

NORTH AMERICA

North America is, in one sense, a continent given by geology. To the west is the vast Pacific basin, into which the North America plate has been moving for tens of millions of years. Tectonic movement has torn it away from Eurasia, leaving the wide Atlantic to the east. It is separated from Eurasia on the north by the Arctic sea, and just misses touching on the west at the Bering Straits between Alaska and Siberia. To the south, the North American plate just touches South America at the Isthmus of Panama (where they are effectively locked together now). In between lies the Caribbean plate. Crustal movement has generated the great mountain chains of the Western Cordillera all the way from Alaska to Central America, which border an ancient core consisting of the Laurentian shield in northern Canada and lands beneath the wide Mississippi river basin, and the much older Appalachians, or Eastern Cordillera, along the Atlantic Coast of the United States. Such movement has also thrown up the Antilles, or West Indies, along the eastern Caribbean. North America is thus distinctive in physical geography, and harbored its own unique flora and fauna over millions of years of separation. [See North American Physical entry]

North America is equally a human construct. Its historical uniqueness begins with two world changing events. The first is the arrival of humans on the continent, at least 20,000 years before the present, but long after the migration of *Homo sapiens sapiens* across Eurasia. After that, the people of the Americas (sometimes called, collectively, Amerindians) developed in almost total isolation for millennium. That separation was shattered over 500 years ago with the invasion of Europeans, unleashing a radically new era of continent history. This is where the continents of the world have collided, crossed and hybridized, and it has given North America a unique place in the world to this day. Those events have propelled this content from the outskirts of world history to the center of economic and political influence on the globe.

That history, and our vision of North America, has too often been treated in parts that barely touch. Many people, on both sides of modern borders, believe that 'Anglo-America', modern nations of Canada and the United States, constitutes the whole of North America. Mexico and the nations of Central America, by contrast, are said to belong to a different entity, Middle America (or attached to Latin America). The Caribbean is mostly forgotten in such classifications, or added as an afterthought to Middle America. No one thinks of ice-bound Greenland at all in most modern history. Yet all these areas belong to North America, and not just in physical geographic terms.

Despite great differences among nations, peoples, and cultures, and no little antagonism, North Americans have shared a common fate. Over the last five hundred years, the histories of North America's peoples and economies have been woven together deeply, over thousands of miles and across the boundaries of empires and countries. The principle forces knitting up this continent -- European conquest, mass migration, trade, resource exploitation, industrialization, nation-building, and religion -- will be the subject of this exploration. In the process, it will become clear how clear a stamp the past has left on the present and the world has left on this astonishing continental landscape.

PEOPLE

The societies of North America are all hybrids born of the collision of continents: European conquest, Indigenous survival, African slavery, and Asian migration. North America has been the crossroads of the world for 500 years. People pouring in from all sides have warred, interbred and carved up a continent. They also created wholly new social forms, from modern slavery and the nation-state to jazz and Pentacostalism. This is an example of the power of place on a vast scale: North America, seized by the winds of history in 1492, ends up changing the world. The story begins dramatically in conquest and decimation; turns into revolts and the carving out modern nation-states; rebuilds on a new demographic basis and continues to the present in worldwide influx of people.

EMPIRES

The North American continent was carved up in the age of European expansion from 1500 to 1750. Conquest and plunder eventually gave way to a new frontier of settlement, which only sharpened imperial rivalries based on different logics. The age of empire left a deep imprint on North America in terms of languages, political traditions, demographics and religion.

Spanish Conquest

Spain's conquests in the Americas, 1492-1550, gave it the greatest empire the world had ever seen. The large Caribbean islands (Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica and Puerto Rico) were first to feel the boot of the *conquistadors*, but the great prize was the Valley of Mexico, wealthy center of the Aztec dominions, which fell to Cortés in 1521. Oaxaca, Yucatan, Guatemala, and northern Mexico were next (along with the Inca empire of South America). Subsequent explorations reached northward into Florida, the Mississippi delta, and the arid Southwest but yielded little except frontier outposts. The Spanish were systematic town builders and missionaries, who built hundreds of towns and missions all the way north to San Augustin, Florida, but Mexico City remained the heart of New Spain and Havana the main *entrepôt* of the Caribbean.

The Spanish conquerors primary goal was to loot the gold, silver and treasures of the fallen people, shipping it back to Spain. Cortes became the richest man in the empire before he was deposed by a king reigning in the *conquistadores* for the benefit of the crown treasury. The Spanish installed a system of *encomiendas* (later *haciendas*) large land grants which bound the natives to a lord in the manner of European feudalism. Spanish became the lingua franca of Middle America (Mexico to Panama), with a few indigenous languages like Zapotec and Mayan surviving on the peripheries.

After a triumphant century, Spain began to sink beneath the weight of empire. It vainly fought against Dutch secession and British and French pirates seizing its galleons in the Caribbean, signs of the growing commercial power of northern Europe. It lost Jamaica to Britain in 1655, the western half of Hispaniola to the French at mid-century, and suffered the single greatest setback of European conquest in the Pueblo revolt of 1680 in New Mexico. In a vain attempt to hold back contending powers it sent a last foray of missionaries to settle Alta California in 1767. It tried to still a restless New Spain with

a belated series of reforms under the Bourbon kings in the 18th century but the breakup of the empire came anyway in 1810. Spain held onto its last colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, until the Spanish-American War of 1898.

English Expansion

England was a minor player in Europe at the time of the Spanish conquest, but grew to be the mightiest imperial power by 1700. It did so by virtue of its pioneering development of capitalist social relations in agriculture at home, reinforced by a successful bourgeois revolution in the 17th century that brought the state fully into support of the new order. Besting the Dutch, the English dominated commerce across the North Atlantic and North American colonization by the 18th century.

In the Caribbean, the English were no more than pesky pirates during the heyday of the Spanish empire but they became the dominant force in the West Indies (as they called the Antilles) until displaced by the United States after 1900. After managing a draw in war with Spain circa 1600, Britain moved into the Bahamas and Lesser Antilles (which the Spanish had ignored) to establish colonies. In the 1640s, they hit paydirt by planting sugar on Barbados, using African slaves. American slavery and the racial slave code were perfected on Barbados, spreading from there to British colonies on Jamaica and thence to mainland Carolina by the end of the century. So was the plantation system, with its highly concentrated landholding and planter elite. Where the plantation system flourished, small holders were displaced.

A new chapter in North America began with the permanent settlement of the British along the east coast. This was at the beginning a relatively poor and harsh periphery compared to New Spain and the Caribbean. With difficulty, English settler colonies had been firmly established by 1620 in New England and the Chesapeake (Virginia and Maryland). Toward the end of the century, additional colonies were set up in Pennsylvania and the Carolinas, along with the addition of New York. Boston was the first significant commercial city, followed by Philadelphia -- which grew to the second largest city in the British Empire by 1775 -- New York, Baltimore, and dozens of lesser port and market towns. English became the common language of the mid-Atlantic.

While religion played a role in the establishment of New England, other British colonies were strictly commercial enterprises (whether private or crown) for an empire seeking exports. The logic of commerce was to bring in labor and settlers to quicken production, trade and land values. The white settler colonies gave opportunity to the poor indentured servant (who could gain freedom in time), and the independent farmer, artisan and merchant, growing prosperous by small measures. With them came the full arsenal of commercial life: towns and cities, trade and industry. This brew would eventually turn the natural wealth of the continent into riches beyond anything slavery could achieve.

Access to land was fundamental to the settler social order. As slavery and plantations became dominant from the Chesapeake to Georgia in the 18th century, the open frontier closed down. Resentment from below helped fire Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia in 1676, and would still be felt as late as the breakaway of West Virginia in the Civil War. Fewer white settlers came, while many small holders fled west to the Piedmont and the mountains in search of economic space. After the American revolution, most European settlers would enter through the Middle Atlantic ports and the farm frontier would push over the Appalachians. This was a highly expansionary social order, propelled from

below. When the British crown tried to constrain the colonists from moving west, it helped trigger the colonial revolt.

Dutch and French Checkmates

The Dutch were the richest and most ambitious traders of Europe by the 17th century, benefiting from a bourgeois social order at home and the carrying trade of empire abroad. As a part of the Spanish dominions through most of the 1500s, the Netherlands gained by providing Spain with finance and manufactured goods. Breaking away at the end of that century, the Dutch were free to prey upon the Spanish galleons and to displace the Portuguese as the prime carriers of slaves and sugar across the Atlantic. By 1650 they had a bigger fleet and greater profits than all others combined. Concentrating on trade, the Dutch never developed sugar colonies, only a few small trading ports in the Lesser Antilles, but ironically Dutch merchants financed the development of Barbados. The Dutch established a foothold at the mouth of the Hudson river, New Netherland, for the fur trade. New Netherland was ceded to England after a brief war, becoming New York in 1667. The Dutch gave way to the English as the commercial dominants of Europe by the end of the century, and never again played an important role in the Americas.

The French were the advance guard of empire in the high latitudes of North America. They established New France in the early 1600s, beginning in Acadia (Nova Scotia), then moving into the St. Lawrence Valley, then called Canada. This provided the deepest access into the continent from the east, although the river froze half the year. In search of furs, they set up trading posts and garrisons all the way to the western end of the Great Lakes. A second colonial flank was opened down the Mississippi Valley at the end of the 17th century, named Louisiana. Lacking settlers, the French nonetheless affected more territory and people than any other imperial power because they traded freely with the Indians rather than trying to drive them off the land. Most native peoples welcomed the newcomers' goods, and some prospered in the first centuries of contact and exchange. Indians were skilled at playing off the rival British, French and Dutch traders, but relations easily turned to war on both sides, with frequently shifting alliances.

French colonization began under private companies until the Crown took control in 1660. France was more commercialized than Spain, and committed to trade over plunder. But its king held undisputed political power up to 1789, and the colonial enterprise was subject to greater central authority. Unlike the English and Scots, the French did not generate a large surplus population through enclosures that would readily emigrate. So their settler numbers were small, even though many of the towns they founded, like Montréal and Nouvelle Orleans, would grow into major market centers in later years. The French played a significant part in the Caribbean sugar system, as well. They moved into the west coast of Hispaniola in 1650, establishing the colony of Saint Domingue (Haiti), which became a leading sugar producer in the 18th century.

France's adventure in North America faltered in the face of growing British power after 1700. The War of Spanish Succession ended with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 granting Britain the claims of France to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay. New France ended with the French defeat in the Seven Years War in 1763, the British seizure of Canada and cessation of Louisiana to Spain. A few thousand Acadians were forcefully deported, and many fled to Louisiana (where they became 'cajuns'). A humiliated French king was ousted in the Revolution of 1789, after which

Napoleon conquered Spain, only to make a hasty sale of Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1804. The French language lives on in Quebec (as the second official language of Canada), Martinique and Guadeloupe, and a lesser isles, and in the *patois* of Louisiana.

NATIONS

The origin of the modern nation-state is to be found in North America as much as in Europe, starting with the rebellions fought by the future United States, Haiti and Mexico. This is a shared experience that transcends every single national story. All had to break away from Europe, build their own institutions, and develop national languages, identities and cultures. It is one thing to declare independence, and another to forge a new nation over vast distances and out of disparate peoples. There was nothing organic about the American nations, nor did the new states have the precedent of their own monarchies. They also had to cope with one another, and especially with the continental giant, the United States.

Colonies to Countries

The British colonies of North America were the first to break away from their European masters. The revolt was the unintended result of imperial success. The monarchy wished to consolidate its gains with a large standing army in the colonies, for which the prosperous and little taxed colonists ought to pay; hence a series of unpopular new taxes which hit in the midst of a post-war recession. While the British crown grew more arrogant, the colonists grew more numerous and sure of their rights as free citizens to representation in Parliament. The two clashed, and when the king refused to back down, the colonies declared their independence and fought off the British army in a five year war, 1775-1780, with considerable aid from their former enemies, the French. It took the Constitution of 1789, however, to forge a United States out of the loose Confederation of ex-colonies. The Constitution gave the new country a unifying framework of government and a national free trade zone, despite a still vigorous federalism based on states and counties.

Middle America rose against Spain in 1810, in consort with revolts in South America that put an end to continental New Spain. A lengthy war of liberation 1810-17 created the United States of Mexico (rarely do we hear the full name of that country in Anglo-America). That was followed by years of turmoil marked by deep internal struggles within the *criollo* elite. Liberalization was instituted in 1825 only to be reversed by the military coup and dictatorship of Santa Ana in 1835 and 1841-45, and constant turmoil -- thirty-six changes of President between 1833 and 1855. Weakened from within, the new nation could not police its distant northern border, where American immigrants led breakaway revolts in Texas (1836) and California (1846). The United States took advantage of the situation to invade Mexico and seize one-third of its territory in the Mexican-American war of 1844-46. Central America had an easier time of it, gaining independence in 1821, but as a set of tiny states: Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras. Chiapas broke away from Guatemala in 1824, and became part of Mexico thereafter. Panama was part of Columbia until 1910.

Canada was not quick to take up the cause of independence from the British empire. It was less populous and more dependent than the thirteen Middle American colonies had been. The eastern provinces refused to join the rebellion of 1775, and large numbers of loyalists (as much as one-tenth of the population) fled north during the war. Canadians joined the British in the War of 1812 against the United States, and fought off invasion

from the south. So Canada long remained more resolutely British and wary of the Americans below the border. Canada gained independence in 1867 by an act of Parliament creating a Confederation uniting English and French zones under British dominion, and remains in the fold of the British Commonwealth.

The second war of liberation in North America was fought not by Free White Men, but by the slaves of Haiti in 1798-1804. Their struggle was not for colonial independence but a revolution, inspired in part by the upheaval in France the previous decade, to be free of servitude. On gaining independence, however, Haiti became the first of many former colonies abandoned by its white and Creole upper class, as its planters moved en masse to Trinidad (by then under English suzerainty) and Martinique. Meanwhile, slaves were not allowed to become voting citizens in the great republic to the north until 1863, and there only for a brief period before Jim Crow laws again denied blacks the vote.

