• Walking Tour 5 •

Greenwich Village Literary Tour

Start: Bleecker Street between La Guardia Place and Thompson Street.

Subway: Take the 6 to Bleecker Street, which lets you out at Bleecker and Lafayette streets. Walk west on Bleecker.

Finish: 14 West 10th St.

Time: Approximately 4 to 5 hours.

Best Time: If you plan to do the whole tour, start fairly early in the day (there's a breakfast break near the start).

The Village has always attracted rebels, radicals, and creative types, from earnest 18th-century revolutionary Thomas Paine, to early-20th-century radicals such as John Reed and Mabel Dodge, to the Stonewall rioters who gave birth to the gay liberation movement in 1969. A Village protest in 1817 saved the area's colorfully convoluted

lanes and byways when the city imposed a geometric grid system on the rest of New York's streets. Much of Village life centers around Washington Square Park, the site of hippie rallies and counterculture demonstrations, and the former stomping ground of Henry James and Edith Wharton.

Many other American writers have at some time made their homes in the Village. As early as the 19th century, it was New York's literary hub and a hot spot for salons and other intellectual gatherings. Both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art came into being here, albeit some 60 years apart.

The 20th century saw Greenwich Village transformed from a bastion of old New York families to a bohemian enclave of struggling writers and artists. Though skyrocketing rents made the Village less accessible to aspiring artists after the late 1920s, it remained a mecca for creative people—so much so that almost every building is a literary landmark. Today, the high cost of housing here means that most modern Villagers are upwardly mobile professionals. There still are, however, plenty of resident throwbacks to the '60s, latter-day bohemians with multiple body piercings, earnest NYU students, gawking tourists, funky shops, and great cafes that keep this one of the liveliest neighborhoods in town. It also remains one of Manhattan's most downright picturesque neighborhoods.

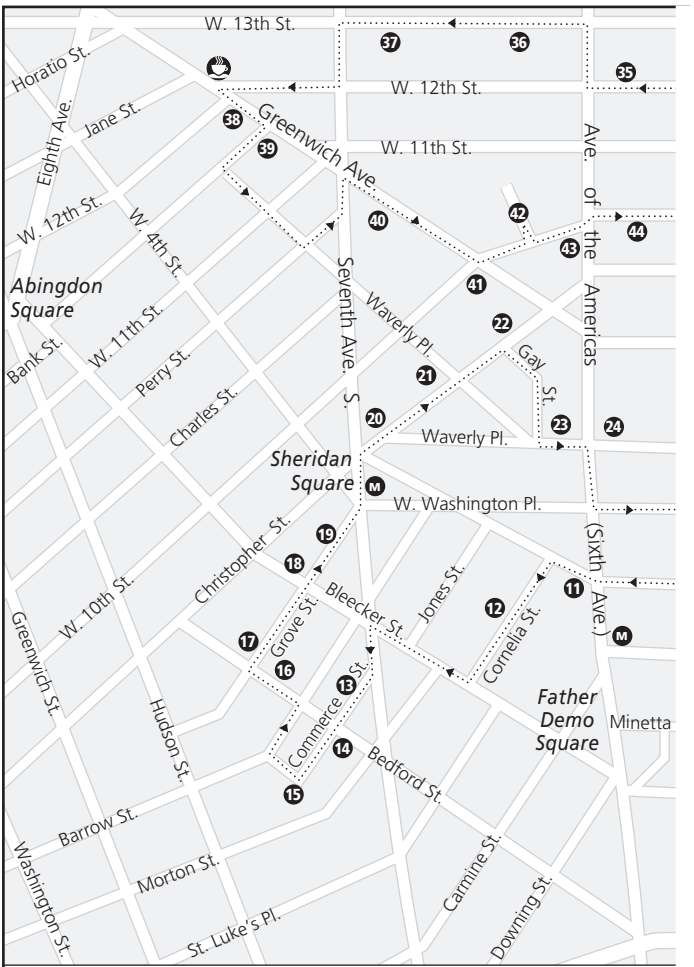
Though the focus of this tour is the Village's literary history, I think you'll also enjoy strolling along its quaint, tree-shaded streets lined with Federal and Greek Revival buildings. This tour is a long one, and you may want to break it up into two visits.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Begin on Bleecker Street, named for a writer, Anthony Bleecker, whose friends included Washington Irving and William Cullen Bryant, at:

1. **145 Bleecker St.** James Fenimore Cooper, author of 32 novels, plus a dozen works of nonfiction, lived here in 1833. Though he is primarily remembered for romantic adventure stories about the American frontier, Cooper also wrote political commentary, naval history, sea stories,

