Moving to America

U.S. immigration through history

by Lee G. Madland

From John White to Ana Gutiérrez, Nguyen Binh Thanh, and many millions of others from the continents rather condescendingly lumped together as the Old World after Europeans' rediscovery of the New, the territory now included in the United States of America has for the last 500 years been a place of dreams and a magnet for settlement. The society that the earlier arrivals from Europe created and passed on to their descendants in time attracted others from other parts of the Old World, not only from Europe but also increasingly from other continents, and more recently in large numbers from nearer parts of the New World itself. Although these broad statements oversimplify, as do all general assertions, they will do for a start.

The United States, more than any other country on earth, has characterized itself as "a nation of immigrants." The label has considerable justification due to the recency of migrations to America that have defined its modern culture, and by the overwhelming proportion of the population that traces its ancestry to such migration and settlement. Actually, though, all nations are nations of immigrants. The main difference is that most of these received their various ancestral migrants over periods of millennia rather than merely a few centuries, and also that the details and even the main outlines of those migrations are often hazy and uncertain for the long periods in which few if any records were kept, or survived.

The First Immigrants

The last statement of course applies also to the original migrants to America, ancestors of the misnamed "Indians," (or, the now popular but even more ambiguous term "Native Americans." Nor is the academically favored but awkwardly contrived "Amerindians" much better. "Original Inhabitants" is more accurate, but its eight cumbersome syllables are unlikely to catch on. What's needed is a shorter term with cachet.[1] Any suggestions? Here, I'll use "Indian" for lack of a better alternative.)

Just when the earliest of these arrived in America, and by what route or routes, is a question that is in a state of flux. The long-held archeological view is that they came over the Bering Land Bridge connecting Siberia and North America that lay exposed due to the lower sea levels during the last Ice Age. They then proceeded by stages across central Alaska and then south along a narrow ice-free corridor that had opened between the two great American ice sheets, providing a relatively easy path along the eastern flank of the Canadian Rockies. This would have occurred no earlier than 14,000 years ago. By about 13,000 years ago some of them reached the region around Clovis in eastern New Mexico where their elegantly flaked, thin spear points have been found and closely studied. As recently as 1996 a prominent archeologist could state in a major, well-respected work that "Clovis is taken to be the basal, the founding, population for the Americas."

But since then new finds and new evidence have cast considerable doubt on that thesis. In the very next year, 1997, archeologists dated a site called Monte Verde in south central Chile as earlier than 14,500 years ago (since revised to 14,800), showing that people were nearing the southern end of the Americas more than a thousand years before the dates given for Clovis-finds in New Mexico and Texas. Soon other sites of early habitation, with date-claims heretofore dismissed by many as speculative, received more intensive study. At one of these, Cactus Hill south of Richmond, Virginia, artifacts have now been more confidently dated at 15,000-18,000 years back, and at another, Meadowcroft Rockshelter near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, habitation dates have been put at more than 19,000 years ago.

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Not only that, the very routes used by these peoples in reaching America have been called into question. Striking similarities have been noted between some of the spear points and their flaking patterns found in the Virginia and Pennsylvania sites with those of the Clovis finds – and compared with the points and tools of a culture from southwestern Europe called *Solutrean* that flourished 20,000 years ago – have led some archeologists to postulate a transatlantic rather than Asian connection for the Clovis people. In all three regions, for example, the spear points are broader and much thinner than those of Asian style found at other sites in the Western U.S., where a different flaking technique was used. If this view is accepted, a likely route for small boats from Iberia (Spain) to the American East Coast would have followed the edge of the North Atlantic ice pack, which in those Ice Age times would have been well south of Greenland. Naturally the idea that such voyages could have been accomplished at all in that period is highly controversial, but it would explain the apparent connection, and it is clear that the seafaring capabilities of early peoples have consistently been underestimated. Nor would the numbers of people making the trip have had to be great.

Another sea route has also recently been postulated, this one originating from somewhere farther south in Asia than the overland "Siberia-Alaska-Canada ice-free corridor" route. As outlined, it may have passed by Japan, skirted Kamchatka and island-hopped the Aleutians, and then followed the Alaskan and Canadian Pacific coasts south, which likely would have afforded small ice-free landing sites between glacier mouths along the way where they might pause and find game. Major support for this route comes from two finds: a stone tool dredged in 1998 from the ocean floor off Canada's Queen Charlotte Islands at a depth of 175 feet, which would have been dry land 11,500 years ago as indicated by the strata; and a spear point found during the summer of 2003 in a limestone cave on those same islands, next to the remains of a bear that had probably taken the spear and which were carbon dated at 12,000 years old.

So, instead of a single assumed early route to America, now *three* have been proposed, none of which excludes either of the others. The possibility remains of more direct routes across the open oceans either accidental or deliberate, though at this point these have to remain still more conjectural.

Dovetailing with the archeological indications are researches by linguists who contend that the original three hundred native North American languages and close to a hundred more in Meso-America, to say nothing of an estimated 1,500 South American tongues, simply could not have evolved from a single tongue in a mere 12,000 years.

All this has been neatly summed up in a remark by an archeologist working at Clovis sites in Texas, Michael Collins, who is quoted as saying, "We are in the theoretical chaos that follows the collapse of a long-held theory."[2]

The various groups of peoples of the New World were as distinct from one another as those of the Old. They were divided into numerous "tribes" or, as a popular TV documentary has put it, "500 nations" in North America. Since they necessarily lived much closer to nature than we do today, an almost worshipfully romantic and bucolic image of them has arisen among today's environmentalists. Indian concepts of the land were different from those of today – defined by use rather than legal ownership – but tribes not infrequently warred over such use almost as if it were physical property.

Nor is it true that these people did not disturb the natural environment. Many large animals, such as mammoths, native horses and giant beavers seem to have been hunted to extinction. Evidence of large-scale changes in the plant cover is the prevalence of tall-grass prairie over large areas of the Midwest centered in present Illinois, Iowa and major parts of neighboring states and extending from Alberta to Texas. This region receives enough moisture to support forest, as it apparently did also in those times, but many researchers believe that the tall prairie grasses came to dominate as a result of fires man repeatedly set to drive game. (New grass sprouts every year after fires, but fire destroys the saplings of new trees that require many years of undisturbed growth to mature). Ironically, since modern settlers in turn have replaced the prairie grasses with their own tall grasses, notably corn and wheat, efforts have been made to preserve or restore the mix of prairie grasses in a few available spots so people today can see what the so-called "natural" prairie once looked like.

Before leaving the topic of prehistoric arrivals, it's worth noting an almost forgotten 1960 paper by University of Southern California anthropologist Ivan

Lopatin, concerning the sauna-type steam bath widely used from ancient times by Indian peoples in most parts of North America, Meso-America, and in at least three quite separate regions of South America. In form and use, it is virtually identical to the sauna of northern Europe, centered around Finland and extending to Scandinavia and northern European Russia – from the method of producing steam by pouring water over hot stones in a closed hut, to the ritual associated with it: namely, the periodic cooling off by dashing outside to plunge into a cold (icy, if available) stream or pond before returning to the hut; the bathers' custom of lashing one another with bundles of reeds or sticks while sitting on the benches inside; and the use of aromatic herbs poured with the water on the hot stones and sometimes also applied to the body.

