

The USA Chart in 2018-2019

Part Two

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[In Part One of this pair of commentaries, I wrote about the major transits to the USA Sibly chart in 2018 and 2019. Now in Part Two, I'll discuss the history of America's Saturn-Sun cycles over the past century. Then I'll return to 2019 and write about some probable meanings for this year's Saturn opposition to the Sun.]

For more than a century, America's Saturn-Sun cycles have been shaped by three fundamental questions about our sense of national Life-Purpose: *How wealthy can we become? How powerful do we want to be? And how shall we use our great wealth and power, both at home (to enhance American life, liberty, and our pursuit of happiness) and throughout the world?*

Let's take a trip down history lane and examine the Saturn-Sun cycles in America's chart over the past century.

1916-1944: The Rocky Road to Wealth and Influence

In 1916, Saturn conjoined the Sun in the USA Sibly chart. That was the middle year of World War One, when America had geared up economically to supply the Allies and was preparing to enter the war. We had already made the decision to become a global empire, but that period astrologically marked the beginning of our status as an industrial giant and supreme economic force in the world. America became the bastion of both capitalism and freedom, as well as the breadbasket of the world. For the next decade and a half, we flexed our industrial muscles and economic might. America grew rich (or rather, some Americans did), but our infatuation with wealth backfired at the end of the 1920s.

Saturn's opposition to the USA natal Sun in 1930 ushered in the devastating results of over exuberance about the unfettered pursuit of money through capitalism's boom-and-bust market cycles. Our economy collapsed into the Great Depression, which brought America to its knees and held the nation in its grip for the next decade.

1945-1973: Economic Juggernaut and Cold War Superpower

In 1945, at the next Saturn-Sun conjunction, President Franklin Roosevelt died in office, America dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, World War Two ended, and the Cold War began. At that point, America reigned as the world's greatest imperial superpower. Throughout the first half of that new Saturn-Sun cycle of central purpose and core meaning, the Cold War became our preeminent obsession. We shifted very quickly from defeating Nazism to defeating Communism. An almost hysterical anti-communist frenzy arose in 1950s America, during which the military-industrial complex and the Deep State dug in and took root, along with the nuclear arms race.

In 1960, as Saturn opposed the USA Sun, we moved into the harvest phase, reaping what we had sown. John F. Kennedy was elected President, and the Cold War with the Soviet Union reached full crisis in the botched Bay of Pigs invasion and subsequent Cuban missile crisis. Those dodged bullets would be followed by Vietnam and the turbulence of the 1960s.

America's Saturn-Sun cycle, which is always about wealth, power, and security ran headlong into the global Uranus-Pluto cycle, which was about revolution, equality, and social justice — all of which are supposedly ideals that America espouses, but which tend to run counter to wealth and power. Much of the waning half of that cycle of purpose and meaning was spent with America in conflict with itself. Lyndon Johnson's presidency was torn apart trying to accomplish the social reforms of the Great Society (Uranus-Pluto) while simultaneously fighting the Vietnam War (Saturn-Sun).

A relevant aside is that some people suggest that had President Kennedy not been assassinated, the tragedy of Vietnam wouldn't have occurred. They hold that JFK's intention was to gradually defuse the Cold War and reverse the nuclear arms build-up, and that blame for Vietnam should be laid squarely upon President Johnson. I find that explanation far too simple. Kennedy, as a creature of his times, was a committed Cold Warrior, as were most of Kennedy advisors, the so-called "best and brightest." Astrologically, the 1960s were the full phase of that Saturn-Sun cycle in America, implying that at the level of government, the decade was the result of the previous 15 years of Cold War confrontation. It was not a time of spring planting, but of autumn harvest.

The radical developments of that decade, including the peace movement, were essentially out of synch with the full phase of America's Saturn-Sun cycle. Instead, they were tuned to the birth of a new Uranus-Pluto cycle in civilizational astrology that applied to humanity as a whole and brought a tidal wave of revolution that challenged authority and tradition. What I'm implying here is that, during the 1960s, those of us who were turned on by the rebellion of the counter-culture were essentially breaking with America, which, following two World Wars and a Great Depression, had happily returned to conservatism. What

felt empty and hollow to us felt secure, safe, and reassuring to the majority of Americans.

Kennedy assassination conspiracy advocates often assert that the President was taken out by the Deep State to prevent any movement toward rapprochement with the Soviet Union. I don't know that this is literally the case, but, considered astrologically, I have to grudgingly admit that such a theory makes a certain sense, whether factual or mythic. The military-industrial complex was part of the crop we sowed in the Saturn-Sun cycle that began in 1945. By the 1960s, it had grown robust and huge, and America reaped the inevitable results of what it had sown, in consequences that were both impressive and terrible. Some Americans were horrified by the extent of our powerful economic militarism. Most Americans were proud of it. Most Americans still are.

1974-2002: American Exceptionalism and History's End

In 1974, at the culmination of the Watergate cover-up, Saturn once again conjoined the USA Sun, starting yet another 29-year Saturn-Sun cycle of purpose and meaning. During the transit, President Richard Nixon resigned, insuring that the age-old struggle between corruption and justice would be a significant part of the cycle for decades to come. Shortly after, the Vietnam War finally ended, closing out a tragic period in the Cold War against communism.

