



~4.5 BILLION YEARS
AGO...



*A dense cloud of swirling gas
and dust condensed to form the
planet we now call Earth.*



WHERE DOES THE UNITED STATES' CULTURAL HERITAGE COME FROM?



The United States of America has taken form over the past couple hundred years by following the examples of many other countries and their cultures, as well as the indigenous people who lived here before us and still do today.

- For many years, the U.S. was proud of its heritage as a nation of immigrants and assimilated the customs of its many immigrants into a larger culture, the proverbial American "melting pot."

NATIVE AMERICANS



- For thousands of years before settlers ever discovered America, 100s of different Native American tribes lived here. When the settlers arrived, some tribes welcomed them, and some didn't. Sadly, in the end many Native Americans were driven off their land, and the ones who weren't were regulated to tiny reservations which were often barren and considered uninhabitable by the American government. In addition, Native American culture was actively suppressed in schools and in public, leading to some smaller tribes and their culture being forgotten entirely.
- Today there are many Native Americans still around, however much of the United States' history was spent actively attempting to destroy their culture, and thus their influence on modern American society is more limited than it should be.

SLAVERY



- Slavery played a massive role in American history, both as the institution that facilitated the American cotton engine, as well as a practice that had massive cultural impact.
- Beginning in 1626, the North Atlantic Slave Trade would bring thousands of enslaved people to America, most of whom were put to work on vast southern cotton plantations. While enslaved people's original cultural heritage was beaten out of them often literally, as generations passed a new culture would form. Distinct from both African and White American society, this new culture created from the horrifying institution of chattel slavery would have a great impact far beyond the abolition of slavery itself.

THE MELTING POT

- The flow of immigrants into the United States has been a constant throughout its history, however there are definitive moments in history when large groups from certain other cultures immigrated to the US.
- 1849-1882- Millions of Chinese immigrants come to the U.S. following the California gold rush and high demand for extra labor.
- 1860-1890- Poor job prospects as well as a lack of civil liberties spur many Germans to come to the U.S. to seek a better life. Today more Americans consider themselves to be of German ancestry than any other group.
- This list could go on almost indefinitely, these are just a few examples of the cultures that influence modern-day American society.



FINDING YOUR COMMUNITY

- In the US it's a very common thing for people to have to find where they fit in, in society, after graduating high school.
- There are many different communities to choose from whether it focuses on religions, hobbies, food, school, work etc. It's up to each individual to find where they fit in and belong.



COMMUNITY

Each of these communities are built on the foundation of cultural values and beliefs.

The reason why having a sense of community is so important in American culture is because we live in a country where it's very easy to isolate which effects things like fulfilment, happiness, and self-worth.

Three of the most important things to have to live a healthy and fulfilling life are: a community where you feel like you belong and make a difference, having something in your life that gives you a sense of accomplishment (like growing a garden) and walking regularly.



CULTURAL STEREOTYPES OF THE U.S.



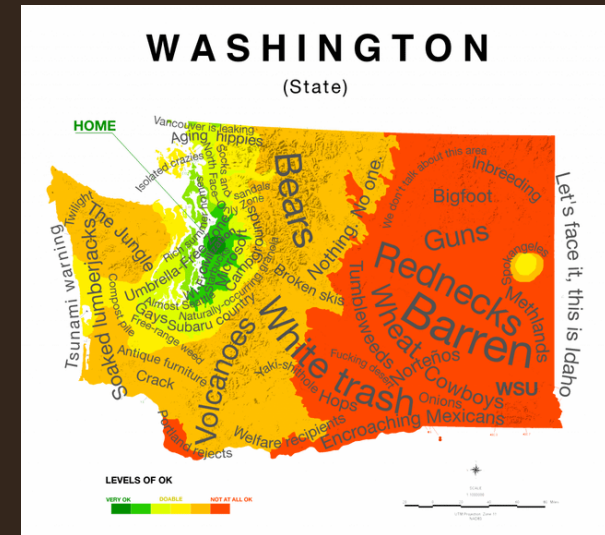
The US is well-known around the world often through stereotypes, which are generalized beliefs held about particular groups of people or areas around the globe.

Some of the most common stereotypes about the US are that citizens are gun-loving, patriotic, entitled, loud, work-obsessed, wealthy, and ignorant.

These stereotypes don't only come from outside the US, but also circulate throughout it and influence how we view each other from within different parts of the country.

MORE SPECIFICALLY: PNW CULTURE

- We come to you live from Olympia, Washington, in the heart of the Pacific Northwest, known for its huge evergreen trees, unrelenting rain, grey skies, surplus amounts of coffee, outdoor gear name brands, and Twilight franchise.
- I think many people from here will happily embrace these stereotypes, or at least begrudgingly acknowledge the accuracy.



Though people from the US and people living in the US often experience these stereotypes, and might even embrace them, it is important to remember that everybody has personal histories that make them unique. Individual, family, and community cultural heritage can connect people with a sense of legacy and belonging in the arts, cultural, religious and spiritual traditions, beliefs and ways of life. So, culture should be celebrated! It makes us who we are.



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THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING!