Greenwich Village Literary Tour



1 145 Bleecker Street
2 Circle in the Square Theater
3 The Atrium
4 172 Bleecker Street
5 189 Bleecker Street
6 Minetta Tavern
7 130-132 MacDougal Street
8 85 West 3rd Street
9 The Provincetown Playhouse
10 137 MacDougal Street
11 Sixth Avenue and West 4th Street
12 33 Cornelia Street
13 11 Commerce Street
14 75 1/2 Bedford Street
15 The Cherry Lane Theatre
16 Chumley's
17 17 Grove Street
18 45 Grove Street
19 59 Grove Street
20 The Stonewall
21 The corner of Waverly Place & Christopher Street
22 Gay Street
23 139 Waverly Place
24 116 Waverly Place

25 82 Washington Place
26 Washington Square Park
27 19 Washington Square North (Waverly Place)
28 7 Washington Square North
29 3 Washington Square North
30 Washington Mews
31 25 East 11th Street
32 21 East 11th Street
33 The Salmagundi Club
34 The Forbes Magazine Building
35 The New School for Social Research
36 138 West 13th Street
37 152 West 13th Street
38 91 Greenwich Avenue
39 1 Bank Street
40 45 Greenwich Avenue
41 139 West 10th Street
42 Patchin Place
43 Jefferson Market Library
44 50 West 10th Street
45 37 West 10th Street
46 14 West 10th Street

and a group of novels about the Middle Ages. His father—judge, congressman, and Federalist Party leader William Cooper—founded Cooperstown, New York, the author's childhood home. This town was the setting for the author's *Leatherstocking Tales,* the epic of frontiersman Natty Bumppo (written over a period of 19 years) that includes *The Pioneers, The Last of the Mohicans, The Prairie, The Pathfinder,* and *The Deerslayer.* The town is more famous today as the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

James F. Cooper entered Yale at age 13 (not an uncommon occurrence in the early 19th century), but he was expelled in his junior year for pranks such as putting a donkey in a professor's chair. At 17, his aborted college career was followed by a stint in the merchant marines and the navy. His first novel, *Precaution,* was published in 1820. It created no great stir in the literary world, but a second novel focusing on the American Revolution, *The Spy,* appeared a year later and enjoyed vast success, as did his later books.

Continue west (walk right) to:

2. **Circle in the Square Theater,** 159 Bleecker St. Founded by Ted Mann and Jose Quintero in 1951 at the site of an abandoned nightclub on Sheridan Square, the theater moved to Bleecker Street in 1959. It was one of the first arena, or "in-the-round," theaters in the United States. Tennessee Williams's *Summer and Smoke* (starring Geraldine Page), Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* (starring Jason Robards, Jr.), Thornton Wilder's *Plays for Bleecker Street,* Truman Capote's *The Grass Harp,* and Jean Genet's *The Balcony* all premiered here. Actors Colleen Dewhurst, Dustin Hoffman, James Earl Jones, Cicely Tyson, Jason Robards, George C. Scott, and Peter Falk honed their craft on the Circle in the Square stage. In the early 1950s, Sunday lectures and readings at the theater featured Gore Vidal, Dorothy Parker, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and many other illustrious authors.

Across the street is:

3. **The Atrium** (no. 160), a 19th-century beaux arts building by Ernest Flagg that is today a posh apartment building. Before becoming the sadly defunct Village Gate jazz

Kid-Friendly Experiences

- Visiting 130-132 MacDougal Street, if they've read *Little Women* (stop 7)
- Stopping by 11 Commerce Street, where Washington Irving wrote "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (stop 13)
- Watching the performers in Washington Square Park (stop 26)
- Discovering the eclectic collections The Forbes Magazine Building (stop 34)
- Having afternoon tea at Tea & Sympathy (see the "Take a Break" box on p. 90)
- Getting a look at 14 West 10th Street, the home of Mark Twain, author of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* (stop 46).

club in the late 1950s, this former flophouse was Theodore Dreiser's first New York residence (in 1895, he paid 25¢ a night for a cell-like room).

Farther west is:

4. **172 Bleecker St.,** where James Agee lived in a top-floor railroad flat from 1941 to 1951, after he completed *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.* Though the book enjoyed great popularity in the 1960s, it was originally scathingly reviewed and went out of print in 1948 after selling a mere 1,025 copies. When it was published, Ralph Thompson of the *New York Times* called Agee "arrogant, mannered, precious, gross," and his book "the choicest recent example of how to write self-inspired, self-conscious, and self-indulgent prose." *Time* called it "the most distinguished failure of the season."

   Rallying from critical buffets during his Bleecker Street tenancy, Agee created the screenplay for *The African Queen* and worked as a movie critic for both *Time* and *The Nation.* He had to move from this walk-up apartment after he suffered a heart attack.

   Nearby, the quintessential Village corner of Bleecker and MacDougal is a good spot for a breakfast break.

