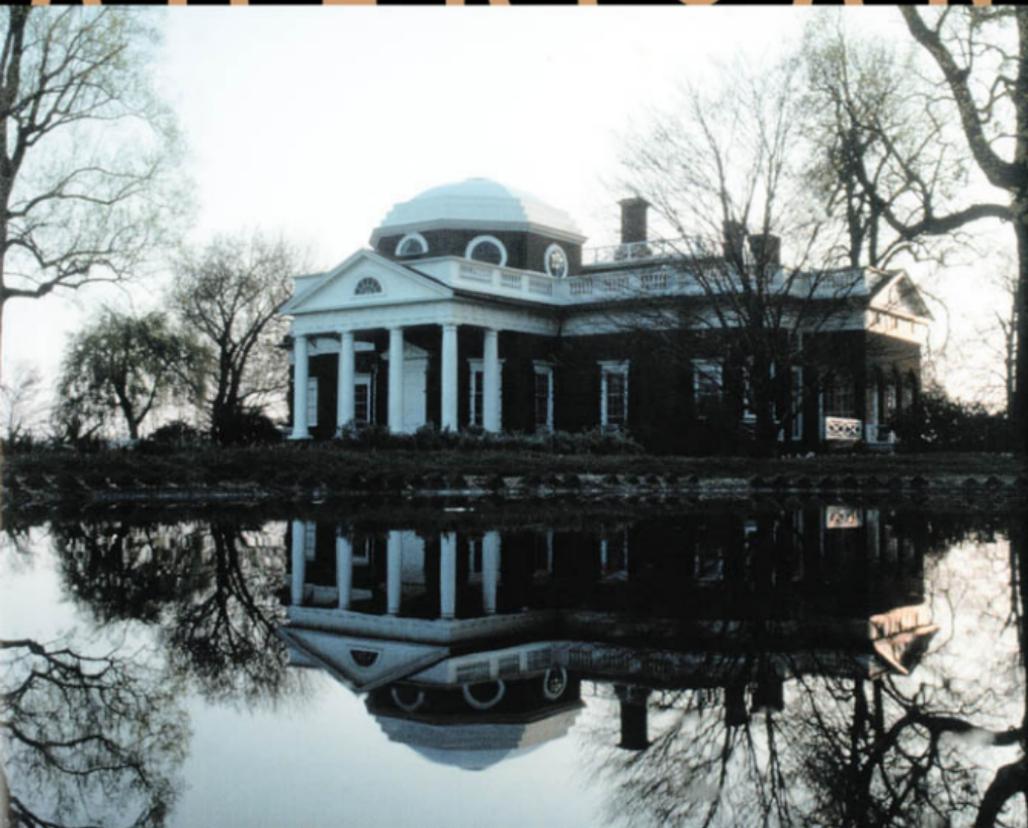


# A M E R I C A N



# P L A C E S

*Encounters with History*

America's Leading Historians Talk about the Sites Where  
the Past Comes Alive for Them

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Edited by WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG

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**P L A C E S**

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Encounters with History

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*A Celebration of Sheldon Meyer*

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*Edited by*  
*William E. Leuchtenburg*

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2000

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford New York

Athens Auckland Bangkok Bogotá Buenos Aires Calcutta  
Cape Town Chennai Dar es Salaam Delhi Florence Hong Kong Istanbul  
Karachi Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai  
Nairobi Paris São Paulo Shanghai Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto Warsaw

and associated companies in  
Berlin Ibadan

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Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
is available  
ISBN 0-19-513026-x

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America  
on acid-free paper

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## Preface

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**T**his book has two aims in mind. One is to gather together essays by prominent historians on a fascinating range of American places. The other is to pay tribute to a stellar editor. Of the two purposes, the topic of places is likely to be the one to which the reader will more readily relate. It may be harder to grasp why a book would be motivated by the desire to celebrate an editor. For generations, filmgoers have been tutored to appreciate that beyond the words and images spoken by actors on the silver screen stands a director, and the names of some directors have become legendary—Hitchcock and De Mille, Bergman and Fellini. But it is uncommon for even the best informed reader to be aware of the contribution of an editor to the success of a book. Only rarely does the name of a Maxwell Perkins swim into public consciousness.

It is especially unusual for an editor to be honored with a Festschrift, for “festival writings” have been thought of as a fanfare not for an editor but for a distinguished scholar, a mentor who is tendered on a special occasion, usually his retirement, a volume of essays. *American Places* is very likely a unique enterprise in that it is a testimonial not to a professor but to an editor. Sheldon Meyer, though, invites such an exception. He is, as I said in dedicating my book *The Supreme Court Reborn* to him, “Editor Nonpareil.” It is doubtful that any other editor in the long history of publishing in the United States has had so large an impact on a field as has Sheldon Meyer on American studies, or so distinguished an array of authors.

Sheldon Meyer’s interest in U.S. history is long-standing. He majored in history and American civilization at Princeton, from which he was graduated in 1949 Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude. In the half century and more since then, he has read so widely in history, especially American history, that he has few peers in his familiarity with the literature.

## PREFACE

During these same years, he also steeped himself deeply in popular culture—from jazz (on which he is a recognized authority), to the musical theater, to the world of sports on two continents—from the baseball diamond exploits of the Mets at Shea Stadium to the heroics of Leeds United, Bayern München, and Real Madrid in the soccer arenas of Europe.

Before going to Oxford University Press, Sheldon had stints at two publishing houses with names so Dickensian that they have come to seem drolly premodern. He began with Funk and Wagnalls. (Some years later, the TV program *Laugh In* could draw guffaws simply by crying out the inane line, “Look *that* up in your Funk and Wagnalls.”) Sheldon then moved on to Grosset and Dunlap, the first publisher’s name to catch my attention as a little boy because it appeared to be on the jacket of almost every book I read. Indeed, Sheldon was hired there in 1955 ostensibly to supervise the Tom Swift and Hardy Boys series, although actually to work on a new paperback line: Universal Library. (I should add parenthetically with regard to these early years that our friendship of four decades has survived only because of my largeness of spirit—for Sheldon persists in taking enormous pleasure in the darkest day of my life. He exults in a certain October day in 1951, not because it marked his entry into publishing—which it did—but because it was on that day that Bobby Thomson hit his egregious home run that enabled the Giants to snatch the National League pennant from the more deserving Dodgers.)

In 1956, Sheldon Meyer joined Oxford University Press, and the rest, as sports announcers are fond of saying, is history—in this case, literally so. His new position gave him a desk in what was arguably the most prestigious publishing house in the world—but not one that was a front-runner in American history. I remember vividly a morning in 1950 in Northampton when my good friend and Smith College colleague Daniel Aaron told me that he was submitting the manuscript of his book *Men of Good Hope* to Oxford University Press, and I expressed bewilderment. Why Oxford? I knew, of course, that Oxford University Press had a luminous heritage going back nearly five centuries and that it was responsible for such landmarks as the *OED*. But in American history, it did not begin to have the éclat of Harper or Knopf. In those years, an aspiring historian hoped not for an invitation to clink glasses and swap yarns at an Oxford party, but to lunch with Alfred Knopf, whose garish shirts semaphored his presence from a great distance away.

