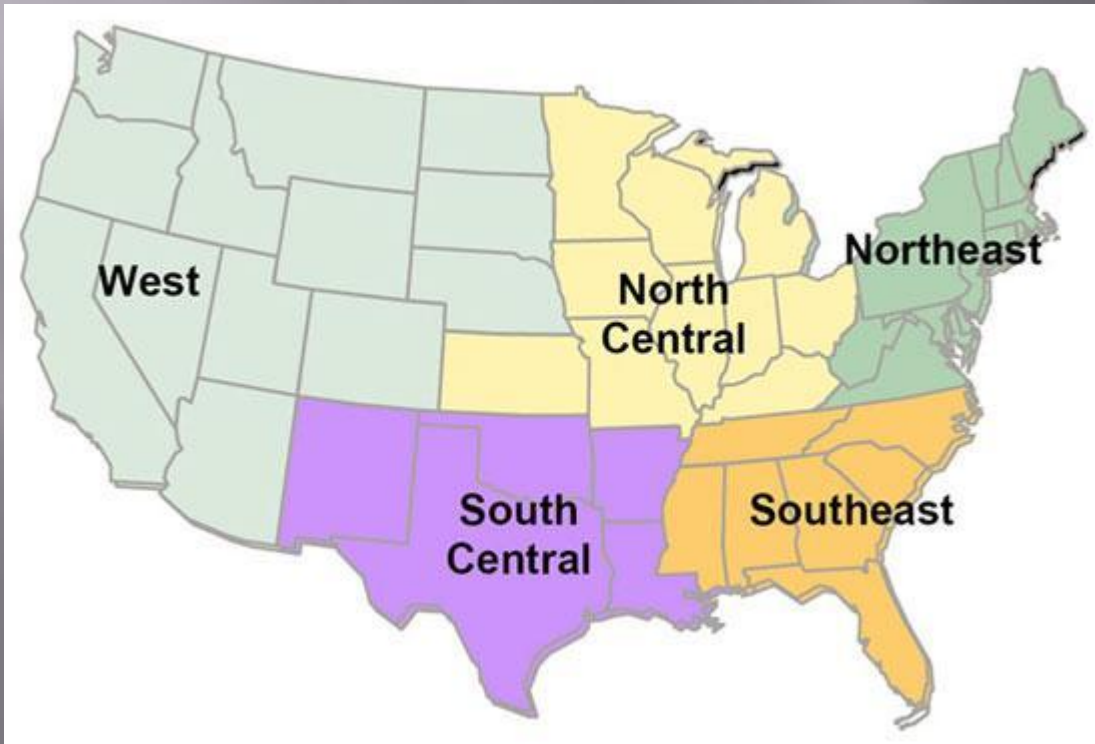


# **REGIONAL VARIETY**

# REGIONAL VARIETY

How much sense does it make to talk about American regions when practically all Americans can watch the same television shows and go to the same fast-food restaurants for dinner? One way to answer the question is by giving examples of lingering regional differences



Consider the food Americans eat. Most of it is standard wherever you go. A person can buy packages of frozen peas bearing the same label in Idaho, Missouri, and Virginia. Cereals, candy bars, and many other items also come in identical packages from Alaska to Florida.

Generally, the quality of fresh fruits and vegetables does not vary much from one state to the next. On the other hand, it would be unusual to be served hush puppies (a kind of fried dough) or grits (boiled and ground corn prepared in a variety of ways) in Massachusetts or Illinois, but normal to get them in Georgia. Other regions have similar favorites that are hard to find elsewhere.



- While American English is generally standard, American *speech* often differs according to what part of the country you are in. Southerners tend to speak slowly, in what is referred to as a "Southern drawl." Midwesterners use "flat" a's (as in "bad" or "cat"), and the New York City patois features a number of Yiddish words ("schlepp," "nosh," "nebbish") contributed by the city's large Jewish population.



- Regional differences also make themselves felt in less tangible ways, such as attitudes and outlooks. An example is the attention paid to foreign events in newspapers. In the East, where people look out across the Atlantic Ocean, papers tend to show greatest concern with what is happening in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and western Asia. On the West Coast, news editors give more attention to events in East Asia and Australia.
- To understand regional differences more fully, let's take a closer look at the regions themselves.