Lopatin emphasizes that all this was fundamentally different from the Classical Greco-Roman bath, the Turkish bath, or ancient Hebrew/Arab and other Asian plunge baths. It appears that the sauna-type bath was invented very early by a people occupying the region now called Finland, adopted by Finns when they arrived there, and later spread west into Scandinavia and east into European Russia. Since it was so widely established in pre-Columbian times in nearly all of North America from Alaska to the southern regions of the present United States (except in much of California and Florida) where it is now called the Native American sweat lodge, and beyond that to Meso-America and a few regions much farther south, it might naturally be presumed that the custom simply diffused across Siberia with migrants and crossed Bering Strait.

But the crux of Lopatin's argument is that this did *not* take place. He notes that this type of bath was completely unknown in all the vast reaches of Siberia until the expansion of Russia beyond the Urals began in the 1580s; nor did it exist anywhere else in Asia, and still does not. "It is clear [that the sauna is] typical of northwestern Europe and of America only, and that it occurs neither in Asia nor on the other continents." He concludes that the idea was probably carried across the Atlantic from northwestern Europe perhaps six to eleven thousand years ago, possibly via Iceland, "although the number of such immigrants could have been very small – a few families in a century."

From this it would seem that Lopatin's paper has been not so much forgotten as promptly dismissed by academics in the first place because of its radical departure from opinion prevalent when it appeared – a common fate of scholarship carrying implications too bold for its times.[3]

This is only one example. Other prehistoric contacts with America have been postulated with varying degrees of evidence involving people ranging from Iberians, Carthaginians, black Africans, Asian Indians, Chinese, Pacific islanders, to Irish and still others, which we can't go into here. Only time and new evidence can settle these questions. There are still new worlds of the past begging to be revealed.

The Earliest Attested Overseas Discovery

The first definite records of arrivals in America are found in the Icelandic Norse sagas, a remarkable body of Medieval literature concerned with family histories of the pioneer settlers, at first transmitted orally. The older and probably more consistently accurate of the two relevant sagas, *The Greenlanders' Saga*, was committed to writing slightly over two centuries after the initial Norse settlement of Greenland led by Eric the Red in 986 A.D. Hardly fifteen years later, in about 1000, Eric's son, Leif, set sail to look for new lands to the southwest of which he had had report. He and his men spent a remarkably mild winter in a land he named Vinland after finding wild grapes there, then returned to Greenland. In the years following, four further expeditions led by members of Leif's family sailed for Vinland with an eye toward settlement, the second staying through three winters. After a storm-tossed third effort failed to reach Vinland, the fourth was a serious attempt to settle permanently, bringing sixty men and five women, plus livestock. They stayed through two winters, during which Leif's daughter-in-law, Gudrid, bore a son, Snorri, the first known child of European parentage born in America. But in both the latter two enterprises conflict arose with the native people (no doubt Algonquin), which caused the settlers to return to Greenland. The fifth and last, a joint effort with two ships, was an unmitigated disaster when according to the saga the leader, Leif's half-sister, Freydis, treacherously carried out a plot of hers to murder the Icelanders of the other ship while wintering at Leif's camp, afterward returning to universal condemnation once the secret of her villainy was leaked to Leif.

No known further attempts at colonization were made. In any case, although Norse Greenland endured for fully 500 years, its settlements were small and never reached more than a few thousand in total population (with remarkably, only a few hundred at the time of the recorded voyages). Their resources were stretched to the limit, though there are reports of occasional voyages (probably to Labrador) to secure timber, lacking in Greenland. Were there any survivors of either these or the earlier voyages who were left behind, or of unrecorded voyages? There's no way of knowing.

Many efforts have been made to determine the location of the camp Leif established in Vinland, with no real results. Most informed guesses have ranged from Newfoundland or Nova Scotia/New Brunswick to New England or even the Hudson River. The discovery of the ruins of a settlement with Norse artifacts on the northern tip of Newfoundland by Helge and Anne Ingstad in 1961 does not settle the issue, although it shows that Norse *did* reach America at about that time. But it's too far north of where grapes ever grew to be the main site in Vinland as described in the sagas. And since the sagas were chiefly concerned with the doings of particular families, that site could easily have been missed in the record. Also, about four-fifths of the saga material has been lost over the centuries. In any case, the Newfoundland outpost was not maintained for very many years. It appears to have been a station established at a strategic location where ships could be repaired and supplies replenished – which implies that more voyages were made than we find in the surviving records.[4]

Rediscovery, and an English Empire

The voyages of Columbus 500 years later that resulted in the Spanish conquests produced more momentous and lasting consequences, of course. While Columbus himself never touched the North American mainland others did, including other Italian mariners such as John Cabot (Caboto) sailing for England, and Verrazano for France. All were looking for a passage to the Orient, but the Spanish and Portuguese were the first to seize and control large areas of the New World, from Mexico south. However, aside from the small and peripheral outposts around San Augustín in Florida (founded 1565), around Santa Fe in New Mexico (1609), and much later the thin thread of missions in California (late 1700s), the Spaniards had little interest in the wild lands of northern America, finding no riches there comparable to Mexico or Peru.

The first attempts at English settlement came comparatively late in the game and were at first most unpromising. Sir Walter Raleigh put a group of colonists ashore on Roanoke Island, in the sound between the Outer Banks and a swampy mainland in the land he had named Virginia. (Later border-drawing put that site in North Carolina.) Within a year the settlement was abandoned, but two years later, in 1587, Raleigh left a group of 120 settlers there under the leadership of John White. White's granddaughter, Virginia Dare, was the first English child born in the New World. But when White returned to England to procure supplies for his colony, he was unable to return for three years because shipping was tied up in the struggle with Spain and its Armada. When in 1590 White finally arrived with a supply ship the colony had disappeared with barely a trace. To this day no one knows what happened to it.

It wasn't until 1607 that Jamestown was founded on the Virginia mainland under Captain John Smith. Although it became the first successful English colony in America the settlers had a hard go of it; especially in the early years when a great many died from disease, starvation, or conflict with Indians. After 1612, tobacco was planted as a cash crop for export, but even by 1624 there were only 1,200 Europeans in the whole region.

In 1620, a group of English from congregations that had separated from the Church of England (then called Separatists but now known as the Pilgrims), who had first migrated to Holland but worried that the English identity of their children would be lost there, arranged to sail to Virginia. During a rough voyage their ship was blown off course and instead made its landfall on the Massachusetts coast where they decided to take their chances. During the first winter half of those who had stepped off the *Mayflower* died. In the years following others came, not only more Separatists, but Puritans of similar beliefs who had remained loyal to the English Church. Their arrivals exceeded a thousand per year after about 1630, each group settling separately to set up their own towns. There now were two main nodes of English settlement on the Eastern Seaboard: Virginia and Massachusetts, the latter soon becoming the larger. Smaller numbers settled farther afield in areas such as Connecticut and New Hampshire.

Farther south, a royal colony was established in 1634 by Lord Baltimore, a Catholic who named it Maryland for the Catholic queen of Charles I. By 1740 about 27,000 people had crossed the Atlantic to settle in the North American English colonies, including 14,000 to Massachusetts and 8,000 to Virginia.

