

TRACING

THEMES

# Diversity and the National Identity

Before the first Europeans arrived, a variety of cultural groups—coastal fishing societies, desert farmers, plains and woodland hunters—inhabited North America. With the arrival of Europeans and Africans, the cultural mix grew more complex. Although this diversity has often produced tension, it has also been beneficial. As different groups learned from one another about agriculture, technology, and social customs, American culture became a rich blend of cultures from around the world.

## 1610s–1870s

### ◀ SPANISH NORTH AMERICA

Spanish missionaries in the Southwest tried to impose their culture upon Native Americans. However, many Native Americans retained aspects of their original cultures even as they took on Spanish ways. For example, today many Pueblo Indians of New Mexico perform ancient ceremonies, such as the Corn Dance, in addition to celebrating the feast days of Catholic saints. Later, the first cowboys—descendants of the Spanish—would introduce to white Americans cattle-ranching techniques developed in Mexico.



## 1776

### THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ▶

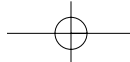
The signers of the Declaration of Independence were descendants of immigrants. The founders' ancestors had come to North America in search of economic opportunity and freedom of religious expression. When the Second Continental Congress declared a "United States" in 1776, they acknowledged that the country would contain diverse regions and interests. Thus the founders placed on the presidential seal the motto "*E Pluribus Unum*"—"out of many, one."



## 1862–1863

### THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION ▲

At the midpoint of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in areas of the Union that were in rebellion. Although the Proclamation could not be enforced immediately, it was a strong statement of opposition to slavery, and it paved the way for African Americans' citizenship.



# 1886

## THE STATUE OF LIBERTY ►

Poet Emma Lazarus wrote the famous lines inscribed at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, “Give me your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, . . .” The statue’s dedication took place during the most extensive wave of immigration the United States has ever known.

Many native-born Americans felt that the newcomers should fully immerse themselves in their new culture. However, most immigrants combined American language and customs with their traditional ways. As immigrants celebrated Independence Day and Thanksgiving, they introduced into American culture new celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and Cinco de Mayo.

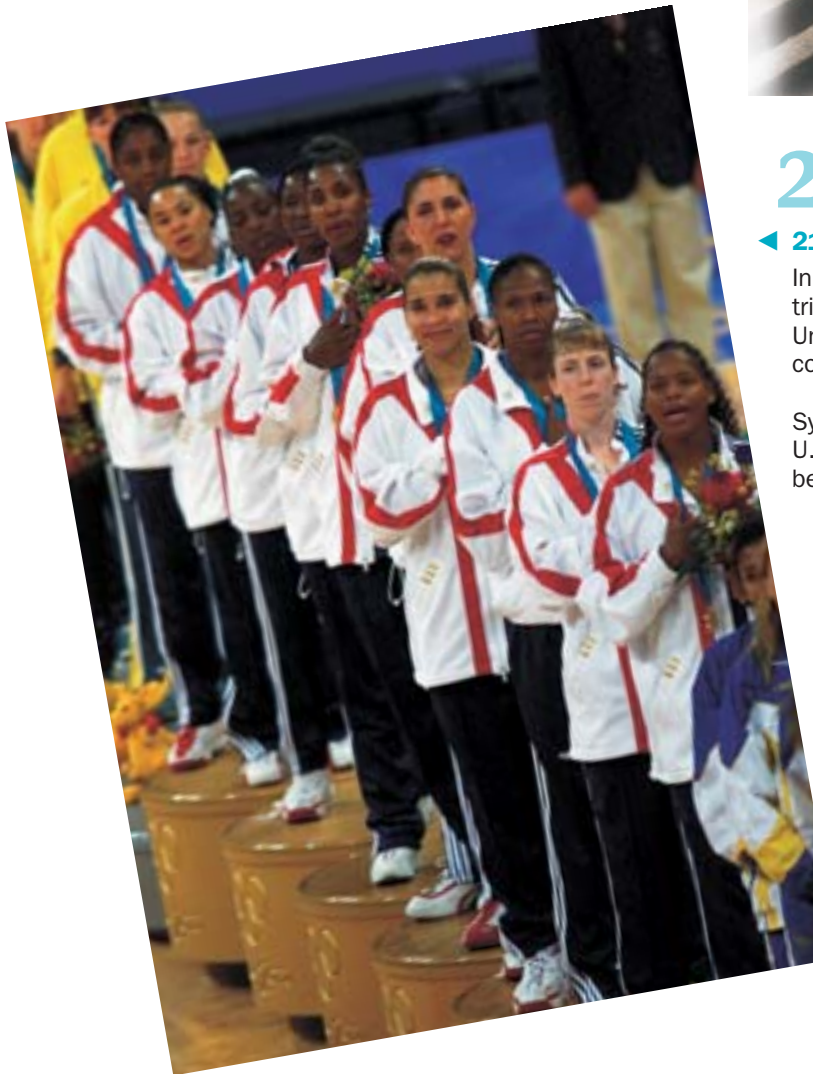


# 2000

## ◀ 21ST-CENTURY DIVERSITY

In 1998, three countries (Mexico, China, and India) contributed a third of the total number of immigrants to the United States. The rest of 1998’s immigrants came from countries as diverse as Vietnam, Sudan, and Bosnia.

American athletes at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, reflected the increasing diversity of the U.S., pointing toward a future in which there may no longer be a majority racial or ethnic group.



### THINKING CRITICALLY

#### CONNECT TO HISTORY

- Analyzing Motives** Why do you think some groups have tried to suppress the culture of others over the course of history? Why have many groups persisted in retaining their cultural heritage?



SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R6.

#### CONNECT TO TODAY

- Predicting Effects** Research current U.S. policy on immigration. How might this policy affect cultural diversity? Write a short editorial from one of the following viewpoints:
  - U.S. immigration policy needs to change.
  - U.S. immigration policy should be maintained.



RESEARCH LINKS

CLASSZONE.COM