Independence has been a long, hard road for the Caribbean island nations. As a result, the region has produced some of the most striking cries for liberation in North America. The plantation islands did not join in either the British or Spanish colonial rebellions, because the white owners feared slave revolts more than they disliked imperial masters. Spain finally lost its grip after war with the United States in 1898, liberating Cuba and the Dominican Republic. But Puerto Rico remains a territorial possession of the US, with ambiguous status as a Commonwealth. England did not let go of its colonies for another half-century: Jamaica and Trinidad in 1962, Barbados 1966, Bahamas 1973 and Belize in 1981. A few small islands are still possessions. Guadeloupe and Martinique remain overseas *departments* of France.

National Consolidation

National consolidation in the United States faced three major tasks. One was the integration of new territory to the west, as settlement moved over the Appalachians. The first business of the new federal government was the Northwest Ordinance of 1784 carving the Midwest into easily disposable sections. The success of Jacksonian Democrats before 1850 was built on the tension between western farmers, townspeople, and states against the merchants, cities and the federal government back east. With the Louisiana Purchase (1804), takeover of the Oregon Territory (1840) and the partition of Mexico (1846), the young country exploded across the breadth of the continent. It rapidly converted its public domain to private property and settled millions of new people across to the Pacific. The United States remains the fourth largest country in the world in land area.

The second challenge facing the new nation was absorption of millions of European immigrants, and their conversion into 'Americans' under a hegemonic English language and Anglophone culture. This was achieved through primary education and party patronage, plus the appeal to nationalism and whiteness. The third and most traumatic challenge was the schism between north and south, free and slave states. A long-simmering conflict broke wide open in the Civil War of 1861-65 -- often called the Second American Revolution. It ended in defeat for the slave South and cost almost half a million lives. Full sectional reconciliation was not reestablished until the early 20th century. Integration of Africans into the mainstream of American democracy was not realized until the Civil Right era, a century later.

Mexico's national consolidation was as prolonged and painful as its independence. Finally, after invasion by France in 1863, the country deposed the puppet Emperor

Maximilian in 1867 and enjoyed relative peace and prosperity under President Porfirio Díaz (1875-1910). Following the *Porfiriato*, the country tore apart once more in the lengthy Revolution of 1910-17, in which almost one million people died. The post-revolutionary order came into its own with the Presidency of Lazlo Cardenas in the 1930s and subsequently settled under the Institutional Revolutionary Party's hegemonic democracy. That lasted for fifty years, until the PRI was ousted in the 1990s. The travails of Mexican nation-building reveals three key lines of fracture in the nation. The first has been the relative weakness of a national bourgeoisie thanks to the delayed takeoff of capitalism in the Spanish realms; it has finally been nurtured under the state and the PRI, and now wants a greater measure of autonomy and liberalism. Second is the regional differences, particularly the north and the south versus Mexico City. The revolution broke into three regional factions before Zapata and Villa were defeated through tragic infighting. Vicente Fox's historic election came under the banner of the National Action Party (PAN), based in the north. Third, only limited democracy has been possible with such a large gap between masses and a small *criollo* elite, despite the greater integration of people as mixed race *mestizos*. The problem of the forgotten *indios* and peasants was revealed again sharply in the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in 1994.

Canada has grappled valiantly to integrate its enormous territory (the second largest in the world) and diverse people into a single nation-state. It has had to negotiate the profound schism between English provinces and French Quebec, split by language, religion and conquest. It has had to integrate far-flung British Columbia, the Plains provinces, and the Maritime provinces around the Ontario-Quebec core. And it has had to resist the pull of the United States all along its border. A long series of economic policies since Independence, including tariffs, transportation and social subsidies, have been aimed at bringing together the interests of all Canadians. A federalist system allows the provinces to pursue many of their own policies, which are often at odds with the national government. After a period of strong national growth and government support after World War II, Canada was in grave danger of being torn apart by provincial party upheavals and Quebecois separatism late in the 20th century. But the old schisms have been blurred by the dramatic upsurge in immigration and free trade with the United States, giving contemporary Canada more of a North American than English or French identity. Canada has also been the most respectful of its indigenous people, granting considerable rights for its First Nations.

After independence, the Caribbean and Central America had to cope with being fragmented into many small nation-states, none with much economic autonomy or political power. There have been several border disputes between countries, like the Salvador-Honduras 'Soccer War' and ongoing skirmishes between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The chief problem has been lack of operative democracy given small *criollo* elites, impoverished masses, and intrusive military presence in all governments. This has led to several revolts, such as Sandino's rebellion in Nicaragua in the 1930s and the Sandinista overthrow of the dictator Somoza in 1979. The tensions have been particularly marked in Guatemala, where highland Mayans (two-fifths of the populace) have kept to their own ways despite periodic military incursions by Spanish-speaking authorities. Guatemala enjoyed a brief respite of democracy 1944-54, but suffered horrendous killings by the Army in the 1980s. It is the only country in Americas charged by the United Nations with genocide. Not by accident is Costa Rica, which has almost no indigenous populace, the most peaceful country in Central America.

National cultures have developed in quite distinct ways behind the various borders, forged out of often polyglot peoples and regions. This is quite marked in the case of

spoken language. US English is quite unlike the mother tongue, and Mexican Spanish is unlike Castilian. Cuban and Guatemalan are different variants again, while Jamaican and Caribbean English, sometimes called *pidgin*, is even more at odds with British usage. The influence of American English on *Québécois* accent and colloquialism is easily discerned by any French speaker. Canadian and US English are very close, but recognizably different, and within the United States there have been dramatic variations in regional pronunciation that persist despite the homogenizing effects of education, migration and the media.

The American Colossus

The United States of America, with its head start and dynamic economy, elbowed its way to the top of the continental order and has never looked back. The life of all of the peoples of North America has swirled around this one giant, sucked into its field of gravity or burned by its flare-ups of imperial might. Loved and hated, the United States is the gorilla among nations that cannot be ignored. Very quickly, the citizens of the North American colossus started calling themselves 'Americans', as did most Europeans and even other North American nationalities. Not without reason did the Americas and the mighty United States come to be seen as interchangeable.

From the beginning, the young giant had continental ambitions and a sense of Manifest Destiny. After settling the Ohio Valley and southern coastal plain early in the 19th century, Americans filled up the vast Louisiana territory (Mississippi and Missouri valleys), then moved on to the Southwest and the Northwest as they were pried loose from Mexico and from British Canada by mid-century. Settlement by the United States would fill up the great midsection of the continent through the course of the 19th century. This was more than an economic adventure. It became a social mission to tame the wilderness, expel the heathen natives, and enlarge the Republic. American national expansion was very much a popular enterprise, both in its best and worst faces, and it drew millions of new people over the next century.

The mass settlement of the United States meant the rapid downfall of the native peoples and their autonomous nations and tribes across the whole continental expanse. They were defeated in battle, shunted aside, hunted down, and herded into barren reservations, left with only a shred of sovereignty and dignity in most cases. Attempts to integrate the Indians into white society through forced education, farm settlement, or tribal disbandment were almost all abysmal, paternalistic failures at best. Americans continued the English habit of treating Indians as racial inferiors and poor stewards of their rich lands, sad victims of Progress at best. Marriage and sexual liaisons were frowned upon and widely outlawed.

Everyone in North America lives under the shadow of the USA. From the beginning, the American revolution was a guiding light that fired Mexicans, Haitians, Cubans, and others. But the Americans undiminished faith in their own democratic and liberating motives -- and denial of imperial intentions -- has not always been shared by those in its orbit. US international pretenses began with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, declaring a right to protect the joint interests of all the new nations of the Americas from European meddling. But it has been the United States that has intervened more than anyone else in the national affairs of other North American countries. It threatened to invade Canada in 1812 and tore apart Mexico in 1846, even considering annexing the whole country. Adventurer William Walker briefly took over Nicaragua in the 1860s, and the South often coveted Cuba.

On the eve of the twentieth century, the US invaded Spanish Cuba on a false pretext, then returned to occupy the country. Panama was created as a fiefdom of the American canal-builders. The US organized the National Guards of Central America, which became key levers of dictatorial power there. The CIA overthrew President Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954, organized a failed invasion of Cuba in 1962, and a successful incursion in Dominican Republic in 1965. The US backed the counterrevolutionary forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1980s, then invaded Grenada in 1982 and Panama in 1990 to oust radical regimes. Such actions have kept the pretensions of Middle American and Caribbean nations in check. Yet for all the affronts of American power, North America has not been convulsed by intra-continental wars in anything like the degree felt in Europe or Asia.

The US has also reached out its commercial arms to the continent for two centuries, from the Caribbean carrying trade of New England in the 18th century to the free trade agreements of today. It built the Panama Canal linking the Atlantic and Pacific shipping lines in 1910-14. After the Second World War, it promoted such international cooperative agreements as the Organization of American States, Alliance for Progress, and Caribbean Basin initiative. Now it embraces Canada and Mexico under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The United States has long absorbed large numbers of migrants from south and north of its borders, creating a new hybridization of North America within itself.

Thus the European Union is not the only model of fragmented nations reinventing themselves as a new continental *mélange*. North America is reinventing itself politically, economically and demographically at the dawn of the new millennium. The fate of North Americans has never been as integrated as they are now. At the same time, the United States has become the greatest power on earth, with unequaled military and political might and a new willingness to exercise it after the fall of the Soviet Union. The United States and North America have come to be seen as the heart of 'the West' in the eyes of the world, taking the mantle of empire long held by the Europeans.

MIGRATIONS AND DEMOGRAPHY

The world-shattering encounter of continental civilizations in North America started badly. The indigenous people suffered the worst consequences, and their numbers fell precipitously; yet they endured and their numbers rebounded in time, largely in hybrid forms. Europeans filled up much of the continent in the greatest mass migration in world history, and they, too, mixed and created new types of Americans. Africans came involuntarily and suffered prodigiously; but they also endured, ultimately touching the soul of American societies more deeply than any other group. Asians joined the throng and left their mark as well. Today, the continent is thickly populated with this astonishing mixture of people: over 250 million in the United States, 100 million in Mexico and 30 million in Canada, 40 million in Central America, and almost 40 million across the Caribbean islands. North America's total population is roughly the same as Europe's (though both are still less than half as populous as either China or India).

Conquest and Catastrophe

The Amerindians preceded the Europeans by at least 20,000 years, and possibly as much as 60,000. Conventional theory has it that they came in one or several migrations across the Bering Straits during the last ice age, when sea level was much lower than

today creating a land bridge between the continents. They may well have arrived by boat more easily, and debate on this and the time of arrival remains fierce to this day. In any case, native peoples flourished in every corner of North America. Estimates of population are uncertain, but current opinion puts the numbers at around 25 million at the time of Columbus: roughly 10 million in Mexico, 10 million in Central America and the Caribbean, and 5 million north of the Rio Grande.

The greatest population concentration by far lay in the Valley of Mexico, followed by surrounding Central plateau, the highlands of Guatemala, Chiapas and Oaxaca, and on the Yucatan peninsula. In present day Canada and the United States, the main concentrations were in the lower Mississippi Valley, California and the Pacific Northwest, the Great Lakes, the eastern temperate zone, and lastly the Great Plains and the western desert and montane areas. Social groups varied widely in size and activities: small clans in California like the Ohlone or the Arctic like the Inuit; prosperous farmers and traders like the Huron of the upper St. Lawrence; migratory tribes of the plains like the Kiowa; town-dwelling Pueblos of New Mexico; warrior confederations of the east like the Five-Nations Iroquois and Cherokee; the city-building Mississippians; and the imperial Aztecs ruling over a city of 200,000 souls -- a city far bigger than any in Spain at the time.

With the coming of the European empires, indigenous Americans suffered one of the greatest demographic catastrophes in human history. The combined effects of wars, disease, and dislocation destroyed almost all the native peoples over a period of four hundred years. Taino on the islands were the first to be wiped out. Mexico's post-conquest population fell to 1 million in a century. In the United States and Canada hardly more than half a million were left by 1800. The Spanish conquest was the most spectacularly destructive, but the Spaniards had no monopoly on brutality when the natives had the temerity to oppose European invasion and settlement. The Indians joined in the killing when it suited them, as well. The native tribes remained players in the colonial drama right up to the Seven Years War and were actively resisting white settlement in the Great Plains and Southwest until the close of the 19th century.

Eurasian diseases caused most of the devastation, because the Native Americans had no immunity to smallpox, measles, pneumonia and other common scourges. All it took was contact through trade, sexual liaisons, and settlement. The most densely settled peoples fell most quickly, while those at the periphery, mostly in the north, lasted longer. Nonetheless, it must be said that disease is not sufficient to explain the losses. Europe lost half its population to the Black Death in the century after 1348, but recovered rapidly. The difference is that the Native Americans had their means of production, their social groups, and their cultures annihilated by outsiders as they lay dying. It was, to some minds, a prolonged genocide by killing, enslavement and destruction of societies.

Only a few Caribes are left today on the Antilles. The repopulation of Middle America to pre-conquest levels took four hundred years. Indian populations only started to recover in the United States in the 20th century. The native languages were many and varied, but a significant number have been lost. Linguistic and cultural continuity have depended on the survival of a critical mass of people and degree of isolation from the mainstream, like the Mistecs in Oaxaca, Hopi in Arizona, or Cree in Quebec.

Settlers and Mestizos

The conquest and exploration of North America was carried out by a surprisingly small number of people from Europe, thanks to their advantage in wealth and armaments. While they were able to impose language, religion, administration and commerce on parts of the continent, the wholesale transfer of European ways of life would require large scale migration to the New World.

Although the Spanish are not thought of as mass colonizers, a goodly number, 250,000, emigrated to the Americas in the 16th century. Men greatly outnumbered women in this, so they began to take native wives and concubines, producing mixed offspring known as *mestizo* (*Ladino* in Guatemala). Such marriages were encouraged by the royal authorities, who sought to rebuild the depleted populace of their new dominions and weren't too fussy about race mixing as long as the children were baptized. The new breed of Americans came to outnumber Mexico's remaining Amerindians by 1700. Population rebuilt gradually to about 5 millions by 1800 and over 10 million by 1900. Mestizos occupied the middle rungs, or *casta*, of society throughout Middle America, below the Spanish elite and above the Indios. Mexico has relied heavily on the idea of *mestizaje* as a unifying national characteristic, even though it hides the fact that many *mestizos* are largely or wholly of Indian ancestry and a subtle racial hierarchy still exists (three-fifths of Mexicans today are Mestizo, one-tenth white, and the rest Amerindian).