Cracks had begun to appear in the American Dream. Americans were exhausted and increasingly disillusioned, and a malaise took hold. Ronald Reagan rode to the rescue, however, and turned the new cycle into a celebration of unrestrained capitalism and the unapologetic quest for material gain.

American Exceptionalism also became part of the central theme of that Saturn-Sun cycle. Our belief in our own innate goodness was seemingly restored, along with conspicuous consumption and "traditional" American values. A fundamentalist Christian revival garnered millions of followers. The pursuit of wealth and infinite abundance returned (with a vengeance). Former hippies and radicals became stock brokers, and it was once again "Morning in America." Or so we told ourselves.

At the halfway point of the cycle in 1989, as Saturn again opposed the USA Sun, the Berlin Wall came down, followed in short order by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and America emerged victorious from the Cold War. Capitalism had won, although Wall Street's euphoria was already tarnished by the ongoing Savings and Loan scandal. Greed was now considered a good thing, and the headlong pursuit of wealth was extolled, despite a disturbing economic inequality that was clearly on the rise. The coastal and urban 'haves' began to separate from the flyover and rural 'have nots.'

We had already exported much of our manufacturing base to the cheap labor factories of the Third World and shifted away from industry to the FIRE economy (**F**inance, **I**nsurance, and **R**eal **E**state). The hard-won 20th-century gains for workers by the labor movement were steadily dismantled, aided by Republican propaganda. The “wisdom of the market” became a neoliberal religion. Big Business and Wall Street created financial schemes that made them seem like wizards and believe that they were indeed the Masters of the Universe. Humility gave way to hubris as the end of history was announced. America was now the world’s sole superpower.

But our wild celebration proved slightly premature. The dark shadow of corruption kept dogging America’s heels. Wages stagnated despite increased worker productivity. Then, in the final years of the cycle, with Pluto smack on the Ascendant of the USA Sibly chart, 9/11 shattered our illusions of omnipotence and safety. That was a foreshadowing of things to come.

2003-2032: Overreach and Imperial Decline

America’s current Saturn-Sun cycle began in 2003. By far, the single most important event of that year was the American military invasion of Iraq and the subsequent overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi regime. What began as a stunning military victory quickly went sour, however, devolving within a year into a terrible quagmire out of which sectarian violence emerged in an insurgency that grew to monstrous proportions. Of the many ham-fisted misadventures of the American empire over more than a century, the invasion of Iraq was arguably the most egregious blunder of all, a tragic mistake of immense proportions for America, for Iraq and the Middle East, and perhaps even for the world.

That series of events set a tone for the entire purpose-and-meaning cycle to come (2003-2032) in America’s chart. Our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have continued since then without resolution, and with no end currently in sight.

Other major developments that proved momentous also began during the initial “seeding” phase of this current Saturn-Sun cycle. The frenzied real estate housing mortgage bubble was one, whose bursting in 2006 led directly to the financial meltdown of huge investment banks in 2008, followed by a massive bailout to keep the game going. The subsequent economic “recovery” enriched those in the top 10%, but the biggest winners were the billionaire class. The losers were most Americans on the bottom half of the wealth ladder.

In addition, the dramatic rise of the Internet, the smart phone revolution, and the birth of social media arose like mushrooms, seemingly overnight. The technology revolution has so completely altered the economic and cultural landscape of America and the world that day-to-day, ordinary life now is shockingly different from what it was a mere two decades ago. The ways we

lived even 40 or 50 years ago now seem like ancient history, and the early 20th century might as well be the Stone Age. Meanwhile, our every mouse click and swipe are tracked and logged. Algorithms determine what we see. Brave New World is here, and the future is hurtling toward us faster than anyone can process. The pace of change is downright dizzying.

I cannot repeat often enough that the full phase of the Saturn-Sun cycle represents reaping what was sown. For better or worse, for good or ill, we are confronted by the results of our own actions. Whether we were wise or foolish, conscious or unconscious in what we built, now we get the results. The challenge is not to start anything from scratch, but to expand our understanding and perspective about possible new uses for what we created and brought into manifestation. In both real and metaphorical ways, first we build, then we share. If what we build is positive, the sharing can be joyous. If what we build is troubled, sharing is a way of salvaging our work and redeeming our sense of purpose and meaning.

To make the shift successfully from the 15 years of building during the waxing half of the cycle into the 15 years of sharing during the waning half requires a social adjustment. It requires realizations about consequences, as well as the willingness to include others.

For America as a nation, those realizations will demand increased awareness that we must cooperate with the rest of the world rather than dominate it. We'll be notified one way or another that acting unilaterally, as a law unto ourselves, doing whatever we choose, has not served us well in the past and will not serve us at all any longer. This will take much more than a single year and may be accompanied by unpleasant or even terrible shocks to awaken us to the realization of our common humanity in all its diversity.

If we get the message, we can make adjustments — political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and even military — toward greater cooperation and better understanding. If we ignore the message, we'll suffer the repercussions during the 2020s by finding ourselves isolated and shunned by the world.

I hope we get the message.