He had a passion for adventure and travel, and spent one college summer in the United Kingdom under a work-permit exchange program. Steve had left for London without any firm job lined up or even a definite place to stay, thinking that jobs and lodgings would be easy to find. He learned differently, however, and had to search long and hard before finally finding a job as a bartender in a South Kensington pub called the Anglesea Arms. But he didn't settle for that alone, persevering until he eventually found a finance-related position. During the day he worked in finance, but he kept his bartending job three evenings a week because he enjoyed the exposure to the local people and to British life. Steve says his day job helped him lay the foundation for the successful business career he has had, and his time in London stimulated a life-long interest in foreign cultures and peoples.

Much of Steve's career has been spent in the risky and challenging, but highly interesting and rewarding, fields of foreign exchange derivatives

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trading and risk management. As Steve points out: "Foreign exchange rates tend to be the first indicator of the impact of world events, so it is fascinating to go into work ... and have my job be different everyday."

Steve's job has also given him the opportunity to travel widely in Asia and to learn about the continent's diverse cultures and peoples. He says it has been very rewarding, personally and professionally, to gain the in-depth knowledge of foreign cultures that can be derived only from long-term exposure and open-minded observation. In his view, Americans who have seldom if ever traveled outside of the United States tend to have an overly U.S.-centered viewpoint and would profit from more exposure to different cultures. Similarly, he has found that his time living abroad has allowed him to view his own country more objectively than he would have had he lived his entire life in the United States.

Steve's many years abroad have not, however, diminished his admiration for the United States or his pride in his Native American heritage. He flew from Singapore to Washington, D.C., to take part in the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in September 2004. Being present at the opening, and being able to walk down the National Mall in Washington with tens of thousands of Native Americans wearing traditional dress, was a deeply emotional experience for him. Like many persons of Native American heritage, Steve is deeply aware of past historical injustices committed against Native American peoples, and he believes that the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian has finally given proper recognition to the nation's first settlers and to the numerous contributions that Native Americans have made in every aspect of American life and culture. – *Steven M. Lauterbach*

Stephen Johnson

Writer, Choral Director, Etc. — Being True to Herself

"My early ambition in life was to try everything I found interesting and intriguing, to travel extensively and study people, and to remember that success means only that you pick yourself up one more time than you fall down," says **Anne Korff** of Newport News, Virginia. Although she modestly claims that "I am still a work in process," she has, in fact, succeeded remarkably well in her life's ambitions.

Anne's job résumé includes everything from serving in the U.S. Navy, to singing in a nightclub, to hosting cooking and weather shows on television. Widowed twice as a young woman, she raised five children by working two jobs. When possible, she took the children along to her second jobs, bedding them down in the nightclub dressing room or under the counter of an airport rent-a-car office.

Now in her mid-70s and married to a retired Air Force officer, Anne is busier than ever–directing a 32-voice women's choral group (which she also founded), traveling and leading tours to Scotland, writing articles for magazines and newsletters, and volunteering at her church, a nature center, and various civic and military organizations. "I want to wear out, not rust out," she laughs.

Anne grew up in Savannah, Georgia, in the heart of the American South. Her mother's parents came from Eastern Europe around 1900 and met and married in the United States. Her Scottish father traveled frequently to America with a musical troupe and finally settled in Georgia when he did not have the money to return to his homeland. During Anne's childhood, her father traveled throughout the South performing in vaudeville shows.

As a young woman unable to afford college, Anne joined the Navy in 1950, during the Korean conflict. "I really wanted to serve my country, because I was afraid we would lose our freedom if people didn't work for it," she recalls. "It was also an opportunity for me to expand my education."

At that time, women in the Navy were not allowed to go to sea, Anne says, but "for the first time in many women's lives, we got the same pay as men for doing the same job." Civilian attitudes were not always favorable, she adds. "We were looked upon as husband hunters and women of loose morals. In fact, we were very rigidly controlled. We had to live in barracks, we had curfews, and there were places in our quarters beyond which men could not go. It was almost like being in a convent."

After three and a half years of active duty at bases from Florida to Pearl Harbor, Anne left the Navy and attended college under what is known as the GI Bill, which provides free tuition for military veterans. Working full-time while attending school, she commuted at one point to a college an hour away from Savannah to take a 6 a.m. class, then drove back in time to start work at 9 a.m.

With a dual degree in journalism and psychology, Anne has worked as an editor, writer, press agent for politicians, advertising copywriter, and on-air personality for radio and television stations. "I think the best job for me was working as sales promotion director for a shopping center chain, because I got to use everything in my experience," she says. "I helped open shopping centers and set up the public relations program, did weekly radio and TV shows, wrote newspaper columns, and made personal appearances before community groups."

Among the biggest changes she has witnessed in American life, Anne cites "the opportunities for women that did not exist before, and the public's perception of women's role in society as more than just nurturers." But, she notes, the changes have come at a price. "Women are not as nurturing because they don't have as much time to enjoy their children." And as Americans have become busier trying to balance career and family, "the public has become less polite and less civil in daily discourse."

Anne also sees a difference between the typical American dream of complete personal freedom and independence and the achievable American dream, which she believes must involve social consciousness. "A woman, for example, can go out and get a responsible job and earn the money she wants only because there were women before who pushed and prodded and brought about changes in the workplace and in the laws. We all have a responsibility to create a climate now for the people who are going to follow us."

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A deeply religious person, Anne says her faith in God is the most important thing in her life. When faced with a moral decision, "the very first thing I do is pray that God will help me see the right thing to do."

To the next generation, Anne advises: "Be true to yourself. You have to look in the mirror every day. You know whether you are betraying your basic beliefs, if you are living a lie or are being cruel to other people. Just be true to yourself." *– Phyllis McIntosh*

ANNE KORFF

Actor — Keeping His Feet on the Ground

In an international digital video conference last November, a questioner in Minsk asked the 16-year-old American actor **Haley Joel Osment** whether he had a driver's license and, if he did, what kind of car he drove. Osment answered that he drove "the family Saturn, which is a well-made American car." His response was in keeping with the portrait that emerges in the interview of a young professional who has enjoyed extraordinary success almost from the time he stepped in front of a camera.

Osment was four years old when he persuaded his mother to let him audition for a Pizza Hut commercial. (It may not have taken much effort to persuade her, since Haley's father was a professional actor.) Osment got the job, and it wasn't too much later that he landed his first film role, playing Forrest Gump's son in a movie that was a critical hit and a commercial success.

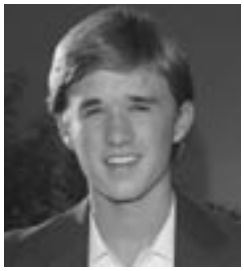
The kind of phenomenal early success in the film industry that Osment has experienced can be a recipe for personal disaster. Fame, financial security, and life in a Hollywood bubble don't always add up to the development of a mature, well-grounded individual. But Osment seems determined, with the help of his parents, to become just that. Although he is tutored when he is shooting a movie, when he's not filming he attends secondary school at home in Los Angeles. He plays sports. He hangs out with his friends, "who don't take the acting part of my life too seriously. ... It's not a big part of our friendship." He's an active member of his secondary school drama department, which is currently working on "The Laramie Project." And when he graduates, he plans to attend college. He'll study film, of course, but he also intends to study history and politics.

In an hour-long conference with English-speaking students from Belarus, Osment's poise before the camera was to be expected–he's an actor, after all–but not necessarily his ability to articulate the craft of the profession to which he has devoted himself. He recognizes his good fortune: "When art is your work," Osment said, "you really don't end up working at all." And that is because, he went on to explain, you care so much about what you do. Acting, Osment said, has to do with becoming someone else, and believing it. "The best part of acting is making that transformation into another person," he told the students in Minsk. "That's really what the essence of acting is, (it's) believing that you are someone who you are not." Not coincidentally, for Osment, the hardest part of acting is believing "what your character is living." If it works, if you can do it, you wind up creating what he described as "an alternative reality."

One questioner wondered why so many actors seem to burn out or disappear after making a splash as a child actor. Osment seemed to be aware of the danger of that happening and converted it to a challenge. His goal, he said, is to continue to improve his acting. Each time he portrays a character, he strives for a better performance, building on what he has done in the past and strengthening his art as he moves from role to role. Having played so many child parts, he looks forward to being able, eventually, to play "a villain."

As for the fame that comes along with success in the movie business, Osment told his interlocutors in Minsk that an actor should first and foremost respect his fans. "Without their support, you wouldn't be working, " he said. Still, he recognizes that celebrity can be a distraction from what really matters, which is the work, and the art in the work. He appears to mean it, and to know what he is saying, when he tells people that when it comes to making films, what's important is "the work on the set."

If there is such a thing as equilibrium in life for a famous young actor, Haley Joel Osment seems to be close to achieving it. One way or another, his future lies in film. While he will continue to act, he said, after college he hopes to explore other aspects of moviemaking, including writing and directing. In the meantime he'll keep working, and studying, and playing rock and roll music with some friends. As he does all that, the odds seem good that he will do so with his feet firmly planted on the ground. *– Mark Jacobs*



HALEY JOEL OSMENT

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Soldier and Statesman — Conquering the Challenges

When **Colin Powell** tells the story of his life, he often describes it as a typical American story of an ordinary child who overcame obstacles to rise from obscurity to prominence. Yet it is equally clear that Powell is an extraordinary man who has played an important role in many of the epic-making events of our time. The resolution of this paradox is probably not to resolve it at all, but to recognize that the trajectory of Powell's life is a classic American tale–and, at the same time, the unique story of a remarkable individual.

"Mine is the story of a black kid of no early promise from an immigrant family of limited means," Powell wrote in his autobiography, *My American Journey*. "It is a story of service and soldiering. It is a story about the people who helped make me what I am. It is a story of my benefiting from opportunities created by the sacrifice of those who went before me and maybe benefiting those who will follow."

Powell has never forgotten the struggles and opportunities of his youth. After first leaving government service in the 1990s, he served as the founding chairman of America's Promise–The Alliance for Youth. As secretary of state, he repeatedly took time in foreign travels to meet with young people and talk to them about their hopes and about the challenges they face as the leaders of the next generation.

At the 2004 Seeds of Peace International Camp, Powell said: "In all of my conversations with young people, we talk about families, we talk about histories, we talk about hopes and dreams, we talk about fears and doubts, and in all these conversations we come away with a richer appreciation of one another as fellow human beings. ... When people share the ideas and feelings that make them human, peace has a chance to take root in their hearts."

Colin Luther Powell, born in 1937, grew up in the diverse ethnic and religious neighborhood of Kelly Street in New York City's South Bronx. His parents were immigrants from Jamaica who set high standards and valued education. By his own description, however, young Colin lacked much focus or direction. "I had not yet excelled at anything," he wrote in his autobiography. "I was the 'good kid,' the 'good worker,' no more." That changed when he entered the City College of New York–where he majored in geology–and found his calling and career when he joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Powell flourished in the military's structure and discipline–he became commander of the unit's precision drill team–and, in 1958, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Powell served two combat tours in Vietnam, was wounded twice in action, and later commanded troops in Korea, Germany, and the United States. He also earned a master's degree in business administration and won a White House fellowship. "I grew up and chose a soldier's life," Powell wrote years later. "I lost close friends in war. Later, I commanded young men and women who went willingly into harm's way for our country, some never to return. A day doesn't pass that I don't think of them."

In 1986, then-Lieutenant General Colin Powell joined the Reagan administration; a year later, President Ronald Reagan named him as his national security advisor at a time when he coordinated history-making summit meetings with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Powell subsequently served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under the first President George Bush as the United States led an international coalition to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein in Operation Desert Storm. He retired from the military in 1993 as one of the country's most highly regarded public figures.