The English implanted a very different society in North America, the white settler colony. The English took a much haughtier view of the Indians, and soon banned intermarriage (miscegenation) in the Atlantic and Caribbean colonies. This practice had several origins: Protestantism's lack of easy conversion, ideas of racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxon honed against the Celts, and lack of dependence of the colonists on a settled Indian populace. But the most important development was African slavery and the Black Codes adopted on the Barbados model. Slavery put black skin beyond the social pale, setting up a hard Color Line that put everyone with any African parentage on the black side. Yet interbreeding took place despite much denial by whites, often through rape by plantation owners, and also commonly between free blacks and Indians.

The English crossed the Atlantic in moderate numbers in the 17th century, but enough to set a vital precedent. A crucial reason for the British ability to outflank their competitors on the northern continent, the French and the Dutch, was the number of settlers they could generate. The Chesapeake drew 120,000 and New England 20,000, and the West Indies a whopping 190,000. Most came to the Chesapeake and the Caribbean as indentured servants who could work four to eleven years to gain their freedom. In the early days, they died in droves from new diseases (mostly African in origin, like Yellow Fever and Malaria), and population at 1700 was only 85,000 and 33,000 whites, respectively. But it expanded rapidly in the 18th century, bolstered by 150,000 Scots (and so-called Scots-Irish).

New England took a more successful tack, as the Puritans arrived with families, possessions, and their own social order. With success in farming, this region outran the others in population, over 90,000 by 1700. This success would be replicated subsequently in the Mid-Atlantic, where the combination of abundant fertile land, commercial vigor, and healthy people would produce large families and astonishing rates of natural increase. That region drew most of 100,000 German immigrants in the 18th century. By 1775, the Atlantic colonies contained 2.5 million people. For the next two hundred years, rates of natural increase in North America above the Rio

Grande would be among the highest in the world (comparable to the population explosion in Mexico and other countries after World War II). New France and New Netherland, by contrast, only drew a few thousand pioneers each, though their numbers grew once they were settled, and the French population would continue to grow rapidly despite English conquest of Canada.

European settlers sought land and opportunity, and to an unprecedented degree they found it. This success story of mass settlement has given North America a unique place in the world's consciousness as a place of possibility which continues to this day. Of course, the myth ignores two crucial things. The first was the wholesale disappropriation of natives, which made the land appear empty and fallow in the eyes of the settlers. In many cases the English moved directly onto prepared fields abandoned by dying Indians, and they often took up native corn and other crops. This story was repeated by Americans moving across the continent. The white person's view of an untouched wilderness was a convenient fiction. Second, slaves in the plantation regions replaced indentured white servants by the late 17th century, and thereafter provided the essential labor that made the whole North American economy function.

In the bitter collision of Europeans, Natives and Africans in North America, it is easy to overlook the profound differences and conflicts among the Europeans themselves. The English at home, for example, conquered Ireland and Scotland, warred incessantly with the French and Spanish, trumped the Dutch in war and peace, and had nothing much good to say about Germans. All these enmities were imported to North America, and fought out among competing empires. What is astonishing is that in the settler colonies of the Atlantic seaboard these would be largely overcome, particularly in the Middle Colonies of Pennsylvania and New York, where Dutch, German, Scots, and English came together in a renewed influx of immigration in the 18th century: 80,000 English, 150,000 Scots, 100,000 Germans. With rapid reproduction, total population swelled to 1.5 million by mid-century and 5 million by 1800. In these places, Europeans became a new people, Americans. In this they were helped by the sleight of hand of becoming part of a fictional white race in a system of harsh racial supremacy and exploitation. The legacy of this racial supremacy has not yet been completely eliminated from North America.

Slavery and Involuntary Migration

Africans came to North America in the greatest involuntary migration in history. After experiments with free farmers, indentured Europeans, and enslaved Indians, the colonists fixed upon Africans as the principal labor force for plantation agriculture. The latter were valued both for their resistance to tropical diseases and their easy identification by skin color, but especially because they could be held in bondage for life. Some 6 million black Africans were transported against their will to the New World, of whom as many as one-fifth died in transit. Four-fifths went to the Caribbean sugar islands, where they were devoured by disease under horrendous conditions of overwork, malnourishment, and brutality. The importation of 4 million slaves to the region by 1830 had left a net slave population of less than 1.5 million slaves and 1 million free 'persons of color'.

On the mainland, slavery was centered on the Chesapeake tobacco region in the 17th century, then expanded rapidly in the South Carolina and Georgia rice lowlands in the 18th. In the 19th century, the cotton plantation frontier pushed quickly into Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and finally Texas, until being halted by the Civil War. In the

Chesapeake, slave births soon outpaced deaths, which were lower by virtue of a milder climate and better nourishment. Having imported 250,000 slaves, Virginia and Maryland counted a total of 575,000 blacks in 1780, and importing very few by that time.

Most African slaves were sold as captives out of West Africa. They were transported first by Portuguese, then Dutch, French and British slave traders, with the latter carrying the largest number. After the British ban on the trade in 1807, slavers shifted south to the Congo and Angola to avoid interdiction. Although slavery was abolished altogether in the empire in 1834, the trade continued surreptitiously in the Caribbean. Southern US plantations obtained slaves internally. Blacks were sold out of families in Virginia to the Mississippi Delta and Texas up to 1865. Slavery came to a prolonged end with the Civil War in the United States, and last of all in the Spanish colony of Cuba in 1886.

In the main plantation colonies, African slaves soon approached or overtook whites in number in the 18th century: first in Barbados, then Jamaica, the Chesapeake, Carolina Low Country, and Georgia. During that century, the English colonists imported 1.5 million slaves, triple the number of voluntary migrants. By 1900 there were some 7 million people in the Caribbean, only one-quarter of them white. The southern United States were more balanced: on the eve of the Civil War, they held about 7 million whites and nearly 4 million Africans in bondage, worth \$1 billion, and a small number of freedmen. Black slavery was also present on the eastern edge of Central America and Mexico and parts of the northeastern United States, but these were peripheral to the plantation zones. Well into the 20th century, almost all people of African descent in North America lived in the Caribbean or the Southeastern states.

Slaves periodically revolted against their condition, and some managed to escape. Maroon colonies dotted the Caribbean, especially Jamaica and the eastern shores of Central America. These settlements preserved African religious ideas and reinserted them into the mainstream. Other slaves were manumitted, usually by buying freedom from their masters. Free blacks in large number became an integral part of slave societies, especially in cities from Havana to New Orleans, in the 18th and 19th centuries. Freedmen could be found all the way north to Canada. There were also many *Creole* offspring of master-slave liaisons, some open and willing, many more secret and forced. Creoles came to play a vital role on many plantations, and even became plantation owners, particularly on Haiti.

The African Diaspora marks the American experience in profound ways. The Middle Passage, slave markets and whippings left a bitter residue that is still remembered. The heirs of slavery further suffered materially in a lack of land, capital, education and labor skills of the kind accumulated by European immigrants over several centuries. Spiritually, they had to cope for another century after abolition with the baleful effects of white supremacy, a doctrine cooked up largely in North America to give Europeans a cover for enslaving other human beings. Africans were largely excluded from the realm of full citizens, despite the abolition of slavery, when Reconstruction collapsed and the Jim Crow system of segregation was established across the South and accepted by the Supreme Court.

At the same time, the descendants of Africans have created one of the world's most dynamic hybrid cultures in the Americas. The best known aspect of this is music, but it extends to language, dress and religion, as well. And even to food: rice and okra were introduced into North America by Africans. African-American cultural influence is felt

around the world today, although North America remains deeply marked by the racial hierarchy inherited from slavery.

Frontier and Mass Immigration

With the continued expansion of white settlement across North America, millions were drawn in from Europe's changing countryside. At the same time, industrialization demanded a rapidly growing labor force, which immigrants also provided. In the greatest mass migration in history, almost 50 million Europeans emigrated to the Americas between 1840 and 1914. The United States was the largest single beneficiary, with over 30 millions arriving. The great European migration contributed mightily to the growth of the northern tier of the United States (the Midwest, New England and Mid-Atlantic) which surged ahead of the Southern states and Caribbean in economic and demographic weight by 1850, and dominated the continent for the next century.

The influx began with the Irish exodus of the 1840s, followed by south Germans, Welsh and Cornish after 1850 and after the Civil War. Scandinavians and Italians followed later the century, succeeded after 1900 by Greeks, Portuguese, Eastern Europeans, and Jews. Immigrants passed through the great ports of the Atlantic coast, swelling their populations. Above all stood New York, the world's largest and most diverse city by 1900, but settlements from Philadelphia to Mexico City waxed large from the influx. Most farm settlers were northern Europeans, while most southern and eastern Europeans piled up in the cities. But there were always striking anomalies, like Poles in Saskatchewan, Greeks in Ontario, Germans in south Texas, Jews in Louisiana, Irish in Monterrey, and Basques in Nevada.

The United States became the supreme nation of immigrants, as it swelled from 25 to 75 millions in the half century after 1850. Successful nation-building by immigration lent the US an extraordinary moral and economic strength. It managed to blend most Europeans into Americans by the second generation, under an Anglophone but distinctive national culture, despite lingering racial antagonisms against Irish, Jews, Italians and others. It assimilated most of these into a generic category of 'white'. Canada drew most of its 19th and early 20th century immigrants from the British Isles, solidifying Anglo dominance in the national formation. But it was far smaller, going from barely 3 million to 5.5 million, 1850-1900, and remained sharply divided between the Anglo and French culture groups. Mexico had the least immigration but was the most successful at integrating black hues into its Mestizo people. By World War I a severe reaction hit the United States, which moved step by step to a virtual ban on immigration in 1924. The face of the nation, which had reached 100 million people by this time, would be dramatically altered by the shift away from open borders.

Asian immigration to North America is of long standing. Chinese and Japanese seafarers likely made it to North America before Columbus, but the first modern crossings were Manila Galleons manned by Phillipino sailors coming to New Spain. After slavery was abolished in the British colonies, Chinese indentured workers were brought to the Caribbean from the 1830s to 1860s, South Asians from the 1840s to 1917. Because sugar and the demand for labor were expanding on Trinidad, South Asians became the largest component of the population. Chinese came to California seeking gold, and were recruited to build the transcontinental railroad. San Francisco was the center of Chinese settlement in North America for the next century, although Chinese were widely dispersed across the western states until immigration was cut off in 1882. Japanese were subsequently recruited to California as farm workers, along

with a few South Asians. They soon met with restrictions on entry, and suffered mass internment during World War II. Philippines entered the United States as seamen and farmworkers after the US seizure of the islands in the Spanish-American War, establishing communities up and down the Pacific coast.

Internal Growth and Movement

The largest migrations of modern times have not been international but interregional, chiefly from the countryside to the city. Rural populations, led by declines in farming, started to erode in New England and the Maritime Provinces as early as the 1830s, while the urban proportion first rose above one-tenth. Industrialization brought rapid increase in the number and size of cities after that, with the urban population in the US and Canada becoming a majority by the early 20th century. A great constellation of new towns and cities exploded across the Midwest and up Canada's St. Lawrence corridor. In 1900, cities of one million people were exceptional (New York, Chicago, Philadelphia), but new industrial centers such as Detroit, Cleveland and Los Angeles soon hit this mark. After 1920, absolute farm numbers began their precipitous fall, most marked in the Dust Bowl areas of the Great Plains. Yet US population soared to 150 million by 1950 and Canada grew to almost 14 million.

The cutoff of mass European migration meant that other people would have to step into the breach in filling urban jobs in the north and west. Thus began a set of dramatic internal migrations within North America. The rural-urban flux sped up, drawing migrants from the southern United States and Caribbean. Most dramatic was the northward migrations of African-Americans between the World Wars, and their migration was paralleled by poor whites from Appalachia and the Piedmont. Northern cities were radically altered by their arrival, especially with the formation of large black ghettos isolated by the surrounding white populace. The migrants also carried southern dialectics and jazz and hill country music northward, to St. Louis, Chicago and New York, where it joined the Tin Pan alley tradition of Euro-Americans.

Afro-Caribbean outmigration began for the first time in the same era, stimulated by work on the Panama Canal. Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Jamaicans began to circulate through the eastern United States, bringing with them new currents like Marcus Garvey's Pan-Africanism, independence movements, and the rhythms of salsa and ska. This tide would swell in the postwar era to almost a million people, augmented by the exit of upper class Cubans to Miami after the revolution and the industrialization of Puerto Rico (which made San Juan to one of the largest cities of the Caribbean, while Havana lagged). Mexicans were also drawn into the United States between the World Wars, especially Texas and southern California, following rail lines built during the Dias' years. Almost one-tenth of Mexico's people traveled north in that time. Although many were expelled in the Great Depression, a new connection was forged between the two countries that has grown to huge proportions today.

Postwar economic expansion brought an upsurge in population growth by natural increase, known in the United States as the Baby Boom, but experienced throughout North America. Mexico, in particular, grew rapidly as its national industrialization took off; population, standing at 25 million in 1950, quadrupled over the next fifty years. With the added force of the Green Revolution, rural to urban migration swelled, and by the end of the century Mexico City was the largest urban center in the world at nearly 25 million (about one-quarter of the country), while the rural proportion of the nation had fallen below one-sixth. High natural rates of increase began to slow down again

across the board by 1970s with a falloff in economic growth, a smaller farm population, and women's laborforce participation.

Other great internal migrations took place after the war. In Canada and the United States the movement was westward. Canada's oil and recreation boom drew many people to Alberta and British Columbia, while the eastern provinces continued to suffer rural outmigration. The former have grown to over one-fifth of the nation, while Quebec has slipped from one-third in 1867 to one-fourth today. The United States' historic drift westward entered a spectacular new era of flow into the Southwest, especially California, which became the most populous state by 1962 and has 35 million people today. Los Angeles became the second largest metropolitan area in the country, the San Francisco Bay Area the fourth largest, by 1975, and other Sunbelt cities such as Las Vegas, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, Houston and Denver mushroomed. In 2000, the Western region had over 64 million people, just edging the Midwest and well ahead of the Northeast's 53 million. At the same time, the South has quietly become by far the largest of the country's regions, mostly through natural increase but also by immigration into growth centers like Atlanta, Miami, and Houston. It's population numbered over 100 million in 2000.