To keep this in perspective, however, during that same time a greater number, around 40,000, had migrated from England to several tiny tropical islands in the Caribbean, especially Barbados (over 18,000) and St. Kitts (12,000), which were much more valued commercially because sugar plantations could be established there.

Meanwhile, in the 1620s and 1630s the Dutch established a colony on Manhattan and nearby Long Island, and also forts and landed estates up the Hudson River Valley as far as Albany and Schenectady — to the consternation of the Crown when it realized by mid-century that through British default a rival foreign power now controlled a potentially vital inland passageway that cut the English colonies in two. After nearly a half-century of control the Dutch governors were expelled during two naval wars with England, in which America was only one theater of operation. The British seized New York in 1664 and once more in 1674, with its offshoot New Jersey. This gave Britain clear control of the Eastern Seaboard. However, settlers still had to deal with periodic Indian outbreaks, of which an organized offensive to expel the New Englanders in 1673-74 was by far the most serious: in defending their towns, "A higher proportion of New England's white population … died than in any American war before or since."[5]

The remaining gap between the English colonies was filled when in 1681 William Penn, a Quaker, was granted a royal charter for what he then named Penn's Woods (or Pennsylvania), along with its offshoot Delaware. Penn then founded Philadelphia, wisely taking care to establish friendly relations with the Delaware Indians of the region, and attracted among others considerable numbers of Protestant Germans by sending agents overseas to the Continent to advertise cheap land and religious freedom. Pennsylvania was soon flourishing and exporting large quantities of wheat and meat to the West Indies.

More settlers came to the colonies, not only English but Scots, Welsh, the so-called Scotch-Irish (Protestants from Ulster) in addition to the already established Dutch, and increasingly Germans and Swiss, plus others. Virtually all were from the British Isles and Western European continental countries, with one major exception.

From the Chesapeake Bay region south, some slaves had been brought in from West Africa almost from the beginning of commercial agriculture to replace European indentured laborers who were prone to strike out on their own once their agreed work years had paid for their passage. But only in the early 1700s did the relative numbers of Africans become large. By 1720 blacks had become a majority of the population in one colony, South Carolina. Few were to be found north of Maryland since the plantation export crops for which their labor was utilized — chiefly tobacco in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, indigo and rice in South Carolina and into Georgia — were confined to the South. (Large-scale cotton production was to begin much later, in the 1790s.)

Slaves were brought to other parts of the New World in far greater numbers than to North America — about 90 percent of them were shipped to tropical America. Thomas Sowell notes that "Brazil over the centuries imported six times as many slaves as the United States, even though the U.S. had a larger resident slave population than Brazil …. Even such Caribbean islands as Haiti, Jamaica and Cuba each imported more slaves than the United States." This paradox was due in part to the greater distance from the source that made slaves much more expensive in North America. The Brazilian and Caribbean slave owners were therefore more inclined to drive their slaves to the limits of endurance although it reduced their life spans, and to import fewer women since it was easier to replace men than raise slave children to working age. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the combination of more brutal treatment and less fecundity resulted in much greater mortality rates among the slave population and drastically inhibited any normal natural increase. For long periods in much of tropical America a natural *decrease* of slaves actually took place, in contrast to the consistent natural increase of the slave population in the territory of the United States.[6]

By the mid-1700s non-Indian settlement was almost continuous along the seaboard from Maine to Georgia. English-origin people had remained a comfortable majority overall, especially in New England, and they

were even more heavily British including the Scots, Welsh and Scotch-Irish, but settlers from several other countries and religious groups (still mostly Protestant) were a significant presence elsewhere; and naturally, cultural rivalries developed. For example, the continuing influx of Germans, chiefly Lutheran, caused anxiety in Pennsylvania. By 1750 Germans had reached an estimated one-third of that colony's population and there was a question whether English would be overwhelmed by German. Benjamin Franklin, while praising the German settlers' industry and frugality, worried that "they will soon so outnumber us that all the advantages we have will not be able to preserve our language and even our government will become precarious."[7]

As it happened, what Franklin feared in 1751 did not come to pass because scarcely five years later German immigration was stopped in its tracks when Germany was convulsed in the seesaw battles of the Seven Years War fought on its soil, with Britain and Frederick the Great's Prussia pitted against an alliance of France, the Austrian Empire, Russia and Sweden. Its British vs. French phase in America was called the French and Indian War because the French effectively used their Huron and Algonquin allies in their battles against British outposts and troops. But after suffering some early setbacks the British prevailed, crowning their victories with the capture of Quebec City in 1759 and Montreal the next year. In the final 1763 peace agreement France ceded all Canada and the vast wild lands between the Appalachians and the Mississippi – which gave Britain official title to the whole eastern half of the continent.

That happy state of affairs for the British in America was not to last very long, however. In 1776 the American Revolution broke out, ending seven years later in 1783 with Britain ceding to the newly independent United States the whole potentially rich territory south of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Valley and west to the Mississippi. The American colonists who remained loyal to Britain through the war numbered perhaps one-fifth of the population that became the United States. When the British troops left, a great many Loyalists picked up and moved to British-ruled Canada, especially Nova Scotia, while others went farther west to set up pioneer farms in Upper Canada (Ontario). Key consequences were that the most committed pro-British partisans thus ceased to be a real divisive force in the new United States, and also that their migration north of the new border was a major reason that the bulk of the Canadian population – except in the province of Quebec – is today speaking English rather than French.

A Long Lull – Then, A Boom

During most of the latter part of the 18th century through nearly the first half of the 19th, immigration to America remained quite low, to the point that in this respect that period has been called the Great Lull. The Seven Years War in Europe (1756-63), then the American Revolution (1776-83), and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1792-1815) with their aftermaths all brought major slowdowns in new arrivals, most of those coming from the British Isles. The Lull did, however, give the newly created country a chance to consolidate, and helped it develop a truly national outlook. Internal migration was dynamic, with an increased movement of land-seekers across the Appalachians to settle in the new lands the United States had acquired. The early western settlers were left pretty much to their own devices including dealing with Indians, though provision was made for regions to petition for territorial and then full statehood status once the population reached specified levels. The first states west of the mountains were Kentucky in 1792 and Tennessee in 1796, followed by Ohio in 1803.

The importation of slaves ceased to be a factor in U.S. population increase when the slave trade was outlawed in 1808 by Great Britain, then ruling the waves. In the American South this shortly reduced that traffic to a mere illegal trickle, though effective enforcement of the ban took longer in Latin America, especially Brazil.

It was only in 1820 that the U.S. government began to keep track of immigration numbers.[8] For the first full decade of record from 1821 through 1830 just some 143,000 immigrants were counted at ports of entry (or an average of around 14,000 per year). About 90 percent of these arrived from Europe with Ireland leading at 51,000 and Great Britain second with about half as many, followed more distantly by France and Germany in third and fourth places. In those years the first-place "Irish" immigrants were largely Protestant Scotch-Irish from Ulster, some of whom settled where their kin had been well-established for a century in western parts of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas; others pushed farther west to pioneer in and beyond the Alleghenies and southern Appalachians. Their descendants remain a weighty presence today in those regions.