Political unity and military strength helped the West contain the Soviet Union, Powell has said, but it was the power of ideas that ended the Cold War and brought democracy to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. "The power of freedom for people, the power of individual liberty ... these are powerful forces that reshaped the Cold War world into the world we are in now. ... I believe these forces are irresistible," Powell observed.

As secretary of state from 2001 to 2005, Colin Powell directed American diplomacy at a time of new and often unprecedented challenges: leading a global coalition in the war against terrorism, helping establish nascent democracies in Afghanistan and Iraq, supporting the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, meeting the challenge of the AIDS pandemic, working for a just and equitable Middle East peace, and championing the growth of freedom and economic opportunity throughout the world.

In many respects, Colin Powell followed in the footsteps of another great American soldier-statesman, George Marshall, who led the United States military during World War II and then formulated the Marshall Plan to assist European recovery and help win the peace as secretary of state.

"George C. Marshall is a personal hero of mine," Powell said upon receiving the Marshall Foundation Award in 2003. "His portrait hangs in my office. ... When I sit in my office and I'm dealing with the most difficult problems, I look straight ahead at George."

Powell married the former Alma Johnson in 1962, and they have a son, Michael, two daughters, Linda and Anne, and two grandsons. Since the 1970s, his favorite escape from work pressures has been to repair older model Volvo automobiles. As Powell told students at a Berlin school recently: "For me, that's very relaxing, to work on my cars, because unlike political problems, when my car doesn't start, I can figure it out quickly."

Colin Powell paid tribute to the enduring values that shaped his life in his 2004 remarks to the National Italian American Foundation: "Wherever I go in the world, I carry deep inside me that kid from Kelly Street–the spirit of an America that is united in its diversity, all embracing in its humanity, and so full of possibility. That democratic spirit has always been our country's greatest strength, and it remains our greatest hope. ... And that generous spirit continues to be our greatest gift to the world." – *Howard Cincotta*

Colin Powell

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Cheetah Keeper — Living A Dream

Many an American child grows up loving animals and dreaming of working with them one day. But **Craig Saffoe**, of Falls Church, Virginia, is one of the lucky few who have parlayed that childhood fantasy into a fascinating and rewarding career. Indeed, he has held only one job in his adult life–caring for cheetahs at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. Now, at age 30, he is head cheetah keeper, managing nine of the endangered cats (including four newborn cubs) and a staff of three.

Craig grew up in Fayetteville, North Carolina, the son of a career army officer, Carl Saffoe, who died when Craig was just six years old. He and two older sisters were reared by their mother, a schoolteacher. An African-American, Craig can also trace his family roots back to Europe: His maternal great-grandmother came to the United States from Norway in the early 1900s.

After graduating from secondary school, Craig enrolled in the animal science program at North Carolina State University with the intent of becoming a veterinarian. A faculty mentor "helped me realize that I was more interested in animal behavior than in animal medicine and introduced me to the idea of working in a zoo," he recalls. With the professor's encouragement, Craig applied for and received an internship at the National Zoo, which had just opened a new cheetah exhibit. He had written so compellingly about his interest in cheetahs that the zoo curator assigned Craig to work with the cheetah biologist. "That was my introduction to cheetahs, and from day one I fell in love with them," he says.

The challenges of managing the sleek cats–the planet's fastest land animals–go far beyond standard care and feeding. "They are very apt to come down with illnesses that can become life threatening literally in a week or two," Craig says. "So we weigh them weekly instead of monthly like most zoo animals. We pay special attention to how much water each cat drinks, how much food they consume each day. They are intense animals to manage. Cheetahs are also very difficult to breed in zoos, so we are in constant communication with other zoos around the world, comparing notes on breeding strategies."

Craig loves his job because "I feel like I'm making a difference by educating people here in the United States about cheetahs and the problems they face in the wild. Also, it's hard to have a bad day at work when you're working with animals as beautiful as these."

The freedom to choose one's path in life is Craig's version of the American dream: "A lot of money is not something I personally need to fulfill my happiness. I want to be able to go to work every day and enjoy myself." Unmarried, he says he lives modestly, "but that's a choice I made, not something I was forced to do. America is one of the few places one can choose one's own destiny, and I appreciate being given that opportunity."

The most important guiding influences in Craig's life the "the memories I have of my father and my ideal of who I think he was. Like my father, who was well respected by his fellow soldiers, I want to be respected by my co-workers and in the field of zoology, not just as an animal keeper but as someone who is a bona fide cheetah expert."

Craig says he takes his moral cues from his mother's upbringing and from the way he views his father. "When I'm faced with a moral decision, I generally think what would Carl Saffoe do if he were in a position like this." Spirituality also comes into play. "I've spent a good deal of time looking at different religions, and I try to take pieces of each that I agree with and make decisions based on what I feel any God who looked at me would deem the right thing to do," he says.

Although still a young man, Craig sees some significant changes in America since he was a child. Gone, he says, is the paralyzing fear of all-out nuclear war that he remembers from the early 1980s. He also believes there is now much greater equality in American life–in families where both parents share in earning a living and rearing the children, and in relations between blacks and whites.

"Few people my age have been raised with the mindset that the races should be kept separate," Craig says. "I feel that I am accepted far more frequently than I am scoffed at because of the color of my skin. I think we've come a long way in how we treat each other."

If Craig Saffoe becomes a parent someday, he hopes to teach his children the importance of tolerance–"not just of people from other ethnic or religious backgrounds but also of those who think differently. I would advise (children) that by maintaining tolerance and humility, more people will respect them throughout their lives."
– *Phyllis McIntosh*

Craig Saffoe

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Ordained Minister — Making History

She ran her eyes over the bronze plaque in the church's vestibule: two-and-a-half columns of names, 99 in all, and all pastors of St. John United Methodist Church since its founding in Augusta, Georgia, in 1798. She recognized a good number of the names, giants in the history of southern Methodism. Five of them became bishops. In fact, one of these bishops occasioned the secession of the southern Methodists from their northern brethren in 1844; his wife inherited a black slave, and northern Methodists could not tolerate a bishop who was a slave-owner. Thus, an ex-pastor of St. John was instrumental in an ecclesiastical schism that prefigured America's bloody schism–the Civil War–by 17 years.

Now, 160 years later, in June 2004, her name was to be added to the plaque: **Renea Slater**. As St. John's 100th pastor stood in the sanctuary for the first time, taking in the century-old stained glass windows, the long pews, the aisles where generations had worshiped and lived history, she was making history. The Reverend Renea Slater is not only St. John's first female senior pastor, she is also the first African American to lead this predominantly white, 600-member congregation.

Renea has come a long way from the eight-hectare farm where she was born in segregated Louisiana 60 years ago. "Back when I was 16," she recalls, "I could only relate to 'Anglos'–what we called white people–on a business level. You didn't get close. You never looked them in the eye. ... As a little girl I thought, 'I don't like this.' But that was America's way. I remember on a bus trip, we couldn't use the same waiting room (that white passengers used), but I never felt less than anyone, it went against my soul."

Still, she loved living on the farm in Shady Grove, Louisiana. She grew up in the midst of seven brothers and sisters, cows, chickens, ducks, pigs, rows of crops that furnished the table, and a mother and father who taught them to love everyone. "We didn't buy much from the store," Renea says. "We even grew sugar cane for making syrup and had our corn ground into meal. When watermelons grew ripe, we'd go to the field and take them and crack them open and just dig out the heart, because the heart was the best." The only crop she didn't like was cotton. "You've got to hoe the cotton and then you have to pick the cotton; we had these long sacks that would hold maybe 50 pounds (22 kilograms). You had to go through and pick that cotton and cut your hands on the bolls."

In addition to farming, her father worked in a sawmill and as a school custodian. While he was at the sawmill, it was Renea and her brothers and sisters who cleaned the school just down the road from their farm. Their mother worked at the school, too, as the cook. "Whenever a daughter was old enough," Renea remembers, "she learned to cook for the family, and after the girls were grown, the boys did it. My mother said, 'That's what I do for a living, and I don't want to do it at home.' "

Because neither her mother nor her father had finished high school, they insisted that their children do so. "That was their dream for us," Renea says. "If you had a dream farther than that, you go for it, but you're on your own at that point."

Renea's dream was to teach. "I was in segregated schools until I went to college in the mid-1960s, but I knew I could be anything because my teachers taught us that," she says. "It's true that in America at that time our world was limited, and we didn't have a broader vision of all the many possibilities, but within that narrower scope you believed you could still be what you wanted to be." Renea went to college, but before she graduated she married, at age 20, and had babies. Raising three children slowed her progress, but not her determination. She finished in eight years, got her master's degree, and spent 20 years teaching children of all races.

Trapped in a marriage to a man who demanded her subservience, Renea accepted his authority and stifled her dreams. Then she started to read the Bible, the same book her husband cited as his authority. To her amazement, she found it was actually a book about liberation. "Our God creates us for liberation, and we don't have to hold to the law when it is destroying us," she says. This was the same message of liberation the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., was preaching in the streets of the South at the time. Renea had to discover it in her own home.

After her 19-year marriage ended, Renea began hearing a voice: "I want you to preach my gospel. I want you to minister to my flock." It was ridiculous. Renea knew no women ministers; her Baptist parents would disapprove; and few congregations wanted a female preacher. But the voice returned every night. "It was as if a television screen appeared in my whole being and this voice came on, and I knew it to be God," she says. At age 45, Renea entered the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Three years later, in 1992, she was ordained a Methodist minister. St. John is her fourth appointment.

When Renea entered the seminary, she heard the voice again: "If you go, I will open doors for you, and you will never have to knock them in." God, she says, has kept that promise. "I've never had to knock down any doors to get in." Then the 100th pastor of St. John Church smiles: "Which is not to say that once I walk through those doors, there are not many challenges!"

Renea knows that not everyone at St. John has welcomed her appointment. But having come through the door, she believes more than ever in the message she's been given: "I have nothing but good news to tell people about how God can change one's world." – *James Garvey*

Renea Slater

PROFILES

Museum Director — Achieving a Dynamic Balance

The director of the National Museum of the American Indian has an expansive, inclusive vision of democracy in America. Referring to Native Americans, **W. Richard West** told an interviewer: "We want to be part of that great pluralism, which really is the United States. It has been in the past and will continue to be in the future. I think that one of the great lessons of American democracy is (that) it has allowed through time this great cultural pluralism to live and grow up together in the United States. That really is the beauty of American democracy, and native people themselves are quite dedicated to that vision."

It's a vision that has guided West's approach to leading what is one of the nation's most important collective cultural undertakings in recent years, the establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The museum now occupies a place of prominence on the Mall in Washington, D.C., near the Capitol, drawing visitors from around the United States and around the world.

A citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma and a peace chief of the Southern Cheyenne, West has devoted his professional and personal life to working with American Indians. He grew up in Muskogee, Oklahoma, the son of an American Indian master artist, the late Richard West, Sr. Although the younger West ultimately chose to study law, he credits his lifelong interest in Indian history with influencing the career choices he has made.

Asked to articulate his version of the "American dream," West describes a kind of dynamic balance between the prerogatives of individual identity and membership in the larger society. There are, he notes, "five hundred and sixty-four federally recognized tribes in the United States. (The) ability to occupy cultural space in the United States is very, very important to us. And yet, we also appreciate that we are part of a larger political hub, which is called the United States of America, and we're very committed to that."