Crossroads of the World

As internal sources of labor began to be exhausted in the United States and Canada, and economic globalization asserted itself once again, the two countries reopened their borders to foreign immigrants. Mass immigration has rearranged the people of North America dramatically, even as population numbers have burgeoned.

The largest flow has been northward from Mexico to the US, some 15 million people or almost one-sixth of the country, mostly from the northern states such as Guanajuato and Chihuahua. This migration has chiefly been directed toward and benefited the burgeoning US Southwest, but the Mexican diaspora now extends to every corner of the United States, and has knit the two countries more closely together than ever before. The northward drift has upended Mexico itself, with a remarkable expansion of the border zone from 4 to 16 million people, 1950 to 2000, especially in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez. Large numbers of Caribbean islanders have kept moving northward, as well. Meanwhile, Central Americans began a mass migration northward into Mexico and the United States, driven by revolution, repression and warfare.

Modern Asians are pouring into North America in unprecedented numbers, as well, thanks to four wars fought across the Pacific and massive trade and investment flows across the basin. Among the Asian immigrants, Chinese are the most numerous, followed by Phillipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans and Thais. In the last decade, South Asians (Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans) have joined the migrations in large numbers. Also for the first time there is a significant influx Southwest Asians, especially from Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestine (Middle Easterners, notably Lebanese and Armenians, had been a small presence since the 1910s). Canada is now over one-twentieth people of Asian origin, the United States about one-twenty-fifth Asian.

Nor can the rest of the world be ignored in this tide of humanity. Europeans, particularly English and Irish, continue to immigrate in considerable numbers, along with Russians and Eastern Europeans since the collapse of communism and Soviet economies. A substantial influx of modern Africans has occurred, mostly from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Many South Americans are coming north, from Brazil, Peru,

Colombia and Chile. Less noticed has been the migration of hundreds of thousands of Canadians into the United States over the last half century.

Recent migrations have utterly remade most of urban and coastal North America. Spanish-speakers from Middle America and the Caribbean have become the single largest minority in the United States (and most Philippines speak Spanish). California, the main entry point for immigrants, is now one-third foreign born and majority non-European stock. Canada has an even higher proportion of new immigrants than the US, and Toronto, with a population of almost 5 million (one-sixth of Canada's people) is the most polyglot city in North America. Vancouver, the third city of Canada, has swollen to almost 2 million with the help of a multitude of Asians. Mexico's northern border is today one of the principle urban corridors of the continent, with Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana now over 2 million inhabitants. Moreover, because the demographic profile of immigrants is tilted toward young people and higher birth rates, the new communities are growing faster than the old.

Rediscovering America

After centuries of Anglo dominance in North America, things have changed decisively in the last fifty years, thanks to the civil rights movement, the new migration, and economic integration. The most striking phenomenon is what some call the *reconquista* of the United States by Mexicans of Mestizo and Amerindian heritage. Spanish is now effectively the second language -- although the country remains resolutely English speaking. Asians have added a melange of skin-tones to the mix, and Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Hindi, and Farsi are frequently heard, and even recognized on official documents by some state and local governments. The main axis of race relations is no longer so clearly white on black, and the presence of Spanish-speaking African-Caribbean people and East Africans has further altered the meaning of black skin.

Old habits of racialization are being shaken, as can be seen in the US Census Bureau's confused attempts to categorize people in more than one slot. One can now declare multiple ancestries, and an increasing number of children are from mixed-race marriages. Hispanic is now understood to cross over several national identities and smudge the black-white-brown race categories once thought essential. Asian is being denounced openly as an absurd catch-all, once thought to be racially clear but taking in a rapidly expanding number of nations looking, speaking and acting nothing alike. Even white identity is thrown open to declarations of European national origins, showing that German ancestry exceeds English or Irish.

A similar transformation of Canadian identity is taking place. Anglophone (three-fifths of the nation) no longer means British and white, but a hodge-podge of Chinese, South Asians, Jamaicans, and southern Europeans. Francophone Canada (under one-fourth of the nation) has been more disturbed by the new immigration, feeling its linguistic and demographic hold on the nation slipping, as even Montreal has become a multiethnic metropolis. Of today's Canadians, over one-fourth claim British heritage, just under one-fourth French, one-sixth other European backgrounds and another quarter 'mixed' backgrounds; fully one-sixth speak a language at home other than English or French. Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean nations, meanwhile, see the economic improvement gained by through emigration, although official policy has often been silent on political status. Nonetheless, return migration has brought with it often profound changes in language, habits and economies, not all of them welcome.

Massive demographic change has stimulated a political reaction in the United States by those who think immigration has been too easy, and that English and Anglo culture are in danger of eclipse. There was a tightening up of borders in the 1990s reminiscent of the runup to 1924. This included building a hundred-mile fence along the Mexican border (just after the Berlin Wall came down), sending back black Haitians coming by small boat, and deporting anyone with a criminal record. Fear of immigrants worsened sharply in the wake of the World Trade Center attack of 2001, and has brought a crackdown on illegal entry, visa approvals, and association with undesirable political groups. This has been felt most severely by people of Middle Eastern origin. Nonetheless, the transformation of the country over the last quarter of the 20th century is irreversible, regardless of the ebb and flow of political sentiments.

A final irony of the present times is the recovery and rediscovery of the Native Americans. Although indigenous people represent two percent or less of the population of Anglo-America and the Caribbean, there has been a dramatic revival of indigenous rights across the continent, triggered by the American Indian Movement, the Alaska Native Claims Act, Canada's First Nations movement, and the Zapatista revolt in Chiapas. Mosquitos, Cunha and other Amerindians in Central America have been granted greater autonomy. Mexico passed critical legislation recognizing native rights in 2002, acknowledging the almost one-third of its people remain Amerindian. Many tribes in the United States and Canada now have substantial jurisdiction over land and natural resources. Declarations of ancestry in the US census reveal a surprisingly high percentage claiming partial Indian heritage, which is no longer something to be hidden. And in the northern Great Plains, a demographic reversal has taken place: Native people have increased their numbers while whites have diminished.

A NEW WORLD OF FAITH

North America after the Conquest has been a mostly Christian continent. Each imperial power, settler group, and immigrant stream has introduced its own brand of religion, making for a polyphonic chorus of faith. Several times before, and again today, Christian hegemony has been put in question, but revivals inside and outside established churches have renewed the faith while creating even more voices of true belief.

Catholics and Conversion

Spain was a young country full of Catholic zeal from the *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula from the Islamic Moors at the time it set out to subdue the New World, although most conquistadors preferred the force of arms to the saving of souls. As the Crown brought its warriors to heel in the mid-16th century, it turned to a policy of pacification of the natives (1573) by Dominican and Franciscan missionaries. New Spain soon bristled with Churches and Missions, as the people converted to Catholicism. The French crown also sought to convert the heathens to Christianity, sending in the Jesuits, but the northern natives were less interested in religion than trade. Franciscans went about their duties at the far edges of empire such as New Mexico with astonishing zeal and sacrifice. During the wars of independence, periods of liberalization, and revolution, the clergy often came under attack as a part of the ruling elite. But under a reformed church, Jesuits would be central to the education of the masses the length of Middle America in the 20th century.

Mexico and Central America remain nine-tenths Catholic today, Canada slightly under one-half. The Americas were the greatest area of growth for the Catholic church over the last five hundred years. But that Catholic adherence overlays other attributes of faith, particularly where Amerindians were converted in large number. The native peoples had their own cache of gods and spirits which they by no means abandoned in the act of conversion. The Catholic Church through its long history has been adept at absorbing local idols into its saintly pantheon, and letting a few pagan rituals and symbols remain. The vision of the Virgin of Guadalupe by an Indian novitiate gave Mexico its own patron saint, while the Day of the Dead is still a major celebration in that country, and native artisans gave altars and frescoes a uniquely pre-Columbian touch (a practice revived as high revolutionary modernism in the 1930s by the great Mexican Muralists). Some natives who converted to Christianity still wear it lightly, like the Zapatecs of Oaxaca.

A similar syncretism occurred at the juncture between African religions and the conversion of slaves to Catholicism in Cuba, Haiti, and elsewhere around the Caribbean. If anything, Africans kept more of their past to themselves, given the master-slave gulf. The survival of *Santeria* and *Vodou* in and around the church reflects that, as does the invention of a new Afro-Christian group in Rastafarianism in the 1930s. The Caribbean remains the least outwardly religious part of the continent, and Cuba has been officially atheist since the 1959 Revolution.

Catholicism's advance was halted by the success of the British settler colonies, which were resolutely Protestant and held the followers of Rome in contempt. This was one among several lines of schism between Anglo and French Canadians. When German, Irish and Italian Catholics appeared in the United States in large number in the second half of the 19th century, the scourge of Papism in their midst alarmed many Protestants, and tensions ran high. Catholicism was long held in a subordinate position in the United States, but Church institutions provided essential grounds for solidarity and advancement among immigrant followers. Catholics gradually gained acceptance after the cutoff of immigration in the mid-20th century, as the election of John Kennedy as the first Catholic President of the US demonstrated. The liberalization of the Church at the Second Vatican Council in 1962 brought it more in line with American tenets of faith. But the new immigration and the long conservative swing of Rome have altered the equation again. Mexicans and other Hispanics are the principal bearers of the faith in the United States today, giving it a vital presence once again.

Protestants and Revivals

In British North America, Protestant Christianity held sway, and with those colonies expansion Protestantism would pass up Catholicism as the dominant North American religion during the 17th century, and hold sway over the continent for the next 300 years. The United States is over half Protestant today, Canada just under one-third. But Protestantism was by its nature a thing of many parts compared to the unified Catholic Church. It is founded on establishing a personal relation to God, Bible and salvation. While organized in parish churches, congregations or meetings, there was a strong tradition of lay evangelizing and individual conversion on the spot (the New Birth Christians so familiar today). Furthermore, disputes with congregational authority could lead to breaks and the formation of new sects, with their own path of revelation. While each might view the others as beyond the pale, there was no clear notion of heresy. Protestants also saw morality, perhaps salvation, residing in good works and material success, which created a tension between devotion to God and to

mammon. Busy with their own salvation, few early settlers had any interest in saving the souls of Indians.

An early division was between the Church of England, which retained the formalism and hierarchy of the Catholics, and Calvinists, who were more egalitarian, but also more sure of their favored covenant with God and brooked less dissent. The Puritan Congregationalists, who derived from Dutch and English Calvinists, prevailed in New England and the Anglicans dominated in the Chesapeake and West Indies, and later in British Canada. Within a generation, the Massachusetts colony hived a radical group of dissenters who were expelled to Rhode Island, where they invented the separation of Church and State. Anglicans were regarded as insufficiently pious by Puritans and evangelicals. Worse, the commercial dynamic of the colonies drew in new immigrants, who brought with them alternative versions of Protestant Christianity. The more egalitarian and tolerant Mid-Atlantic colonies, in particular Pennsylvania, gathered together British Quakers and Baptists, Scots Presbyterians, German Lutherans and Calvinists, along with a few Catholics and Jews. In this milieu, a new degree of religious tolerance was learned by the colonists (Indian relations were much better, too, until westward settlement made war inevitable).

That did not last. Flagging absolutist conviction and material success spawned a revival of faith in the 1740s that swept the United States, known as the Great Awakening. It was led by itinerant preachers of an evangelical cast, working within all the denominations. The most radical and enduring were the radical Baptists, who grew mightily among the plain folk and slaves in Virginia, and eventually came to dominate religion in the Southern states. The revolutionary war era brought new Protestant denominations to America, such as the Unitarians in New England and Methodists in Baltimore. Around 1830, a Second Great Awakening stirred the faithful, spawning a range of new ideas from Emerson's rationalist transcendentalism to the extreme Mormon sect. The Latter Day Saints were hounded out of New York and sought refuge ultimately in Utah, where they established a unique centralized evangelical church. Free Blacks created the the African Methodist Episcopal Church. After the Civil War, even more unorthodox sects such as Christian Science and Jehovah's Witnesses were founded (the latter enjoying some success in Mexico).

Protestantism in North America was giving birth to a host of new forms, losing none of its power to revive the Christian faith in times of social strain and transformation. Protestant churches sent preachers and missionaries among the Indians, into the west, and abroad in search of conversions. The more radical movements made little headway in Canada, with its solid Catholic and Anglican followings. Canada had a history of opposing Protestant denominations going back to the 18th century: Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists, especially. But in 1925 the great majority of non-Anglicans joined together as the United Church of Canada, the world's first effort to reunite what had been torn assunder so many times in the Protestant tradition. The United State would follow later with the United Church of Christ and United Methodists, among other reunifications.

Meanwhile, a new era of revivalism in North America began in the twentieth century with the emergence of Pentacostalism in 1905 in a small integrated church in Los Angeles, led by a black minister. Taken up by both black and whites (who split off on their own), Pentacostalism spread like wildfire around southern California, then across the country, and into Mexico. It repeats much of the formula of radical Baptists, with evangelizing, laying on of hands, visions and declarations, in a highly participatory and emotional form of Christian rebirth. Even compared with other Protestant sects,

Pentacostal congregations are autonomous and spontaneous creations of individual ministers.

After a long period of quiescence and secularization in the middle of the 20th century, a new wave of Protestant evangelizing spread across North America. It speaks to deep anxieties about individual isolation, changing gender roles, and racial change, as well as peasants drawn into the new labor markets. Millions declared themselves Born Again Christians, including a President of the United States. This revival was led by Southern Baptists, Mormons and Pentacostals, who now count their converts in the hundreds of millions around the world. In the United States they have millions of adherents, in Mexico about one-sixteenth of the people are Protestants today (mostly evangelicals), and Guatemala is another site of large-scale proselytizing. In the US, the South and Southwest are the most deeply Christian. Canada remains largely outside the evangelical orbit.

Beyond Christianity

The hegemony of Christian adherence in North America is not as absolute as it might seem, and is facing new challengers. The principal alternative faith of modern times is not another organized religion, but secular rationalism. This is the principal tenet of faith among those participating in commercial enterprise, and is deeply instantiated in North America, as the leading center of capitalism on the globe. It entails a belief in the logical consequences of action, rational calculation of costs and benefits, and faith in the laws of nature and the market. It usually comes married to a belief in the discoveries of modern science.