## PREFACE

Under Sheldon's aegis, Oxford University Press soon assumed a considerably larger presence in the field of American history and after a time became the dominant house. Historians from Orono to San Diego learned to say, as convention time approached, "I'll meet you at the Oxford party." To mark how greatly the stature of Oxford has changed since the 1950s, one needs only turn to a convention program of the Organization of American Historians. At one recent meeting, where Sheldon Meyer was honored, the publication carried an astonishing eight full pages of advertising for OUP books, far beyond the spread of any other publisher; the list comprised no fewer than 138 titles.

The rise to eminence of Oxford University Press in U.S. history closely tracks the career of Sheldon Meyer. He rose from assistant editor to become Executive Editor for Trade Books, then Senior Vice President, Editorial, with his own publishing unit. Though he has recently stepped down from that post, he continues to work with Oxford authors as Consulting Editor.

Sheldon Meyer all but reinvented the calling of editor. He would pop up on a college campus less to sell books, though he did that well, than to inquire of a young professor, "What are you working on?" When he found out that the man or woman was engaged in a topic not regarded as mainstream, he would convey the inspiring message not only that the project was worthwhile but that there was a renowned firm on Madison Avenue eager to publish it. He did not create new fields, but he did do a great deal to foster communities of scholars—to assure anxious historians venturing into uncharted seas that other explorers had set out on the same sorts of voyages. And when the manuscripts arrived on his desk, he would help shape them into books in which both the author and the press could take pride.

Lewis Bateman, who, as a consequence of thirty years at Princeton University Press, the University of North Carolina Press, and Cambridge University Press, enjoys an enviable reputation as one of the country's foremost history editors, wrote Sheldon in 1998:

You changed the landscape of scholarly publishing in the United States. Most editors at university presses waited until manuscripts arrived over the transom and found them at annual meetings. You actively sought them out on campuses. . . . When I joined Princeton University Press in 1972 . . . everywhere I went you had been there before

## PREFACE

me or anyone else. A few weeks ago, C. Vann Woodward . . . mentioned to me that you knew what everyone was working on. Few of my colleagues would admit it, but we are merely trying to replicate your efforts in our modest careers. We know what a wide net Oxford has cast as a result of your tenure as editor there.

In short, if any of us accomplishes one-tenth of what you have done in your career, it will be a lot.

Sheldon's performance at OUP has been truly remarkable. He has edited no fewer than six Pulitzer Prize-winning books and seventeen that have won the prestigious Bancroft Prize—a record. Merely reciting the names of the authors of these award winners indicates the extent of his influence: Eric Barnouw, Ray Billington, Charles Capper, Robert Dallek, John Demos, Stanley Elkins, Eric McKittrick, Don Fehrenbacher, Louis Harlan, Kenneth Jackson, Robert Johannsen, David M. Kennedy, Gordon Levin, Leonard Levy, James McPherson, Robert Middlekauff, Samuel Eliot Morison, Mark Neely, James T. Patterson, Merrill Peterson, Joseph Wall, and Donald Worster.

Furthermore, the *kinds* of books he has edited have frequently broken new ground. Consider some of those he shepherded in the single area of African American history:

John Blassingame, *The Slave Community*  
Thomas Cripps, *Slow Fade to Black*  
George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy and Black Liberation*  
Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*  
A. Leon Higginbotham, *In the Matter of Color*  
Nathan Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*  
Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*  
August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *CORE*  
Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion*  
Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*  
Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*  
Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture*  
Robert Toll, *Blacking Up*  
Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*  
Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*

## PREFACE

Note, too, the impact Sheldon Meyer has had on the publishing of histories of American women, another field shamefully neglected when he began. The books he has edited include:

William H. Chafe, *The American Woman*, revised as *The Paradox of Change*

Allen Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*

Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and Family in America*

Mary Kelley, *Private Woman/Public Stage*

Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out of Work*

Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past* and *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*

Regina Morantz-Sanchez, *Sympathy and Science*

Paul Nagel, *The Adams Women*

Sheldon has been especially innovative in fostering works in popular culture. Just a sampling of the books in this field that he edited embraces Gunther Schuller's *Early Jazz*, called "the most important musicological statement on jazz's infancy"; Martin Williams's *The Jazz Tradition*, cited as "the most distinguished critical work in the field"; Whitney Balliett's *American Musicians*; Gerald Bordman's *American Musical Theatre*; Michael Kammen's *The Lively Arts*; Andrew Sarris's *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet*; and Alec Wilder's *American Popular Song*. In 1987, thanks to Sheldon Meyer, Oxford University Press received the Carey-Thomas Award for "creative publishing" for its list in jazz and popular music, and in 1997 it was applauded for having brought out more ASCAP prize books than any other publisher.

Gary Giddins, who has published four books on jazz with Oxford University Press, has written in the *New York Times Book Review*:

Sheldon Meyer merits, at the very least, a flourish of saxophones, a melody by Jerome Kern and a high-kicking chorus-line salute. Over the past 40 years, Meyer turned the world's oldest and most staid publishing house into the leading chronicler of jazz, Broadway musicals, popular-song writers, broadcasting and black cultural history.

Sheldon Meyer's achievements have won international recognition. The Association of American University Presses honored him with its

## PREFACE

Constituency Award “in appreciation of outstanding service to the University Press Community,” and in 1993 Oxford University bestowed on him an Honorary Master of Arts. The Oxford degree ceremony is an awesome experience because it is carried out entirely in Latin, a language most of us do not readily fathom—although I once read in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that Dan Quayle had been studying Latin so that when he went to Latin America he could converse with the natives. The late C. Vann Woodward, whose essay in this volume is, sad to say, very likely the last he ever wrote, once confessed to me that when he received an honorary degree from Oxford most of the words swam by him. He did piece out, however, that “*Jacobus Corvinus*” were the two final words of his *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, yet another book edited by Sheldon Meyer in its later editions. Similarly, Sheldon, wondering what the oration in Latin would do with *jazz*, picked out “*musica vulgaris*.” The Oxford ceremony took place at the Sheldonian Theatre, and one chirpy young woman said, “Oh, isn’t it nice for Sheldon that they’re holding it in his own theater.”

Sheldon had yet another tribute in store for him. After he turned in his keys at 198 Madison Avenue and set up advisory editor quarters in his apartment on Riverside Drive, Oxford University Press resolved that proper notice should be taken of his change of status and of his illustrious career. Clearly, neither a gold watch nor a monogrammed briefcase would be adequate. Instead, the press decided to put together a Festschrift, with his most prominent authors as contributors.

When Peter Ginna, OUP’s trade editor, first approached me about editing the volume, he already had a well-thought-out conception of it. He sought not a mere “collection of essays” but “a book that will hold together and be of interest in itself to the same kind of general readership that Sheldon’s list has reached out to over the years.” In the course of a generation, Sheldon had edited manuscripts by so many outstanding historians that it would not be easy to decide whom to invite, but we would collaborate with Sheldon on making the choices, and, to include as many as possible, the total would be unusually large. In the end, there were more than two dozen. Our only regret was that even with so many, there was not room for more numbers of highly esteemed scholars.

Too often, volumes of this sort, no matter how well-intentioned, have wound up as random aggregations of miscellany; at worst, batches of

## PREFACE

yellowed essays exhumed from file drawers—with no theme and no reader appeal. I recall painfully the opening line of a review by Arthur Schlesinger of a tome in honor of my mentor, Henry Steele Commager, to which I had submitted a piece: “As an art form, the Festschrift is a loser.” We agreed that this book must have a theme, and the theme should be “American places.”