How does that work out in practice? "On a percentage basis," says West, "native people in the United States volunteer for military service, to the defense of this country, at much higher rates than any other segment of our population. So you see there is this wonderful commitment to the country of the United States, but at the same time to our own particular cultural communities." While his identity as a Southern Cheyenne is "very, very important, my being a citizen of the United States is equally fulfilling."

The director of the NMAI brought his vision of participation and pluralism to the daunting task of guiding the development of the three facilities that comprise the National Museum of the American Indian. West oversaw the creation of the George Gustav Heye Center, an exhibition and education facility in New York City, and he supervised the planning of the Cultural Resources Center, which houses the NMAI's 800,000-object collection, in Suitland, Maryland. He also directed the architectural and program planning for the museum on the Mall in Washington, D. C., which opened in September of 2004.

From his arrival in 1990, West understood that this was an undertaking of great social and political significance for the nation, and he took steps to ensure that its evolution faithfully reflected the stake that so many Americans had in it. By pushing back the construction schedule two years, he allowed museum planners to consult with contemporary native communities throughout the Americas. From 1991 to 1993, the museum hosted two dozen consultations, attended by hundreds of people. The result of their involvement profoundly influenced both the design of the museums and the programs they carry out.

Native peoples did not wish to be seen as "cultural relics" but as "peoples and cultures with a deep past who are very much alive today," says West. They also wanted "the opportunity to speak directly to audiences through the museum's public programs, presentations, and exhibits; to articulate in their own voices and through their own eyes the meaning of the objects in our collections and their import in native art, culture, and history."

The end result of that full-faith collaboration is an architectural design that reflects the values and experience of native peoples. As West has written, "I believe ... based upon my own upbringing and life experiences as a Cheyenne, that native views of the world, of reality, of cosmology, are profoundly different from those that have grown out of the Euroamerican cultural experience, and that these differences have a deep impact on the meaning and interpretation of the millions of objects sitting in the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian." Anyone who visits the museum can attest to the accuracy of the observation. The National Museum of the American Indian is a testament to the power of democracy in action. – *Mark Jacobs*

W. Richard West

PROFILES

Restaurateurs — Facing Daily Challenges

"Every day is a new opportunity for us to put ourselves out for our customers," says **Ray Young**. Ray, 39, and his sister, **Diane Young Parker**, 45, represent the fourth generation of the Young family to manage the very popular Young's Lobster Pound and Restaurant in Belfast, Maine. Their grandparents, Bud and Belle Young, whose ancestry can be traced back to Germany, started the business 75 years ago and instilled in their family a powerful work ethic. "We worked in grocery stores, shoveled snow, and chopped wood. When we earned enough money we could buy the bike, not before," says Ray.

Young's Lobster Pound, which sits on the shores of Penobscot Bay, looks more like a red warehouse than a restaurant. Customers enter from the parking lot through the open side of the building into the kitchen, where they place their orders. Ray, Diane, and other family members can be found behind a large stainless steel counter taking orders and weighing lobsters. Two enormous stainless steel kettles--the same ones that their grandparents used--sit atop an oil-fed combustion chamber enclosed in bricks. Water is boiling ferociously in the kettles, and the lids can barely contain the steam. Once an order has been placed, a lobster is pulled from a tank, weighed, and dropped in the cauldron of boiling water for several minutes to cook.

Opposite the kitchen is a multi-tank "hotel" where the lobsters are placed when they are brought in by lobstermen. The lobsters are divided according to size in tanks that are filled with water pumped directly from Penobscot Bay, where most of the lobsters are caught. "As long as they get plankton from natural sea water, they can live in our tanks indefinitely," Ray explains.

When an order is filled, customers take their array of lobster, clams, shrimp, chowder, lobster stew, corn, and coleslaw to picnic tables on the deck in the back of the building overlooking the water. If it's cool or wet, patrons can go to tables inside on the second level. There, Ray's daughters and their cousins can be found clearing tables and talking with customers.

The Lobster Pound is open year round, but summer is the busiest time. On July 4, America's Independence Day, people start lining up at 8 a.m. for carryout orders for their holiday celebrations. "We have no idea how many people we serve, and if we did it would probably scare us," says Diane. The Youngs hire extra help during the summer, but they find that some people don't understand hard work the same way the Youngs do. That is one thing that has changed since they were young, Diane and Ray say. Ray's advice for young people is simple: "Nothing comes easy. By working hard for your goals, you will appreciate what you get."

The Youngs take pride in doing the unexpected for their customers. "One time we opened (the restaurant) at 1 a.m. so the drivers from the local raceway could celebrate their victory with a lobster dinner," Ray recalls. If someone in a customer's family does not like seafood, Ray and Diane will order a pizza for them from another restaurant, pick it up, and deliver it to their table at the Lobster Pound so that everyone can enjoy the meal as a family. "We've even warmed a baby's bottle," says Ray.

Ray and Diane both meet customers and take orders. In addition, Diane makes fish stews and chowder, and she packs the meat that has been picked from the lobsters for shipment to commercial customers. Ray is responsible for meeting the fishermen and buying the lobsters. That also gives him the chance to be close to what has been his favorite job.

"I loved being a lobster fisherman," says Ray, who started in the business with one lobster trap and a rowboat when he was just six years old. By the time he was in his 20s, he had 150 traps and a much bigger boat. "I miss being out on the lobster boat," Ray confesses. "Every day is a challenge. There are always surprises, and you never know what might be in the trap until you pull it up."

Diane believes that the American dream is the life they have. "We've grown up knowing the importance of work, honesty, and good values, and we've had the chance to raise our children the same way. Doing the right thing, the honest thing, has to be part of you. For us, it's a gut instinct that came from our parents," she says.

During March and April, their slow time at the Lobster Pound, Ray and Diane take their children on trips to see the rest of the world, including South America and Australia. This is something that earlier generations of Youngs could not do. "Our parents and grandparents worked hard and 'went without' to make the business as strong as it is today," they say. "We owe it to them to work just as hard as we can for the next generation." – *Cathy Lickteig Makofski*

Diane Parker Young and Ray Young

STILL E PLURIBUS UNUM? YES

ALAN WOLFE

The "question of American unity is as important as any question Americans currently are facing," says the author. Despite media reports and commentary about a divided America, citizens of the United States have much more in their traditions and values that unites them than divides them. "Indeed," the writer concludes, "there is every reason to believe that the polarization Americans witnessed in 2004 is likely to give rise to counter movements designed to remind Americans that for all their political differences, they share national citizenship in common."

Alan Wolfe is professor of political science and director of the Boisi Center for Religion and Public Life at Boston (Massachusetts) College. His books include One Nation After All *(1998) and* The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith *(2003)*

Several years ago in my book *One Nation, After All*, I argued that despite media reports about divisions in American society, much more ties us together as a nation than tears us apart. Yes, I acknowledged, there are significant differences of opinion on a number of political and social issues confronting the American public. (There always have been.) But the deeply held values of individualism and self-expression are powerful magnets that continually pull Americans together. These values are much stronger than the polarizing issues of the day that sometimes repel us, one from another.

CATEGORIES OF DIVISION

In considering the last two presidential elections in the United States, many pundits, journalists, and political observers contend the country appears to be deeply divided. The 2000 election resulted in a virtual tie, with each candidate receiving a nearly identical vote in the Electoral College. In 2004, President George Bush obtained a clear majority of both the popular and the electoral votes. (The president received almost 3.4 million more popular votes than Senator John Kerry, a margin of 2.8 percent, and he won the all-deciding Electoral College vote 286 to 252.) Yet the political map of the country changed relatively little between the two campaigns; there still exist "blue" states along the coasts that lean in a liberal direction and "red" states in the South and West that tilt more conservatively.

The first years of the 21st century have been marked by continuing American differences in a variety of arenas, including religion, race, gender, geography, and world views. While overt theological disputes between religions have all but disappeared in American public life, debates within religious traditions over social issues and perceptions of the outside world remain. Whereas once the primary racial division in the United States was between blacks and whites, we now have growing populations of Hispanics and Asian Americans, as well as significant numbers of people who, in identifying themselves as multiracial, are not claiming membership in any one racial category. Men and women also often look at the world differently, so candidates for office shape their messages to appeal to one side or the other of what is commonly called the gender gap.

Geographic differences may not be as pronounced as they were during the Civil War, but, as America's election results confirm, they persist. Most Texans (who voted for Bush by a 61 percent to 38 percent margin) hold different political views than do most Rhode Islanders (who voted for Kerry by a margin of 59 percent to 39 percent). The outsourcing of factory jobs and the decline of farming communities, as well as a growing service sector and booming exurbs, testify to the persistence of economic differences;

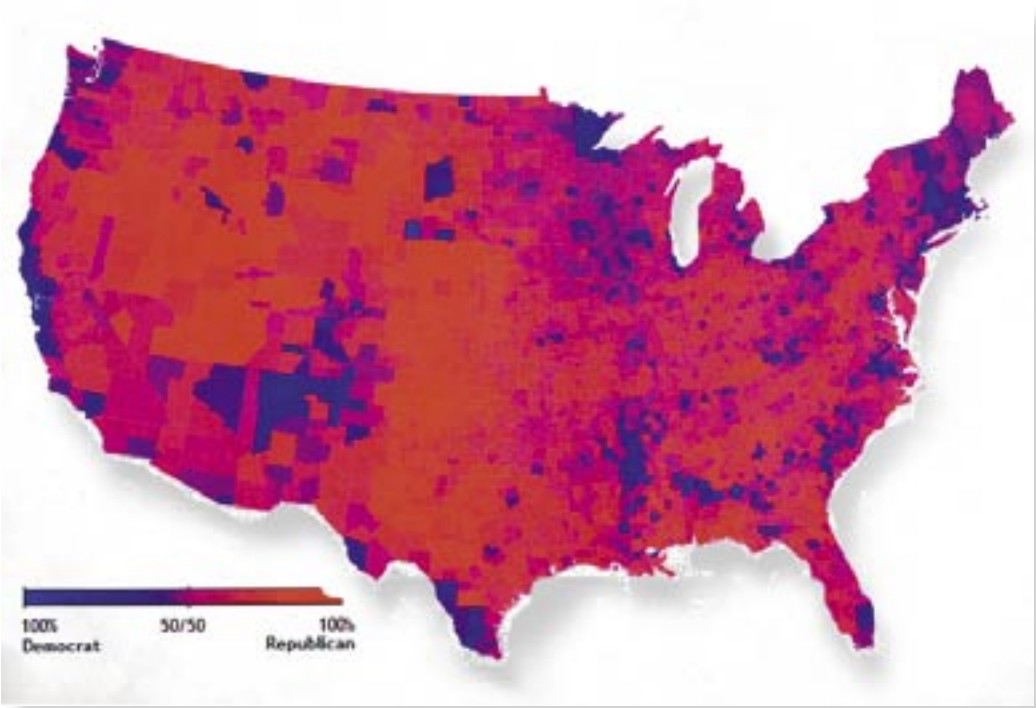
So diverse is the United States today that we lack a term to describe ourselves.

some Americans struggle to survive while others enjoy the best that a wealthy and productive society has to offer. Clearly, there are many "Americas" in America today.

A significant number of scholars share this perception that the United States is a deeply divided country. The most articulate may be the distinguished historian Gertrude Himmelfarb. Her book, *One Nation, Two Cultures* (1999), argues that Americans are still living in the aftermath of the cultural divide that first appeared in the 1960s. One of America's two cultures, according to Himmelfarb, values individual freedom and self-expression, and wants to move beyond the more traditional societal roles and mores prevalent in American society in the first half of the 20th century. The other places a premium on authority and respect for rules and traditions, and wants to see a return to an era in which parents had more control over their children and more people were proud of their country and sincere in their religious devotion. Himmelfarb, a conservative, clearly identifies with the latter of these two cultures. But one can find similar arguments from writers on the left who feel that such liberal values as secularism and self-expression are under threat from the right and who seek to defend the gains of the 1960s as thoroughly as they can.

