

# The USA Chart in 2018-2019

## *Part One*

by Bill Herbst

*Version 1.4 (posted on 4 September 2018)  
© 2018 by the author, all rights reserved*

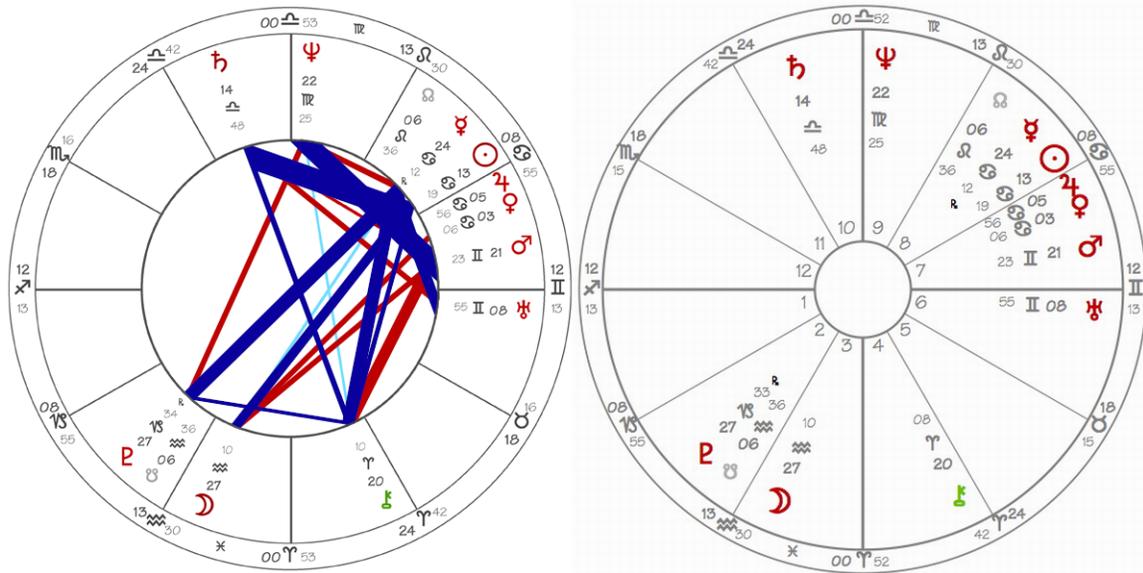
As we near the end of the tumultuous decade of the 2010s and approach the many challenges that will no doubt arise in the 2020s, what can astrology tell us about where America is now in 2018 and where it's headed in 2019? This week's commentary, the first of two parts, is my attempt to address that question through reference to the major cycle activations (called transits) in America's natal chart during 2018-2019.

This two-part commentary will be the fifth (and sixth) essays I've written over the past six years about the chart of the USA — one in 2013, three in 2017, and now two more in 2018. I've compiled the previous four commentaries into a single PDF file on the Essays Archive page of my web site. After I post Part Two of the current pair next week, I'll add both to the file. Here's a link to read or download the compilation file:

<http://www.billherbst.com/USA%20Sibly%20Chart%20Series.pdf>

In the first essay of the compilation file, the natal interpretation of the square from the Sun in Cancer/8th house to Saturn in Libra/10th house in the USA chart is particularly relevant to this current pair of commentaries. The two critical cycle activations in the USA chart during 2019 are transiting Saturn's opposition to the USA natal Sun and waxing square to the USA natal Saturn. Understanding the implications of those two simultaneous transits necessarily refers back to the fundamental meanings of their relationship in the natal chart. Readers — especially those who weren't following my commentaries back in 2013 — are strongly encouraged to download and read that material.

On the next page are two representations of what's called the USA Sibly chart, erected for July 4th, 1776, at 5:10 p.m. local mean time in Philadelphia, using the Tropical Zodiac, Koch houses, and the True Node. The graphic on the left is my custom-tailored version of the chart that shows me what I want to see at a glance. The graphic on the right is a more standard astrological presentation. Both charts are exactly the same, however:



## 2018 USA Sibly Major Active Cycles (Transits)

- ♃△☉△♁ ..... *Jupiter trine USA Sun and Mercury*
- ♄♁♀♃♁♁ ..... *Saturn oppose USA Venus and Jupiter; inconjunct USA Uranus*
- ♁♁♁☐♁♁♁ ..... *Uranus sextile USA Moon; square USA Pluto; inconjunct USA Midheaven*
- ♁△☉♁♁ ..... *Neptune trine USA Sun; inconjunct USA Saturn*
- ♁☐♁♁♁♁ ..... *Pluto square USA Chiron; inconjunct USA Mars*

Astrologically, 2018 is definitely the less important year within the two-year span of this commentary pair. It is also the least significant of all the years in America's chart from 2013-2023. Essentially, 2018 represents a kind of bridge or breather between the previous five years (2013-2017) — which were akin to the formation of a magma dome from pressures deep within the volcano — and the next five (2019-2023) — during which the volcano begins to smoke and belch lava as pressures approach eruption. That's not to suggest that 2018 is necessarily insignificant in reality, just that it's not particularly potent in astrological terms. The Jupiter and Neptune transits imply a period of buoyancy and expansion, but the Saturn transits indicate widespread unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and lack of opportunity. These contradictory elements in America's chart for 2018 don't cancel out. They coexist in a kind of intertwined dance of good news and bad news, whether as events of relevance to the nation or as indications of the overall psychological tenor of the American public in the cultural zeitgeist.