Take a Break **Café Figaro** (☎ **212/677-1100**) at 184–186 Bleecker St. is an old beat-generation haunt. In 1969, Village residents were disheartened to see the Figaro close and in its place arise an uninspired and sterile Blimpie's. In 1976, the present owner completely restored Figaro to its earlier appearance, replastering its walls once again with shellacked copies of the French newspaper *Le Figaro.* Stop in for pastries and coffee or an omelet and absorb the atmosphere, or sit at a sidewalk table to watch the Village parade by. It opens at 10:30am Monday to Friday and serves a full, fixed-price brunch Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 3pm. They now present Jazz music nightly at 8pm and, of all things, belly dancing on Sundays!

On the opposite corner is:

5. **189 Bleecker St.** For several decades, beginning in the late 1920s, the San Remo (today Carpo's Cafe), an Italian restaurant at the corner of Bleecker and MacDougal streets, was a writer's hangout frequented by James Baldwin, William Styron, Jack Kerouac, James Agee, Frank O'Hara, Gregory Corso, Dylan Thomas, William Burroughs, and Allen Ginsberg. John Clellon Holmes wrote about the San Remo in his 1952 novel, *Go,* one of the first published works of the beat generation.

   Take a right and head north on MacDougal Street to the:

6. **Minetta Tavern,** 113 MacDougal St. at Minetta Lane (☎ **212/475-3850**), which was a speakeasy called the Black Rabbit during Prohibition. The most unlikely event to take place here in those wild days was the founding of De Witt Wallace's very unbohemian *Reader's Digest* on the premises in 1923; the magazine was published in the basement here in its early days. Since 1937, the Minetta has been a simpatico Italian restaurant and meeting place for writers and other creative folk, including Ezra Pound, e.e. cummings, Louis Bromfield, and Ernest Hemingway.

   The Minetta still evokes the old Village. Walls are covered with photographs of famous patrons and caricatures (about 20 of which artist Franz Kline scrawled in exchange for drinks and food), and the rustic pine-paneled back

room is adorned with murals of local landmarks. Stop in for a drink or a meal. The Minetta is open daily from noon to midnight and serves traditional Italian fare.

Minetta Lane is named for the Minetta Brook that started on 23rd Street and flowed through here en route to the Hudson. The brook still runs underground.

A little farther up and across the street stands an 1852 house fronted by twin entrances and a wisteria-covered portico.

7. **130–132 MacDougal St.** belonged to Louisa May Alcott's uncle, and after the Civil War, Alcott lived and worked here. Historians believe it was here that she penned her best-known work, the autobiographical children's classic *Little Women* (Jo, Amy, Meg, and Beth were based on Alcott and her sisters Abbie, Anna, and Lizzie, respectively). Alcott grew up in Concord, Massachusetts, the daughter of transcendentalist Amos Bronson Alcott. Emerson was a close family friend, and Thoreau taught the young Louisa botany. During the Civil War, Alcott briefly served as a Union hospital nurse in Washington, D.C., until a case of typhoid fever nearly killed her. Mercury poisoning from the medication she was given left her in fragile health for the rest of her life. Alcott later published a book of letters documenting her time as a nurse under the title *Hospital Sketches.* Henry James called Alcott "The novelist of children . . . the Thackery, the Trollope, of the nursery and schoolroom." Die-hard chauvinist G. K. Chesterton found himself admitting in 1907 that "even from a masculine standpoint, the books are very good."

   Turn right onto West 3rd St. Walk 1 block, just beyond Sullivan Street, to:

8. **85 West 3rd St.,** where Edgar Allan Poe lived, on the third floor, in 1845 (last window on the right). He wrote "Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" here, and "The Raven" was published during his tenancy. Today, it's part of the NYU Law School, and the current residents claim that Poe's rooms are haunted.

   Double back down 3rd Street to MacDougal Street and turn right. On your left is:

9. **The Provincetown Playhouse,** 133 MacDougal St. (☎ **212/477-5048**), which was first established in 1915 on a wharf in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Founders George Cram "Jig" Cook and his wife, Susan Glaspell, began by producing their own plays. One day, however, an intense 27-year-old named Eugene O'Neill arrived in Provincetown with a trunkful of plays, a few of which he brought for Cook and Glaspell to read. They immediately recognized his genius and were inspired to create a theater dedicated to experimental drama. The theater later moved to this converted stable, where O'Neill managed it through 1927. Many of O'Neill's early plays premiered here: *Bound East for Cardiff, The Hairy Ape, The Long Voyage Home, The Emperor Jones,* and *All God's Chillun's Got Wings.* That last play was especially radical for its time because of its portrayal of a racially mixed couple; black star Paul Robeson kissed white actress Mary Blair (literary critic Edmund Wilson's wife) on stage, prompting general outrage and Ku Klux Klan threats. Nevertheless, the play ran for 5 months.