To some degree, Himmelfarb, as the title of her book suggests, was reacting against my own contribution to the debate in *One Nation, After All*. Political activists tend to be engaged in a culture war with each other, I argued, but most Americans share common values. They may disagree on issues of the day–in a democracy, people are expected to disagree–but in contrast to the 1960s, let alone to the era of the Civil War, they are in surprising agreement. They appreciate the gains of individual freedom that are a by-product of the cultural upheavals of the 1960s, and, in that sense, Himmelfarb is correct to insist on the importance of that decade. But their feelings about those gains are often ambivalent: They frequently wonder whether the United States has gone so far in its individualism that it no longer respects authority and tradition, and they generally want politicians to get along and find common solutions to the country's problems.

The question of American unity is as important as any question Americans currently are facing. The United States, after all, has already experienced a Civil War whose costs in bloodshed have never been forgotten. However deep our current divisions may be, they certainly do not plumb to those depths. And, as the experience of the Civil War reminds us, division and disunity are harmful both to Americans themselves and to others who



Voting Results by Colors

Red, blue, and purple depict the percentage differences in voting results county-by-county in the 2004 U.S. presidential elections. Red was for Republican incumbent George W. Bush and blue for Democratic challenger John Kerry. The purple shadings reflect the closeness of the voting in various parts of the country. This map, developed by Robert Vanderbei of Princeton University, is among a collection of election-results maps and cartograms on a University of Michigan Website (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/election/).

look to the United States for leadership. Surely we owe it to both groups to look beyond the headlines to find out whether there continue to be viable beliefs and practices that hold Americans together.

Church and State

Of all the presumed divisions in American life, one in particular stands out as especially significant. The fault line in America, we are frequently told, is religious in nature, gathering all those who believe strongly in God, whatever the God in which they believe, on one side, and those who do not see the hand of the divinity guiding all human action on the other. If it turns out to be the case, however, that religion in America is as much a source of unity as it is of division, then the prospects for e pluribus unum are significantly enhanced.

Many of America's founders believed that a common morality required a common religion. Yet because the United States committed itself to separation of church and state and to religious freedom in the First Amendment to its Constitution, there has never been a common religion in the United States, at least not in a formal sense. Still, the great majority of Americans at the time of our founding were Protestant, so that, despite the large number of Protestant sects, they at least shared the ideas of the Reformation in common.

Any hopes that an unofficial source of unity could be found in widespread adherence to Protestantism, however, were dashed by the arrival of huge numbers of immigrants from non-Protestant backgrounds during the 19th and early 20th centuries. So powerful were the tensions between faiths that a genuine culture war–far more violent and divisive than the one presumably taking place today–broke out in cities such as Boston between native-born Protestants and Catholic immigrants from Ireland and other countries, resulting in significant loss of life and property. Yet over time, a relatively peaceful solution to inter-religious conflict was found. Although the various denominations of Christians had never shown much unity among themselves, the United States by the mid-20th century had started calling itself a "Judeo-Christian" society, united by the fact that its three major faiths shared at least one holy text, the Hebrew Bible.

Originally meant as a term of inclusion, Judeo-Christian appears now as a term of exclusion, since it does not embrace Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and numerous other faiths brought to America after the far-reaching Immigration and Nationalty Act of 1965 ended quotas that had favored newcomers from Europe. So diverse is the United States today that we lack a term to describe ourselves. Some have proposed "Abrahamic," which does include Muslims, but at the same time it excludes the Eastern religions. There has probably never been a society with as many religions flourishing at the same time as the United States today, and it can all, in a sense, be traced back to the decision made by America's founders to encourage religious liberty.

A Common Culture?

In the face of so much diversity, some have begun to argue that Americans lack a common culture and, as a result, face the prospect of significant disunity. This was the message of *Who Are We?*, a book published in 2004 by the Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington. Focusing primarily on Mexican Americans, many of whom arrive with Catholic backgrounds, Huntington insisted on the importance of a common culture shaped by Anglo-Protestantism to which immigrants ought to adhere. Huntington did not focus on religion per se as a source of disunity but rather on the kinds of culture that are shaped by different religious traditions. Still, his book evoked earlier periods in American history when fears of diversity led writers to conclude that unless the United States found a way to solve the problem of having too many competing cultures, its future could not be assured.

President George W. Bush listens to the views of leaders from many different religious faiths during a meeting in the White House. (White House photo)

There is no doubting the fact of religious diversity in America. But there is reason to doubt the conclusion that diversity is the source of disunity. For despite the fact that Americans are organized into a bewildering variety of denominations and traditions, American culture acts as a powerful force shaping all of its religions. In recent years, scholars have begun to focus not only on the texts and creeds of America's religions, but also on the actual ways in which ordinary people experience their faith. And one of the conclusions that emerges from this research is that as different as religions can be from each

other, people often practice their faith in remarkably similar ways.

Americans, for example, frequently prefer religions that speak to them personally. They distrust distant authority–and in some cases even local authorities. They generally turn to religion for emotional rather than intellectual reasons; sacred texts are not for them documents meant to be examined for their compelling ideas, but rather are sources of guidance for how to lead their lives in difficult times. Religion gives them a strong sense of right and wrong, but it frequently is willing to forgive people for their sins and to offer them second chances. Through their faith, Americans typically experience feelings of self-empowerment and confidence. Their religion teaches them truths, but it also offers love. Americans sometimes switch faiths in their search for a religion that offers them a sense of authenticity. Religion for them does not imply some kind of hidebound commitment to tradition, but is rather an ever-changing, innovative, and dynamic way of adapting to a complex world.

Because Americans experience different religions in often remarkably similar ways, faith can serve as an important source of unity. People do not have to agree about who God is or what God does; it is enough for them that other people try to find ways of belief that fit their own needs. So powerful are these common ways of practicing religion that even recent immigrants quickly adapt the faiths of their homelands to American realities. In the 19th century, Catholics and Jews developed American versions of their religions. Now Muslims and Hindus are doing the exact same thing.

Getting to Know One Another

As religion goes, so go other aspects of American life. Experience makes possible commonalities even in the face of difference. The more white Americans get to know non-white Americans in their workplaces, the greater the decline of racism. The more that children marry persons from backgrounds other than their own, the more quickly the divisions that bedeviled the generations of their parents and grandparents disappear. It is true that many southerners and northerners may not agree on politics, but their lifestyles are remarkably similar; they drive the same kinds of cars to the same kinds of shopping malls to purchase the same kinds of products. For all the talk of blue and red America, a person can be put down anywhere in either part of the country and find everything remarkably familiar – even too familiar.

Indeed, there is every reason to believe that the polarization Americans witnessed in 2004 is likely to give rise to countermovements designed to remind Americans that for all their political differences, they share national citizenship in common. Polarization does pay obvious political dividends, especially to partisans who rally their troops by insisting on the nefarious designs of those on the other side of the ideological divide. Yet in politics, at least in a successful democratic political system, every reaction is eventually met by a counter reaction. United by common practices in religion and by common experiences in other aspects of life, Americans, I believe, will reach the point when they will question whether other Americans with whom they have political disagreements ought to be treated as if their views render them beyond the pale.

As they do this, I am confident they will conclude that we are one nation, after all. American individualism and our quest for self-discovery trump our differences. As long as we remember that all of us are shaped by a common American culture, we will continue to build the bridges, as we have so often in our history, that connect and hold us together. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

AMERICAN ORIGINAL
Voluntary Service

Clara Barton (1821-1912) dedicated her life to serving others. She began teaching school at the age of 15 and later established a free public school in Bordentown, New Jersey. When the U.S. Civil War broke out, she launched a relief program for collecting medical supplies and other goods for distribution to injured troops. So successful was her effort that the government permitted her to travel with military ambulances to serve the sick and wounded. For three years she followed army operations, cradling the heads of wounded soldiers, providing food and water to them, assisting surgeons with their work, and organizing a program to locate soldiers missing in action. Out of these experiences, Barton established in 1881 the American Red Cross, serving as its volunteer president until 1904 and expanding the International Red Cross Movement's role beyond battlefield assistance to include disaster relief. She continued working in field relief programs until well into her 70s.

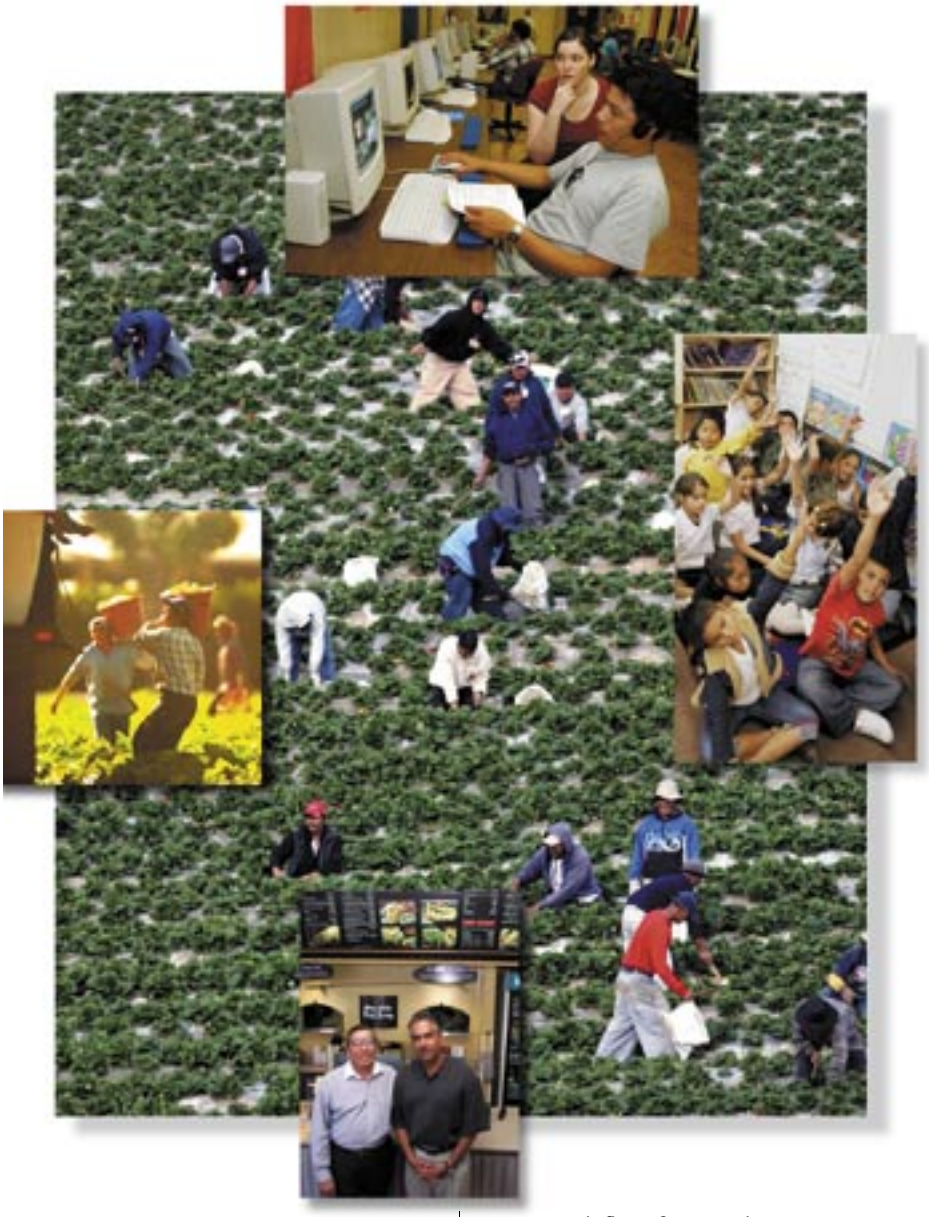
THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

A Discussion With Michael Barone and Victor Hanson

Millions of new immigrants have entered the United States over the past decade. Indeed, the country has not seen present-day levels of immigration since the 1920s. Many of today's immigrants came illegally and have taken low-skill/low-paying jobs. Others, highly educated, have entered the U.S. labor market legally as skilled, well-paid professionals in the fields of high technology, science, and medicine. Still others have come to join family members or as refugees.

