

C O N T E N T S

List of Illustrations xi

Acknowledgments xiii

Introduction xvii

PART I

THE RISE OF HOBOHEMIA, 1870–1920

1

“The Great Army of Tramps” 3

The Making of America’s Tramp Army 5

Tasting of the “Fountain of Indolence”:

Origin Myths of Tramping 17

2

The Other Side of the Road 30

“The Broken Home Circle” 32

From Patriarch to Pariah 38

“From the Fraternity of Haut Beaus” 47

3

“Hallelujah, I’m a Bum!” 59

The Opening of the Wageworkers’ Frontier 62

The Main Stem 71

“(White) Man’s Country” 81

Hobosexuality 85

PART II
HOBOHEMIA AND HOMELESSNESS IN THE
EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

4

The Politics of Hobohemia 95

Organizing the Main Stem 97

"The Song of the Jungles" 111

5

"A Civilization without Homes" 127

Reforming the Main Stem 131

"The Hotel Spirit" 140

The Comic Tramp 152

PART III
RESETTLING THE HOBO ARMY, 1920-1980

6

The Decline and Fall of Hobohemia 171

The Closing of the Wageworker's Frontier 175

Contesting Hobohemia 185

7

Forgotten Men 195

A New Deal for the American Homeless 200

Folklores of Homelessness 210

8

Coming Home 221

The Decline and Fall of Skid Row 227

Dharma Bums and Easy Riders 235

PART IV
THE ENDURING LEGACY:
HOMELESSNESS AND AMERICAN CULTURE SINCE 1980

9

Rediscovering Homelessness 247

The New Homeless 252

Romancing the Road, Surviving the Streets 262

Notes 273

Index 313

I L L U S T R A T I O N S

- 1.1. "The Ignorant Vote—Honors Are Easy," *Harper's Weekly* (December 9, 1876) 21
- 1.2. "The Tramp," *Harper's Weekly* (September 2, 1876) 28
- 2.1. Jacob A. Riis, "The Tramp in a Mulberry Street Yard" (1887) 48
- 2.2. Portrait of William W. "Roving Bill" Aspinwall (1893) 55
- 3.1. "Providence Bob and Philadelphia Shorty Riding the Rods" (1894) 67
- 3.2. A hobo jungle picnic (1895) 71
- 3.3. Map of West Madison Street (1923) 76
- 4.1. "Blanket Stiff and Employment Shark—Which Side Is Your Hump On?" *Industrial Worker* (June 10, 1909) 103
- 4.2. "The 'Blanket Stiff,'" *Industrial Worker* (April 23, 1910) 109
- 4.3. "Constitutional Guarantee:—Life? Liberty? And the Pursuit of—A Job!" *Industrial Worker* (April 24, 1913) 116
- 4.4. "Now for the Eastern Invasion!" *Solidarity* (October 14, 1916) 122
- 4.5. "Somebody Has Got to Get Out of the Way!" *Solidarity* (August 19, 1916) 123
- 4.6. "One Big Union of All the Workers," *Solidarity* (April 28, 1917) 124
- 5.1. Mills Hotel (1899) 136
- 5.2. Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (ca. 1910) 141
- 5.3. Portrait of Nat M. Wills, "the Happy Tramp" (1907) 155
- 5.4. Charlie Chaplin, film still from *City Lights* (1931) 165
- 5.5. Frederick Burr Opper, "Happy Hooligan" (1904) 166
- 6.1. Dorothea Lange, "Migrants, Family of Mexicans, on the Road with Tire Trouble" (1936) 180
- 6.2. Portrait of Ben Reitman, the "Main Stem Dandy" (ca. 1919) 189
- 7.1. Bonus Marchers battling police (1932) 200
- 7.2. Wilfred J. Mead, "We Can Take It!" (ca. 1935) 207
- 7.3. Dorothea Lange, "Migrant Mother" (1936) 217
- 8.1. Bill Mauldin, "Remember that warm, soft mud last summer?" (1944) 222
- 8.2. Bill Mauldin, "How's it feel to be a free man, Willie?" (1947) 225
- 9.1. Mike Sienienkiewicz and James Brown, Los Banos camp (1982) 250
- 9.2. The Reynolds family, *Newsweek* (January 2, 1984) 260