   Other seminal figures in the theater's early days were Max Eastman, Djuna Barnes, Edna Ferber, and John Reed. Edna St. Vincent Millay, whose unlikely life plan was to support herself as a poet by earning her living as an actress, snagged both the lead in Fred Dell's *An Angel Intrudes* and Dell himself (their love affair inspired her poems "Weeds" and "Journal"). Millay's own work, *Aria da Capo,* was produced here in 1919. Another notable Provincetown Playhouse production was e.e. cummings's *him,* a play with 21 scenes and 105 characters.

   Katharine Cornell, Tallulah Bankhead, Bette Davis (who made her stage debut here), and Eva Le Gallienne appeared on the Provincetown stage in its early years. The theater was a great success, and O'Neill's plays went on to Broadway. But instead of basking in their popularity, Cook and Glaspell disbanded the company and moved to Greece, convinced that acceptance by the establishment signaled their failure as revolutionary artists. Though the Provincetown Players gave their last performance on December 14, 1929, this theater, fully restored in 1997, now presents plays by and for young people, as well as community playhouse–produced O'Neill works.

Next door is:

10. **137 MacDougal St.** Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Vachel Lindsay, Louis Untermeyer, Max Eastman, Theodore Dreiser, Lincoln Steffens, and Sinclair Lewis hashed over life theories at the Liberal Club, "A Meeting Place for Those Interested in New Ideas," founded in 1913 on the second floor of the house that once stood here. Margaret Sanger lectured the club on birth control, an on-premises organization called Heterodoxy worked to promote feminist causes, and cubist art was displayed on the walls.

    Downstairs were Polly's Restaurant (run by Polly Holladay and Hippolyte Havel) and the radical Washington Square Book Shop, from which Liberal Club members more often borrowed than bought. Holladay, a staunch anarchist, refused to join even the Liberal Club, which, however bohemian, was still an "organization." The apoplectic Havel, who was on the editorial board of *The Masses* (see stop 38), once shouted out at a meeting where fellow members were debating which literary contributions to accept: "Bourgeois pigs! Voting! Voting on poetry! Poetry is something from the soul! You can't vote on poetry!" When Floyd Dell pointed out to Havel that he had once made editorial selections for the radical magazine *Mother Earth,* Havel shot back, "Yes, but we didn't abide by the results!" Hugo Kalmar, a character in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh,* is purportedly based on Havel. In a previous incarnation, this building was the home of Nathaniel Currier (of Currier and Ives).

    Turn left onto West 4th Street and continue to the corner of:

11. **Sixth Avenue and West 4th Street.** Eugene O'Neill, a heavy drinker, nightly frequented a bar called the Golden Swan (more familiarly known as the "Hell Hole" or "Bucket of Blood") where the small park now stands. The bar was patronized by prostitutes, gangsters, longshoremen, anarchists, politicians, artists, and writers. O'Neill later used the bar as a setting for his play *The Iceman Cometh,* a script that was 12 years in the writing. Eccentric owner Tom Wallace, on whom O'Neill

modeled saloon proprietor Harry Hope, kept a pig in the basement and seldom ventured off the premises.

Cross Sixth Avenue, angle up the continuation of West 4th Street, and make your first left onto Cornelia Street looking for:

12. **33 Cornelia St.** Throughout the 1940s, film critic/poet/novelist/screenwriter James Agee lived on Bleecker Street and worked in a studio at this address. Here he completed final revisions on *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* which portrayed the bleak lives of Alabama sharecroppers. The book originated in 1936 as an article for Henry Luce's *Fortune* magazine, which rejected the piece as too long and too liberal—the book's first pages contain a paraphrase from Marx's *Communist Manifesto:* "Workers of the world, unite and fight. You have nothing to lose but your chains, and a world to win."

Though a Harvard grad from an upper-class background, Agee was extremely sympathetic to the plight of the poor (he once took a hobo into his home); dubious, if not downright cynical, about the very nature of journalism; and ashamed of the intrusive nature of his mission. "It seems to me," he wrote, "obscene and thoroughly terrifying . . . to pry intimately into the lives of an undefended and appallingly damaged group of human beings, an ignorant and helpless rural family, for the purpose of parading the nakedness, disadvantage, and humiliation of these lives before another group of human beings in the name of . . . honest journalism."

Next door, at 31 Cornelia St., **Caffé Cino** once stood. The cafe opened in 1958 and served cappuccino in shaving mugs. In the early 1960s, owner Joe Cino encouraged aspiring playwrights, such as Lanford Wilson, Sam Shepard, and John Guare, to stage readings and performances in his cramped storefront space. Experimentation in this tiny cafe gave birth to New York's off-Broadway theater scene. Plagued by money troubles, Cino committed suicide in 1967; Caffé Cino closed a year later.