That topic had more than one feature to recommend it, not least that most of us associate Sheldon Meyer with places: a cavernous hotel room where he reigned benignly at an Oxford party; a dinner table at the leafy Commander’s Palace in New Orleans; on a Chicago rooftop overlooking Lake Michigan; a cramped campus office where he appeared in quest of a manuscript; a frigid seat at Giants Stadium in the New Jersey meadows; a sunlit luncheon venue with lobster salad and chilled Chardonnay at his summer home on Fisher’s Island off the Connecticut coast.

In our letter of invitation, we told prospective authors that we wanted them to write a short essay on a place that engaged them, and encouraged them to adopt a personal style. We were looking for, we explained, not just a descriptive piece about a particular site, but the interaction of the historian with that place. These were to be personal essays of a sort historians often do not get a chance to write, and the author was to be at the center of his or her essay.

The historians who were invited responded with gusto. All welcomed an opportunity to say thank-you to Sheldon, and almost all found the conception of the book congenial, although, taught from their first days in graduate school to eschew the *I* word, some took a while to adapt to the personal idiom. We made no attempt to impose topics on contributors, and they showed considerable imagination in their choices. James C. Cobb and David Brion Davis defined *American* to encompass the U.S. presence on the European continent; Edward L. Ayers comprehended *Places* to accommodate the virtual sphere of cyberspace. Some other venues were almost as unexpected: Fenway Park and the Polo Grounds, an arts and crafts colony in upstate New York, and a Hollywood bistro. The essays—ranging from coast to coast, with stops at places such as Stone Mountain, Georgia, and Main Street, Memphis, in between—can be no more than suggestive of the range of Sheldon’s reach. We present them for the pleasure of our readers, but especially, with abiding affection, for one particular reader: the redoubtable Sheldon Meyer.

WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG

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## Taking Place

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**P**eople have always had a strong sense of place. The Romans spoke of the *genius loci*, the “spirit of a place,” and we can understand their meaning readily today, even if the spirit for us is a feeling rather than a deity. “Place,” writes Eudora Welty, “absorbs our earliest notice and attention; it bestows on us our original awareness; and our critical powers spring from the study of it and the growth of experience inside it.”

For anyone intrigued by history, the physical traces of the past, especially places, have a particular fascination. Certain sites speak to us because in visiting them we confront the past in a tangible, immediate way. Sometimes we visit historic places as an act of homage. Sometimes we visit them to satisfy simple curiosity—what did Walden Pond look like? Sometimes we discover history in an unexpected locale, like a restaurant or a baseball park. But whatever the occasion for our visiting these places, there is no question that we understand history in a different way when we encounter it “on the ground.”

Place stimulates the historical imagination in several ways. These different facets of the historian’s sense of place are displayed with sparkling variety in the essays collected in this volume. Perhaps the first way we think of place is as setting—the scene in which the events of history are played out. The battlefield at Gettysburg, so well evoked here by James M. McPherson, was the stage for one of the greatest dramas of the Civil War, while Elvis Presley’s Graceland witnessed the less edifying spectacle of the King’s demise, recalled in Joel Williamson’s wry tour. Yet in either case, we cannot imagine the event without the setting, nor can we visit the place without replaying in our minds what happened there.

Of course, place may be much more than a backdrop for history; it can itself shape people and events. Simple geography can be crucial. As David Kennedy observes, the very remoteness, in 1859, of San Juan Island prevented a spat between U.S. and British troops from becoming

## TAKING PLACE

an international conflict. Or something harder to define—a *genius loci*—may leave its mark. David Hackett Fischer detects, for example, a spirit in the history of Boston Common that has helped to give that city its unique character. On a more intimate level, Bertram Wyatt-Brown's recollection of growing up in Sewanee tells us about an unusual place (and its unusual inhabitants) that helped to form the writer himself.

Place is also a connector: some sites speak so strongly of individuals who have gone before us that we almost feel we can touch them there. To visit Monticello is, as Merrill Peterson shows, as close as we can come to spending a day with Thomas Jefferson. But we can also feel such a link in places that are not "historic" in the plaque-and-guidebook sense. Paula Fass learned that in a country store in California, where a chance discovery connected her to the past with the jolt of an electric current. And Alice Kessler-Harris writes movingly here of how, in a Fifth Avenue mansion, she heard the voices of Eastern European immigrants.

If places can shape history, it is no less true that they are shaped by it, often indelibly. It is no surprise, then, that many of our contributors "read" places as evidence—a historical record written in three dimensions. To William Freehling, Charleston's Battery and New Orleans's Jackson Square spoke volumes about the varied origins and cultures of the Old South. To William Leuchtenburg, the changing face of a Queens, New York, street corner encapsulates the modern history of his native borough. And Donald Worster, in his elegant essay on the Grand Canyon, finds inscribed there the story of an entire planet.

"One place comprehended can make us understand other places better," Welty went on to say. She might have added that it can make us understand history better, for the unfolding of events is inseparable from their location: that is why we say history "takes place." The writers in this volume have each "taken place," too, and eloquently. They have come together to honor a friend and colleague, but they have given us twenty-eight additional reasons to celebrate.

PETER GINNA

**A M E R I C A N P L A C E S**



Cyberspace, occupying no actual place, is often imagined with two basic features: grids and glowing lights. Image by Nate Ayers.

## **CYBERSPACE, U.S.A.**

I write not of Thomas Jefferson's town, where I live, nor of the American South to which I have devoted my working life. Rather, I write of a new American place, one we cannot see but whose effects we increasingly feel: "cyberspace." That place, simultaneously metaphorical and tangible, has touched every part of the United States. Information surges along networks of copper and glass, weaving ever tighter webs across the country and the world. Those networks define a space at once empty and densely populated, desolate and hopeful. By its very nature, cyberspace is the space among other places. It touches them all but is possessed by none.

At one level, cyberspace is merely bits of electronic information, zeroes and ones, stored on computers and networks. At another level, it is more concrete, addresses and linkages whose names people know and can read. And at the sites where people interact with one another, cyberspace becomes physical, filled with color, sound, and image. Even though those places are merely projected on screens, people have fallen in love there, have cooperated, conspired, traded, and raged.

So powerful has this new kind of space become that some observers worry that cyberspace may efface the country it is colonizing with such speed. The portals of cyberspace, critics charge, pull people into basements and bedrooms, encapsulate them in lonely fantasies of sex, greed, and violence, replace real communities with virtual ones. Other

## AMERICAN PLACES

commentators hold out the hope that cyberspace will unite people by affinity and passion rather than by the mere accident of physical locale. These optimists believe that the fabric of American society can be strengthened by the new networks. Either way, the stakes are high.

Cyberspace is not a purely American invention; like the railroad, automobile, cinema, radio, and television, cyberspace grew out of international collaboration. But like those innovations, it has been absorbed and dominated by the United States, claimed as an American contribution to the world. The conceit is not baseless, for not only did U.S. military spending and engineering ingenuity undergird the creation of much of the original network, but American business has taken up where defense spending left off. Two-thirds of Web traffic originates in the United States, and two-thirds of Web users speak English, the native language and lingua franca of cyberspace.