Such rationalism has an uneasy relation to modern Christianity, especially Protestantism. It lurked even within Calvinism, set more comfortably with Anglican rationalists like Thomas Jefferson, and has been especially common among Presbyterians, Unitarians, and other faithful from the merchant and industrial classes. As the absolutes of God and Heaven broke down in the face of scientific evidence and human achievement in the 19th century, modern men and women grew to accept a more abstract notion of God while going on about their business. But rationalism runs up against wide streak of Christian mysticism among people for whom the manifest order of the world is less evident and the human condition is a source of mystery. And many a successful businessman has indulged the occult symbolism employed by Masonic Orders or given millions of dollars to support evangelical missionaries spreading the faith.

Socialism and communism offered an extreme form of rationalism that openly denies God and religion, while spiriting in its own utopian articles of faith. Once having ten of thousands of adherents, belief in socialist heaven-on-earth has mostly died out, except in Cuba. Conversely, New Age spiritualism introduced a individualistic route to mystical insight and comfort that attracted many followers in the United States by such devices as revival meetings and instant conversion, but it, too, has ebbed away. A surprisingly enduring aspect of North American religion is Native American animism, or worship of the land, wildlife, ancestors, and their spirits, which has been renewed by the growing autonomy and numbers of American Indians in the last few decades. About one-tenth of people in the United States today declare themselves to be non-religious.

Judaism has undergone its own revival in recent years. Jews have come to North America for the same reasons as other immigrants, but anti-semitism and the rise of

Nazism drove many more out of Europe. Here they have faced much less discrimination and little violence, and gained general acceptance by the majority Christians following World War II. Jewish immigrants were notorious free thinkers. Religious orthodoxy was no more in evidence among this group than rationalism and socialism. But the creation of Israel has led to a remarkable revival of orthodox faith mixed, like American Christianity, with a healthy dose of nationalism. Despite some large concentrations in New York, Los Angeles and elsewhere, Jews remain a small minority in North America, no more than one-fiftieth of the population.

Very significant today are the non-Christian religions coming from abroad, particularly Asia, entering mostly as the cultural accompaniment of immigrants. The Chinese bring Confucianism and Taoism, Japanese Buddhism and Shintoism, Indians the Hindu and Sikh faiths. The adherents of these faiths are somewhat less than the number of immigrants, because many Vietnamese, Koreans and Chinese arrive as Christians, due to the past work of missionaries. So far Asian religions have rarely found converts among European or African Americans, but have often influenced intellectuals, mystics and artists.

Islam is the fastest growing of religions on the continent, though starting from a tiny base. It is entering with the recent migrations from the Middle East, North Africa, and South and Central Asia, who are approaching one-twentieth of the population. Mosques, a rarity in the past, have sprung up in cities across North America. Islam has become accepted as part of the American landscape of faith, despite (or because of) the fierce conflicts in the Middle East, but it now suffers much of the anti-Semitic opprobrium once reserved for Jews as somehow outside the pale of Christianity. Though not a part of mainstream Islam, the Black Muslims (Nation of Islam) has gained a few hundred thousand faithful among African-Americans who associate Christianity with white society.

North America has not only become once more a crossroads of peoples but a crossroads of the worlds beliefs. Non-Christians are edging up to one-tenth of the people in the United States and one-fifth in Canada. It is to be hoped that the best traditions of religious tolerance and separation from state power will prevail.

ECONOMY

The modern economies of North America have developed prodigiously in the last 500 years. The continent has gone from outlier of world civilization to the core of the contemporary world economy, with the United States by far the largest single economic entity with a gross domestic product of over \$10 trillion in 2000. Mexico and Canada rank in the top ten global economies at just under one trillion dollars.

This astounding development turns on several things. It began with the penetration of the market system of commodity trade across much of the continent, and flourished originally on the extraction of natural resources and agricultural settlement. There was subsequently a remarkable evolution of the productive arts and modern industry. By 1900 the United States had passed up Britain and Germany as the world's leading industrial power. Industrialization brought unheard of advances in the productivity of labor, hurled commodities into trading circuits, and spawned a new world of consumerism. Modern capitalism also gave rise to advanced forms of business organization and finance.

All these elements of economic development have their geographies of factories, cities, highways, power lines, fields and mines. The buildup of these material landscapes have given shape to North America, and tie together its many parts regardless of national boundaries and cultural differences. But economic growth has been uneven, and the US and Canada have fared better than Middle America and the Caribbean, despite the latter's more advanced state at the time of European conquest and early leadership in production for world markets.

TRADE

North America's modern economic history and geography begins with trade. European expansion was driven by commercial urges as much as by the religious hopes of Puritans or the imperial aims of sovereigns, and Europe was the first target area for North American exports, chiefly resource goods (staples) and precious metals. As the world economy moved to industrialization, and the United States became the biggest manufacturing country, continental trade became more internal. Lately, with the rise of East Asian economies, trade has been increasingly directed across the Pacific.

Staple Exports

Mexico and Guatemala offered a feast of gold and silver for export; some 181 tons of gold and 16,000 tons of silver were transported from the Americas to Europe, 1500-1650. Internal trade in Mexico and Central America was driven by the need to supply mines and colonial cities, above all Mexico City; otherwise, commerce was stunted by the *hacienda* system, which kept the people poor and demand local, and the expense of transport by horse and burro. The Caribbean islands offered little to the Spanish, but provided excellent refuge to a vigorous trade in piracy on Spanish shipping promoted by the lesser powers of Northern Europe.

In the far north, the fur-trade pioneered by the French in the late 16th century was the chief commerce before 1700. It established the St. Lawrence corridor as the original axis of Canadian development. It also served as the advanced guard of European exploration all the way to the Pacific north of the Rio Grande, and contact with the Native people, on whom the colonial traders depended for their supply of pelts. Furs were lucrative, and the trade would continue to flourish in Alaska and Canada into the 20th century. But the trading frontier had to kept moving westward as the animals were rapidly depleted.

After 1650, the Caribbean became the greatest center of trade in North America, knitting the Atlantic economy together and displacing Mexico as the center of North American economic and social development. It was here that production was revolutionized by the plantation system, which encompassed large scale, servile labor, and integration of growing and processing. The first major export crop from the region was tobacco, grown with indentured labor (poor English and Irish) and captured Indians sold as slaves. As tobacco flourished around the Chesapeake Bay by the mid-17th century, the West Indies (Antilles) switched in sugar. This shift was led by Barbados, the first important African slave colony and the leading economy of North America, 1650-1700. The Carolinas (including Georgia) specialized in rice and indigo by the 18th century, overtaking the Chesapeake tobacco colonies in wealth of its planter class.

Under the hothouse conditions created by the quickening of British and European capitalism, sugar planting expanded rapidly, with the frontier moving to Jamaica in the late 17th century, thence to St. Dominigue and Martinique in the 18th, which passed up the British colonies in output by mid-century. Cuba came on strong in the late 18th century, becoming the premier producer of the 19th. The final planter frontier was Trinidad in the 19th century, which grew cotton, indigo and citrus, as well as sugar. Throughout the century, new technologies of milling, combined with larger plantations, kept productivity rising. British merchants, planters, slavers and financiers dominated all through the West Indies, with additional financial investment by the French and Americans in the capital-poor Spanish colonies. By 1700 exports from the West Indies were worth three times those from the North American mainland, and were hugely lucrative for planters, merchants and crown tax-collectors.

In the 19th century, cotton became king, thanks to the demand from the textile mills of Britain and New England. Cotton spread rapidly from the Carolinas around to Mississippi and Texas, and was the greatest single export commodity from North America for one hundred years. Plantation slavery generated some of the most prodigious trade and profits anywhere in the world up to the Civil War. Yet it engendered little secondary commerce, economic development or industrialization across the South or the Caribbean. A few large cities, such as Havana, New Orleans, and Charleston, grew up as shipping centers and gathering places of planter society but there were few other towns of substance. Most of the trade went directly from the plantations abroad, and much of the surplus was siphoned off by merchants in European and Atlantic coast cities.

In colonial times, New England and the Mid-Atlantic colonies did not produce lucrative export staples like the Chesapeake or West Indies. They would lag behind the US South and the Caribbean in accumulated wealth (including slaves) until the middle of the 19th century. They made modest sums selling a variety of goods, such as timber, grain, fish, meat and ships, to the West Indies. Nonetheless, Boston, New York and Philadelphia merchants emerged as a force in the flow of goods and slaves across the Atlantic, through the Caribbean, and up and down the Gulf coast. Merchants were the

chief financiers of slavers, plantations, and imperial governors alike, and effectively managed the money supply. Ironically, while the northeast colonies and, later, United States, held far fewer slaves than the South, they still waxed prosperous off of the slave system.

Commerce in Industrial Goods

North America joined the industrial revolution early, thanks to the affinity of the United States and Canada with British commercial culture and a ground well prepared for the capitalist system of production. Industrialization began in New England in the late 18th century and spread rapidly from there to the Mid-Atlantic, and thence to the Midwest, Southern Ontario and Quebec, and the Far West in the second half of the 19th century. But industrial goods were still overshadowed by staple exports in the trading mix, and had to be protected by tariff barriers in both countries. Tariffs were a constant source of political conflict between the north and south before the Civil War; Union victory meant a more severe regime for the next fifty years. Canada instituted strong protections for its infant industries in 1879.

As the two countries industrialized, the main flows of trade became internal: within regions, between regions, and among a dense fabric of cities. Scores of industrial cities appeared across the Northeastern US and southern Canada, from giants like Buffalo and Montreal, to thriving middle-sized towns such as Troy and Muncie. These were linked together by a multilayered transportation system, beginning with ships and steamboats on the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence seaway, and Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. This was supplemented by an immense canal network (above all, the Erie Canal) built in the 1820s and 30s, and then overtaken by railroads criss-crossing the continent, 1850-1900.

In the course of the 19th century, the United States became the world's greatest free-trade zone, greatly assisting American manufacturers seeking a market for mass produced goods. Gradually the quality and quantity of manufactures increased, catching Europeans by surprise at the Crystal Palace Exposition in London in 1851. After that, American goods, like pistols and sewing machines, were in demand across the Atlantic. Canadian manufacturers had to cope from early on with the pull of the US market and competition from American companies. But altogether, the companies and cities of the industrial belt thrived on both sides of the border. By the middle of the century, the Northern United States and southern Canada overtook the Southern United States and Caribbean Islands as the continental leaders in value of economic output and capital stock -- a fact of immense importance in the run-up to the US Civil War and the Union victory over an outgunned Confederacy.

Even though the United States built the Panama Canal (completed 1914), which revolutionized inter-oceanic shipping, it remained one of the most closed economies in the world (well over nine-tenths internal trade) through most of the 20th century. To facilitate that national market, it built the most extensive superhighway system in the world from 1945 to 1975. Canada followed suit with its own mammoth highway program. Canada had difficulty keeping external trade and competition under control, by virtue of its links to the United States and Britain. It would lower its barriers after World War II, and has been the biggest trading partner of the US ever since.

Mexico was opened up to trade and investment by President Dias in the late 19th century, and American companies built railroads into the country to facilitate commerce with the north. But the borders closed down again after the Revolution, and Mexico

followed an import-substitution model of development. Central America entered the circuits of world commerce with the extensive planting of coffee and bananas in the late 19th century. But these small nations suffered from small domestic markets and lack of capital in building internal commerce. The Panama canal provided almost no benefit to the region it transected. When sugar markets finally glutted around 1900, the Caribbean went into severe economic decline and left a dire legacy of ecological devastation by deforestation and soil erosion on all the islands. The Caribbean island nations began growing bananas, nutmeg, and coffee, but they have struggled mightily to build modern economies in the face of small territories, poor transportation, and costly imports.

A New Era of Trade

Trade and transport changed mightily in the second half of the 20th century. Trucking surged along government-built superhighways, at the expense of declining railways. Oil became the largest single component of ocean traffic, and the coming of Supertankers meant much deeper ports. Containers altered fundamentally the loading of ships and the geography of ports. Los Angeles surpassed New York as the continent's largest port, with Newport News not far behind. Great Lakes shipping declined after 1975. Air traffic exploded, and every city sprouted an international airport. Air transport of goods and intermodal shipping would be central to the globalization of manufacturing that had become so striking by the last quarter of the 20th century.

One of the capstones of the new globalism is NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Alliance, signed by the US, Canada and Mexico in 1993. While the former have had a relatively free trade border since World War II, they lowered trade barriers even more in the 1980s and signed the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement in 1988. Canada-US trade today ranges from \$200-300 billion per year. Mexico began opening up gradually with the border industrialization program put in place in 1965, but became tightly integrated with the United States as the *maquiladora* zone took off in the 1980s. NAFTA caused exchange with the north to explode. Today, Mexico is the fourth largest trading partner of the US.

NAFTA was meant to position North America more favorably in competition with the emergent European Union and the rising East Asian sphere, as well as cementing the United States' traditional economic sway over the continent. It is the model for US efforts to create a free trade zone encompassing all of the Americas, approved in 2003. NAFTA has also been a trigger for protest against neo-liberalism, from the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas to labor protests in Canada. But the emergence of Japan as the second largest economy of the world, and rapid East Asian industrialization has brought trans-Pacific trade to the forefront. More goods are exchanged across the Pacific basin today than across the Atlantic, reversing 500 years of European dominance.

In Central America and the Caribbean there have been attempts to build larger trading zones out of the many small national economies. A British West Indies Federation's was stired in 1958, then expanded to the fifteen member Caribbean Common Market, CARICOM, in 1973. An alternative strategy has been to increase integration with Anglo-America through export zones, first introduced in the late 1960s (following an example tested in Puerto Rico). The US government's Caribbean Basin Initiative of the 1980s gave this effort a renewed emphasis, and the practice began to spread to Central America. Diversification has come recently with exports of cotton, meat, and clothing,

and with cheap air transport, fresh fruit and flowers. But specialization still renders small nations vulnerable, as shown once again in the losses suffered by places like Dominica when the World Trade Organization agreed with the United States to break European quotas on bananas from specific countries. Meanwhile, post-revolutionary Cuba became isolated from North American trade because of a US embargo, and mostly shipped its minerals and sugar to Eastern Europe. This had begun to change after the collapse of the Soviet Union, with more trade developing with Europe, Mexico and Canada.

RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE

North America was originally conquered, explored and colonized in the European search for natural resources, beginning with precious metals. This plunder is a sore topic in most of Middle America and the Caribbean, and in Canada the theme of raw materials (staples) dependency resonates deeply to this day. In much of the western United States, resource colonialism has been a recurrent counterpoint, as well. Yet Anglo-America developed through resource extraction and processing as much as anything else, as shown by the persistent resource-bias in United States exports. From 1850 to 1950, North America was the world's premier region for the exploitation of metals, fuels, wood, fish and water.

Minerals and Energy

The western Cordillera, Laurentian shield and Sierra Madre Occidentale have offered some of the best prospects for metal mining in the world over the last 500 years, including gold, silver, iron, copper, tin, lead and uranium. The earliest mining regions were opened up in Mexico around Guanajuato and Zacatecas, chiefly for precious metals. Mining took a horrendous toll on a largely forced labor supply (wage work was scarcely viable with the low productivity techniques employed). California gold brought the world rushing to the Pacific Coast 1848-53. Placer deposits and favorable social relations meant prosperity for many prospectors, despite personal hardships, and even deep mine workers later held their own. Equally important, mining technology was revolutionized by industrial methods for the first time in centuries. Gold and silver mining spread to Nevada, Colorado, the Dakotas, British Columbia, and the Yukon. Merchants and mine-owners accumulated large fortunes and San Francisco was catapulted to economic mastery over the western slope. By 1900, cities such as Denver, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver had grown large enough to claim their own resource hinterlands.

Meanwhile, the industrial revolution propelled non-precious metals such as copper, zinc, iron and lead into resources of importance. The first large-scale copper mining took place in Maryland in the 1830s, then developed in Michigan by mid-century. Lead, used for ammunition, piping and brass, among other things, first came out of the Upper Mississippi Valley, then shifted southward. The tri-state lead-zinc district at the juncture of Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas, opened up around 1850, proved to be the most productive zinc mining area in the world for the next century. The lead district of southeastern Missouri, developed in the 1860s, is still the leading lead mining area in the United States. Late in the century, Lake Superior iron helped create a huge steel complex around the Great Lakes. The age of electricity turned copper into a major industry by the late 19th century, opening up mines in the US southwest, Mexico's northwest, and along the Canadian shield. It also gave new life to lead for batteries,

solder and insulation. Electroplating expanded the market for zinc exponentially. Agricultural expansion drove the demand for potash from Florida.

In the early 20th century, the era of steel alloys arrived, sharply raising the value of nickel, cobalt, tungsten, molybdenum, and chromium ores. The world's second largest deposit of nickel was opened up at Sudbury, Ontario (later supplemented from Labrador). Bauxite began to be mined in quantity when aluminum production became affordable in the age of electricity, and deposits were heavily exploited in the Ozarks and Jamaica (the former ran out quickly). Cuba began to supply nickel and cobalt in large quantity, as well. Canadian minerals, including cobalt, molybdenum, titanium, copper, sulfur, potash, iron, and zinc, came under renewed demand in the post-World War II era of growth, especially from US manufacturers. Southwestern uranium was widely mined for the making of bombs and fuel rods at the same time.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, Canada began exporting metals to Japan in quantity. The United States, on the other hand, has become a large importer of most minerals, and its mining corporations are busy exploring the rest of the world. This is true not because of widespread scarcity of natural resources -- only a few metals such as tin, chromium, and manganese have proved to be scarce across the continent -- but because of the enormous industrial appetite of the US for raw materials.

Coal and oil have been the greatest of all sources of mineral wealth on the continent. The Appalachians run deep with the earth's finest coal seams, while lesser coal deposits have been found in the Prairies and northern Rockies. Coal passed water power and wood burning as an energy source by the 1840s, and helped propelled the industrialization of Anglo-America. Coal and iron deposits fueled the great iron and steel industry of Pennsylvania, first in the anthracite zones of the Poconos, then the bituminous zones of the Alleghenies, especially around Pittsburgh. West Virginia and Kentucky coal also supplied the steel belt of the Great Lakes with coke for decades.

The Gulf Coast has the continent's largest petroleum and natural gas deposits from Louisiana south to Veracruz (as well as Trinidad, whose petroleum is more related to Venezuela's deposits). There are other significant reserves in Alberta, California, and Alaska's north slope. North America led the world in oil and gas production from 1860 to 1950, and played the leading role in the history of petroleum discovery, extraction and utilization thanks to its combination of industrial leadership and ample deposits. Oil was first exploited in Pennsylvania, then the lower Midwest. The action shifted to California, Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas after 1900, with Texas supreme by the 1930s. Mexico nationalized American oil companies in 1938, and used the revenues for its national development program.

After the war, off-shore oil of the Gulf came on line, catapulting the Gulf Coast to the forefront. The last oil bonanzas were Alberta and the Alaskan north slope, in the 1970s. Since then, consumption has exceeded production by large amounts, fed by imports. In response, natural gas exploration and use has increased dramatically. Most gas comes from the Gulf Coast and Alberta, although new fields have opened up off Nova Scotia and elsewhere; Mexican and Canadian exports to the United States have shot up.

Oil and gas are burned for electricity, refined into gasoline and fuel for transportation, or used for heating. A vast supply network traverses the continent, with thousands of kilometers of natural gas and oil pipelines, usually underground and unseen (over 400,000 km for gas, 50,000 km for crude, 300,000 km for petroleum products). Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma are the heart of the system, but pipelines run from

Alaska and Alberta to the US and north from Mexico. Refineries cluster around production districts like Houston and Veracruz, and near consumption centers like New York, Chicago and Mexico City. Trucks complete the system, riding on the world's biggest highway network -- paved largely in petroleum asphalt.

The electric power grid of North America is more extensive than any other infrastructure except roads, and an index of modern continental integration. It links hydrodams and powerplants to centers of population, in a virtually continuous network across the continent. Western Canada, Quebec, and the Pacific Northwest are huge suppliers of electricity to the rest thanks to their great rivers. But the base supply is mostly in coal-fired generators in the northeastern US, gas-fired in the southwest, oil-burning in Mexico City. North America has few nuclear generators compared to Japan and Europe.

North America leads the world in total energy production from all sources, including fossil fuels, hydropower, wood, wind, and geothermal. The United States is first at 71.6 quadrillion BTUs, ahead of Russia, China and Saudi Arabia. Canada is fifth at 18.2 quadrillion, Mexico tenth at 9.5 quadrillion. The US and Canada rank first and third in production of natural gas, while petroleum has fallen well down the global rankings, making the United States, in particular, a large net importer. Despite mammoth outputs, employment in mining and energy production, which are highly capital intensive, is only around 1 percent of the labor force today.

Timber, Water and Fish

North America is home to some of the largest temperate forests on earth, as well as some remarkable tree species such as Coast Redwoods and Bristlecone Pines. Most of the subarctic taiga and northern conifer forests of Canada and Alaska are intact, though logging is common. The great eastern deciduous forest that once stretched from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, from the St. Lawrence to the southern Appalachians, was almost entirely removed for agriculture and timber during the era of settlement, but it has recovered dramatically in many areas with the decline of farming. The southeastern coastal plains harbored a pine forest that has been cut and regrown several times. The western cordillera are forested in their mid-altitudes. Tree grow thicker along the moist coast from Northern California to southern Alaska (some of which is considered temperate rainforest). These were the last of the woodlands to be cut over, and only a few remnants of pre-settlement stands remain; most is regrowth. North Americans were the world's most prolific and ruthless devourer of forests for almost four centuries.

Timber cutting and the production of lumber was even more widespread than mining through most of the 18th and 19th centuries. The cutting of the vast Northern forests of the United States and southeastern Canada followed the westward line of colonial settlement and spread of field agriculture. Timber became a modern industry with the arrival of the rotary saw in the 1830s. Buildings, railroads and mines were huge consumers of wood. Commercial clear-cutting leveled most of the forest around the Great Lakes in a lifetime, and triggered the first modern forest fires burning through the slash in the late 19th century and, subsequently, the wholesale set-aside of National Forests in the US and Canada. US lumber production peaked in 1909, after which concrete and other wood substitutes chipped away at demand. Canadian lumber and wood pulp, chiefly for newsprint, would enter the US market in quantity after the First World War.

One of the key developments in mass production in the 19th century was balloon frame construction, made possible by dimensional lumber (and subsequently plywood). Canada and the United States were carpeted with wooden buildings, which sped settlement, urban expansion and access to housing for a large segment of the populace. Construction was propelled to the forefront of industries in employment, reaching as high as one-fifth of the workforce in some areas (today it is less than one-twentieth). Brick and stone were the other major building materials in cities, quarried from local sources, before concrete and steel became favored for commercial buildings in the 20th century. In Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America, construction continued to be mostly in stone and adobe for domestic buildings, changing to concrete block and stucco after the mid-20th century.

By the late 19th century, timbering had jumped to the Pacific coast coniferous forests of redwood, spruce and Douglas fir. At first this served the California market, but throughout the 20th century, the Northwest forests supplied most of the continent's lumber and, later, pulp and paper. Forestry at its peak employed one quarter of the workforce in British Columbia, Oregon and Washington (down to less than one-twentieth today). The western forests continue to be cut on a large scale up to Alaska, and into the boreal zones of Canada. Much of this is now exported to Japan. This has led to major debates over protection of old growth forests and fire-danger in poorly managed areas of regrowth. Forestry employs only around 1-2 percent of the labor force in Anglo-America today.

Today the industry has shifted to new frontiers in the southern half of the continent. One front is plantation timber, using fast-growing pines and eucalyptus, along the Southern US coastal plain and Gulf coast of Mexico. This yields low-quality wood that is turned into chipboard, which underlies the veneer of most house and furniture construction today. Another new timbering frontier is tropical hardwoods, with Central America and southern Mexico offering up their forests, including patches of rare 'cloud forest' -- high altitude tropical woodlands of exceptional biological importance. Wood exports rose dramatically. Mexico's woodlands of the Sierra Madre and central plateau contain some of the last untouched temperate forests of North America, but are falling fast. Central America has a dense cover of tropical forest for the most part, but it has been cleared rapidly for grazing in recent years, and cutting now endangers the unique tropical cloud forests dotted through the upper elevations. Exceptional efforts have been made to conserve some parklands in the highlands of Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua. Most of the Antilles have tropical forests in their uplands, where they catch the trade winds, but all suffered severe deforestation during the plantation era and have never fully recovered.

Water was always a means of transport and a domestic necessity, but it, too, was mobilized on a grand scale with the industrial revolution. Water power drove most of the early mills and factories of the continent before 1840. Canals criss-crossed the thriving industrial regions of the US northeast and around the Great Lakes. Water power and transport were essential to the timber industry, and water drove hydraulic mining in the Far West. Above all, water had to be fed into the burgeoning cities. New York and Boston reached out to distant watersheds as early as the 1830s. By the early 1900s, Los Angeles and San Francisco were building 100 mile long aqueducts from the Sierra Nevada. Today a vast system of dams, canals and river control impacts large parts of the continent to mobilize water for irrigation, industry, electricity and domestic use.

Fish and fur-bearing mammals were once plentiful along the coasts and up the great river systems of the continent. The Grand Banks of Newfoundland, the Pacific

Northwest coast, the upwelling zone off California, and the warm Gulf coast supported some of the greatest fish stocks in the world's oceans. Fishing and whaling have always been locally important activities along the coasts of North America, and were significant in the early development of New England and the Canadian Maritime, and then again on the Pacific Coast and Gulf Coast in the 19th century. Whale oil was the principle lighting fuel and lubricant up to mid-century. Most whales and sea mammals such as otter and seals were hunted nearly to extinction, and only survive precariously with protection. Fish and shellfish were coastal dietary staples, but were sometimes sent inland long distances by rail.

After 1900, the world's first fully industrial fishery arose to exploit the sardines of California, which were canned and processed into animal feed and fertilizer. With the arrival of gasoline engines, huge nets and industrial processing, fish harvests soared and fish stocks could be quickly exhausted. A good example is the rapid invasion of traditional fishing areas along the rich coastal waters of Mexico in the last quarter century. Today, no North American fishery, from Pacific salmon to Gulf crab, has not suffered severe drop-off due to overexploitation, hastened by dams, pollution, and reclamation of wetlands. In this, the continent is little different than the rest of the world's coastal fishing grounds.

Agriculture and Food Products

North America has had the most advanced market agriculture in the world during most of its modern history, which has been an aggressive part of the history of settlement and economic expansion. Agriculture shares some features with mining, in that it exploits the land, and with timbering, in that it clears the native vegetation before introducing crops. The depredations of plantation agriculture are clear around the Caribbean and across the US South, which were left with grave soil exhaustion and erosion from careless monoculture practices on fragile tropical and semi-tropical soils -- adding to the burden of history on the former slave colonies. Nevertheless, agriculture of any duration depends on improvement in the form of breeding, soil maintenance, fertilization, and irrigation. Post-colonial agriculture in North America has an extraordinary record of technical development and rising productivity, growing hand-in-glove with industry and urbanization.

Mexico and Central America had a long history of settled agriculture before Europeans arrived, some of it quite sophisticated. Traditional crops, practices and foods survived among the Indians and Mestizo peasants, and have only slowly given way to commercial agriculture. The *hacienda* system of rural production made a deep imprint, as well, and class habits of power and deference have only broken down in the course of several revolutions. Central America's coffee and banana exports of the 20th century brought a new era of farming, and some gains in small farms; but it also introduced the plantations of the United Fruit company and never displaced the narrow oligarchies, based in landed property, who still rule those countries. Around one-fifth of Mexico's population is still involved in farming today, but falling fast. At the end of the 20th century, there were sharp political battles over the government's abandonment of communal *ejidos* and import protections under neo-liberalism and NAFTA, and corn imports from Anglo-America are undercutting Mexico's small producers.

In Mexico the northern states have been the scene of the most independent and market-guided forms of agrarian economy -- a mark that still divides the north from Mexico City. After mining, cattle ranching was the foundation of colonial Mexico's economy, exporting hides to Spain and selling leather and tallow to the mining centers. Cattle

spread into the dry zones beyond the Central Plateau, spawning both grand empires and small rancheros. Both guarded an independence from the national center that resonates to this day. From northern Mexico, commercial cattle ranching made its way into what is now the southwestern United States and the Great Plains, culminating in the vast overstocking of the range that ended in the mass drought-induced starvations of the 1860s in California, 1880s in the Northern Plains, and 1890s in the Southwest. A restructured cattle industry, bringing in eastern breeds of European ancestry and tied to Chicago's great stockyards and meatpacking plants flourished again in the first half of the 20th century.