This new wave of immigration has sparked an intense debate in the United States. Some embrace today's relatively open-door policy as the continuation of a long-standing tradition in the United States of laying out the welcome mat to newcomers who seek the American promise of freedom and economic opportunity. Others question the wisdom of allowing so many new immigrants into the country, fearing that cherished traditions and values will be eroded.

We invited two immigration experts to discuss this issue: Michael Barone, a senior writer at U.S. News & World Report *and author of* The New Americans: How the Melting Pot Can Work Again, *and Victor Hanson, senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of* Mexifornia: A State of Becoming. *James Dickmeyer, press attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, chaired the discussion, which was conducted long distance via a digital video hookup. Following is an abridged transcript of their remarks.*



A New Wave of Immigration: Is It Different?

CHAIR: How does the most recent wave of immigration into the United States compare to those of previous periods?

MR. BARONE: The inflows of immigration typically in American history haven't been predicted by most experts. They just occur and surprise us.

If you had told most American demographic experts in 1970 that we were going to have an influx of something on the order of 20 to 30 million immigrants over the next 25 or 30 years, they would have said, "You're crazy. Immigration is a thing of the past. It doesn't happen anymore."

It turns out that we have had big immigration flows. We continued in 2004 (to have) big inflows from Latin America, a majority from Mexico. We do not have precise measurements of actual immigration because a lot of our immigrants are illegal, and we don't keep very good track of illegal immigrants in the United States. The inflow

from Asia and to some extent from Latin America outside of Mexico contains a large percentage of people with high levels of skill. From Mexico (there are) lower percentages of people who have graduated from high school, who have other educational credentials, who have demonstrated skill levels in employment.

So immigration has been continuing. In my book *The New Americans*, which was published in 2001, I argued that minority groups of today resemble immigrant groups of 100 years ago. The blacks resemble the Irish, Latinos resemble the Italians, Asians resemble the Jews.

The comparisons aren't precise, but I think there are still significant resemblances. One of the differences, of course, is that Latin America, and particularly Mexico, is contiguous to the United States, so we do have a large body of people in this country now whose first language is Spanish, who may or may not learn to master the English language.

CHAIR: Dr. Hanson, (how is this new) wave of immigrants (different from that of) the early 1900s that came from Europe and so on?

DR. HANSON: Superficially this is not new, but on (reflection) I don't think we've ever had anywhere from 8 to 12 million people primarily concentrated in one geographical area (who) came here under illegal auspices. That's new. And more importantly, the attitude of the host is new. We had a very brutal melting pot assimilation ideology in the 19th century.

But after 30 years of bilingual education in California, which we finally scrapped we have a Chicano studies program in every state college that's sort of chauvinistic and divisive. We (also) have bilingual government documents. We now in California have (whole) communities where people are coming from Mexico illegally because of family ties.

So you have whole enclaves of people who find that they can re-create Mexico to a certain degree without assimilating after a single generation. Really we have two communities. There (are) literally hundreds of thousands of people who after (the) second generation are not assimilating.

An immigrant from Guatemala studying English on a computer gets assistance from an instructor at East Central Community College in Forest, Mississippi. (AP Photo/ Rogelio Solis)

MR. BARONE: I take a little different view of what has been happening in the United States than Victor Hanson does. And that's because I think that the forces favoring assimilation into the American population remain significantly strong, even if they are somewhat weaker than they were 100 years ago. Victor refers to (a) brutal melting pot assimilation of 100 years ago. People at the time (of former President) Theodore Roosevelt used the term "Americanization."

But of course helping people to master the English language, to understand the workings of American government and the economy, those are things that are not oppression. They are things that are essential to success and upward mobility in the United States.Despite the fact that American university, journalistic, media, and, to some extent, corporate elites do not believe in assimilation as much as they did 100 years ago, I think the large body of American people and the large body of immigrants believe in assimilation. In my view, we're seeing a degree of assimilation and upward mobility (for Latinos) that is probably higher than it was for the Italian Americans of 100 years ago.

Remember that 100 years ago, the process of assimilation did not always seem likely to be successful. A hundred years ago, Americans were told that Irish, Italian, Jewish, and other immigrants were people of a different race, they could never be assimilated into Anglo-Saxon American civilization. We know today those predictions proved to be wrong. And I think those predictions will be proven to be wrong for the large number of American immigrants that we have today.

Yes, some will go back to their native country as some Italian (and) Greek immigrants of 100 years ago went back to their native countries. Some will not learn to master the English language; we need to do a better job in our schools and to abolish this so-called bilingual education that too often is neither bilingual nor education.

Assimilation: What Is It and How Does It Work?

CHAIR: Let's talk about this term "assimilation." Dr. Hanson, what finally signifies assimilation? Is it language, is it acceptance of certain values, is it marrying with people of other ethnic groups?

DR. HANSON: It's mastery of the language. It's acceptance of American values, and that can be everything from religious tolerance to (good) treatment of women to family planning to attitudes (about) government. But what I would like to point out is, as I said earlier, (that) we have two phenomena going on. We have the success story on one hand (for) five (or) six out of every (10) illegal aliens.

But the numbers (of illegal immigrants) are so large that if you are failing in 30 to 40 percent of a situation, what that translates into is a quarter of the inmates in the California penal system are illegal aliens. Because we are getting one or two million people (or) three million trying to get across (the border), and anywhere from a million or two who do, the sheer numbers result in de facto apartheid.

And what does that mean in the practical sense? For somebody that doesn't live with this situation, it sounds like the market can always adjudicate or we can just go on. But what does that mean (at the community level)? It means you get up in the morning and maybe you have a sofa sitting on your lawn (because people are unaccustomed to using a trash-collection service), or in the case of my neighbor, a cow, a dead cow. Or it means when you go to school—we don't have an integrated school in my locale—you have 90 percent of one particular group. Or on my farm that means people come from

Mexico and they have very different ideas about women and the role of women in society until they assimilate.

And if you have an attitude in the university or in the school system that (this is) just an alternative vision or an alternative culture, then it's very hard to break (this) down.

And the last point is very important because it's not emphasized nearly enough. It's not a static process, assimilation. But because we have so many people coming in and coming in under illegal auspices we're creating almost a permanent transitory group of a million or two people who are in this process of assimilation, but not assimilation in the 19th-century sense. I'm talking about a 30- or 40- or 50-year process.

If we were to have 150,000 legal immigrants from Mexico, control the borders, unleash the formidable powers of assimilation, pretty much what we did in California until about 1965 or 1970, we wouldn't have to go through this ordeal. It would be very easy to do. And we wouldn't privilege Mexican illegal immigration over legal immigration from other countries.

The biggest controversy right now in Fresno County (California), which is ground zero for the illegal immigration explosion, is Sikhs from India, people from Southeast Asia who are waiting five and six and seven years for an electrical engineer in the family or a teacher who cannot come in due to the apparatus of government, and yet they see people coming in illegally just by family ties. It's creating a lack of confidence and respect for the law, and it's got a pernicious, eroding effect on the law in general.

Farm workers carry baskets of freshly picked squash to a truck near a field in Homestead, Florida. (AP Photo/J. Pat Carter)

AMERICAN ORIGINAL
Education

The late United States **Senator J. William Fulbright** (1905-1995), whose name has become almost synonymous with international educational exchanges, led a life dedicated to public service and, especially, to education. His own education included attending Oxford University in the United Kingdom as a Rhodes scholar. He worked as an attorney, law school professor, and president of the University of Arkansas before entering politics. In 1946 he introduced legislation establishing the Fulbright Scholar Program, which has as its goal to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries." In the almost 60 years that have passed since then, more than 255,000 persons, from the United States and from around the world, have participated in the Program, including persons who went on to become Nobel Prize winners and heads of state. Senator Fulbright remained actively involved in his namesake program until the end of his life.

New Immigration Proposals

CHAIR: President Bush has a proposal on the table that he put out almost a year ago in which he is suggesting some kinds of mechanisms (by which) you regulate (what some have called) a guest worker program. Would (this) take care of this particular spike (in illegal immigration)?

MR. BARONE: Well, I think that the president's plan, which he announced in January of (2004 and) which did not make much progress in the Congress, is premised on the idea that there's an economic demand for a large number of immigrants and (that) that demand is being met not only by legal immigrants but by illegal immigrants.

And I think the evidence for that is pretty strong. The workings of the economic marketplace are such that if we suddenly could expel all illegal immigrants from the United States overnight, there would be large parts of our economy that simply wouldn't work. You wouldn't be able to get a clean dish in a restaurant in Los Angeles and things of that nature. So what President Bush's proposal attempts to do is to provide a guest worker program to match willing workers with willing employers, (and thereby) provide some legal status to immigrants in this country.

Interestingly in Congress, that proposal or something of that nature has more support from members of the Democratic Party than from members of President Bush's own Republican Party. Many of the Republicans argue that this is rewarding illegal acts with legal status. … The Bush administration makes the argument … that their proposal would not put guest workers automatically on a path to citizenship. (However,) some of the Democrats would like a guest worker proposal that would put guest workers automatically on the road to citizenship.

So there's (also) a difference there between the Bush administration and many Democrats in Congress who are active on this issue.

CHAIR: Dr. Hanson, how do you see this debate in terms of (whether) the president (is) giving us a practical solution to (the) problem?

DR. HANSON: The thing to remember about this is (that) it leaves as many questions unanswered as it answers. So you're going to bring in a pool of a quarter million—or 300,000, let's say—guest workers. What are you going to do about the other 700,000 that don't want to participate in the program? Are you going to really enforce the borders, or are you going to deport them?

If we have the guest worker program, they're going to have to still have an alternate pool who will want to come illegally (that) you'll have to clamp down on. The people who are in it will want to stay.

There's a psychological, philosophical, moral problem, let's say, in Fresno County when the head of the Farm Bureau says we won't be able to pick the peach crop unless we have 30,000 people here illegally from Oaxaca, (while) the Chamber of Commerce estimates there are 50,000 or 60,000 teenagers without work and the unemployment rate in Fresno County is 16 percent, mostly among first- and second-generation Hispanics. It's a terrible indictment of the system (that) counties that have the highest illegal immigration also have the highest unemployment rates.

MR. BARONE: Isn't one of the reasons that the Central Valley has this high unemployment rate a result of the tougher border enforcement, which makes it difficult for people who are working seasonally in the Central Valley agriculture to go back to Mexico or wherever for five months, six months a year? They don't want to risk going back over the line. They'd prefer to stay in Fresno County, where they may find themselves eligible for welfare.