This historian came to cyberspace with no intention of staying. I arrived several years after the Internet, the infrastructure of cyberspace, had been constructed by engineers and scientists for their own purposes. When I had first used computers, in the 1970s, they had seemed isolated behemoths, ensconced behind glass, presided over by priestlike figures. Though the first link between computers had been established in 1969, the maturation and spread of the technology had taken years to unfold. When I returned to computing in the early 1980s, everything had changed. Machine and machine connected with hidden protocols, moving information instantly and invisibly, ignoring distance. The networks tied people and machine together in a new kind of intimacy.

No one spoke in the early years of "cyberspace." The descriptive and prosaic "net" served as the term of choice until an influential, if unlikely, book appeared in 1984: *Neuromancer*, by William Gibson. An American living in Canada, Gibson wrote in an American idiom of science fiction and dystopia, of fascination with and dread of the future. Fittingly enough for this pioneering era, he composed his book on a manual typewriter, extrapolating the implications of cyberspace from the merest glimpses of the new technology. Discovering a portable cassette player in a shop a few years earlier, Gibson had slipped the headphones on. "For the first time I was able to move my nervous system through a landscape with my choice of soundtrack," he recalled. Gibson imagined cyberspace when he saw an ad for an early Apple computer and con-

## CYBERSPACE. U.S.A.

nected it with the experience of the cassette player: "I thought, if there is an imaginary point of convergence where the information this machine handles could be accessed with the under-the-skin intimacy of the Walkman, what would that be like?" Gibson envisioned cyberspace as a "consensual hallucination," people at their computers weaving their imaginations into vast metaphors of information and disembodied energy, power and wealth translating into immaterial but potent form. It did not take long in Gibson's novel for the hallucination to become all too real, for the longing actually to enter cyberspace to become so strong that characters "jacked in" to the network directly with their brains and bodies.

Gibson's vision resonated with those who logged on to the early net. People in the 1980s experienced cyberspace only through words and symbols glowing on a monochromatic screen. No images, no sounds, intruded; imagination confronted limitless space. Across that immense void, mere typed conversation became appealing in a way few would have foreseen. Words, devalued by movies and television, took on a new life. In the absence of ready-made entertainment, people filled the vacuum with role-playing games, dramas of mutual creation. Solitary people sought out compatriots; enthusiasts sought out fellow enthusiasts; people of many sorts sought out titillation of one form or another. The net appeared, paradoxically, both empty and intimate. People rushed to its lists and groups, to its virtual chat rooms, dungeons, and bordellos, and yet the place still felt like a secret sanctuary for the few hundred thousand souls who occupied it.

To most people, even to some of its inhabitants, the world of the net seemed overwhelming and uncertain. Bleak visions of the society that might accompany cyberspace proliferated in the eighties. *Neuromancer* was not alone. The film *Blade Runner* portrayed a postindustrial society awash in its own waste and discarded people, no longer able to keep law and order. A famous Super Bowl advertisement of 1984 evoked a leaden world of robotic clones that only more computers, Apple computers, could supposedly shatter. Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* portrayed a world where franchises and viruses attached themselves to weakened hosts in both cyberspace and the material world. Young people in these years imagined themselves as "cyberpunks," marrying a facility with the new networks to the anarchic sensibility of the Sex Pistols. They and

## AMERICAN PLACES

their allies waged battles, both legal and illicit, to keep cyberspace beyond the grasp of government and corporate capitalism, to create a libertarian paradise of hackers.

Other people pursued a different vision, one of strengthened community and responsibility. One of the most successful efforts grew from an experiment called the WELL, founded in 1985. The outgrowth of San Francisco-area countercultural leaders, the WELL sought to provide a place for sustained communal conversation. It attracted thousands of participants and for many people stood as the embodiment of what an online community could be. As Howard Rheingold, an active member of the WELL and a pioneering writer on community in cyberspace, later put it, "Hundreds of thousands of people rely on their virtual communities as a real lifeline—people whose illness or disability prevents normal communication, people who are caregivers or who suffer from any one of hundreds of diseases, people who live in isolated areas, the only gay teenager in a small town, people trying to escape abusive relationships." Rheingold had personally taken his "turn sitting by the deathbed of a woman who would have died alone if it were not for the real-life presence of a virtual community."

About this time, in a much more prosaic way, I became entangled in the world of the Internet. I had recently conceived of trying to get at the larger issues surrounding the American Civil War through a linked study of a Northern community and a Southern community, done the old-fashioned way, with notecards and text. Through a series of coincidences and collaborations, however, I ended up in 1991 beginning to build the archive for such a study in a computerized format that could be shared with others. While I had casually used the Internet for years, I could not imagine how to distribute this digital archive in any form other than putting it on a tape and mailing it to the other few institutions that had the considerable hardware necessary to run it. We set to work digitizing newspapers, censuses, diaries, letters, and maps with just this purpose in mind. The Internet let us transfer some files and let us collaborate from our offices, but our project remained isolated.

One day in 1993, however, one of my computer science associates e-mailed me to say that I must come to his office as soon as I could. There, he showed me Mosaic, the key tool for something called the World Wide Web. The Web, an overlay of linked text and image that used the net for its vehicle, redefined the experience of being online. The brainchild

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of an English physicist working in Switzerland, Mosaic had been designed for scientific collaboration. We confronted Mosaic on a high-end Unix operating system, but versions of this browser software—polished and promoted by Americans—soon appeared for desktop computers. Overnight, cyberspace became a far more literal, and populated, place.

It was immediately apparent that everything had changed, including the Civil War community project. Now we could construct an archive online; our material need not wait for years to be disseminated but could be shared even as we gathered it. The archive could go anywhere in the world people could tie into the network, a network expanding exponentially. We threw ourselves into building a Website devoted to this slice of history. We called it the Valley of the Shadow Project, for our two communities lay in the Great Valley of the eastern United States and had been visited by death and devastation in the war. The archive grew until it contained thousands of sources, detailing, week by week, the fates of a Virginia county and a Pennsylvania county from 1859 to 1869. The archive housed civilians as well as soldiers, women as well as men, enslaved as well as free.

The Web offered a challenge to many of the conventions of the historian's craft. Long, linear prose did not work on the Web, and yet we did not know how to write in any other way. The Web loved images, but we knew words best. The Web depended on instant interactivity, but we were used to laying out our arguments in a fixed form. No one has yet discovered how to write for this new medium, how to tell a historical story in scrolled or interactive text. Some worry, in fact, that the short attention spans and fixation on the future supposedly bred in cyberspace will erode historical thinking. On the other hand, the new medium may be especially well suited to convey the complexity and depth of history. Only trying will tell.

History has traditionally been a solitary craft, the product of one person thinking about something a long time, but the Web demands collaboration. Team-produced history makes some people nervous, as they wonder where authority and accountability lie. As it turned out, however, our collaboration proved a delightful innovation, all the more satisfying for being absolutely necessary. Dozens of students and allies were pulled into the project as the archive steadily grew. We held each other accountable and found our authority in combined effort.