U.S. immigration surged during the 1830s with about 600,000 arriving during that decade. This included a renewed German influx of some 152,000, putting it in second place. But this, even if we add 46,000 from fourth-place France, was still well behind the British Isle total, consisting of Ireland's leading 207,000 and Great Britain's third-place 76,000. While the immigrant numbers are beginning to look large, it should be kept in mind that the total population of the United States, less than 4 million at the 1790 census, had in a half-century doubled and doubled again to 17 million by 1840. Much of the greater part of this growth was due to homegrown natural increase; even during the 1830s "surge" decade, rising immigration contributed only one person of every seven added to the total American population. (During the previous 1820s decade, the immigrant proportion of population growth had been much less – 1 in 22.)

That surge, however, turned out to be a pale prelude to what was coming: an Era of Mass Immigration that would span 80 years. In 1845 and again in 1846 the potato crop in Ireland failed almost completely as a result of a quick-spreading fungal blight. Ironically, the potato had been brought from its native Peru across the Atlantic to Europe via Spain, and the crop's success in Ireland resulted in a sustained baby boom that multiplied the island's population from less than 1 million in the early 1600s to some 8 million in 1840. The "Irish potato" had become the main, indispensable staple of the Irish diet. Not that the Irish were prospering by that time; sustained British repression, and overpopulation in terms of the Isle's resource base, had produced a level of dire poverty that "may be indicated by their average life expectancy of 19 years – compared to 36 years for contemporary American slaves."[9] Ireland was living on the edge.

With the collapse of the island's staple crop, endemic poverty was capped by catastrophe. Starvation and malnutrition diseases claimed nearly a *million* lives. For many of those who survived it was a final blow too: in the peak years of Irish emigration, 1847 through 1854, roughly *two million* fled the island. Some went to Britain, but the lion's share, about 1.6 million of them, endured long voyages in jam-packed sailing ships to reach the United States. (In the aftermath of the "starving time," the island's population continued to decline until by 1911 it was down to 4.4 million, cut almost by half. Deaths and emigration had been followed by a sustained baby bust.)

Americans had never seen anything like it. This was the first truly *mass* influx the U.S. had known, and it was different in other respects as well. Because Ireland's western and southern regions (Connacht and Munster) were the most dependent on the potato crop and thus were hit hardest when the blight struck, those who emigrated this time were heavily Catholic. Also, unlike the earlier Protestant immigrants from the northern region (Ulster) who had settled in rural and frontier areas of the U.S., these and most subsequent immigrants from the Isle flocked to cities and gravitated into urban trades.

Overall, total immigration to the U.S. for the full twenty years of the 1840s and 1850s totaled an unprecedented 4.3 million, with the Irish leading the pack at 1.7 million. Also, German immigration had increased enough to maintain a solid second place, with 1.4 million arrivals during the same two-decade period. Great Britain placed a not-too-distant third, and France remained in fourth place where it had most often been since the record began in 1820. Immigration did decrease to near pre-Irish-migration levels during 1858-60, the three years prior to the Civil War. The population of the United States at the 1860 census stood at above 31 million – another doubling in some twenty years. For the 1841-1860 period as a whole, the immigration to total population growth ratio had risen to 1 in 3.3 – i.e., nearly a third of that increase came from immigration alone.

Immigration nearly dried up during the first half of the Civil War, but the numbers increased somewhat during the war's second half when it became clear that the North was winning. With peace restored in 1865, the latter years of the 1860s saw immigration surging to levels comparable to the former Irish-led inflow. But there were differences: first, while Irish were still arriving in considerable numbers they no longer dominated the picture. Germans had already taken first place before the Civil War, and Great Britain rebounded to a respectable second as a source of immigrants, Ireland being reduced to third place. France dropped out of the top four, a position it would never regain. The high total numbers resulted largely from booming industries in the North during and after the war, which provided a source of jobs for immigrants.

This set a pattern for the rest of the Era of Mass Immigration to the U.S. that had begun with the Irish in 1845 and which would continue (with several pauses) for

the remainder of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th.

Mass Immigration from All Europe

During the more than half-century from the 1870s through the 1920s, every decade eclipsed all periods prior to that era in sheer numbers of arrivals to the United States, even including the Irish wave set off by the potato famine. This does need to be kept in perspective, however: in terms of *proportion of the U.S. population at the time*, none of that wave's several peaks quite equaled the peaks of Irish immigration reached in 1850-54.[10] But because of its long duration, the inflows of the era's later period likewise had a profound effect on the make-up of the American population as it evolved. The great increase in actual numbers was facilitated by the fact that sailing ships were rapidly being replaced by ocean-going steamships that could carry more passengers across the North Atlantic in less time, more safely, and more cheaply.

It was not one continuous wave. There were sharp downturns in immigration almost comparable to that of the years just before and during the Civil War, due to economic slowdowns in the 1870s and again in the 1890s, and yet another on account of World War I. These four major pauses lasted six to seven years each, and were of major significance partly because they provided a "breather" from immigration that helped the country absorb each large flow that preceded it, and also because those pauses taken together amounted to fully 25 years of the 80-year (1845-1924) Era of Mass Immigration.

The major countries of origin were changing, too. Germany remained in first place through the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s (having taken that position in the latter 1850s). Great Britain placed second during the same three decades, with Ireland third and Canada fourth, the latter including many French-Canadians moving to New England to claim postwar jobs there.[11] Canada and Scandinavia (Sweden and Norway being a single kingdom from 1815-1905) had pushed France well out of its "traditional" fourth place. Also worth mentioning is that, first during the California gold rush and then the Western railroad-building periods from the 1850s through 1870s, the importing of Chinese laborers brought China up to fifth or sixth place, until further such arrivals were specifically excluded by law in 1882 due to Western concern over their numbers.

In 1890 the Census showed that the U.S. population, now at 63 million, had doubled for the fourth time since the first census held exactly a century earlier. For the 1880s total immigration was counted at over 5.2 million, nearly twice that of the previous decade which itself had set a record in number of arrivals. (One advantage of stating such numbers for whole decades is that a simple shift of decimal point converts them to a perhaps more easily visualized average per year, hence 520,000 in this case.)

Up to this time the overwhelming source of U.S. immigration had been Northwestern Europe. Until roughly mid-century it had come mainly from the British Isles, then was augmented in increasingly large numbers by arrivals from the Continent north of the Alps and Pyrenees. From colonial times those Continentals had not been really outside the American experience however, as we have seen with the Dutch, Germans, Swiss, and French.

But by this time, what turned out to be a major change in the immigration pattern was beginning to appear. During the 1880s Italy placed sixth in number of immigrants and the Russian Empire eighth (Italy during the previous two decades barely having made the top ten, and Russia never). In the 1890s, however, Italy vaulted all the way to the number one spot and Russia to number two, displacing Germany, Ireland and Great Britain respectively to third, fourth, and fifth places. Italy and the Russian Empire were to hold those one-two positions until the outbreak of World War I in Europe.