Continue down Cornelia Street to Bleecker Street and turn right. Cross Seventh Avenue, jog a bit left, and angle back down Commerce Street. Near the corner stands:

13. **11 Commerce St.** Washington Irving wrote "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" while living in this quaint three-story brick building. Born into a prosperous New York family, he penned biographies of naval heroes as an officer in the War of 1812. In 1819, under the name Geoffrey Crayon, he wrote *The Sketch Book,* which contained the stories "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "Westminster Abbey," and "Rip Van Winkle." Irving was one of the elite New Yorkers who served on the planning commission for Central Park and was ambassador to Spain from 1842 to 1846. He coined the phrase "the almighty dollar" and once observed that "A tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only tool that grows keener with constant use."

    Continue walking west on Commerce and turn left at Bedford Street to find:

14. **75½ Bedford St.** The narrowest house in the Village (a mere 9½ ft. across), this unlikely three-story brick residence was built on the site of a former carriage alley in 1873. Pretty, redheaded, feminist poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, who arrived in the Village fresh from Vassar, lived here from 1923 (the year she won a Pulitzer Prize for her poetry) to 1925. Ever a favorite among Village intelligentsia, the vivacious Millay perhaps best expressed her youthful passion for life in the lines:

    My candle burns at both ends;
    It will not last the night;
    But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—
    It gives a lovely light!

    Other famous occupants of the narrow house have included a young Cary Grant and John Barrymore.

    Return to Commerce Street and turn left, where:

15. **The Cherry Lane Theatre,** nestled in a bend at 38 Commerce St., was founded in 1924 by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Famed scenic designer Cleon Throckmorton transformed the Revolutionary-era building (originally a farm silo, later a brewery and a box factory) into a playhouse that presented works by Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett (*Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* premiered here),

Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, and Harold Pinter. In 1951, Judith Malina and Julian Beck founded the ultra-experimental Living Theatre on its premises. Before rising to megafame, Barbra Streisand worked as a Cherry Lane usher.

Nearby, in Commerce Street's bend, is **no. 48, a Greek Revival house** fronted by a bona-fide working gas lamp and built in 1844 for malicious merchant maven A. T. Stewart.

Continue around Commerce Street's bend to Barrow Street, where you turn right, and then turn left back onto Bedford Street. A few doors up on the right is:

16. **Chumley's,** 86 Bedford St. (☎ **212/675-4449**), which opened in 1926 in a former blacksmith's shop. During Prohibition, it was a speakeasy with a casino upstairs. Its convoluted entranceway with four steps up and four down (designed to slow police raiders), the lack of a sign outside, and a back door that opens on an alleyway are remnants of that era.

Original owner Lee Chumley was a radical labor sympathizer who held secret meetings of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) on the premises. Chumley's has long been a writer's bar. Its walls are lined with book jackets of works by famous patrons who, over the years, have included Edna St. Vincent Millay (she once lived upstairs), John Steinbeck, Eugene O' Neill, e.e. cummings, Edna Ferber, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Theodore Dreiser, William Faulkner, Gregory Corso, Norman Mailer, William Carlos Williams, Allen Ginsberg, Lionel Trilling, Harvey Fierstein, Calvin Trillin, and numerous others. Even the elusive J. D. Salinger hoisted a few at the bar here, and Simone de Beauvoir came by when she was in town.

With its working fireplaces (converted blacksmith forges), wood-plank flooring, amber lighting, and old, carved-up oak tables, Chumley's lacks nothing in the way of mellowed atmosphere. Think about returning for drinks or dinner. A blackboard menu features fresh pasta and grilled fish. Open nightly from 5pm to an arbitrary closing time, Chumley's also offers brunch on weekends from 11am to 4pm.

Continue up Bedford to Grove Street, named in the 19th century for its many gardens and groves, and make a right to:

17. **17 Grove St.** Parts of this picturesque wood-frame house date from the early 1800s. A friend of James Baldwin's lived here in the 1960s, and Baldwin frequently stayed at the house. Baldwin, whose fiery writings coincided with the inception of the civil rights movement, once said, "The most dangerous creation of any society is that man who has nothing to lose."

Farther along this street is:

18. **45 Grove St.** Originally a freestanding two-story building, this was, in the 19th century, one of the Village's most elegant mansions, surrounded by verdant lawns with greenhouses and stables. Built in 1830, it was refurbished with Italianate influences in 1870. In the movie *Reds,* which is based on the life of John Reed, 45 Grove was portrayed (inaccurately) as Eugene O'Neill's house.