The greatest agrarian success story in modern world history is the vast sweep of Northern European settlement across the western US and Canada in the 19th century -- the greatest land redistribution in history to that point. It put into place millions of farm families, a deeply commercialized and modern version of a peasantry, and one with political clout. As the farmer's frontier surged along the Erie Canal, the St. Lawrence Valley, the Ohio Valley and around the Great Lakes, and across the Prairies, it plowed into some of the finest soil on earth. Wheat poured forth from the northern tier lands of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Minnesota and the Dakotas, corn and hogs from the middle tier of Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, and wheat again across Kansas and the southern plains. In the process, some of the most extensive grasslands on earth in the Prairies of the middle continent suffered a fate similar to the eastern woodlands as agriculture and cattle grazing invaded, and little remains that is unplanted, unplowed, or unaltered by grasses and weeds introduced from Eurasia and Africa.

Agricultural success in the US and Canada has been tightly linked to industrialization. Industry provided the tools to unlock a continent's fertility, beginning with mold-board plows, wagons, and reapers in the mid-19th century, continuing with gasoline tractors, rural electrification, and submersible pumps in the early 20th, and accelerating in the age of petroleum based fertilizers, synthetic pesticides, cattle feedlots and concrete high dams by mid-20th century. In addition to these industrial inputs, farms benefited from the demand generated by an increasing urban populace, cheap transportation to markets, and mechanized processing, as in fruit canning, steel-rolled flour, and breakfast cereal. City and countryside thus advanced hand-in-hand, to the benefit of both. Chicago, Cincinnati, and Calgary, for example, developed as processing and trading centers for enormous agrarian hinterlands, and small industrial and market towns proliferated across the northern tier of states and provinces. Agro-industrialization was uniquely advanced in North America.

Mass settlement had its economic woes, too. Farmers demanded repeated concessions from the US Congress right up to the Homestead Act (1862), but nothing could save them from the debt and disturbances of open markets, as they bought more and more machinery and produced ever greater quantities of grain or hogs. World markets began to glut with wheat by the 1880s and hosts of farm families fell into bankruptcy with the depression of the 1890s. One result was the Populist Party in the United States, another was the end of farm settlement. Farm population peaked in the early 20th century and began its long downward spiral. Prices revived through the First World War, then began a long secular decline that has steadily driven farmers out of the market and into the cities.

The worst debacle of grain agriculture was undoubtedly the incursion onto the Great Plains, from Alberta to Texas, in the first quarter of the last century. Good times lured hundred of thousands to break up the grasslands and plant; drought and bad prices broke them down and scattered the remnants to the winds in the 1930s. Grain farming recovered by World War II, thanks in part to government stabilization programs, and

flourished thereafter with the help of Green Revolution strains of wheat and corn. Productivity surged and farms consolidated into larger and larger units. By the 1960s, Canada and the US were exporting huge surpluses, and a long process of consolidation ensued in which a handful of giant merchant companies, such as Cargill, came to dominate grain markets. Farm population declined precipitously, by about three-quarters from 1930 to 1975, leaving only one out of one hundred people on farms in the US and Canada today.

Modern agribusiness emerged most swiftly in California, which set the example for diversified, highly capitalized, and profitable agriculture in the 20th century -- from orange groves to cattle feedlots. California introduced modern business organization into farming, marketing and processing, and led the way in practices like multiple cropping, universal irrigation, and plant breeding. It also treated harvest labor little better than the Old South. Carrots, cantaloupes and oranges are now produced on the same model by large landholders from Arizona to Florida, while industrial hog and chicken production under the direction of huge merchant processors has moved into North Carolina and Arkansas.

Such corporate agriculture has spread south of the border, mostly under contract to supermarkets and agro-processors in the US. Sugar beets, winter fruits, and organic vegetables issue forth from northern Mexico into the markets of colder zones, and have popped up around the Caribbean basin and Central America. Indeed, the agribusiness model has spread around the world, with extensive food supply systems feeding into Europe and Japan. It has propagated hybrid grains, chemical farming, high dams and irrigation, and now genetically-modified crops, with considerable environmental disruption in its train, along with higher yields.

North American agriculture continues to be the world's greatest exporter of farm products, particularly the temperate grains, corn and wheat, soybeans and meat products, cotton, and specialty fruits. This export trade often overwhelms world markets and impedes agrarian development elsewhere. The United States and Canada have been locked in prolonged trade battles with the European Union and Japan over trade regulations and government farm subsidies, and now genetically-modified foods. Farming is, however, a sector in which free trade rarely prevails because of the remaining political strength of farm interests.

MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY

Manufacturing is the heart of modern industrial economies and their extraordinary levels of technical progress and rising income. Yet industrialization in North America evolved in close alliance with resource extraction, agriculture, and construction, as in paper making, flour milling, and wood working. As a result, manufacturing has never composed more than one-third of employment in any North American economy, all of which are marked by substantial extraction and agriculture, extensive transportation networks, and large amounts of work in distribution. Only in the last quarter century have the patterns of economic development left natural resource export and processing far behind.

Nineteenth Century Manufactures

Textiles were the vanguard of the first industrial revolution after the new spinning, weaving machines and the factory system arrived in New England in the 1780s.

Textiles worked up natural fibers, and some call the cotton gin the most important machine of the 19th century. Factories were located along the 'Fall Line' where the rivers plunge down to coastal plain and sea, especially around Boston, Providence and Philadelphia, and in southern Quebec and Ontario. Textile mills forced the building of the first large canals, for power and transport, and the construction of special housing to attract workers to mill towns.

Lumber and wood products led all manufacturing sectors in the US and Canada until 1900. Grain products were not far behind. While lumber was cut in the forest zones, lumber distribution and millwork were urban activities, as were flour mills, breweries and distilleries. These were rather widely distributed across the Middle West, with major concentrations at shipping points such as Buffalo, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Canadian brewers and distillers grew especially large compared to the US because of Prohibition. At the end of the 19th century, steel rolling turned Minneapolis and Winnipeg into the milling kingpins of the Prairies and Great Plains. Furniture making came to be concentrated in Grand Rapids and North Carolina.

By the middle of the 19th century, a second industrial revolution was led by advances in machining. Machine tool and machine-makers supplied all the others with their means of production, from farm implements to locomotives, and were therefore the pivot of rising productivity throughout the industrial system. New England was known for its early leadership, including the first interchangeable parts, or 'the American system'. Large-scale mechanization depended on advances in wood and metal cutting with lathes and improvements in iron casting and forging made in the first half of the 19th century. After 1850, machine shops sprang up all across the Midwest and southeastern Canada, and centers of machine-making developed at places like Chicago, Hamilton, and Milwaukee. San Francisco also became a leading center of machinery, chiefly for mining.

Manufacturing evolved along a distinctive path in the United States and Canada. One feature was a high degree of mechanization, owing to the relative scarcity of labor and capital (high wages and interest rates), and to the habit, which became ingrained, of favoring mechanical over hand and craft solutions. Oliver Evans had put together a fully automatic flour mill by 1776. This culture of technology has been commented on since Alexis de Tocqueville, and struck the European observers like thunder at the London Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, the first of the modern world's fairs. Another peculiarity is the resource-intensity of Anglo-American manufacturing processes: techniques have been not only labor-saving but resource-wasting, thanks to the abundance of natural inputs. Examples are saws that made faster but wider cuts and locomotives that climbed mountains with ease but devoured fuel. By the turn of the 20th century, Anglo-America took a decisive edge over Europe with the development of high-speed machines and fully interchangeable parts, made possible by the introduction of steel alloys, which allow finer tolerances in metal cutting and casting.

Twentieth Century Industries

A third industrial revolution broke out in the early 20th century. Resource-linked manufactures were overtaken by sectors resting on new technologies: vehicles, electric machinery, and chemicals. Automobiles came into prominence with the mass production system of Henry Ford, developed in Detroit by 1910. Ford's assembly line converted a rich-man's plaything into a universal form of transportation, the Model T. This was no leap into the void, because the Midwest had a long history of making carriages, bicycles, and ship engines, and in mass production -- the 'disassembly line'

of the pork-packers, developed a half-century earlier. So this region evolved with its own set of industries and methods, distinct from Europe and New England. The US Midwest powered it way to the pinnacle of the world industrial districts in the first half of the 20th century, with the rest of the Northeastern Corridor over to the Mid-Atlantic and the St. Lawrence corridor of southern Canada not far behind.

Another great breakthrough of the time was electricity. Electric generation and efficient transmission provided a flexible source of energy and a major new production sector. Electric motors revolutionized factory layout by freeing machines from drive-belts, and provided cities the first rapid transit system, the trolleys. Electricity brought improved lighting to factories, offices and homes, and was the root of a whole new world of communications by telephone and radio broadcasting. The manufacture of electric motors, light bulbs, telephones and radios was largely concentrated in the mid-Atlantic region, with outliers in New England, Ontario and the Midwest.

The chemical industry came into its own in North America with such breakthroughs as electrolysis, chlorine-based compounds like bleach, industrial acids, dyes from coal tar, and nitro-glycerin explosives. Demand for chemicals came from textiles, agriculture, cosmetics and metallurgy, among many sectors. The first great site of cheap electricity for chemical production was around Niagara Falls, later spreading to the Tennessee Valley and the Columbia River basin in the 1930s with the era of large dams. Synthetics fibers appeared after World War I, derived first from cellulose. The continent's leading position would be solidified by the invention of catalytic cracking and petro-chemicals on the eve of the Second World War.

Industrialization developed more slowly in Middle America and the Caribbean. The first advances came in Mexico under the reign of Porfirio Dias, but were badly disrupted during the Revolution. Early manufacturers concentrated on consumer goods such as cigarettes, clothing, textiles, matches, and foodstuffs for the national market. The stabilization of politics and nationalizations under Cardenas in the 1930s allowed Mexico to move forward again, World War II brought a real take-off. The one center of heavy industry was Monterrey, which had Mexico's first steel mill. From the 1940s, Mexico produced a more diversified mix of products, from consumer durables to machinery to gasoline. Most of this concentrated in Mexico City, which expanded its role as the primate city lording over the rest of the country.

Postwar Industrialization

After World War II, the United States stood astride the world with two-thirds of total manufacturing capacity. The American economy grew magnificently for the next quarter century, and Canadian industry received a large boost in train. Autos, oil, chemicals and electric machinery continued to reign supreme in the manufacturing mix. As engineering and science inputs became more sophisticated, most sectors and companies boosted their investment and labor deployed into research and development. At the same time, entirely new industries were taking shape as technology kept moving forward. In the United States, they were carefully nurtured by decades of heavy government research and development funding, which would put the US far ahead of all rivals in the high tech age to come.

Aircraft and missiles came into their own during the war, especially in the Far West, mostly southern California and Seattle. Film and TV studio production around Hollywood grew robustly. The new solid-state electronics industry settled into western bastions from Dallas to Orange County, with Silicon Valley taking shape as the largest

cluster. The economic weight of the continent was lurching westward once again. California, a secondary center since the Gold Rush, catapulted to the leading manufacturing state by 1970 and the heartland of global high technology. California's output makes it the sixth largest economy in the world today. Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area leapt up the urban hierarchy of the continent to surpass prior giants as Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit. Back east, only Boston, Minneapolis and New York retain importance in electronics and software.

The Old South of the United States experienced industrialization on a large scale for the first time after World War II. Branch plants of northern industries moved in, followed after 1975 by European overseas factories. Atlanta emerged as the new southern hub city. Houston and Oklahoma City had long benefited from the oil century, while Dallas had a major piece of electronics. Washington DC grew fat on the enlarged Federal government, beltway consulting firms and a new outer layer of electronics and biotechnology. Miami grew mightily by virtue of its links to Latin America and became the new hub of the Caribbean. Canadian postwar development saw southern Ontario outrun southern Quebec in level of industrialization.

In postwar Mexico, industrialization was robust for thirty years. Growth rates in the import-substitution era averaged 6 percent per annum into the 1970s. But technical standards and productivity lagged the world market, which reasserted its force by the 1980s. Deeply in debt by then, and suffering from the worldwide collapse of oil prices, Mexico effectively defaulted on its debt and took a sharp turn to neo-liberalism, inviting in more foreign investment. Building on the *maquiladora* program, Mexican industrialization shifted toward the northern border. Major recessions and factory closures drove down wages, making Mexico more attractive for subcontracted production from the United States and Mexico. With NAFTA as an additional incentive to cross-border investment, border manufacturing expanded to over 1 million jobs in the 1990s, challenging California as the largest industrial zone in North America. But recession and competition from China cut this number back severely after 2000. One-quarter of Mexico's labor force is still employed in manufacturing.

By the millennium, striking industrial changes were in train across North America, signaling a fifth industrial revolution. With computing and information technology the leading edge of technology, Silicon Valley's 'New Economy' model of high tech spinoffs, venture capital, contingent labor and rapid innovation was the envy of the world. Seattle became identified with software giant Microsoft and secondary electronics centers like Phoenix, Austin and Albuquerque exploded across the southwest. Guadalajara emerged as a major outpost of high tech in Mexico. The Internet, the latest wave in communication, was laid down in optical cables and microwave stations across North America in the 1990s. Nowhere was it denser than in Silicon Valley and the western electronics hubs, except in the financial centers of New York, Boston and Toronto. Biotechnology was also emerging as a force. The US has benefited the most from the new era, while the other countries all run deficits in high tech trade.

A striking development was the movement of labor-intensive manufacturing out of the United States and Canada. Everything from shoes and toys to clothing and hardware is being made abroad. Mexican *maquilas* make TVs, VCRs and automobiles for the northern markets. Factories have sprung up around the Caribbean Basin and Central America making clothing, toys, and footwear. Demand for hamburger meat helped turn much of Costa Rica and Guatemala to cattle ranching to supply fast-food outlets. Canada stole a march on Hollywood as film producers began to use Canadian locations, actors and technicians on a large scale, especially in Vancouver and Toronto.