Third graders raise their hands to answer questions at Oasis Elementary School in Oasis, California. Instruction is offered only in English to the school's 650 students, more than 90 percent of whom are Hispanic. (AP Photo/Francis Specker)

DR. HANSON: I don't think so, because one of the other myths of illegal immigration is that it's primarily (for) agriculture, which is only about 20 to 25 percent of illegal aliens. A guest worker program tends to be associated with agriculture, but most illegal aliens who come to central California are working in construction, hotels, restaurants, even though we know (that) people who could do that work are on the unemployment rolls.

Why is that happening? Because (the longer) people live in the United States, the more acquainted they (become) with the various realms of entitlements, and they lose that desperate zeal to work. (Also), if you ask employers—and this is why I think it's really a moral issue—they will tell you that they would rather have 18- to 25-year-old people from Mexico who can't speak English because they work much harder than either their (own) children or their cousins who were born in the United States or such people after they're 40 or 50.

So what we're really talking about (is) illegal immigration; it's the big lie that nobody wants to speak of. It's a recycling of human capital. We're taking people from Mexico and, in large part, using up their best years, and then as employers we're throwing them on the entitlement industry to take care of them when they're 50. And we do not want to hire their children who are unemployed and not educated, but we do want younger people to replace them so we can start all over again.

The Demand for Immigrant Labor

CHAIR: (There has been) low unemployment over the past couple decades in the United States. (Doesn't this mean) that in terms of the demand side for labor, there is still plenty of room for bringing in people and also employing those in the United States who actually seek employment?

MR. BARONE: We've been talking mainly about one portion of the immigration situation in the United States, and your question sheds lights on some of the other portions of it. That is, an awful lot of our immigrants are highly skilled. Probably a larger percentage of Asians than of Latin immigrants are highly skilled. But we find immigrants filling a lot of positions that Americans simply are not being trained for.

In the scientific, computer, technology fields, you have large numbers of immigrants, primarily from Asia. In the medical field, a large number of immigrants. Go to midwestern hospitals and you'll see that an awful lot of the personnel there, both M.D.s and R.N.s, are South Asian in origin. They come from India, Pakistan, and other countries.

You can fault the United States, I think, for not training more engineers (and) scientists, not channeling more young people who might be capable into these fields. But the fact is a lot of our growth and prosperity have been generated by highly skilled immigrants, and the economy seems to be producing a major demand for them.

CHAIR: Is there a kind of tipping point? A tipping point in terms of conditions in a country that would lessen (immigrants') desires to come to the United States?

DR. HANSON: The question is what makes Mexicans in Mexico want to come in such great numbers besides being contiguous and having a history of proximity with the United States and relatives (here).

I think (there is) an unofficial policy (of the Mexican government) that serves it very well in two or three (ways. First,) I think (Mexican immigration to the United States) is the second largest earner of foreign exchange after (oil). About $12 billion in remittances is sent back. It's vital to the Mexican economy.

Second, there's a sense that Mexico will not really (have to) embrace genuine grassroots political, economic, social, (and) cultural reform if it has a sort of permanent safety valve of one to two million people who (expect to) be housed or fed or clothed at a level that they're constantly being exposed to in (the) international media.

And then there's (the) phenomenon that happens with immigrants from Mexico. In all due respect, the further and the longer they're away from Mexico, the more they romanticize Mexico. So everybody puts a flag on, and they've become a powerful lobbying force. Some of them are, as you know, voters. So it's a win-win-win situation for the Mexican government.

MR. BARONE: Let me add something on the question of a tipping point, because there's one controlled case that may provide some illumination on it, and that's Puerto Rico.

Puerto Ricans are American citizens under a law passed by Congress in 1917, and so they have total access to the United States as U.S. citizens, can come and go as they like, are not subject to any immigration procedures. And in the late 1940s and 1950s, there was a massive Puerto Rican immigration primarily to New York City, the New York metropolitan area. There was this sense that Puerto Rican immigration was ongoing, that the economic levels of life in Puerto Rico were much lower, and that this was a force that was going to continue.

What actually happened was rather different. Starting about 1961, net in-migration from Puerto Rico to the continental United States declined to roughly zero. It has roughly stayed that way ever since. Nineteen sixty-one was also about the point when the per capita income levels in Puerto Rico reached about one-third those in the continental United States. Obviously there's something of a lower cost of living in Puerto Rico as well, which means that the standard of living differential is less than would be implied by those income figures.

Now, Mexico does not have income levels that are one-third those of the United States.

Father and son entrepreneurs Rafael, left, an immigrant from Mexico, and Ralph Rubio stand at the counter of one of Rubio's Baja Grill restaurants in San Diego, California, a small but growing chain fast-food eateries establishing locations across the United States. (AP Photo/Lenny Ignelzi)

They are well below that number at the present time. And I don't think I want to argue that there is a magic tipping point, that when the country reaches one-third of U.S. GDP (gross domestic product) per capita that immigration is going to shut off like you shut off water with a faucet. That's perhaps too mechanical a suggestion.

But I think the case of Puerto Rico does stand for the proposition that there comes a point at which the economic level of the donor country, the donor of immigrants, gets high enough that the volume of immigration declines substantially. That point was reached in Germany in about the 1880s or early 1890s. German emigration declined sharply. It was reached at other points in continental Europe in later periods in different countries. It has reached that point with Korea. Emigration from South Korea peaked in the 1980s and is now very much less than it was before.

And so I think that that process may repeat itself. I'm not prepared to predict precisely when. But it is possible to reach tipping points in immigration where (the) emigration flow from a particular country to the United States is reduced substantially.

DR. HANSON: I'd just like to comment slightly differently on that point because I have studied emigration from (the U.S.) Virgin Islands, for example, (as well as) Puerto Rico.

It does seem that that tipping point was in part achieved by the Great Society programs of the 1960s, which for the first time really offered to all Americans emergency room health care free, a lot of family assistance, Social Security levels. So that people who were citizens in (those territories) found that they could have access to health care and a monthly stipend as U.S. citizens. It was not that different from the United States. And that was really the point at which people found that it was not that advantageous to move to the United States.

So I think we're really not going to have a tipping point until people in central and northern Mexico feel that there's the same type of health, education, and safety network that there is in the United States.

Stopping Illegal Immigration

CHAIR: We talked a lot about Mexico but I think we all know that there are great pressures from many countries. We know that the Mexican border is being used by many, many other people to also enter (the United States) illegally. What practical mechanisms can (the United States) apply to deal with illegal migration?

MR. BARONE: Well, we can get tougher on border enforcement. In point of fact, that has happened over the past 10 years. Both the Clinton administration and the Bush administration have responded. We have built walls in the highly populated areas of the border near San Diego. We've enhanced border control in El Paso, in some parts of south Texas.

We can probably enhance border control more, I suppose, but we've already done a lot of that. The other means of enforcing law is having the Immigration and Naturalization Service "card" employers—check identification, check documents, deport illegal immigrants. I think at the current levels of illegal immigration, this is really not a practical or feasible thing to do. So I think that if the country wants to bring these people within the law, we need to regularize the situation and bring our laws back in line with our labor markets.

CHAIR: Dr. Hanson, what do you think about practical solutions to this?

DR. HANSON: I think there are three or four (things) that could be done. One, of course, as Michael said, is to enforce

employer sanctions. The problem now is (that) IDs (identification documents) are just fabricated so easily. We'd have to have some type of (secure) identity card. And if there was a stiff fine for employers (who employ illegal labor), that would help.

Second, we have to change the calculus in the United States that sends the message to Mexicans in Mexico that if you come across as a worker, you're going to be expected to learn English, you're going to be expected to put your kids in a school where they're going to have immersion into the English language, and you're not going to be able to reduplicate the culture of Mexico.

And then, third, I think (it is) very important to work on economic development with Mexico. We see a little bit of it happening along the border.

If we would have a quota of 250,000 or 100,000 legal immigrants, that would send a message to Mexico that, for the first time in three decades, they are not going to have a full $12 billion in foreign exchange (remittances), and they're going to have to address their problems because they can no longer count on both exporting dissidents and getting in return billions of dollars of foreign exchange.

A final note about amnesty. Michael makes a good point. We're not going to go into Fresno County and go into my hometown and pull out somebody who's 60 years old that's here illegally and send them on a bus back to Tijuana. That would be inhumane.

But on the other hand, the amnesty of the past has been a rolling amnesty. Each (piece of) federal legislation that has been passed has given an amnesty in lieu of changes. The changes never happen, but the amnesty occurs and draws people even in greater numbers across the border.

So if all parties could come together and say (that) this is the last amnesty we're going to give and it's only going to be predicated on radical changes in border enforcement and legal quotas of immigrants, I think we could get some proper legislation.

Farm workers pick strawberries along a hillside in Oceanside, California. (AP Photo/Lenny Ignelzi)

MR. BARONE: If we were to have an effective 250,000 quota on immigrants from Mexico, you would have to change the family unification provisions of existing immigration law because that's the basis on which most Latin immigrants, legal immigrants, come into the country.

Immigration – Not a Left-Right Issue

CHAIR: I'd like to just wrap up with one question. This isn't then a liberal-conservative issue, a left-right issue in the United States (as issues tend) to be?

MR. BARONE: I think it's a debate that runs along a different continuum, a different spectrum. There have been throughout American history, or at least since the 1830s and 1840s when we started getting substantial numbers of immigrants from Ireland, other cultures that were different from the existing culture in the United States, there have been movements of nativism to exclude immigrants altogether.

And there have been people who favored simply open immigration, which is largely what we had in the years before (the) 1921 and 1924 immigration acts.

So as Victor Hanson describes, people who favor free market economics, (like) the late Robert Bartley of the *Wall Street Journal*, join people who favor this kind of immigrant nationalism, like these professors of Chicano studies.

DR. HANSON: I think that's true. I would just add one last comment. I think it has something to do with class lines as well. I think people left and right who are employers, who are intellectuals, who are professors tend to either directly benefit from illegal immigration, in the case of some employers, or intellectually see it as part of a positive thing.

But I think other people of the working classes that are in competition for jobs or are of different races (or) are worried about the changing complexity of their communities, they have legitimate worries.

My experience in talking to thousands of people about it is (that) I can almost predict by one's income level what their attitude is going to be and what they do for a living. ■

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A VALLEY IN CALIFORNIA

James Houston

California's unique geography—bordering Latin America while facing the Pacific Ocean—has shaped a rich and vigorous culture, says the author. He reflects on the many changes in demography and landscape, particularly in the Santa Clara Valley region where he grew up. "The story of this valley is a classic California story," he writes, "which means it's laced with the ironies of a land continually finding a way to reinvent itself." Like so many regions of 21st-century America, California is "now home to families from Guatemala and El Salvador, from Jordan and Afghanistan, from Samoa and Taiwan and Cambodia." Given its ever-increasing ethnic diversity, he says, perhaps the greatest of all the challenges facing California today is "learning to live together in this new and still unfolding polycultural world, teaching one another how to listen, how to see across the borders that have so often kept us apart."

A promotional chamber of commerce postcard from the early decades of the 20th century highlights the bucolic charms of the Santa Clara Valley. (Courtesy of History San Jose Website)

My father moved to California from Oklahoma during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Like so many thousands of others, he was fleeing the drought and dry farmland of "The Dust Bowl," heading west in search of better times. Though he didn't cross a national boundary to get to California, he crossed a desert and two mountain ranges. In those pre-jet, pre-power steering days, this was a large and risky move. Jobs were scarce, and "Okies"–looked upon as refugees–were not welcome. But he came anyway, desperate, as immigrants often are, looking for any way to change his luck.