Ohio-born poet Hart Crane rented a second-floor room at 45 Grove St. in 1923 and began writing his poetic portrait of America, *The Bridge* (Hart depicted the Brooklyn Bridge as a symbol of America's westward expansion). Crane was born in 1899 with "a toe in the 19th century." His parents' marriage was a miserably unhappy one, and his mother, an artistic beauty subject to depression, concentrated her aesthetic energies on her son, giving him music and dancing lessons, taking him to art galleries, and providing him with every kind of children's book and classic. Although constant traveling with his mother kept Crane from finishing school, he was a voracious reader and brilliantly self-educated. By the time he was 17, his poetry had been published in prestigious New York magazines, and Nobel Prize–winning Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore was so impressed that he arranged to meet Crane when visiting Cleveland.

In later years, frustrated by frequent rejection from magazines and other exigencies of his craft, Crane would occasionally toss his typewriter out the window. Often moody and despondent, he was chronically in debt, plagued by guilt over homosexual encounters on the

nearby docks, and given to almost nightly alcoholic binges; fellow Villager e.e. cummings once found him passed out on a sidewalk, bundled him into a taxi, and had him driven home. In 1932, returning by ship from Mexico (where, on a Guggenheim fellowship, he had been attempting to write an epic poem about Montezuma), Crane made sexual advances to a crew member, was badly beaten up, and jumped into the waters to his death at the age of 33.

Continue up the street to:

19. **59 Grove St.** English-born American revolutionary/political theorist/writer Thomas Paine died here in 1809. Paine came to America (with the help of Benjamin Franklin) in 1774, and in 1776 he produced his famous pamphlet, *The Crisis,* which was critical in rallying support for American independence, and begins with the words: "These are the times that try men's souls." After fighting in the American Revolution, he returned to England to advocate the overthrow of the British monarchy. Indicted for treason, he escaped to Paris and became a French citizen. While imprisoned in Paris during the Reign of Terror, he wrote *The Age of Reason.* He returned to the United States in 1802, where he was vilified for his atheism. Benjamin Franklin once said to Paine, "Where liberty is, there is my country." To which Paine replied: "Where liberty is not, there is mine."

    The downstairs space has always been a restaurant, which today is called **Marie's Crisis Cafe** (**☎ 212/243-9323**). Though the building Paine lived in burned down, some of the interior brickwork is original. Of note is a WPA-era mural behind the bar depicting the French and American Revolutions. Up a flight of stairs is another mural (a wood-relief carving) called *La Convention*, depicting Robespierre, Danton, and Thomas Paine. In the 1920s, you might have spotted anyone from Eugene O'Neill to Edward VIII of England here.

    At Seventh Avenue, cross to the opposite side of the wide intersection, walk around to the left of the little park, and head half a block up Christopher Street, the hub of New York's gay community, to no. 53:

20. **The Stonewall.** The current bar in this spot shares a name with its more famous predecessor, the Stonewall Inn. This bar was the scene of the Stonewall riots of June 1969, when gay customers decided to resist the police during a routine raid. The event launched the lesbian and gay rights movement and is commemorated throughout the country every year with gay pride parades. In the tiny Sheridan Square Park you just skirted, several of George Segal's realist sculptures honor the gay community. By portraying same-sex couples enjoying the park just like anybody else would, these sculptures point to the ludicrousness of marginalizing gay members of the community.

    Continue up the block to:

21. **The Corner of Waverly Place and Christopher Street.** The wedge-shaped Georgian Northern Dispensary building dates from 1831. Edgar Allan Poe was treated for a head cold here in 1836, the year he came to New York with his 13-year-old bride, for whom he would later compose the pain-filled requiems "Ulalume" and "Annabel Lee":

    > *I was a child and she was a child,*
    > *In this kingdom by the sea;*
    > *But we loved with a love that was more than love—*
    > *I and my Annabel Lee.*

    Keep walking up Christopher Street to take a right onto:

22. **Gay Street.** Famous residents of this tiny street (originally a stable alley) have included New York Mayor Jimmy Walker, who owned the 18th-century town house at no. 12. More recently, Frank Paris, creator of Howdy Doody, lived here.

    In the 1920s, Ruth McKenney lived in the basement of no. 14 with her sister Eileen, who later married Nathanael West. It was the setting for McKenney's zany *My Sister Eileen* stories, which were first published in the *New Yorker* and then collected into a book. They were

then turned into a popular stage comedy that ran on Broadway from 1940 to 1942, followed by a Broadway musical version called *Wonderful Town* and two movie versions, one of them starring Rosalind Russell. The house dates from 1827.

Mary McCarthy, the *Partisan Review's* drama critic and author of *The Stones of Florence* and *The Group,* lived in a studio apartment at no. 18 in the 1940s. During Prohibition, the street held several speakeasies.