To our surprise, over three million visitors came to the Valley Project

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on the Web, people of all ages, from all over the world. Some told us that this history on a computer screen, as unlikely as that seemed, touched them more deeply than any other they had ever experienced. Part of the appeal came from the very thing we had worried about: the lack of a visible authority, the absence of a single voice, the empty space where there would normally be an argument or narrative. Instead, we had created a place where visitors in effect collaborated with us to weave stories from the records.

We had stumbled upon what proved to be one of the most appealing metaphors of the Web: community. The historical sources took on meaning because they told of communities of imaginable size undergoing the most dramatic events the people of this nation have ever known. But there was more to the appeal than that, for people using the site seemed to feel themselves a part of a larger community. They knew they were not the only ones thinking about these anonymous people of the past. Messages came virtually every day to the Valley Project, sharing enthusiasm and encouragement. The new technology seemed to be creating new communities, both real and virtual.

Other Web communities were far more self-consciously orchestrated. Businesses quickly sprang up around the metaphor; tens of millions of people "joined communities" by posting Websites reflecting their personalities, interests, and images of themselves. Those virtual communities soon became among the most heavily visited places in cyberspace; twenty million people have created Web pages in one virtual neighborhood or another, and the number of new arrivals continues to expand. The metaphor is pursued with great thoroughness and literal-mindedness. At GeoCities, one of the largest virtual communities, visitors are promised they can "meet people just like you." Websites are divided into neighborhoods, blocks, and houses. Each neighborhood is themed, its denizens united by their fascination with some hobby, celebrity, or cause. The neighborhoods read like an X ray of American obsessions, pastimes, and fantasies. People can choose to live, among many other places, in WallStreet (investing, finance), TimesSquare (games, role-playing), Athens (education, philosophy), Hollywood (film and TV), Pentagon (military), or RainForest (the environment).

As in suburbia, looks can be deceptive; though each house in each block appears the same, behind the surface great variation awaits. Some houses are filled with sophisticated graphics and text, while others bear

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the marks of residents who lost interest after posting a photo of their cat or listing their favorite television shows. Some communities have active city fathers and mothers who strive for cybercivic pride. In the Heartland community, for example, residents vie for the Heartland Award of Excellence, given to those who do the most to encourage the values of the traditional American community. Special places have been set aside in the Heartland for genealogy, prayer, and other honored practices and values. Sites are decorated with symbols rich in nostalgia and earth tones.

Much of cyberspace, in other words, has become thoroughly domesticated. It would be difficult to imagine places much farther removed from the dark, slick, and sinister spaces of *Neuromancer* than these relentlessly cheerful commercial communities. While early visions of cyberspace envisioned power nakedly displayed in glowing cubes and grids, cyberspace at the turn of the century resembles nothing so much as it does the American suburbia in which it flourishes. Confronted with a blank slate on which to imagine a new kind of space, people on the Web have replicated late twentieth-century America and its car culture of malls, subdivisions, traffic, construction, shopping baskets, and chain stores. People have even begun to buy and sell, at escalating prices, "real estate" in role-playing games. Until proven otherwise, everything on the Web is an advertisement for something else. Eighty-three percent of sites devote themselves to commercial content; 6 percent are devoted to education and science. We have met cyberspace and it is us.

Relentless optimism stands as the official mood of cyberspace. "In this Internet moment—a remarkable convergence of calendar and change—we the people have a chance at last to become our own masters," one booster enthused at the approach of the new millennium. "We are all moguls now, pooh-bahs with our hands on the machinery of vast empires. We are retail lords, media masters, forces on Wall Street and in Hollywood. And we don't even have to put on ties or heels." While critics of the Web complained that over half of all Web traffic was already controlled by a few big companies, optimists pointed out that half remained for everyone else.

The sense of danger, nevertheless, continues to lurk. No sooner had cyberspace been settled than it attracted doomsday cults, pedophiles, and fascist skinheads. Nostalgia immediately developed for the old Internet. "Cyberspace, once thought of as the world's most cozy community," one

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editorial lamented in the wake of a computer virus, "has quickly become a lonely, infinite expanse of electronic hallways filled with endless queues of on-line shopping malls and shadowy alleys where computer outlaws and their rogue programs lurk." The world of *Neuromancer* has merged with that of Wal-Mart. Faced with this anomie, gated communities have proliferated in cyberspace; some people, presented with an unprecedented possibility, want instead to mingle with people virtually like themselves. Shoppers are automatically guided to the same music and books as other people who bought similar music and books before. The web of "customerization" grows tighter and tighter, hopes of communities based on something other than consumerism dwindle.

It is a familiar pattern: Americans, perpetually optimistic, are also perpetually disappointed. In this way, the accelerated history of cyberspace has recapitulated the history of the country where it has most flourished. Things tend to begin with millennial visions and end in comfort, convenience, commerce, and more than a little regret and guilt. A dominant emotion of cyberspace might be called "anticipointment," a perpetual sense of possibility undercut by the acknowledgment that the reality can never quite live up to the idealized image we have of it.

Echoes of earlier periods in American history run through much of the discussion of cyberspace. Even as they talk about the newest and latest things, commentators reach toward the familiar formulas, standards, and assumptions that have shaped much of American public and private life since the birth of the republic. Confronted with a new medium and a new expressive freedom, Americans have seized on familiar metaphors of prophecy and analysis.

The most obvious analogy of the new information age is the Wild West. Images of gold rushes and gunfights fill stories about otherwise humdrum business Web ventures. The other obvious analogy is that of the robber barons and the Gilded Age. Bill Gates finds himself compared, depending on the purpose of the commentator, to both the rapacious Jay Gould and the generous Andrew Carnegie. Editorials attack the concentration of wealth in the new realm with a spirit the Populists would have applauded: "Five years into the e-commerce revolution," one editorial raged, "the big dogs of mass-market retailing are throwing untold millions into the development of category-dominating megasites." Such people watch with disgust as the democratic possibilities of cyberspace seem to disappear as quickly as they materialize. The Americans

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with the least access to this new landscape turn out to be the Americans who have the least access to the existing landscape: the poor, the black, the urban, the rural, and the old.

Economic inequality is not the only threat to democracy in cyberspace. Many people worry more about the absence of authority than about its concentration. In the wake of a high-school shooting spree, an editorial in the *New York Times* noted that one of the young killers maintained a Website that contained directions for making a bomb, along with threatening cartoons and lyrics, posted for anyone to see. But no one did see, or if they did, no one attempted to stop the outburst: "Precisely because the Internet is such a neutral, free, open and unregulated technology," the editorialist lamented, "it means that we are all connected, but no one is in charge. The Internet is a democracy, but with no constitution."

Alexis de Tocqueville, of all people, would have understood. Tocqueville, routinely trotted out to explain every facet of American community and character for the last 150 years, did nevertheless seem to speak directly to the world of cyberspace. Indeed, of all the writers on cyberspace, Tocqueville, writing in the 1830s, may have come the closest to capturing its relationship to the United States because cyberspace is a clear projection of core American hopes and anxieties.