Eventually he found work as a house painter. The defense buildup for World War II brought new prosperity to America's West Coast. By 1948, he had put aside enough money for a down payment on a plot of land in Santa Clara Valley–a farm house, a few outbuildings, and two hectares of dark purple plums that make the best dried prunes. As a painter he no longer worked the land, but he still had a taste for the rural life.

Those hectares gave him a small piece of what was then called "The World's Largest Orchard." California is famous for such grandiose claims. This one happened to be true. For half a century and more, the wide, fertile plain of Santa Clara Valley–in eons past, the silted southern end of San Francisco Bay–had been filled with six million fruit trees. You could see most of them from a country road that followed the base of the eastern hills. It was called Blossom Hill Road. Each spring we would pile into my father's car –my mother, my sister, my grandmother, and me–for a pilgrimage to witness the first blooming. Others were usually there ahead of us, their cars parked along the road's high crest. In the way visitors travel to the northeastern United States to catch the peak moment of vivid autumn color, people would come from near and far to gaze out across the panorama of white and pink blossoms–plum and pear and apple and cherry–that made a fluffy, flowery inland sea.

It was a seasonal ceremony to honor both the short burst of beauty and the produce that soon would follow. Though Mediterranean in climate, this valley was not a pastoral retreat remote from the centers of commerce. Its hub was San Jose, a small, prosperous city of some 70,000 people and a world leader in the processing of canned and dried fruit. Innovative machinery had been developed here that changed how food was gathered and preserved. During my secondary school and college years, most of us made our summer money working in the orchards–picking peaches alongside migrant workers from Mexico, laying out trays of apricots to dry in the sun–or at one of the numerous canneries that surrounded the town. From here, pear halves and peach nectar, stewed prunes and dried prunes, applesauce and fruit cocktail would be shipped to all parts of the United States, as well as around the globe.

The Draw of the Golden West

Driving into the valley today, you enter another kind of world with another identity, another look, another name.

James D. Houston is the author of seven novels, including the trilogy Continental Drift, Love Life, *and* The Last Paradise, *which received a 1999 American Book Award. Among his several nonfiction works are* Californians, A Pacific Basin Journey, *and* Farewell to Manzanar, *which he co-authored with his wife, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston. Jim taught writing at the University of California's Santa Cruz campus for more than 20 years; he has also worked as a musician and taught classical and folk guitar. Jim and Jeanne live in Santa Cruz, California.*

It is still framed east and west by two arms of California's long Coast Range. But roads like Blossom Hill, which once linked farms and ranches, are lined with townhouses and condominiums, the lawns and driveways of a thousand subdivisions. Almost two million people live in the valley now. Like Los Angeles County, 480 kilometers south, it's a quilt of adjoining townships with only "City Limit" signs to tell you where one ends and the next begins. San Jose, still the hub, has become America's 11th largest city. The region's transformation has been so complete that from the crest of Blossom Hill, you look out upon a sea of shake roofs and satellite dishes, brightened here and there by the glint of a backyard swimming pool.

That glorious springtime spectacle is long gone, never to return, and it is too late now to mourn the loss, too late for lament or for nostalgia. California is a land so driven by runaway growth, the inexorable rate of change itself can overwhelm you. I give thanks that I had the chance to see that ocean of blossoms before they disappeared.

During the l950s, '60s and '70s, buyers like my father kept coming, from other parts of California, from other parts of the United States, from other parts of the world, looking for a piece of the Golden West. The valley was only an hour from San Francisco. The climate that had so appealed to ranchers and growers appealed to these newcomers, too. California's population was expanding at the rate of 1,000 people per day (a rate that has now increased to 1,500 per day, every day of every week of every year), and the valley's numbers swelled along with the rest of the state, systematically gobbling up some of the most fertile and productive soil on Earth. The worth of croplands simply could not compete with the escalating value of real estate.

If my father were still alive, it would surprise and probably anger him to be told he had played a part in what the valley has become, a small but emblematic part. He loved the look of his plum trees in bloom; he tended them when he could. But he wasn't a grower; he was a painting contractor with a family to support. From time to time he would sell off a quarter of a hectare. As the land was rezoned and reappraised, the buyers would later subdivide and sell off smaller parcels. Driving through our neighborhood today, I see that those two hectares of prune-plums have been replaced by 15 houses with 15 two-car garages and 15 lawns with 15 sprinkler systems. My Oklahoma father would surely groan at the sight. But when he sold off the first parcel, who could have foreseen where it would lead? He needed the money, and there were still fruit trees in laden rows as far as the eye could see.

Decades of Change

The story of this valley is a classic California story, which means it's laced with the ironies of a land continually finding a way to reinvent itself. While a precious resource was being paved over and a world-class industry dismantled, another was already rising up beside it. The real estate boom was accelerated by the excitement and economic promise of technological discoveries spawned in the same innovative atmosphere that had made the valley an agricultural force.

Here, engineers who followed Nobel laureate William Shockley when he moved west from Bell Labs developed the integrated circuit. Engineers from Intel invented the microprocessor. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, working out of their legendary garage, developed the personal computer and founded Apple Computer. Cisco Systems devised the routers that direct traffic through the Internet. At the forefront of the high-tech revolution, Silicon Valley magnetized billions of dollars in venture capital, as well as a new generation of fortune-seekers.

So while the orchards large and small have now been uprooted and hauled away, there is more of just about everything else--more money, more millionaires, more elegant homes perched on vista hillsides, along with more homeless persons, more crime, more cars, more road rage, and more qualified students than the community colleges and state university can handle. But with these have come more concerts and literary magazines and theater and dance (a new performing arts center, new galleries, new libraries), and more families coming from more countries, bringing their many histories from every direction, north and south and east and west. California's unique geography--bordering Latin America, while facing the Pacific--has shaped a rich and vigorous crossroads culture. And, again, the valley mirrors population patterns up and down the state.

A Look Back

Indians were here first, hunters and gatherers who roamed the oak-dotted plain for thousands of years. Several hundred descendants of those early tribes still inhabit the valley. In 1769, Spanish soldiers arrived on foot from Mexico, soon followed by colonists trekking north to found El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe, an agrarian outpost designed to encourage colonization and provide produce for nearby Franciscan missions established to Christianize the Indians. One of these was named (in 1777) for Santa Clara de Asis.

Until 1848, all of California was a northern province of Mexico, and Spanish was the official language. (For many thousands of today's residents, it is still the language learned first.) The discovery of gold in California triggered a great wave of in-migration, as the promise of quick riches drew multitudes across the continent from the eastern United States and, by ship, from Europe, from Chile and Peru, from China, Malaysia, and the Pacific Islands. Before long, immigrants

from France and Italy were planting vineyards in Santa Clara Valley, where soil and climate reminded them of lands they had left behind. Prominent among them was Paul Masson, based in San Jose, who introduced champagne production to the United States.

From the Gold Rush onward, most of the settlers–the farmers, ranchers, and growers who developed the valley–were of Anglo-European background. Yet by the time my family arrived, cultural diversity had long been a feature of the region. During my secondary school and college years in the 1950s, I had friends whose parents came from Serbia, from the Azores, from Hawaii, the Philippines, Mexico, China, and Japan.

Fifty years later, it's a world my father wouldn't recognize. Like so many regions of 21st-century America, it is polycultural now, home to families from Guatemala and El Salvador, from Jordan and Afghanistan, from Samoa and Taiwan and Cambodia. Immigrants from Vietnam now outnumber the valley's entire population when I was a student. Immigrants from India are served by four locally published periodicals. For three blocks of a major boulevard, half the signs above the shops and restaurants are in Korean characters, some with no English subtitles. Cinco de Mayo–the day Mexico celebrates victory over French forces in the 1862 Battle of Puebla–is observed with a major parade and festival.

A Look Ahead

After a century and a half of ongoing settlement, a huge social experiment is under way in the Santa Clara Valley, as well as in the rest of California. Until very recently, few regions have ever harbored people from so many backgrounds looking for ways to coexist. For some, this looms as a threat–now that whites no longer comprise an ethnic majority. In my experience, however, this, in itself, is not a cause for high alarm.

My wife's background is Japanese. We met during our college years, when her father–a man from Hiroshima drawn east across the Pacific early in the 20th century, for much the same reason my father had been drawn west–was farming strawberries near the eastern foothills. Our three children are Eurasian. Joining us for a recent holiday dinner were my son's wife, who is half Chinese, and our older daughter's husband, who is Jewish. As the son of an Okie with Scots-Irish ancestors, I was an ethnic minority at my own dinner table. And I can testify that one can get through such an evening and actually enjoy the meal.

The time has come to re-examine the word "minority," since it deals with so much more than numbers. For those of us who have long been in the "majority," it can have an ominous ring, connoting a lesser category, to be somewhere off on the margin, out of the mainstream. But what if we simply let go of the word and looked for other ways to describe ourselves and our differences? The term is only useful when there is a majority to be compared to. If there is no longer an ethnic majority in the state of California, then diversity becomes the norm and the mainstream, and we all move a little closer to being in the same category–people of varying hues and backgrounds who happen to inhabit the same region.

This is not to minimize the serious tensions in the air and in the streets. As I revisit where I grew up, it seems to me that of all the challenges now facing Santa Clara/Silicon Valley, perhaps the greatest is learning to live together in this new and still unfolding polycultural world, teaching one another how to listen, how to see across the borders that have so often kept us apart. ■

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AMERICAN ORIGINAL
Entrepreneurialism

William (Bill) H. Gates, inspired by a belief that the personal computer would be a key tool at home and at work, established a computer software company with childhood friend Paul Allen in 1975. Their creation, Microsoft Corporation, quickly grew into the largest company of its kind and today employs more than 55,000 people in 85 countries around the world. Born in 1955, Gates began programming computers at age 13, and while in college developed a version of the programming language BASIC for the first microcomputer. Gates has shared his vision of the computer's promise in books published in 25 languages, through his support of technology in education, and through Corbis, a company he founded that is developing one of the world's largest digital archives of visual information. He has shared his wealth through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has committed more than $3.2 billion to organizations working in global health and more than $2 billion to improve learning opportunities.

A TOWN IN WEST VIRGINIA

Henry Louis Gates

In excerpts from his 1994 memoir, Colored People, *author Henry Louis Gates reflects on his childhood in the small rural community of Piedmont, West Virginia, in the years before the civil rights movement brought integration to the United States. His meditations begin with some prefatory remarks addressed to his daughters, and go on to offer a glimpse of a place, with all of its social, political, and geographic implications. In an addendum, Mark Jacobs describes his recent visit to Piedmont and how the town has changed, and not changed, from the time of Henry Louis Gates' childhood to the present day.*

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., is the W.E.B. DuBois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University and the Chairman of Harvard's Afro-American Studies program. A prominent essayist, critic, and social commentator, his books include Figures in Black *and* The Signifying Monkey.

Preface

Dear Maggie and Liza:

I have written to you because a world into which I was born, a world that nurtured and sustained me, has mysteriously disappeared. My darkest fear is that Piedmont, West Virginia, will cease to exist, if some executives on Park Avenue decide that it is more profitable to build a complete new paper mill elsewhere than to overhaul one a century old. Then they would close it, just as they did in Cumberland with Celanese, and Pittsburgh Plate Glass, and the Kelly-Springfield Tire Company. The town will die, but our people will not move. They will not be moved. Because for them, Piedmont – snuggled between the Allegheny Mountains and the Potomac River Valley – is life itself.

I am not Everynegro. I am not native to the great black metropolises: New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, say. Nor can I claim to be a "citizen of the world." I am from and of a time and a place – Piedmont, West Virginia – and that's a world apart, a world of difference. So this is not a story of a race but a story of a village, a family, and its friends. And of a sort of segregated peace.

