



## American Places: Encounters with History

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For anyone interested in history, the physical traces of the past, especially historical places, hold a special fascination. Whether it is a battlefield or the home of a notable American, there is no question that we understand the past in a different and more immediate way when we encounter it "on the ground."

In *American Places*, more than two dozen of America's most gifted historians write about their own encounters with historic places, bringing a personal viewpoint to bear on a wide variety of sites, ranging from Monticello to Fenway Park. Here James M. McPherson writes about the battlefield of Gettysburg, and how walking the ground of Pickett's Charge inspired one of his books. Kevin Starr visits the Musso & Frank Grill in Hollywood and finds many of the flavors of California history there. Joel Williamson takes a bemused tour of Elvis Presley's Graceland, and David Kennedy tells the story of the "Pig War" of San Juan Island, where a spat between Britain and America over a speck of land in the Pacific helped determine the shape of the U.S. and Canada. William Freehling compares two places, Charleston's Battery and New Orleans' Jackson Square, showing how each reveals the different spirit of the society that created it. And Edward Ayers talks about spending time in Cyberspace, U.S.A., a virtual place that has much in common with the America visited by Alexis de Tocqueville a century and a half ago. Other pieces include Robert Dallek on the FDR Memorial, David Hackett Fischer on the Boston Common, and William Leuchtenburg on his native borough of Queens.

*American Places* celebrates the career of Sheldon Meyer, who over his years at Oxford University Press has published some of our most distinguished historians, including many Pulitzer Prize and Bancroft Prize winners, virtually all of whom have contributed to this volume.

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