Tocqueville's great volumes on democracy in America explored the paradoxes of a place where no one seemed in charge and yet people behaved with remarkable uniformity, where everything seemed possible and yet devoid of the joy one might expect in a land so prosperous and free. One commentator on Tocqueville, writing years before either the net or cyberspace had been imagined, distilled the essence of the French visitor's argument: "The egalitarian principle takes a heavy toll from the human personality, sacrificing depth to busyness, and courtesy to vulgarity, putting easy social relations ahead of meaningful human ones, restlessness ahead of rootedness, independence ahead of authority, private decision ahead of public taste, materialist well-being ahead of the intangibles of the mind, the belief in progress ahead of a sense of complexity in society and history, and the 'indefinite perfectibility of man' ahead of the mystery of the supernatural." These words anticipated, with remarkable thoroughness, the laments of many who worry about the morality fostered in cyberspace. Every clause has been the focus of one critic or another of the new space growing in our midst. Cyberspace seems a

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distillation of America. Both are quick, shallow, and lonely as well as hopeful, energetic, and sociable.

Like Tocqueville's America, cyberspace America confronts no old order to overthrow, no virtual monarchy, church, or aristocracy to slow its spreading dominion. There is only momentum—of network, of mass communication, of consumerism, of hunger for speed, stimulation, and gratification. As in Tocqueville's America, the government in cyberspace is decentralized, distrusted, and weak, afraid to interfere. As in Tocqueville's America, the denizens of cyberspace are fascinated by any machinery faster and shinier than yesterday's machinery. People flock together to discuss UFOs, politics, or stocks online, just as they flocked to the lodges, reform organizations, and religions they invented on the spot in the America of Andrew Jackson. The impulse is constant; only the medium has changed.

Tocqueville still speaks to us because he refused to speak in mere disdain. No one today reads the European observers who visited only to sneer, and no one takes seriously those who only doled out praise. Tocqueville admired much of what he saw in America, but he worried about the lack of satisfaction he found here: "In America I saw the freest and most enlightened men, placed in the happiest circumstances which the world affords; it seemed to me as if a cloud habitually hung upon their brow, and I thought them serious and almost sad even in their pleasures." Tocqueville ascribed this perpetual longing to the impossibility of ever acquiring true equality; each man thought every other man was getting ahead, leaving him behind with no one else to blame. Americans felt alone, adrift, without a place and without community.

Presented with a clean sheet on which to draw our deepest desires and our best plans, Americans seem to be re-creating much of what Tocqueville saw. In cyberspace, we reconstitute the hustle and anxiety even as we try to build the perfect community to contain both. The Web of today contains virtual versions of earlier monuments to these competing impulses. Without much difficulty, a visitor to the Web can see Main Street and Times Square, Levittown and trailer parks, Brook Farm and Las Vegas, white-steepled churches and storefront ministries, red schoolhouses and night schools. As in Disneyland, we try to re-create our real communities in idealized ones that we can smooth, perfect, and contain. Like many of their predecessors, those places in cyberspace have been put up quickly, often shoddily, because no one expects them to last

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very long. We build only to tear down for something better, something that may satisfy our hunger for connection and belonging.

The World Wide Web will not long endure in its current state. Today's most sophisticated Websites will seem hopelessly limited in just a few years; the technologies that will permit a new generation of cyberspace are being readied at a feverish pace. Cyberspace may yet grow into the nightmare of *Neuromancer*, the beloved community of the WELL, or something else altogether. Whatever the machinery or the landscape, one thing seems likely: a longing for community, as tangible and as elusive as always, will hover over Cyberspace, U.S.A.



President and Mrs. Kennedy ride in the inaugural parade along Pennsylvania Avenue. *Copyright Corbis Bettmann.*

## PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

### The Avenue of the Presidents

**A**s a sport, running (like swimming laps) can be boring at times, at least for an amateur, and a few years after taking it up I began combining it, whenever possible, with sightseeing. It seemed like a bright idea: keeping fit while learning something about cities I visited. I did runs around the Emperor's Palace in Tokyo, down Riverside Drive in Manhattan, along the waterfront in Seattle, on the river walk in San Antonio, near Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, and in Rock Creek Park and down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

Pennsylvania Avenue was a favorite. The sights along the way were impressive: museums, monuments, memorials, statues, imposing government buildings, parks, plazas. The association with presidents, a major interest of mine, was also powerful. Most presidents, I knew, traveled along the "Grand Avenue" from the White House to the Capitol to be sworn into office on Inauguration Day, and then returned to review the Big Parade in their honor that afternoon from a stand erected for that purpose in front of the Executive Mansion. A few went to the Capitol by foot or on horseback; more made the trip in fancy phaetons and barouches and, later on, in automobiles and limousines. At my leisurely pace I made the trip (1.7 miles) in about fifteen minutes. It took the presidents longer because they were usually part of a stately procession witnessed by hundreds, and then thousands, lining the Avenue. Three

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presidents—Jimmy Carter, George Bush, Bill Clinton—were runners, but none ventured to jog down Pennsylvania Avenue on Inauguration Day, though Carter and Clinton walked part of the way on their return to the White House.

Time gallops on, of course, and in retirement I substituted swimming for running, but I still take walks along America's "Appian Way" (as it used to be called), whenever I am in Washington, admiring the Romanesque Post Office, with its 315-foot clock tower, the East Building of the National Gallery of Art (designed by I. M. Pei), and the Willard Hotel (self-styled "the crown jewel of Pennsylvania Avenue"), the host for American presidents since Franklin Pierce in 1853. As I stroll down the Avenue (at a slower pace than Harry Truman used in his daily walks), I take time out to visit the exhibits in the National Gallery of Art and the National Archives, chat with attendants at the Willard who have witnessed inaugural parades, and examine the sketches, maps, and quotations inscribed on the flagstone surface of the Freedom Plaza between 13th and 14th streets. Two quotes I find especially pertinent. One is an utterance of Samuel C. Busby, president of the Medical Society of Washington, in 1898: "There is not a street in any city in this country entitled to the eminent distinction which crowns the history of Pennsylvania Avenue." The other is from Thomas Jefferson, writing in 1791: "The Grand Avenue connecting both the palace and the federal House will be most significant and most convenient."

Jefferson preferred the dreams of the future to the history of the past, as John Adams put it, but it took a lot of history to transform the Grand Avenue from what it was when he became the first president to be inaugurated in Washington to what it is today. In 1801, Jefferson used New Jersey rather than Pennsylvania Avenue in walking from his boardinghouse to Capitol Hill, because Pennsylvania was still too much of a "Serbonian bog." But after becoming president he saw to it that the Avenue was graded and paved, and he used it when riding in a carriage to the Capitol for his second swearing-in. On both occasions, he received praise for his "Republican simplicity." He avoided fancy garb and insisted on simpler oath-taking ceremonies than those accompanying George Washington's and John Adams's induction into office. And he soon rechristened the "President's Palace" the "President's House."

Jeffersonian simplicity, I found, was short-lived. Soldiers accompanied James Madison to the Capitol in 1809, perhaps because of strained re-

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lations with Britain, and became indispensable features of inaugural processions thereafter. Andrew Jackson returned to Jeffersonian austerity in 1829, walking informally with a few Revolutionary veterans along the Avenue, nodding and waving to his fans along the way, as he headed for Capitol Hill. "It is *true* greatness," exclaimed one observer, "which needs not the aid of ornament and pomp." I expected ornament and pomp in William Henry Harrison's inauguration in 1841, and I got plenty of it. The Whigs, I learned, sponsored the first big, colorful parade (reminiscent of their "log cabin and hard cider" campaign), made up of members of Tippecanoe Clubs and log cabin floats, as well as military units and bands. The most striking float (since it showed that the Whigs tried to keep up with the times) was a large platform on wheels, drawn by six white horses, displaying a power loom, with several operators busily weaving pieces of cloth and tossing them out to people lining the Avenue. It was a frigid day, but Harrison joined the procession to and from the Capitol on "Old Whitey," his white charger, and the paraders trooped back and forth for a couple of hours after the inaugural ceremony to entertain the crowds. John Quincy Adams called the procession "showy-shabby," but he meant it as a compliment: elegant but not undemocratic.