In your lifetimes, I suspect, you will go from being African Americans to "people of color," to being, once again, "colored people." (The linguistic trend toward condensation is strong.) I don't mind any of the names myself. But I have to confess that I like "colored" best, maybe because when I hear the word, I hear it in my mother's voice and in the sepia tones of my childhood. As artlessly and honestly as I can, I have tried to evoke a colored world of the fifties, a Negro world of the early sixties, and the advent of a black world of the later sixties, from the point of view of the boy I was.

Colored People

On the side of a hill in the Allegheny Mountains, two and a half hours northwest of Washington and southeast of Pittsburgh, slathered along the ridge of "Old Baldie" mountain like butter on the jagged side of a Parker House roll, sits Piedmont, West Virginia (population 2,565 in 1950, when I was born), the second major city of Mineral County. West Virginia is famous for its hills, the Allegheny Mountains, which run along the Potomac River in the east, the Ohio River along the west, and the Kanawha and Guyandotte rivers in the south. And of all the mountain ranges gazed upon by its riverine mountaineers, none is more beautiful than the south branch of the Potomac Valley, overlooked by Gates Point, the highest promontory in the county, rising above Patterson's Creek.

It was in Piedmont that most of the colored people of Mineral County lived – 351 out of a total population of 22,000.

To my children, Piedmont as a whole must seem to be a graying, desiccated town, rotting away brick by brick, just like my old school. Its population is down to about 1,100 souls, 300 of whom are black, a population whose average age

A historic postcard offers this rustic view of Piedmont, circa 1920. (Courtesy of Blackwood Associates)

increases each year, so that the spirited figures who dominated my youth – those who survive, anyway – must strike my daughters as grizzled elders. No, my children will never know Piedmont, never experience the magic I can still feel in the place where I learned how to be a colored boy.

The fifties in Piedmont was a sepia time, or at least that's the color my memory has given it. Piedmont was prosperous and growing, a village of undoubted splendors. I say a village, but that's an unpopular usage among some. ("Class Three City" is the official West Virginia state euphemism.)

Village or town, or something in between – no matter. People from Piedmont were always proud to be from Piedmont – nestled against a wall of mountains, smack-dab on the banks of the mighty Potomac. We knew God gave America no more beautiful location.

And its social topography was something we knew like the back of our hands. Piedmont was an immigrant town. White Piedmont was Italian and Irish, with a handful of wealthy WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) on East Hampshire Street, and "ethnic" neighborhoods of working-class people everywhere else, colored and white.

For as long as anybody can remember, Piedmont's character has always been completely bound up with the Westvaco paper mill: its prosperous past and its doubtful future. At first glance, Piedmont is a typical dying mill town, with the crumbling infrastructure and the resignation of its people to its gentle decline. Many once beautiful buildings have been abandoned. They stand empty and unkempt, and testify to a bygone time of spirit and pride. The big houses on East Hampshire Street are no longer proud, but they were when I was a kid.

On still days, when the air is heavy, Piedmont has the rotten-egg smell of a chemistry class. The acrid, sulfurous odor of the bleaches used in the paper mill drifts along the valley, penetrating walls and clothing, furnishings, and skin. No perfume can fully mask it. It is as much a part of the valley as is the river, and the people who live there are not overly disturbed by it. "Smells like money to me," we were taught to say in its defense, even as children.

Just below East Hampshire, as if a diagonal had been drawn from it downward at a 30-degree angle, was Pearl Street, which the colored people called "Rat Tail Road," because it snaked down around the hill to the bottom of the valley, where the tracks of the B&O railroad run on their way to Keyser, the county seat. Poor white people like Bonnie Gilroy's family lived down there, and five black families. We moved there when I was four.

Like the Italians and the Irish, most of the colored people migrated to Piedmont at the turn of the 20th century to work at the paper mill, which opened in 1888.

Nearly everybody in the Tri-Towns worked there. The Tri-Towns – three towns of similar size – were connected by two bridges across sections of the Potomac less than a mile apart: Piedmont, West Virginia; Luke, Maryland; and Westernport, Maryland, the westernmost navigable point on the river, between Pittsburgh and the Chesapeake Bay. The Italians and the Irish ... along with a few of the poorer white people, worked the good jobs in the paper mill, including all those in the craft unions. That mattered, because crafts demanded skill and training, and craftsmen commanded high wages. It was not until 1968 that the craft unions at the mill were integrated.

Until the summer of 1968, all the colored men at the paper mill worked on "the platform" – loading paper into trucks. ... The end product of the paper mill was packaged in skids, big wooden crates of paper, which could weigh as much as 7,000 pounds (3,150 kilograms) each. The skids had to be forklifted from the mill onto the shipping platform and then loaded into the huge tractor-trailers that took them to Elsewhere. Loading is what Daddy did every working day of his working life. That's what almost every colored grown-up I knew did. Every day at 6:30 a.m., Daddy would go off to the mill, and he'd work until 3:30 p.m., when the mill whistle would blow. So important was the mill to the life of the town that school let out at the same time. We would eat dinner at 4:00, so that Pop could get to his second job, as a janitor at the telephone company, by 4:30. His workday ended at 7:30, except when there was a

baseball game, over in the Orchard or at the park in Westernport, in which case he would cut out early.

Almost all the colored people in Piedmont worked at the paper mill and made the same money, because they all worked at the same job, on the platform.

The colored world was not so much a neighborhood as a condition of existence. And though our own world was seemingly self-contained, it impinged upon the white world of Piedmont in almost every direction.

When Daddy was a teenager, dance bands used to come to the Crystal Palace Ballroom in Cumberland, Maryland. They'd play a set or two in the evening for white people and then a special midnight show for the colored. Daddy says everybody would be there – the maimed, the sick, the dying, and the dead. Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway. And Piedmont's own Don Redman. Later, we had our own places to dance – the colored American Legion, and then the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

It was amazing to me how new dances would spread in the black community, even to small towns like ours. Somebody'd be visiting his relatives somewhere, go to a party, and that would be that. He'd bring it back and teach everyone, showing it off in the streets in the evenings or at a party in somebody's basement.

Before 1955, most white people were only shadowy presences in our world, vague figures of power like remote bosses at the mill or tellers at the bank. There were exceptions, of course, the white people who would come into our world in ritualized, everyday ways we all understood. Mr. Mail Man, Mr. Insurance Man, Mr. White-and-Chocolate Milk Man, Mr. Landlord Man, Mr. Police Man: We called white people by their trade, like allegorical characters in a mystery play. Mr. Insurance Man would come by every other week to collect premiums on college or death policies, sometimes 50 cents or less. But my favorite white visitor was the Jewel Tea Man, who arrived in his dark-brown helmet-shaped truck, a sort of modified jeep, and, like the Sears Man, brought new appliances to our house. I loved looking at his catalogues. Mr. Jewel Tea Man, may I see your catalogues? Please?

And, of course, we would bump into the white world at the hospital in Keyser or at the credit union in Westernport or in one of the stores downtown. But our neighborhoods were clearly demarcated, as if by ropes or turnstiles. Welcome to the Colored Zone, a large stretched banner could have said. And it felt good in there, like walking around your house in bare feet and underwear, or snoring right out loud on the couch in front of the TV – swaddled by the comforts of home, the warmth of those you love.

People in Piedmont were virulent nationalists – Piedmont nationalists. And this was our credo:

> All New York's got that Piedmont's got is more of what we got. Same, but bigger. And, if you were a student: You can get a good education anywhere. They got the same books, ain't they? Just bigger classes, 'at's all.

Otherwise, the advantage was all to Piedmont. Did you know that Kenny House Hill was written about in *Ripley's Believe*

AMERICAN ORIGINAL
Overcoming Adversity

Displaying the grit and determination born of an intense competitive spirit, **Lance Armstrong** fought off the effects of a deadly disease to become the most celebrated cyclist of this, and possibly any, generation. Born in 1971, he already was one of the world's best cyclists when, at the age of 25, he learned that he had an aggressive form of testicular cancer. The disease had spread to his abdomen and lungs, and two cancerous lesions threatened his brain. Determined to fight, he took an active role in educating himself about his disease and underwent surgery as well as chemotherapy. Even before his recovery was complete, he created the Lance Armstrong Foundation to inspire cancer patients, and he became a world spokesperson for the cancer community. Armstrong has said that in battling cancer, "knowledge is power and attitude is everything." He has demonstrated that by winning every *Tour de France*, the world's premier bicycling race, since 1999.

It or Not as the only street in the world from which you can enter all three stories of the same building? That made it the most famous place in this Class Three City; other of our attractions were less well publicized.

Like Dent Davis's bologna, which was so good that when colored people came home to Piedmont for the mill picnic each Labor Day, they would take pounds of it back to whatever sorry homes they had forsaken Piedmont for, along with the bright-red cans of King Syrup...with the inset metal circle for a lid, the kind that you had to pry open with the back of a claw hammer. ... Some of them, those whose tastes were most rarefied, would take home a few jars of our tap water. And that was before anybody thought of buying water in bottles. People in Piedmont can't imagine that today. A dollar for a bottle of water! We had some good water in Piedmont, the best drinking water in the world, if you asked any of us.

Dent's bologna, and our water, and our King Syrup, and the paper mill's annual pic-a-nic, all helped account for Piedmont's tenacious grip upon its inhabitants, even those in diaspora. And then there was our Valley. I never knew colored people anywhere who were crazier about mountains and water, flowers and trees, fishing and hunting. For as long as anyone could remember, we could outhunt, outshoot, and outswim the white boys in the Valley. We didn't flaunt our rifles and shotguns, though, because that might make the white people too nervous. Pickup trucks and country music

– now that was going too far, at least in the fifties. But that would come, too, over time, once integration had hit the second generation. The price of progress, I suppose. ■

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Reprinted courtesy of Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

ADDENDUM —PIEDMONT TODAY—

By Mark Jacobs

Piedmont is a small town in the northeastern corner of West Virginia that has gotten smaller since the eminent scholar Henry Louis Gates grew up there. When Gates was born in 1950, the population of Piedmont was 2,565. Today, according to the most recent estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau, 1,014 people make their home there. With just over 27,000 residents, the whole of Mineral County, where Piedmont is located, is quite sparsely populated.

Gates was among the first African-American students to attend the newly desegregated public schools of Piedmont following the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954. He took an interest in local civil rights issues and, as part of a group that became known as the "Fearsome Foursome," pressured the Blue Jay restaurant and nightclub to integrate.

Relatively little has changed since Gates's memoir of growing up in Piedmont was published in 1996. No new large employers have appeared. The Westvaco paper plant is still in operation. Like most men of his time, Gates's father worked at Westvaco. Owned by the Mead Westvaco Corporation, the plant continues to be the major source of jobs for Piedmont residents, black and white.

The Reverend Bart Thompson, pastor of the Trinity United Methodist Church in Piedmont, speaks about the need for the town to change with the nation's "changing economy." Police Chief Paul Karalewitz, who has lived in Piedmont for 28 years, points to a number of new small businesses as a sign of progress. At the *Piedmont Herald*, Mary Lou Kady was equally optimistic. She says that the town is "basically the same" as it was when Gates's memoir was published. Kady, who was born and raised in Piedmont, says, "I wouldn't live anywhere else. It's a great little city … with a small-town atmosphere."

Because of their location in the Allegheny Mountains, Piedmont and Mineral County are known for their rugged natural beauty. To those who know it, this rural region of West Virginia continues to exert the powerful appeal to the eye and to memory that it exerted on the author of Colored People. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

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