Thus the center stage of immigration to the U.S. around the turn of the century had decisively shifted to Southern Europe (primarily Italy) and Eastern Europe. The new century's first decade, 1901-1910, showed an unprecedented 8.8 million total immigrants, and the ratio of immigration to overall population growth rose to a 1 in 1.8 level (meaning that for the first time the number of immigrants recorded actually exceeded the U.S. natural increase, or births-over-deaths, by 55 percent to 45 percent; and even that understates the margin, since the "natural increase" includes births *to those many immigrants* during the decade). During its peak years that decade's immigration flow nearly rivaled the peaks of the Irish flood during the mid-19th century in its proportion to population, even though the population at that earlier time was only a third as great.

For that 1901-1910 period of truly massive inflow, Italy retained a firm grip on first place in numbers of U.S.

immigrants at over 2 million, with the then-Russian Empire not far behind at 1.6 million. Hungary took third place with 809,000 and Austria fourth at 668,000, plus *another* 668,000 from Austria-Hungary murkily "unallocated" but without doubt chiefly various Slavic peoples.[12] Great Britain, Germany, and Ireland were now down to respectively fifth, sixth, and seventh places. (It's worth noting that for the first time, Mexico showed sizable absolute numbers of immigrants with about 50,000 for the decade, though that barely placed it in the top twenty countries of origin.)

The flood continued in a roughly similar pattern until 1915, when World War I drastically cut the dominant European flow for the rest of the decade.

With peace treaties finally concluded in 1919, by 1921 immigration to the U.S. had again returned to levels typical of the years prior to the Great War – over 800,000 in that year alone, partly due to the pent-up desires of people wanting to move to America but whose plans had been foiled by the war. It looked like the immigration flood was going to pick up right from where it left off.

But change was in the air. Since the 1880s many Americans had been becoming increasingly alarmed by rising numbers of immigrants, a growing proportion of them from European cultures that had been outside the prior American experience. By the 1920s sufficient numbers of Americans, worried that American culture itself was threatened, were saying "enough!" that Congress passed the Immigration Restriction Act of 1921, which established a system of immigration quotas.

This was something new. Immigration to the U.S. until that time had been largely open (one exception being the Chinese exclusion enacted in 1882 and later extended to several other Asian groups). The quotas were first aimed at reflecting the ethnic/cultural mix of Americans as of 1910; then a separate 1924 Act changed this standard to 1890 which even more favored Northwestern European origin. But in 1927 the overall numerical quota was further lowered while the base year was reset forward to the ratio of the whole American population in 1920, thus increasing the proportion admissible from Italy and Eastern Europe. No quotas were set for the Western Hemisphere.[13]

The result of these machinations was that the 1920s "transition decade" saw immigration levels drop greatly from the very high levels of the early 20s, to the point that the year 1924 can be considered the last of the 80-year Era of Mass Immigration. But during that decade close to a million immigrants came across the Canadian border, including both Europeans using Canada as a quota-free entryway and many French-Canadians from Quebec – Canada for this one decade becoming the largest sender of all – and also nearly a half-million crossed the southern border from suddenly second-place Mexico. Both came to claim jobs in the Roaring Twenties United States. In the process these two heavily Catholic groups, unwittingly left outside the quotas, outflanked the desire to favor entry of Northwestern Europeans (although those cross-border flows were stemmed in 1930, partly by changes in work-permit rules.)[14] Italians (many having come earlier in the decade before quotas had fully taken hold) were a close third. Germany followed in fourth place and Great Britain in fifth. Poland, reconstituted after the war, was at last listed in the INS statistics, as the sixth-largest source nation at 228,000, with now seventh-place Ireland close behind.

The mass immigration era had been a wild ride. The United States had been able to absorb such numbers partly because of continuing industrialization in the East and a frontier being available to the more venturesome farther west. The country had not yet filled up. But the 1890 Census revealed a key change: the frontier had closed in the sense that there was no longer a continuous line separating settled from unsettled lands, population maps by that time revealing the latter as large and small pockets with clear limits. The significance of this was promptly analyzed in a famous paper by a young historian, Frederick Jackson Turner at the then obscure University of Wisconsin.[15] Turner's cogent appraisal set many to thinking about limits to immigration as well, with results that later would lead to the restrictions of the 1920s.

The biggest losers in the filling up of the land were, of course, the original inhabitants, the Indians. Their basic problems were their relatively small and scattered numbers, European diseases to which they had little immunity, less sophisticated technology, and the fact that the hundreds of tribes seldom could unite in opposition to encroaching settlement – in nearly all the major skirmishes and Indian wars, the whites were assisted by Indian fighters and scouts who thereby hoped to defeat rival tribes, their longtime enemies. By the time the frontier had closed, most Indians who wished to retain

their culture had been tragically relegated to scattered reservations.

A Great Pause

In the 1930s the bottom dropped out. Although U.S. immigration had fallen considerably by 1925 and averaged about 300,000 per year for the rest of the twenties, or half the rate of the previous four years, it utterly crashed along with the economy in the 1931 year of record when the number of immigrants fell below 100,000 for the first time in living memory.[16] (This hadn't happened since war-torn 1862.) It would not regain even that low level until fifteen years later. Thus began the period Peter Brimelow has called The Second Great Lull, the first one having been prior to the great Irish influx.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, unanticipated and decidedly unwanted by anyone, ironically accomplished the immigration objectives of reformers much better than did the limits and national quotas themselves. By the late twenties the overall limit had been set at 150,000 per year.[17] But in comparison with the 8.8 million entrants in the century's first decade, 5.7 million during the teens,1911-1920, including the wartime pause, and 4.1 million in the restrictionist 1920s, the immigration total for the entire 1930s was just 528 *thousand*, thus averaging only 53,000 annually – much less than actual U.S. quotas, low as they were. At the Depression's nadir, the 1933 fiscal year counted only 23,000 immigrants. Based on admittedly rough estimates of persons leaving the country (never officially counted), it appears that U.S. *net* immigration during each of the four years 1932-1935 was actually negative [18] – more people moving out of the country than in! For the 1930s as a whole, the immigrant-to-population-growth was 1 in 16 (a spread exceeded only by the very first decade of immigration records, the 1820s during the First Great Lull.) But despite an abnormally low natural increase as well, the 1930s marked the country's fifth doubling of population since the first census.

In short, potential immigrants no longer thought Depression America such a land of opportunity. Although Europe was similarly mired in hard times, the attitude seems to have been, "If I'm going to suffer without a job, I might as well take my chances at home where people know and understand me."

As for national origins: of these far smaller numbers, the large majority still came from Europe. For the full 1930s decade Germany was once again in first place with over a fifth of all immigrants at 114,000 (although by no means were all "German" as that total included refugees fleeing Nazi persecution including many Jews, most famously including Albert Einstein.) Canada placed a close second with another one-fifth. Italy was third with 68,000, Great Britain fourth with half that number. Mexico had slipped to fifth place, and Poland remained in sixth place. The former Russian Empire, which had taken a strong second in the 1890s as well as in the two decades that followed, but having since become the Soviet Union, had since 1910 to 1920 virtually disappeared from the rankings, averaging merely some *one hundred per year* for the 1930s (and less than that in the two subsequent war/Cold War decades), as the Communist government had forbidden anyone to leave the Workers' Paradise. All told, during the Depression years about two-thirds of the immigrant trickle came directly from Europe and over half from Northwestern Europe, although a joker in this calculus is how many of the considerable Canadian share were really recent European residents re-emigrating. (In any case, adding Canada's share for the 1930s brought people of European heritage to at least 86 percent of admissions.)