Floats became a big thing after 1841. In 1857 two floats demonstrating that Liberty and Union were in good shape (though they weren't) dominated the parade for James Buchanan, and in 1865 three ambitious floats proceeded down the Avenue to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's second oath-taking: a replica of the *Monitor*, from which sailors fired salutes; a structure representing the Temple of Liberty filled with women wearing costumes signifying the different states; and a platform containing a hand-run press, with members of the Typographical Union turning out inaugural programs for the parade-watchers.

Lincoln's first inauguration in 1861 was inevitably unique. With the nation on the brink of civil war on March 4, the inaugural planners realized that the safety of Lincoln and the security of Washington itself were their most urgent tasks. To meet the crisis, General Winfield Scott, the army's general in chief, moved several hundred regular troops into the city and arranged for the presidential carriage to move along Pennsylvania Avenue on inauguration morning between double files of District cavalry, with a company of sappers and miners marching in front of the carriage and the infantry and riflemen of the District following

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behind. He also stationed soldiers on streets paralleling the parade route and cavalymen on the side streets crossing Pennsylvania Avenue, and put riflemen on the roofs and at the windows of buildings along the parade route as well.

Fortunately there was no trouble that momentous day, and the inaugural procession, with soldiers, bands, marching clubs, governors, war veterans, congressmen, and Washington officials, went off nicely. The crowds lining the Avenue especially liked the float decorated in red, white, and blue, drawn by four white horses, and carrying thirty-four pretty little girls, one for each state (including the seceded ones), wearing white frocks and waving little flags. The story that Lincoln took time out to kiss each little girl is charming but spurious. So, probably, is the tale told by one of Buchanan's biographers about the exchange Lincoln had with his predecessor en route to the Capitol. "My dear sir," Buchanan supposedly said, "if you are as happy in entering the White House as I shall feel on returning to Wheatland, you are a happy man indeed." "Mr. President," Lincoln is said to have replied, with uncharacteristic stiltedness, "I cannot say that I shall enter it with much pleasure, but I assure you that I shall do what I can to maintain the high standards set by my illustrious predecessors who have occupied it." Later, when General Scott, stationed on a hill nearby, learned that the inauguration had gone off peacefully, he raised his hands and exclaimed: "God be praised! God in His goodness be praised!" I couldn't help liking old "Fuss and Feathers" as I read about his Last Hurrah.

Four years later, at Lincoln's second swearing-in, American blacks marched in the inaugural parade for the first time, both as soldiers wearing the Union Army blue and as members of an Odd Fellows lodge in full regalia. Though some people objected, participation of blacks in their country's quadrennial celebrations continued and increased in importance until the day came when Margaret Truman could boast that at her father's inauguration in 1949 all the activities, including the inaugural ball, were at last fully integrated.

After the Civil War, the military component of inaugural parades increased in importance, and the parades themselves, originally a minor supplement to the task of getting presidents to and from the Capitol, gradually became featured events, were moved to the afternoon, and were scheduled to take place after the inaugural ceremonies at the Capitol. Meanwhile, the morning processions to the Capitol became less sig-

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nificant and, with the arrival of automobiles in the early part of the twentieth century, turned into little motorcades, with the president and the president-elect in the first car, the vice president and his successor in the second car, the presidential wives in the third, and members of Congress, cabinet members, government officials, and Secret Service men in succeeding cars. Crowds continued to gather along the historic thoroughfare on inauguration morning, hoping to get a glimpse of the presidents and their wives as well as to get good seats in the bleachers erected along the way for the afternoon parade. Helen Taft was the first presidential wife to get into the act when she insisted on riding with her husband back to the White House after the inaugural ceremony in 1909.

Automobiles replaced horse-drawn carriages in 1921, when Warren G. Harding succeeded Woodrow Wilson as president. The motorcade from the White House to the Capitol on the morning of Harding's inauguration contained a dozen cars, and the mounted cavalry accompanying the cars came close to galloping in order to stay ahead of them. Cheers greeted the little procession moving down the Avenue, but Wilson purposely ignored them; he assumed they were all for Harding, and he tried to convince himself that he didn't mind a bit. But he was amused by the turn the conversation took soon after they left the White House. Harding began telling Wilson about an elephant he'd heard of whose devotion to his keeper was almost unbelievable. "You know," he said, "I've always wanted to own an elephant some day." Murmured Wilson: "I hope it won't turn out to be a white elephant." History, the *New York Times* observed in 1953, "is an outgoing President riding up Pennsylvania Avenue with his successor, each trying to make pleasant conversation while each hears the loud ticking of the clock that brings noon nearer."

The clock-ticking chats weren't always as amiable as the Harding-Wilson exchange. One of the unpleasantest (and among my favorites) occurred in 1933, when Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt rode to the Capitol together for the latter's swearing-in. Thousands of people lined the Avenue that morning, waving, shouting, cheering, and singing "Happy Days Are Here Again," and FDR smiled, waved, and raised his silk hat in obvious pleasure as the presidential limousine lumbered along. But Hoover, aghast at his successor's determination to go ahead with his New Deal, stared bleakly straight ahead, utterly unresponsive to FDR's efforts to get a conversation going. FDR prided himself on his skill in engaging people in small talk, but with the ponderously glum Hoover

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his efforts came to naught. Spying a building under construction on one side of the Avenue, he suddenly exclaimed, almost in desperation: "My dear Mr. President, aren't those the nicest steel girders you ever saw?" There was no response from Hoover, and FDR gave up at this point. As he told Grace Tully, his secretary, later on: "I said to myself, 'Spinach! Protocol or no protocol, somebody had to do something. The two of us simply couldn't sit there on our hands, ignoring each other and everybody else.' So I began to wave my own response with my top hat and kept waving it until I got to the inauguration stand and was sworn in."

Harry Truman's ride to the Capitol with Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953 was more strained, if anything, than the Hoover-Roosevelt trip. Once on good terms, the two men had come to dislike each other thoroughly during the 1952 campaign, when Truman went out on the stump for Adlai Stevenson, and just before Ike touched base with Truman on inauguration morning, he told aides he wondered "if I can *stand* sitting next to the guy." He refused to meet Truman in the White House, as protocol dictated, forcing the president to go out front to join him in the presidential car. In his diary for January 20, Truman wrote that the conversation en route to the Capitol was at first about "the crowd, the pleasant day, the orderly turnover," and then Eisenhower suddenly remarked that Kenneth Royall (Truman's secretary of war) "tried to order him home" for Truman's inauguration in 1949, "but he wouldn't come because half the people cheering me at that time had told him they were for him." "Ike," Truman retorted, "I didn't ask you to come—or you'd have been here." At that, New Hampshire Senator Styles Bridges, one of the congressional escorts, "gasped," according to Truman, and Massachusetts's Joe Martin, speaker of the House, "changed the subject."