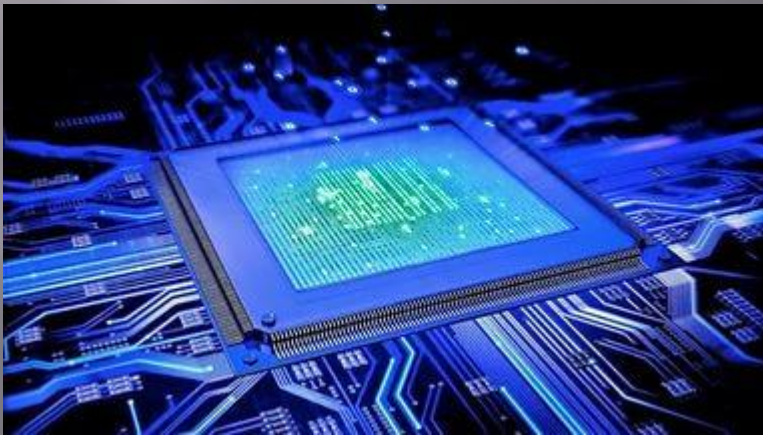
# NEW ENGLAND

The smallest region, New England has not been blessed with large expanses of rich farmland or a mild climate. Yet it played a dominant role in American development. From the 17th century until well into the 19th, New England was the country's cultural and economic center.

The earliest European settlers of New England were English Protestants of firm and settled doctrine. Many of them came in search of religious liberty. They gave the region its distinctive political format -the town meeting (an outgrowth of meetings held by church elders) in which citizens gathered to discuss issues of the day. Only men of property could vote. Nonetheless, town meetings afforded New Englanders an unusually high level of participation in government. Such meetings still function in many New England communities today.



- ▣ The mainstays of the region became shipbuilding, fishing, and trade. In their business dealings, New Englanders gained a reputation for hard work, shrewdness, thrift, and ingenuity.
- ▣ In the 20th century, most of New England's traditional industries have relocated to states or foreign countries where goods can be made more cheaply. In more than a few factory towns, skilled workers have been left without jobs. The gap has been partly filled by the microelectronics and computer industries.



# MIDDLE ATLANTIC

- ▣ If New England provided the brains and dollars for 19th-century American expansion, the Middle Atlantic states provided the muscle. The region's largest states, New York and Pennsylvania, became centers of heavy industry (iron, glass, and steel).
- ▣ The Middle Atlantic region was settled by a wider range of people than New England. Dutch immigrants moved into the lower Hudson River Valley in what is now New York State. Swedes went to Delaware. English Catholics founded Maryland, and an English Protestant sect, the Friends (Quakers), settled Pennsylvania. In time, all these settlements fell under English control, but the region continued to be a magnet for people of diverse nationalities.





- Early settlers were mostly farmers and traders, and the region served as a bridge between North and South.
- Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania, midway between the northern and southern colonies, was home to the Continental Congress, the convention of delegates from the original colonies that organized the American Revolution. The same city was the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the U.S. Constitution in 1787.



- As heavy industry spread throughout the region, rivers such as the Hudson and Delaware were transformed into vital shipping lanes. Cities on waterways -- New York on the Hudson, Philadelphia on the Delaware, Baltimore on Chesapeake Bay -- grew dramatically. New York is still the nation's largest city, its financial hub, and its cultural center.
- Like New England, the Middle Atlantic region has seen much of its heavy industry relocate elsewhere. Other industries, such as drug manufacturing and communications, have taken up the slack.



# THE SOUTH

- ▣ The South is perhaps the most distinctive and colorful American region. The American Civil War (1861-65) devastated the South socially and economically. Nevertheless, it retained its unmistakable identity.



- ▣ Like New England, the South was first settled by English Protestants. But whereas New Englanders tended to stress their differences from the old country, Southerners tended to emulate the English. Southerners tended to emulate the English. Even so, Southerners were prominent among the leaders of the American Revolution, and four of America's first five presidents were Virginians.
- ▣ Revolution, and four of America's first five presidents were Virginians. After 1800, however, the interests of the manufacturing North and the agrarian South began to diverge.
- ▣ Especially in coastal areas, southern settlers grew wealthy by raising and selling cotton and tobacco. The most economical way to raise these crops was on large farms, called plantations, which required the work of many laborers. To supply this need, plantation owners relied on slaves brought from Africa, and slavery spread throughout the South.