During World War II these historic immigration lows continued for obvious reasons (in 1943 dropping once more to 23,000). Arrivals started to pick up again at war's end (Germany once more taking the lead), and somewhat more during the 1950s, including special provisions for refugees outside the quotas.

The early 1950s saw something new: large numbers illegally crossing the Mexican border to seek jobs in the booming postwar economy. When it became clear that this had become chronic, the Eisenhower administration launched a crackdown known by the now very politically incorrect name "Operation Wetback," including both border operations and searching interior regions for illegals, who were deported. It succeeded in shutting off the illegal traffic almost completely, with over a million apprehensions in 1954 but by comparison very few during the next ten years mainly because there were no longer many illegals left in the country to apprehend.[19]

Although immigration increased to the 250,000-300,000 per year level during the 1950s, even those absolute numbers were not particularly high when compared to the norms of the late 1840s through the 1920s. Nor had the mix of main source countries changed greatly since the Great Depression. Through the

1950s Germany remained firmly in first place and Canada in second, those positions having prevailed since the Depression years. However, Mexico (like Canada exempt from quotas) had advanced from its fifth place in the 1930s to fourth in the 1940s to third in the 1950s. Great Britain was fourth and Italy fifth. The rising prominence of Mexican immigration was little noted at the time but would prove a portentous omen for the rest of the century and beyond. (Bear in mind that these were all *legal* immigrants – the Mexican illegal entrants of the early 1950s had been rendered a temporary phenomenon, who were not counted as immigrants, and in any case that flow had been reversed by the 1954 U.S. action.)

The 1960s, and the 1965 Act

Immigration rates during the first half of the 1960s continued with about the same annual numbers as the latter half of the 1950s, mostly under 300,000 per year. But a momentous change was taking place in the halls of Congress. After the assassination of President Kennedy, who had written a book advocating reform in immigration policy, support built up for spreading quotas worldwide. Today we'd call it globalizing. Legislation was drawn up without much thought to real consequences (as would later be abundantly confirmed while looking back at the rosy predictions of its advocates). The Immigration Act of 1965 was easily passed with key support from Senator Edward Kennedy and signed by President Johnson. This is not the place to delve deeply into the rules or the de facto loopholes and later amendments, except briefly to summarize a few that have had the most profound effects:[20]

First: A worldwide yearly quota was enacted, at least initially not greatly over the previous total quotas. *Every* country, huge or tiny, was allowed an equal *maximum* number of immigrants. (It's worth thinking about the "equity" of that!) But when the overall world quota was filled, say by a dozen or two countries, no other countries could have any more quota admissions – which meant that the countries that first filled up the overall yearly quotas would shut out all others whose people had not been quite so quick to migrate. As it happened, the region that was crowded out most in this way was Europe, the ancestral homeland of most Americans.

Second: First-in-line preference was given to "family reunification" – not just parents, spouses and their minor children but many adult children as well. ("Spouses" would soon include those in arranged marriages, which cannot be checked.) When those admitted attain U.S. citizenship (typically in five years or so) they in turn could sponsor married children and brothers and sisters with *their* spouses and children. The apt term used to describe it is *chain migration*. You can see where this is going – over not very many years it has proven to be a chain that forges and draws to itself multiple links with ever-sprouting branches. And, to cap it off – such admissions are *outside any quotas*, i.e. without clear limits other than what the extended family sizes happen to be (or are claimed to be). It has become the largest source of U.S. immigration.

Third: Refugees and asylum seekers – these are likewise outside the quotas. Also, from time to time troubles in various parts of the world, whether from wars, political or ethnic strife from Cuba to Vietnam to Yugoslavia, have prompted additional "special" authorizations that swell the legal immigrant totals yet further.

That is not all, but it is enough. (There are some token work-skill preferences and, since 1990, "diversity" preferences, but family connections reign supreme in affecting the numbers.) And as yet, there has been no official recognition that any realistic limits apply to immigration. But if there is growth without limits, the United States of America will surely fall.

The great ballooning of immigration did not take place immediately after the 1965 Act was passed; the family chain migration effect could not build up a full head of steam until two or three five-year periods had elapsed to allow immigrants to sponsor more family members after attaining citizenship. Even so, the legal flow did increase substantially from under 300,000 annually in the first half of the 1960s to a yearly average of about 375,000 for the decade's latter half, the first affected by the new rules. However, there were immediate switches in the major source countries. During this transition decade Mexico for the first time seized first place – not far ahead of Canada's second, but the U.S.A.'s populous southern neighbor has increasingly dominated the top spot in every decade since. Third for the full decade – temporarily – was Italy, neck and neck with Great Britain's fourth place. Fifth place saw a newcomer to the upper tier, Cuba, a result of the mass flight from Fidel Castro's Communist regime. Germany, the number one sender of immigrants to the U.S. for the

previous three consecutive decades, had to settle for sixth – and would not again show even in the top fifteen. The demise of European immigration to America had already begun. And beginning to replace it was the wedge of an influx from not only Mexico but other countries of the Third World.

The Second Great Wave Begins

During the 1970s the raw numbers of immigrants increased from levels of around 400,000 per year to just over 600,000 for that decade's peak year in 1978. At the same time, the main immigrant sources were changing more rapidly still: among countries, Mexico was now unchallenged for first place in that ten-year period with 640,000 admitted, nearly twice as many as the new second-place country, the Philippines. Third was Korea, fourth Cuba, then Vietnam with many refugees as its war ended; and soon after, its "boat people" of mostly Chinese extraction continued to flee persecution under the new regime, at great risk. The top five were now *all* Third World countries.

"Thus the immigration juggernaut rolled on, rising with each decade. Following the 1960s' total of 3.3 million immigrants admitted, the 1970s' 4.4 million, and the 1980s' 7.3 million, the INS counted for the 1990s a record-shattering 9.1 million for the ten years ending September 30, 2000."

Another change: illegal immigration was reappearing, which did not show up directly in the official statistics, of course. (Indirectly they do show in a very real way, since these people have children, and their U.S.-born children are automatically full U.S. citizens.) From a very low level in 1965, the number of "alien apprehensions" – which masks large numbers who were *not* caught – grew rapidly in the late 1960s and through the 1970s to over a million a year, as it had in the earlier one-time peak of 1954. But this time illegal entries were not stopped nor have they been stopped since, despite the best efforts of the understaffed, under-equipped Border Patrol and the INS. It had by this time simply become politically incorrect to sufficiently increase funding and operations to stanch the new illegal flow, mostly laborers from Mexico seeking farm work. (Many would later arrive illegally from elsewhere, and not only agricultural workers.)

During the 1980s, the new Great Wave built up steadily, inexorably. Despite some predictable year-to-year fluctuations the underlying base steadily expanded, and – quite unlike all previous U.S. immigration surges – without pauses. This was not so much a result of quota increases or even substantial refugee/asylee admissions but of the steadily expanding family chain migration – and not least, continued increases in illegal entries.[21] Topping that off dramatically, in 1986 an official Federal "amnesty" was enacted for illegals who had been in the country before 1982 offering them immediate "temporary" legal residence to be followed in a couple of years by legal admission which put them on track to apply for citizenship. The program took full form at the end of that decade, showing up as a towering spike impossible to ignore in any graph of legal immigration. (The three peak years were 1989 through 1991; in the end, 2.7 million immigrants who had entered illegally were thereby officially rendered legal.)