At the end of the short street, take a left onto Waverly Place and look for:

23. **139 Waverly Place.** Edna St. Vincent Millay lived here with her sister, Norma, in 1918. Radical playwright Floyd Dell, her lover, who found the apartment for her, commented: "She lived in that gay poverty which is traditional of the Village, and one may find vivid reminiscences of that life in her poetry." An interesting note: Edna St. Vincent Millay's middle name was derived from St. Vincent's Hospital, which had saved the life of her uncle.

Cross Sixth Avenue to check out:

24. **116 Waverly Place.** Dating from 1891, the building has hosted William Cullen Bryant, Horace Greeley, Margaret Fuller, poet Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Herman Melville. Here Poe read his latest poem, "The Raven," to assembled literati. Waverly Place, by the way, was named in 1833 for Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Waverley.*

Return to Sixth Avenue and turn left (south) down it. Take another left onto Washington Place to:

25. **82 Washington Place,** residence from 1908 to 1912 of Willa Cather, whose books celebrated pioneer life and the beauty of her native Nebraska landscape. Cather came to New York in 1906 at the age of 31 to work at the prestigious *McClure's* magazine and rose to managing editor before resigning to write full time. As her career advanced, and she found herself besieged with requests for lectures and interviews, Cather became almost reclusive and fiercely protective of her privacy. She complained,

> *In this country, a writer has to hide and lie and almost steal in order to get time to work in—and peace of mind to work with . . . If we lecture, we get a little more owlish and self-satisfied all the time. We hate it at first, if we are decently modest, but in the end we fall in love with the sound of our own voice. There is something insidious about it, destructive to one's finer feelings . . . It's especially destructive to writers, ever so much worse than alcohol, it takes their edge off.*

Band leader John Philip Sousa owned the beautiful 1839 building next door (**no. 80**).

Washington Place ends at:

26. **Washington Square Park,** the hub of the Village. This area was once a swamp frequented largely by duck hunters. Minetta Brook meandered through it. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, it was a potter's field (more than 10,000 people are buried under the park) and an execution site (one of the makeshift gallows survives—a towering English elm in the northwest corner of the park). The park was dedicated in 1826, and elegant residential dwellings, some of which have survived NYU's cannibalization of the neighborhood, went up around the square. At this time, it was the citadel of the stifling patrician gentility so evocatively depicted in the novels of Edith Wharton. She defined Washington Square society as "a little set with its private catch-words, observances, and amusements" indifferent to "anything outside its charmed circle."

    The white marble Memorial Arch (1892) at the Fifth Avenue entrance, which replaced a wooden arch erected in 1889 to commemorate the centenary of Washington's inauguration, was designed by Stanford White. One night in 1917, a group of Liberal Club pranksters climbed the Washington Square Arch, fired cap guns, and proclaimed the "independent republic of Greenwich Village," a utopia dedicated to "socialism, sex, poetry, conversation, dawn-greeting, anything—so long as it is taboo in the

Middle West." Today, Washington Square Park would probably surpass any of this group's most cherished anarchist fantasies and might even lead them to question the philosophy altogether.

Along the square's north edge stand many of the surviving old homes, including, just west of Fifth Avenue:

27. **19 Washington Square North** (Waverly Place). Henry James's grandmother, Elizabeth Walsh, lived at this now-defunct address. (The no. 19 that exists today is a different house, the numbering system having changed since James's day.) Young Henry spent much time at her house, which was the inspiration for his novel *Washington Square,* later made into the Olivia de Havilland movie *The Heiress.* In 1875, James moved to Europe where he became an expert on expatriatism and penned many novels about Americans living abroad.

Farther east is:

28. **7 Washington Square North,** where Edith Wharton, age 20, and her mother lived in 1882. A wealthy aristocrat, born Edith Jones, Wharton maintained a close friendship with Henry James and, like him, left New York's stultifying upper-class social scene for Europe (Paris) in 1910, where she wrote the Pulitzer Prize–winning *The Age of Innocence.* Both she and James were immensely popular in Europe and were deluged with invitations (James once admitted to accepting 107 dinner invitations in a single year). Wharton wrote almost a book a year her entire adult life, while also finding time to feed French and Belgian refugees during World War I and take charge of 600 Belgian orphans. For these efforts, she was awarded the Legion of Honor by the French government in 1915. No. 7 was also once the home of Alexander Hamilton.

Nearby is:

29. **3 Washington Square North** (today the NYU School of Social Work). Critic Edmund Wilson, managing editor of the *New Republic,* lived here from 1921 to 1923. Another resident, John Dos Passos, wrote *Manhattan Transfer* here. Dos Passos, a fiery New York radical in the 1920s, became disillusioned with Communism after

journeying to Spain with Hemingway during the Spanish Civil War. He was appalled that the Marxist-backed Republicans executed his friend Jose Robles, himself a Republican supporter. The incident, which caused a break between Dos Passos and Hemingway when the latter refused to challenge the integrity of the Republican cause, was the basis of Dos Passos's next novel, *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939). His books thereafter also demonstrated a marked shift to the right. In the 1940s, Dos Passos returned to his native Virginia.