- Slavery was the most contentious issue dividing North and South. To northerners it was immoral; to southerners it was integral to their way of life. In 1860, 11 southern states left the Union intending to form a separate nation, the Confederate States of America. This rupture led to the Civil War, the Confederacy's defeat, and the end of slavery. The scars left by the war took decades to heal. The abolition of slavery failed to provide African Americans with political or economic equality: Southern towns and cities legalized and refined the practice of racial segregation.
- It took a long, concerted effort by African Americans and their supporters to end segregation.



COTTON CULTURE—COVERING IN THE SEED.—[See Page 546.]

# THE MIDWEST

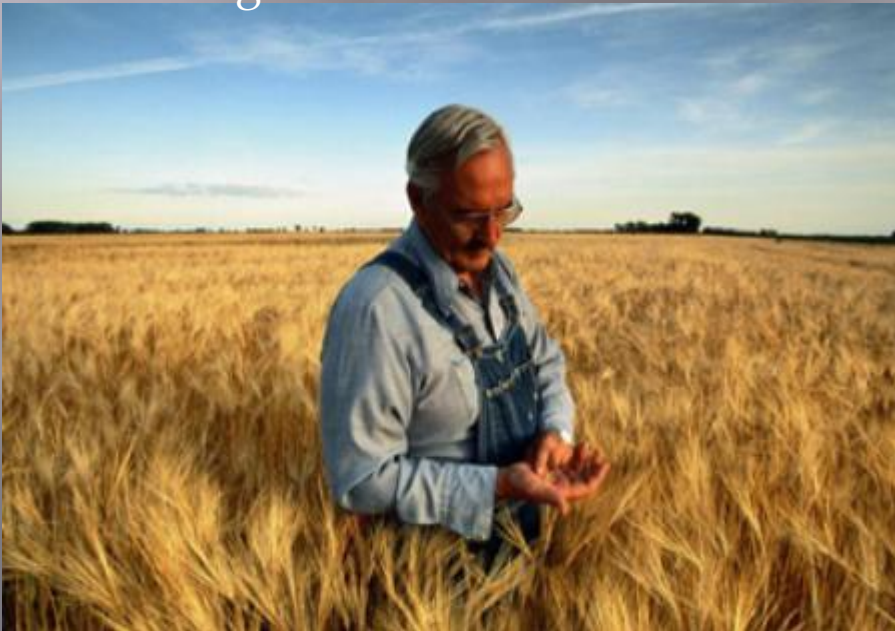
- ▣ The Midwest is a cultural crossroads. Midwesterners are praised as being open, friendly, and straightforward.
- ▣ Most of the Midwest is flat. The Mississippi River has acted as a regional lifeline, moving settlers to new homes and foodstuffs to market.



The region's fertile soil made it possible for farmers to produce abundant harvests of cereal crops such as wheat, oats, and corn. The region was soon known as the nation's "breadbasket.»

Midwesterners are praised as being open, friendly, and straightforward.

The region's hub is Chicago, Illinois, the nation's third largest city. This major Great Lakes port is a connecting point for rail lines and air traffic to far-flung parts of the nation and the world. At its heart stands the Sears Tower, at 447 meters, the world's tallest building.



# THE SOUTHWEST

- ▣ The Southwest differs from the adjoining Midwest in weather (drier), population (less dense), and ethnicity (strong Spanish-American and Native-American components). Outside the cities, the region is a land of open spaces, much of which is desert.





Population growth in the hot, arid Southwest has depended on two human artifacts: the dam and the air conditioner.

Dams on the Colorado and other rivers and aqueducts such as those of the Central Arizona Project have brought water to once-small towns such as Las Vegas, Nevada; Phoenix, Arizona; and Albuquerque, New Mexico, allowing them to become metropolises.



# THE WEST

Americans have long regarded the West as the last frontier.

The West is a region of scenic beauty on a grand scale. All of its 11 states are partly mountainous, and the ranges are the sources of startling contrasts.



Western cities are known for their tolerance. Perhaps because so many westerners have moved there from other regions to make a new start, as a rule interpersonal relations are marked by a live-and-let-live attitude. The western economy is varied. California, for example, is both an agricultural state and a high-technology manufacturing state.



**Thank you  
for your  
attention!**