All this brought total legal immigration for the 1981-1990 decade to 7.3 million, with 1990 and 1991 surpassing even the highest peaks of the pre-World-War I-years in numbers of legal immigrants added. And, recall that this does not count the continuing rise in numbers of further *illegal* immigrants. When estimates of those numbers are added, the real rate matched and perhaps exceeded the 19th and early 20th century peaks even in proportion to the then prevailing U.S. total population.

Thus the immigration juggernaut rolled on, rising with each decade. Following the 1960s' total of 3.3 million immigrants admitted, the 1970s' 4.4 million, and the 1980s' 7.3 million, the INS counted for the 1990s a record-shattering 9.1 million for the ten years ending September 30, 2000. (The peak year for amnesties was 1991, but after that they dropped rapidly toward zero as the time limits expired.) Even if we blindly ignore the 2.7 million legalizations of the amnesty (70 percent of whom were from Mexico and 90 percent from the Western Hemisphere), the rate for the 1980s' "ordinary" legal

immigrant admissions averaged 597,000 per year; and the "ordinary" immigrants of the 1990s averaged a whopping 777,000 annually. Once again, recall that all these were new *legal* arrivals. Illegals, though their precise numbers are of course indeterminable, are estimated to have added – net – several hundred thousand each year to those figures. Most estimates of the total number of illegals presently in the U.S. range from 8 to 12 million, in any case an all-time high. As this is written, plans for a second amnesty are in the works, although no government official dare call it by that name. If it clears Congress, such numbers show that it would certainly dwarf the first one.

As for origins, the numbers of legal immigrants from Mexico rose spectacularly (from its already record 640,000 in the 1970s) to over 1.6 million during the 1980s. The Philippines was again second among immigrant-sending countries, albeit with "only" one-third of Mexico's legal entrants at 548,000. Mexico's individual dominance, however, masks the rise of Asia as an immigrant source: of the six countries just below Mexico in the 1980s rankings, five were Asian. China now took third place, Korea was fourth, Vietnam fifth, the Dominican Republic sixth, and India seventh – these five closely bunched at between 350,000 and 250,000 entrants each. Eighth and ninth were El Salvador and Jamaica with a bit over 200,000 each. The top European country was the United Kingdom at 159,000, remaining in the tenth place to which it had dropped in the previous decade.

For the last decade of the twentieth century (October 1, 1991 to September 30, 2000), Mexico's numerical lead increased still further with 2.25 million immigrants legally admitted to the U.S., its dominance among countries of course all the greater when the large numbers of illegal entrants, however estimated, are added.[22] For that decade recently concluded plus the two subsequent years available at this writing, we'll simply show official legal immigration from the top twenty countries listed by the INS.

To summarize, a quick glance at the table is all that is needed to bring home the strikingly polyglot nature that immigration to America has taken – truly the globalization of U.S. immigration, and a historic departure from all such patterns prior to the passage of the 1965 immigration reform law. For almost four centuries those arrivals had consisted overwhelmingly of people from Europe (a major exception being the slave trade from Africa chiefly during the 1700s, until that was outlawed in 1808). During the eighty-year great wave that started with the Irish influx of the 1840s and lasted with several pauses until the mid-1920s, the main groups came first from the British Isles (including Ireland), then from elsewhere in Northwestern Europe including Germany and Scandinavia, and later Italy plus Eastern Europe – but all these, excepting a few trickles from elsewhere, still were coming from Europe, and hence America drew above all from the shared reservoir and heritage of Western Civilization. This continued through the lull that lasted through the watershed year of 1965, but was about to change radically in both numbers and character, as just outlined.

Third-World countries soon came to dominate through the family-preference provisions of the 1965 law, which now forms easily the largest proportion of U.S. immigration and remains outside any national quotas. The countries thus favored were not necessarily even the more populous ones. Likewise outside the quotas are refugees and asylees – many deserving of help, certainly, but the supply of which seems to have few limits. Note the 1990s' appearance of a European region to a place high on the list: the former Soviet Union whose breakup freed people to leave, most of whose recent emigres have been liberally admitted to the U.S. as refugees/asylees (the 2001-2002 listing here showing Ukraine and Russia leading, true of 1990s also). Another is Bosnia, from which a great many real refugees have fled in the wake of bitter ethnic strife.

Also notable is that – after Mexico, whose immigration dominance presently seems unassailable – India and China in the first years of the new century have risen to second and third place. And at the ironic end of the scale, the country whose people founded the United States, established its language and many of its basic institutions, and only some thirty years ago was still a major player in American immigration – the U.K. with 60 million people – has been overshadowed to the point

where British legal entries are now roughly equal to those from Jamaica (population less than 3 million).

The actual results of the 1965 Act were determined largely by which countries happened to be ready at that one particular moment in history to take advantage of the newly opened U.S. doors. The sheer numbers of those who began to flock to America – from countries that first got their "foot in the door," filling the overall national quotas and thus locking other countries out – thereby locked *in* their own initial advantage, and also gave them a decisive head start in establishing preferences for the law's "family reunification" provisions outside the quotas. It did not take very long for this to become the largest source of U.S. immigration. America has in a real sense become "a colony of the world," in former Senator Eugene McCarthy's strikingly apt phrase. This willy-nilly historical accident is the primary reason for today's predominance of the Third World in a massive inflow to America, not any pious wish to give preference to the downtrodden on the part of the 1965 Act's sponsors. (Indeed, at the time the Act was being debated in Congress, those sponsors were vehemently denying that it would significantly alter either the traditional sources of immigration or the overall numbers.) The 1965 Act, passed with hardly a ripple of public protest and only a handful of farseeing critics speaking out at the time, is a monument to unforeseen consequences–with which America is all too evidently struggling with ever-increasing difficulty today.

Consequences

In 1990 the United States marked the sixth doubling of its population, at about 250 million. (The first census exactly two hundred years before had counted just 3.9 million people). Notice that only two more doublings will bring that population to a full *billion*. It takes little imagination to visualize some of the effects of crowding as many people into America as there are today in China and India.

When the post-World-War II baby boom died down in the 1960s the U.S. population was stabilizing and heading for zero net growth, but in a bizarre twist, the new inflow caused by the ironically timed 1965 immigration reform law has not only offset that trend but dramatically reversed it. This is an epochal change: the driving force in American population increase has become immigration, with post-1965 immigrants and their descendants now the source of much the greater part of that growth and not far hence likely to be producing all of it. This is also the cause of the rapid decline in the proportion of the U.S. population of European heritage from about 88 percent in 1965 to below 70 percent today, who are currently barely replacing themselves. (The proportion of American blacks is now also declining from its 12 percent.) The change has been almost entirely due to the flow from Third-World countries since that time, their numbers increasing further due to higher birthrates.