Manufacturing has fallen to less than one-sixth of employment today in Anglo-America (although including mining and transportation it is still almost one-quarter)

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

The economic expansion of North America was presided over by specific forms of business and finance, varying according to the quirks of national law, organizational innovation, and political conflict.

Finance Capital

In the colonial era, finance was largely mercantile, provided by merchants for trading expeditions and to planters to get through a year's growing cycle. North America long suffered a deficit of capital, even though its gold and silver had filled the coffers of Europe. This encouraged financiers from Britain, France and Holland to lend and invest in the colonies as trade and production quickened. Investment continued after national independence of the United States, Mexico and Canada. British capitalists were particularly important in building canals and railroads across the continent, but also invested in mines, cattle ranches and banks. Before 1850, even the prosperous US economy was chronically short of funds and circulating money. The table began to turn, however, with the California gold rush, which greased the wheels of the US and trans-Atlantic economies with \$1 billion in new money in ten years (\$3 billion from the Western US over the next fifty years).

After mid-century, financial dominance shifted away from merchants to commercial banks. Canada had the most integrated financial system by 1900, with nationwide branch banking. Deep internal schisms over bank concentration kept the United States banking system fragmented. Its first two attempted national banks were soon dismantled and bank regulation left in the hands of the states until late in the 19th century. The Federal Reserve bank did not come into being until 1913, and even that was regionalized. With banks confined to single states and even single towns up to the 1910s, finance was relatively decentralized. The first to follow the Canadians into branch and interstate banking was San Francisco's Bank of Italy (later Bank of America), which grew to the largest bank in the world 1940-80.

Stock and bond markets were concentrated in a few top cities, as were investment banking, trust companies, and insurance. New York led the pack by far from early in the 19th century, and by the early 20th century was closing in on London. Other major US financial centers were Chicago, San Francisco, Boston and Philadelphia. Montréal was the foremost financial center of Canada for two centuries, but in the 20th century as Ontario gained preeminence as the leading industrial zone of the country, Toronto began to catch up. By the 1930s, Toronto surged ahead, and Bay Street became the northern equivalent of Wall Street.

Mexican banking and finance has long been concentrated in Mexico City. Modern banking and insurance had begun to develop before the Revolution, and foreign capitalists were dominant in financing Mexico's mines, railroads and infrastructure (roughly two-thirds of all investment). After 1917, the government was central in managing financial affairs and keeping capital inside the country. A handful of private banks grew large, and these have consolidated rapidly in the post-NAFTA era. Much of the Caribbean region's banking is done from Miami.

North American finance only became widely internationalized in the latter half of the 20th century. Canadian banks moved into the US in force after 1960, American banks moved into London and the Eurodollar market, then sped around the world in the 1970s. Japanese and Chinese capital crossed the Pacific to touch down in the financial districts of Los Angeles, Vancouver, San Francisco and New York. With liberalization, US banking corporations have bought up several Mexican banks. Several Caribbean nations and territories, such as the Bahamas and Cayman Island, have made themselves available as sanctuaries from taxation and regulation for New York and London banks and corporations. This money does not circulate appreciably within the region. Along with the shift from bank loans to securities in the 1980s, financial markets became more integrated, and with the speeding up of international capital flows Mexico's stock and bonds were the scene of fierce speculation in the 1980s, New York's in the 1980s and 1990s (when one-quarter of the \$7 trillion stock bubble was foreign investment).

Business Organization

Before 1850, almost all businesses were either small proprietorships and partnerships or chartered companies, licensed by city, state or national governments. The limited-liability corporation appeared in the United States c 1840, and in Canada after Confederation. From early on, American and British capital were prominent in Canadian industrialization, with some of the earliest branch plants known. Middle American business did not move into the corporate era until the 20th century.

Around 1900, the US saw the invention of an entirely new form of business organization, the multidivisional corporation. These large-scale enterprises pulled together many similar factories and products, and integrated supply and distribution chains, with the whole overseen by professional managers, accountants and engineers. They swept the country and surged abroad as multinational corporations through most of the 20th century. By the postwar era, US companies owned two-thirds of Canadian manufacturing capacity, raising fears again for Canadian economic autonomy. But some Canadian upstarts, such as JDS Uniphase and Nortel (Northern Telecom), have moved successfully south of the border.

As international competition intensified by the 1970s, American corporations proved vulnerable to competitors from Japan, Europe, and China using different organization forms and management principles. While learning from these developments, US and Canadian companies (especially from high tech) responded with innovations of their own that have impacted world production anew through practices such as global subcontracting, flexible labor deployment, contract manufacture, and computer-guided supply chains. Mexico's protected industries were quite vulnerable to international competition after tariff walls came down, and Mexico has become a major sourcing area for US companies seeking high quality but low cost parts; this has been a major impetus to border industrialization. The Caribbean islands are also commonly used for outsourcing, especially of garments.

Along with large scale finance and enterprise has come a major new segment of economic activity, the business services. These serve corporate and financial management with expertise in law, architecture, real estate, engineering, marketing, software, employment, and the like. Most of these are now purchased from independent companies, which cluster in large cities. They fill the large downtown office buildings that were once the province of big corporations before they fled in number to the suburban fringes from the 1950s to 1980s. Meanwhile, bank and

corporate routine services, like credit card billing and telephone inquiries, have moved to the hinterlands from North Dakota to Bermuda in search of cheap English-speaking labor. Business services are also becoming important element of international commerce, crossing North American borders.

CONSUMPTION AND INCOME

North America has played a striking role in the evolution of modern consumption and consumerism. Most of the primary products of the colonies, like sugar, went directly to personal consumption, as Europeans began enjoying the fruits of their newfound power and wealth. Tobacco and chocolate were indigenous plants enjoyed by native peoples in the Caribbean and Mexico which passed into the circuits of fashion and pleasure across the Atlantic. Beans and tomatoes are Mexican in origin. Corn, from Oaxaca, is today the most commonly grown grain on earth, ahead of rice and wheat (and at the center of disputes over genetically modified crops in the contemporary diet).

Industrial Markets

Simple consumer goods and household tools were the heart of the first industrial revolution in North America. Shoes, cloth, salt-pork, stoves and axes were some of the leading manufactures up to the US Civil War. Most went to farm households and townfolk, then to increasingly numerous city dwellers. An early feature of American consumption patterns was a taste for the commonplace and machine-produced, in contrast to the more refined and aristocratic demand for craft work of Europe and Asia. Household or village products from lumber and clothes to beer and toys quickly gave way to manufactured substitutes as the 19th century progressed, though less so in Middle America and the Caribbean.

The first machines for modern living came into being through the 19th century: the clock, revolver, sewing machine, bicycle, and phonograph. Key sectors in the evolution of mass production techniques, they were also machines that changed everyday life and taught people the satisfactions of modernity -- and stimulated the first mass marketing from the 1870s. By the 1920s, the car, telephone, radio and refrigerator had taken off as consumer goods in the US and Canada, well ahead of the European mass market. After mid-century, the television, electric stove, freezer, travel trailer, and other goods made the North American standard of living the envy of the world. The multiplication of consumer durables with electronic components in the last quarter of the 20th century has been astonishing: everything from microwave ovens to personal computers.

Much personal consumption took place in the home, and in North America individual houses and home ownership were widespread even before the advances of the post-World War II era. Once settled into their own homes (and garages), families could fill them up with consumer goods. Such levels of consumption depend on good wages, which is why Canada and the United States enjoyed the benefits of mass production long before most people in Middle America and the Caribbean. Wages are a joint outcome of resource abundance, labor productivity, labor scarcity, and worker efforts to secure better compensation. This worked to the benefit of most of English-speaking North America, but not Spanish-speaking countries, the Caribbean basin, the southern US or Quebec.

Several reasons may be adduced for this difference. The northern territories had the advantages of a thoroughgoing commercial order and mass European immigration. The virtual annihilation of the indigenous peoples gave the Euro-Americans access to land, and made for relative labor scarcity. As an industrial proletariat formed, workers began to come together in fraternal organizations and unions for mutual aid and protection. While these were bitterly fought, often outlawed, and sometimes violently repressed, they still made progress, and wages inched up with industrial growth. Inequalities were not large until the Gilded Age of the late 19th century, and restricted again in the mid-20th century (of late they have ballooned dramatically again in the US). Under these conditions, swelling consumption, industrial productivity and wages fed off each other in a virtuous cycle of development.

The southern portions of the continent have not fared so well. One reason is the legacy of slavery, followed by share-cropping, which kept African-Americans impoverished and outside the modern labor force in most parts of the greater Caribbean basin. In Mexico and Central America, the conquest left small landed elites lording over large peasantries for centuries. Mexico had the best chance to build a robust economy, but long suffocated under Spanish exactions and then suffered a protracted national consolidation in the 19th century. Mexico's revolution gave the people many more rights, and industrialization created a modern working class and middle class with rising incomes in the postwar era. Nonetheless, the single-party government kept union organization under tight control. With liberalization, debt payments, and financial crisis, wages have fallen by almost half in the last two decades, despite rapid industrialization, and inequality, already marked, has worsened. This has limited the market opportunities for US and Canadian companies hoping to enter Mexico under NAFTA.

In the Central America nations, with the exception of Costa Rica, social progress has been much slower. The peasantry has been impoverished, offering little domestic market, and the working class small, with almost no economic leverage. The unsuccessful revolutions of the 1980s have left things much as they were in terms of income distribution. The inability to raise wages and incomes of the mass of people has limited their domestic markets. The situation in the Caribbean nations is much the same. Most manufactured products and some food have had to be imported at prices that few can afford. Cuba withdrew from the capitalist economic market after 1960, and succeeded in creating a more equitable economy; but its growth has atrophied from being cut off from the markets and technologies of the continent.

Modern Mass Consumption

A vast apparatus now exists for the purpose of storing, transporting and selling the vast quantities of consumer goods in the advanced industrial economies of North America. This network employs millions of people. Here, too, Canada and the United States have often pioneered in methods of distribution and retailing. The artisanal shop and dockside merchant of the 18th century were supplemented by general merchandise store of the early 19th century, meant to handle a growing number of manufactured goods and merchants specializing in handling the movement of goods by canal and rail. They were, in turn, transcended by the department store, mail-order catalogue, and traveling salesman. Many important inventions of the time were used principally for selling, such as the telegraph, cash register, newspaper and offset printing.

The early 20th century ushered in even more advanced forms of retailing: the dealership, chain store, and Supermarket -- featuring a vast array of products on

display and self-service, another Anglo-American trait. The grand tradition of home shopping continues today with express delivery companies, cable shopping networks, and purchases over the internet. Chaining, self-service, and mass consumption of manufactured goods have never been more pronounced than in the realms of Fast Food and Big Box stores of recent decades. Behind all these lie huge networks of warehouses, shippers, transport and communication. Much of this is highly automated now, and the bar-code and computer have made for seamless flows of supply from factory to store. With NAFTA, WalMart and other US and Canadian retailers are targeting Mexican markets with the whole array of large-scale stores and selling techniques.

The modern city has been the fount of consumption, thanks to scale, wealth, contact, and display. Downtown shopping districts had emerged as distinctive zones in New York, Philadelphia, Havana, Mexico City and Montréal by the middle of the 19th century. In the 20th century came automobile-driven 'strips', suburban shopping centers, and fast-food intersections, giving urban landscapes in the United States a remarkably homogenous look. While they have spread into Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean, commercialization and automobilization of urban space have not penetrated as deeply. Spanish plazas still give focus to most Latin cities, and pedestrian traffic is brisk. On the other hand, Mexico City offers stark contrasts between modern middle class consumerism in the midst of a vast informal economy of the poor. Canadian cities have protected most of their neighborhood (and ethnic) retail districts -- and its downtown shoppers with vast underground malls. US city centers were widely gutted under urban renewal programs of the postwar period, and have had to be revived by investment in mixed use projects, warehouse markets and gallerias, as well as by rebuilding communities by the hard work of new immigrants.

Consumer sales have always depended on the mobilization of desire and the experience of delight in shopping. This goes back to the birth of department stores and the advertising industry. Today, retailing has become even more consciously a form of entertainment, nowhere more than in North America, bringing it into close conjunction with amusement parks. Disneyland raised the bar in the Theme Park, with its carefully orchestrated amusements and salesmanship. Now the largest malls, led by the West Edmonton Center, build in recreation centers and the flagship stores of chains like Nike are designed by Hollywood consultants.

Another form of mass consumption is tourism. Tourists spend a great deal of money along with their leisure time, and with the growing affluence of North Americans they can order up a host of goods and services in support of their travel and recreation. These include clothing, luggage, golf clubs and other goods, but especially on-site hotels, restaurants, guides, shopping and entertainment. Tourism has become a major industry throughout North America, but has its main impact on three types of places: convention cities, like Las Vegas; scenic wonders, like Banff-Lake Louise, and warm coasts, as in the Caribbean or the Pacific coast of Mexico. The latter has made tourism the number one income earner in the Caribbean and much of rural Mexico and parts of Central America. But it brings a new kind of migration and semi-colonization by white Anglo-Americans from the north.

Paradoxically, North American countries have become more elaborate consumer societies while producing a smaller proportion of their own goods. The US and Canada order from Mexico and the Caribbean basin, and across the Pacific, while Middle America and the Caribbean import heavily from the north. Many of these things are produced under contract to big retailers like WalMart and Dell. The United States, in particular, has become the buyer of last resort for the continent and for the world,

creating a staggering trade deficit and consumer debt load for the country. Immigration has also made the USA a major exporter of remittances sent home to family and friends. The sum amounts to several billions of dollars annually to Mexico, and is vital source of income to small countries like El Salvador, Dominican Republic and Nicaragua.

Similarly, health care and education, which are mostly supplied on the spot and without fanfare, do not benefit from salesmanship and entertainment values. They require, more than a thriving marketplace, underlying conditions of good pay, government involvement, and social care. These things have suffered in the United States, the richest of all North American countries, while Canada and Cuba have done well with less. But medicine and education are very labor-intensive, and as they have grown in coverage to include most of the populace and many more elderly, the weight of their costs has become a sizable burden on national economies. Every nation today is struggling with the expense of health and education, and government programs for their support have become political issues of first importance. Even immigration, financial, and language policies have been deeply touch by these controversies. In the end, how the countries of North America cope with delivering good health care, good education, and inclusive coverage will be one of the most important ways they are judged on moral grounds in the 21st century.

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