Some astrologers would emphasize the waning trine of transiting Neptune to the USA's natal Sun, and (to a lesser extent), the waxing inconjunct of transiting Neptune to the USA's natal Saturn, but I regard both of those transits as relatively minor. They blend into the background rather than stand out. Taken together (since the two transits are simultaneous), they imply a period of almost

two years — from spring 2017 through the end of 2018 — where fact, fiction, opinion, and belief blend seamlessly and cook down into smooth pudding. That could reflect well-formed perspectives or simply confirmation bias. Either way, Americans will tend this year to stick with what they already feel. Events and new information are not likely to alter many individual stances, and few minds will be changed. The years ahead will probably alter that as we are forced to reconsider what we assumed was true. Astrologically, though, 2018 isn't a year for rethinking.

Although some enthusiasm is indicated in the transits, excitement is generally at low ebb. As a collective, Americans are currently hunkered down into their respective tribal camps, waiting for something dramatic to happen. With the sole exception of the Uranus square to the USA's natal Pluto, nothing active in the USA Sibly chart for this year implies that sort of critical mass. Even the Uranus transit is insufficiently provocative by itself to upset the applecart. About all we can expect from the Uranus transit to Pluto is what we've already seen thus far in 2018: sporadic, sudden downturns in the financial markets in response to dicey news, from which the markets recover quickly.

Instead, 2018 is a pause — perhaps a pregnant pause, but a pause nonetheless — a year of gradual recovery where our psychic batteries are slowly recharging. Much of what's happening that might be important is occurring beneath the surface, out of sight and away from the video crawls of breaking news alerts, despite the daily melodramas of conflicting narratives continually vying for the attention of the national nervous system from every form of media. From the overall perspective of transits to the USA Sibly chart in 2018, most especially Neptune trine the USA Sun and inconjunct the USA Saturn, most of that is probably more superficial than substantial. This year is a temporary lull within a larger storm.

Overall, the 2018 transits seem to me to indicate that the national and state midterm elections in November are likely to draw a large turnout of voters, but with only moderate chances of surprises in the outcome. Will the much-anticipated "blue wave" of the voter pendulum swing back? I don't know. Maybe, maybe not.

I would assert that everything I know about the astrology of these times, whether from the USA chart specifically or the more universal transits currently active in civilizational astrology, strongly suggests that candidates for office would be well advised to *not* move toward or run from the center. That strategy, long employed by the Democrats but less by the Republicans, seems to me doomed to failure at this point. The "center" is empty. Appeals to the centrist "middle" will probably be met with indifference by the voters. America is in the throes of extreme partisanship. In politics, passion rules, mostly in the form of sustained anger. Whether candidates for office wave a red or blue flag, chances of winning are better if the color is bold. Pastels or purples are losers.

## 2019 USA Sibly Major Active Cycles (Transits)

♃♁♂♂♂♂♂..... *Jupiter oppose USA Mars; square USA Neptune*  
♄♁☉☐☐☐♁♂..... *Saturn oppose USA Sun; square Saturn & Chiron; inconjunct Mars*  
♅♁♀..... *Uranus sextile USA Venus*  
♇☐♁♂♂♂♂♂..... *Pluto square USA Chiron; inconjunct USA Mars; trine USA Neptune*

Compared to 2018's transits, 2019 is entirely different. Where 2018 is astrologically a year of watchful waiting and lack of tangibility, 2019 is like a massive block of granite that sits in the middle of the road and blocks our way ahead. At least as indicated by the astrology of major transits in the USA chart, 2019 is a much more important year.

Politically, if the Democrats regain the majority in the House, that will chasten President Trump and set us on a road toward more serious consequences. If the Republicans retain their hold over both legislative chambers (House and Senate), that will embolden Trump and set us on a much different but equally serious path. Either way, we will crash into a solid wall of resistance.

Socially/culturally, 2019 brings the "Us/Them" polarity to a head in America. If it seemed that our division into angry tribalism had gotten about as bad as it could get, 2019 may show us the full repercussions of extreme polarization. Is civil war around the corner? I don't know, but astrology strongly suggests that any sort of national unity or public consensus will be unlikely in 2019-2021.

Economically, 2019 will almost certainly bring further challenges in national finances and monetary systems. Business and money are at the heart of the USA Sibly chart as central themes (8th house Sun, with Saturn in the 10th house ruling the 2nd), and 2019's major transits are powerfully connected to both arenas in difficult ways. Am I predicting another financial collapse as in 2008? I'm not willing to go that far, but I am concerned. Many astrologers believe that America's Pluto return in 2021-2023 (exact in 2022) is a prime indicator of economic/financial meltdown. I would be hard-pressed to disagree. Our financial systems seem to me much more fragile than we are told.