The immigration flood, legal and illegal, must be faced squarely if the United States, its culture, and its institutions are to survive even the present century. We need only look at the consequences of multiculturalism in numerous countries on all major continents, of which the former Yugoslavia, former Soviet Union, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Sudan, Cyprus, Lebanon, and Iraq are only a few of the more recent examples. The factor common to them is that they contain within their boundaries major groups of peoples with different cultures and speaking different languages. They have typically suffered periodically from ethnic/multicultural strife for centuries, in some cases millennia.

The United States has so far been largely spared this kind of trouble thanks to a common culture strongly rooted in underlying traditions of Western Civilization. While America has been extraordinarily accepting of traditions from elsewhere and enriched by them, their bearers were formerly not numerous enough to have any real potential of undermining the basic American culture. And assimilation of widely varying cultures did occur during times when immigration numbers were modest – the numbers are key. But during a mere thirty-odd years America has been inviting exactly such strife by blindly importing, on a huge scale, the conditions that promote it.

Moving to America is no longer a viable option for the many problems of Third World peoples themselves, either. No longer is it even "compassionate" to continue inviting them en masse to the U.S.; to do so only delays their confronting their own troubles, including runaway population growth. If this is not done in their own countries, hope itself will die. *And then what?* – as Garrett Hardin would ask.

Many Americans, including some prominent conservative talk-show hosts, unhesitatingly speak out against illegal U.S. immigration but seem afraid even to broach the idea of any reduction in legal entries (which still account for the greater numbers), sidestepping that

issue or handling it with kid gloves. But *both* are out of control; if the overall numbers are to be significantly reduced, those issues will have to be faced in tandem. America now takes in roughly twice as many immigrants as all other countries of the world combined, and there is no way this can continue indefinitely. What is necessary to check that trend is the *will* to stop illegal entries and reduce the massive numbers of legal entrants. The latter do not need to be reduced to zero. To limit admissions to roughly the numbers of immigrants who choose to return to their home countries (estimates are in the range of some 200,000 annually) would result in zero *net* immigration, thus balancing the current roughly zero net population growth of native-born Americans.

America has muddled its way through many problems in the past, and its basic cultural strength and cohesiveness has, up to now, pulled it through – even through a bitter civil war. But this problem cannot be muddled with indecision very much longer if that basic strength is not to be irrevocably undermined. Even a new civil war, which within this century could pit against one another several diverse groups with far less in common than the two antagonists of the first one, is distinctly possible – depending on what is done, and how soon, about runaway immigration. A common culture is the strongest of all the glues that hold a nation together. Is America's motto, *E Pluribus Unum* to be transformed in real terms to *E Unum Pluribus?*

NOTES

1. *Cachet* is used in the sense of definition #1 given in *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th ed.

2. An informative and readable summary of these discoveries and conjectures by Michael Parfit, discussing sites mentioned here as well as others from Alaska to Florida, is "Hunt for the First Americans" in *National Geographic*, December 2000, p.40-67 (Collins quoted on p. 56 and 61). Native American tongues (and worldwide, most others of consequence) are mapped, classified and discussed extensively in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th Ed. Vol. 22 (printings 1974 to present), under "Languages of the World," p.572-787.

3. Ivan A. Lopatin, "Origin of the Native American Steam Bath." *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 62, No. 6, December 1960, p.977-993.

4. For a most thought-provoking treatment of these issues by the distinguished geographer Carl O. Sauer, involving not only the Norse (with probably the most informed case ever made for the New England region as Leif's site in Vinland) but also covering Irish, Portuguese, and other European activities in the North Atlantic prior to Columbus, see *Northern Mists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, with later reprints). An also illuminating and rather different treatment is Erik Wahlgren, *The Vikings in America* (Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986).

5. Winthrop D. Jordan, Leon F. Litwack, Richard Hofstadter, et al, *The United States*, combined 6th edition (Prentice-Hall, 1987), p.29. An alliance of tribes dispossessed by the white settlers was led by the Wampanoag chief Metacom (whose people lived around Buzzard Bay), called King Philip by the Puritans, and hence the conflict came to be known as "King Philip's War."

6. Thomas Sowell, *Conquests and Cultures: An International History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p.157-66. Quote: p.159.

7. H. W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*. (Doubleday 2000) p.216-221.

8. Unless otherwise noted, immigration figures are taken or derived from Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) reports for fiscal years, especially the "2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." The numbers shown here are generally rounded for clarity.

9. Sowell, p.65.

10. For an at-a-glance depiction of this, see Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation* (Random House, 1995). Chart 1, p.30-31, graphs the actual INS immigration numbers 1820-1993, while the same trends shown in proportion to population at the time are graphed in Chart 4, p.40-41.

11. French-Canadian immigration into New England from the Civil War to the late 1920s is discussed by Roger Daniels in *Coming to America*, 2nd ed. (Perennial, 2002), p.258-64.

12. Large numbers of Poles were by now coming to America too, but at that time Poland had no official existence, having been partitioned since 1815 between Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany, the INS not counting Poles apart from others in those countries. Similarly, other regions of Slavic peoples such as Czechs, Slovaks, and major portions of what later would become Yugoslavia are lost in the INS data as coming from the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the time. In view of the shifting political boundaries and ethnic complexity of these regions it's hard to blame the INS for having been inconsistent and ambiguous about how to allocate these immigrants to a "country."

13. Jordan, Litwack, Hofstadter, et al, p.598-99.

14. *Ibid.*, p.599; and Brimelow, p.273.

15. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1893.

16. The correlation between the 1931 "year of record" and the onset of the Great Depression is clearer when we remember that *fiscal* years are used by the INS. At that time, U.S. fiscal years ended on June 30 of the named year. Thus the 1931 fiscal year actually began July 1, 1930, only eight months after the stock market crash of late October 1929, and thus was the first full fiscal year of the Depression. (Since 1976, U.S. fiscal years have ended September 30.)

17. Jordan, Litwack, Hofstadter, et al, *ibid.*

18. Daniels, Table 11.1, p.288.

19. Brimelow, Chart 3, p.34; and p.35.

20. For more on these and other results of the 1965 Act, see Brimelow, Chapter 4, p.74-87; Daniels, Chapter 13, p.328-49; and Tables 4 and 5 in the INS statistical yearbooks.

21. The 1980s listed 1 in 3 persons added to the total population as an immigrant, a proportion vastly greater than the 1 in 16 and 18 during the 1930s and 1940s. However, the official figures were by now increasingly understating the immigrant contribution to population growth due to the uncounted and sharply rising illegal flow (most young people), the higher birthrates of the now-predominant Third World entrants generally (whose U.S.-born children are naturally part of the overall native-born population increase), and further complications introduced by the amnesty. The first two factors increased even more in the 1990s. As this ratio is now becoming ever less meaningful as an indicator, it is henceforth dropped here. Post-1965 immigrants and their descendants at the turn of the millennium now comprise most U.S. population growth.

22. Mexico is hardly the only country with illegal immigration to the U.S.; however, INS estimates credit that country alone with roughly 70 percent of the total illegal flow. Mexicans, of course, have the advantage that they need cross only the inadequately patrolled and shallow Rio Grande or usually flimsy fences farther west to reach U.S. territory from their own. Other, and increasing, illegal flows are coming from elsewhere in Latin America and from Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Canada (in that order) and, of recent concern in this age of international terrorism, from Islamic countries of the Near East.