Eisenhower's remark continued to rankle Truman long after Ike became president, and when he came to publish *Mr. Citizen* in 1960, he gave a fuller and more confrontational account of the episode. But both Truman and Eisenhower seem to have had faulty memories. Newspapers covering the 1949 inauguration reported that Ike was actually on hand for the celebration; he appeared in the afternoon parade. The crowds along Pennsylvania Avenue, according to the *New York Times*, applauded enthusiastically "when they spotted Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in a car whose placard bore only the name of his host, Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall." Eisenhower said nothing in his memoirs about the curt exchange with Truman in 1953, but he did recall asking Truman who

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ordered his son John, a colonel stationed in Korea, to Washington for the inauguration, and when Truman said, "I did," he "thanked him sincerely for his thoughtfulness." Truman remembered it differently; he interpreted Ike's query (which came after they reached the Capitol) hostilely, and in *Mr. Citizen* reported another angry retort on his part. But he said nothing about the friendly letter he received from Ike's son three days after the inauguration, thanking him for enabling him to attend his father's swearing-in. He never forgave Eisenhower for his discourteous behavior in 1953.

The ceremonies of 1933 and 1953 were exceptions to the clock-ticking encounters on inauguration morning. Most journeys of presidents and presidents-elect to Capitol Hill seem to have been polite, if not cordial. The transitional trip of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter in 1977 was certainly friendly; Ford reminisced about his days in Congress and explained to Carter that Republicans and Democrats could have their scraps in the House and still remain friends. George Bush and Bill Clinton got along fine, too, in 1993; Clinton was never at a loss for friendly words.

In the twentieth century, the newly installed president usually had lunch with members of Congress in the Capitol after the inaugural address and then returned to the White House to review the parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. Some presidents enjoyed the parades enormously; others simply took them in their stride. But for at least one president, Calvin Coolidge, the parade after the inauguration in 1925 seems to have been an ordeal, though it lasted only an hour and consisted mainly of army, navy, and marine forces. "Silent Cal" was so quiet throughout that some people called it "a review in silence." In an attempt to explain Coolidge's apparent indifference, "Ike" Hoover, the White House's chief usher, mentioned the president's "lack of appreciation for such demonstrations. The people certainly like to be noticed and the President could not or would not warm up to them." The *Emporia Gazette's* William Allen White put it more colorfully: "It takes two to wake up the hurrahs of a crowd, the harrachers and the harrahee. That fine, fair Coolidge day the hurrahee's emotions—never tenacious—were spent by four o'clock." Thoroughly exhausted by the experience, Coolidge returned to the White House afterward for a bite to eat and a good nap.

Theodore Roosevelt was more typical. Like Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan after him, he thoroughly enjoyed the

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afternoon performance, and it was probably the high point of the day for him in 1905. As the inaugural parade passed his reviewing stand in front of the White House, he grinned, smiled, laughed, nodded, waved his hat, clapped his hands, stamped his feet, swayed to the rhythm of the band music, and at times almost danced, as more than thirty thousand men, representing hundreds of military and civilian organizations, passed in review. He liked the band music: the Sousa marches, the rag-time, and tunes like "Maryland, My Maryland," "Marching through Georgia," "America," "Dixie," and especially "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." He liked the signs and banners too: THE PRESIDENT'S NEIGHBORS (people from Oyster Bay), ALL I ASK IS A SQUARE DEAL FOR EVERY MAN (a Roosevelt political club), and, in particular, the banner carried by some coal miners in overalls, with lamps on their caps, celebrating his intervention in the anthracite coal walkout in 1902: WE HONOR THE MAN WHO SETTLED OUR STRIKE.

With his affection for things military, Roosevelt was particularly proud of the army and navy units, which saluted as they passed in the parade. "Those are the boys," he exclaimed, as the West Point cadets and the midshipmen from the Naval Academy appeared. "They're superb." When the Seventh Cavalry passed by, its band playing "Garry Owen," TR remarked: "That is a bully fighting tune, and this is Custer's old regiment, one of the finest in the service." As a squadron of the Ninth Regular Cavalry, a black regiment, went by, he cried: "Ah, they were with me at Santiago!" He got a big kick out of the Rough Riders, of course, and joined in the laughter when one of them lassoed a spectator and carried him along with the march. Seeing soldiers from the "Territories" (Puerto Rico and the Philippines) gave him special pleasure, and when a battalion of Puerto Rican militiamen came by, he turned to antiexpansionist Senator Augustus O. Bacon of Georgia and chortled: "They look pretty well for an oppressed people, eh, Senator?" The arrival of some Filipino scouts (with their band playing, for some reason, "The Irish Washerwoman") led him to lean far over the railing and clap his hands vigorously. "The wretched serfs disguise their feelings admirably," he teased Senator Bacon. A little later he remarked to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge in a voice loud enough for the Georgia senator to hear: "You should have seen Bacon hide his face when the Filipinos went by. The 'slaves' were rejoicing in their shackles!" Bacon was too polite to remind the president of how many lives were lost putting down

## PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

the Filipino insurrection that broke out after the United States took over the Philippines from Spain.

There were civilian groups in the parade that gave Roosevelt a great deal of pleasure too. When fifty or so cowboys, headed by his friend Seth Bullock, came dashing along Pennsylvania Avenue, waving their sombreros and cheering like mad, TR yelled back his greetings and waved his hat frantically. One cowboy, putting spurs on his steed, raced up under TR's very nose at such speed that he almost fell over the railing but, to TR's delight, skillfully spun his bronco around on its haunches and rejoined his companions. Then, as TR watched with a big smile, the entire bunch rolled merrily away, yelling and hollering, and snaring unwary bystanders with their lariats. When it was all over, TR exclaimed: "It was a great success. Bully. And did you note that bunch of cowboys? Oh, they are the boys who can ride! It was all superb. It really touched me to the heart."

Like TR, most other presidents had their favorites in the parades down the grand boulevard. In 1933, FDR's seems to have been the three hundred members of the Electoral College marching in the inaugural parade (at his request) to remind people of the role that electoral as well as popular votes play in American presidential contests. But he admired, too, the model of the War of 1812's famous frigate, the *Constitution*, and exchanged friendly greetings with former New York governor Alfred E. Smith as the latter passed with a contingent from Tammany Hall. (Smith received a thunderous ovation from the people thronging the Avenue, but the cowboy star Tom Mix, in town to promote a new movie, received even more applause.) For John F. Kennedy, the pièce de résistance in 1961 was the reproduction of PT boat 109, carrying members of his wartime crew; as it passed the reviewing stand, he waved vigorously and cried: "Great work!"

Kennedy enjoyed the parade, but he was distressed by the shabby condition Pennsylvania Avenue had fallen into after World War II, and, soon after becoming president, he sponsored a program of renovation that by the early 1980s had produced the majestic boulevard that I was privileged to traverse when I first began jogging in Washington. Unfortunately, JFK didn't live to see any of the redevelopment, and it was the old Avenue that was used for his funeral on November 25, 1963, three days after his assassination in Dallas. Thousands of people crowded the sidewalks that day to watch his casket, placed on a black caisson (the