All this is strongly indicated for 2019 by the overall pattern of conflicted transits, but in particular by two simultaneous Saturn transits that dominate America's astrological landscape — one to the USA natal Sun and the other to our natal Saturn. These are both very serious transits. By "serious," I don't mean "headline news spectacular event" serious, but rather "deep in the gut" serious. Americans will be forced to examine who we've been, who we are, and who we will become. That process will occur with or without any provocative events to stimulate it. Major events may happen, of course, but I expect that their impact will be grinding over time rather than suddenly sensational.

To discuss 2019 in more depth, I need to write first about the Saturn-Sun cycle, which I've addressed partially in other, earlier commentaries. So, to paraphrase Shakespeare, "*Once again, dear friends, into the breach...*"

The Saturn-Sun cycle is (in my opinion) the most important cycle in personal astrology. Many other cycles in individualized astrology are important, but the Saturn-Sun cycle easily takes the blue ribbon for what and how much it reveals about the central themes of our lives. The cycle represents a 29-year period in four seven-year quarters during which an individual (or, in this case, a nation) sets a course that will determine the fundamental meaning and overall purpose of its life throughout the cycle. Whatever happens (by choice or fate) at the beginning of the cycle will tend to remain of major importance throughout the entire three decades. This is so whether or not we realize it at the time (we may or may not), and also whether or not the events seem important at the beginning. Changes will occur along the way, of course, but the central tone will continue to resonate, necessitating further actions as circumstances unfold over time.

If we plant an acorn, we cannot be certain that the seed will produce a stout and strong tree. The sapling or young tree could wither and die along the way for any of a thousand reasons, or it might flourish and mature into full flower and magnificent tree-ness. But what we can know for sure, right from the start, is that planting an acorn will result in an oak tree — not a pine, not a birch, not a fir. The same is true of the beginning of the Saturn-Sun cycle (and indeed, of all astrological cycle beginnings). We can't be sure of the eventual outcome, but we can know the essential nature and quality of what's growing.

The Saturn-Sun cycle addresses a fundamental issue: what can we create and do that will provide us with a meaningful life. Not necessarily a happy or easy life, but a life that has meaning. To determine our path, we bring together our core vitality and connection back to Cosmic Central (the Sun) with the custom-tailored challenges we face and obstacles we must overcome inside ourselves and in the outer world (Saturn). This "seed germination" of setting out on a path starts when Saturn in the heavens passes over the zodiacal position occupied by the Sun at our birth. That's the beginning of the Saturn-Sun cycle. As a convenient shorthand, I call it the Life Purpose cycle, since it involves a major investment of time, energy, activity, and — crucially — patience to produce a meaningful and fulfilling life-experience.

The Saturn-Sun cycle doesn't start at birth. It kicks in at some point between birth and age 29 (the chart tells us when), and then repeats every 29 years thereafter. In a full human life, we will get at least two complete Saturn-Sun cycles, and perhaps even three. No one gets four. Think of the cycle as a garden with four seven-year seasons: spring planting, summer tending, autumn harvest, and winter lying fallow. If we live long enough, we'll get two or three chances throughout our lives to see if we can grow a beautiful garden.

For a nation, more Saturn-Sun cycles are possible. America is reaching the halfway point in its eighth Saturn-Sun cycle of purpose and meaning, the first of which began in 1798. Each cycle represents another variation on a basic theme, revealed by the Sun and Saturn in the birth chart.

The actual transits of quarterly phase changes in Saturn cycles, usually about ten months long, are a time of forced stoppage in our life-journeys. Everything slows to a standstill in preparation for a 90° shift in direction. At the halfway point, as the Full Phase gets underway, the shift is away from forward development and toward realization of what was built. It's a little like building one's own house. At some point, the house under construction must cease being a project. We have to move into the house and live in it as our home.

In 2019, America's chart reaches that halfway point in our current Saturn-Sun cycle of central purpose and meaning as Saturn, now moving through Capricorn, arrives at the degree exactly opposite the USA's natal Sun in Cancer. That midpoint in the cycle implies the necessary transition from summer tending of the growing crops to the autumn harvest. The period of the transit itself announces that it's time to change direction. Over the following seven years, we reap whatever was sown, whether the fruits of the crop we grew are bountiful or sparse.

This doesn't mean that we have no choice about how to make the shift and what to do over the coming years. Choices are important, and our collective decisions matter. It does imply, however, that we have to work within the context and structure that now exists. This isn't starting over from scratch. Instead, it's about understanding the full implications of what we created (whether we did so consciously or unconsciously, with wisdom or foolishness, and for better or worse), then finding the best ways to put to good use whatever we created.

End Part One

*[In Part Two of this pair of commentaries, I'll discuss the history of America's Saturn-Sun cycles over the past century. Then I'll return to the year ahead in 2019 and write about some of the probable meanings for Saturn's opposition to the USA's natal Sun and their implications for America's necessary adjustments coming in the 2020s.]*