Make a left at University Place and another immediate left into:

30. **Washington Mews.** This picturesque 19th-century cobblestoned street, lined with vine-covered, two-story buildings (converted stables and carriage houses constructed to serve posh Washington Square town houses), has had several famous residents, among them John Dos Passos, artist Edward Hopper (no. 14A), and writer Sherwood Anderson (no. 54). No. 54 dates from 1834.

Double back to University Place and turn left to head north to the southeast corner of 9th Street, where stands the first of two possible places to:

Take a Break The more expensive and formal of the choices is the **Knickerbocker Bar and Grill** (☎ **212/228-8490**) at the southeast corner of 9th Street and University Place. This comfortable wood-paneled restaurant and jazz club attracts an interesting clientele, including writers (Jack Newfield, E. L. Doctorow, Erica Jong, Sidney Zion, Christopher Cerf) and actors (Richard Gere, F. Murray Abraham, Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins). Harry Connick Jr. got his start playing piano at the Knickerbocker, and Charles Lindbergh signed the contract for his transatlantic flight at the bar here. The restaurant is open daily for lunch/brunch from 11:45am; an eclectic menu offers entrees ranging from pasta dishes to bangers and mash to Southwestern paella.

For smaller appetites, head 2 blocks up to a branch of **Dean and Deluca,** 75 University Place, at 11th Street (☎ **212/869-6890** or 212/473-1908). It offers superior light fare (pastries, croissants, ham and Brie sandwiches

on baguette, pasta salads) in a pristinely charming setting, usually enhanced by recorded classical music. Be sure to look up at the gorgeous plasterwork ceiling. It's open Monday to Thursday 8am to 10pm, Friday and Saturday 8am to 11pm, and Sunday 9am to 8pm.

This address is also a stop on the tour. When Thomas Wolfe graduated from Harvard in 1923, he came to New York to teach at NYU and lived at the Hotel Albert (depicted as the Hotel Leopold in his novel *Of Time and the River*), which stood at this address. Today the Albert Apartments occupy the site.

From University Place, turn left onto 11th Street to:

31. **25 East 11th St.** The unhappy and sexually confused poet Hart Crane (whom you met at stop 18) lived here for a short time. His neighbor at:

32. **21 East 11th St.** was Mary Cadwaller Jones, who was married to Edith Wharton's brother. Her home was the setting of literary salons; Henry Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and John Singer Sargent often came to lunch, and Henry James was a houseguest when he visited America from Europe. Jones's daughter, landscape architect Beatrix Farrand, grew up here before designing such renowned outdoor spaces as the White House's East Garden and the New York Botanical Gardens' Rose Garden.

Continue to Fifth Avenue, cross it, and turn right. On your right is:

33. **The Salmagundi Club,** 47 Fifth Ave., which began as an artist's club in 1871 and was originally located at 596 Broadway. The name comes from the *Salmagundi* papers, in which Washington Irving mocked his fellow New Yorkers and first used the term *Gotham* to describe the city. *Salmagundi,* which means "a stew of many ingredients," was thought an appropriate term to describe the club's diverse membership of painters, sculptors, writers, and musicians. The club moved to this mid-19th-century brownstone mansion in 1917. Theodore Dreiser lived at the Salmagundi in 1897, when it was located across the street where the First Presbyterian Church stands today. It

was at the Salmagundi that Dreiser probably wrote *Sister Carrie,* a work based on the experiences of his own sister, Emma.

Cross 12th Street. At the northwest corner is:

34. **The Forbes Magazine Building,** 60–62 Fifth Ave., with a museum (☎ **212/206-5548**) housing exhibits from the varied collections of the late Malcolm Forbes, who was famous as a financier, magazine magnate, frequent Liz Taylor escort, and father of one-time presidential hopeful Steve Forbes. On display are hundreds of model ships; legions formed from a collection of more than 100,000 military miniatures; thousands of signed letters, papers, and other paraphernalia from almost every American president; a remarkable even dozen of Fabergé eggs and other objets d'art fashioned for the czars; an exhibit of the evolution of the game Monopoly (natch); and changing exhibits and art shows. Admission is free. The galleries are open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm.

Make a left on 12th Street and you'll see:

35. **The New School for Social Research,** 66 West 12th St., which was founded in 1919 as a forum for professors too liberal-minded for Columbia University's then stiflingly traditional attitude. In the 1930s, it became a "University in Exile" for intelligentsia fleeing Nazi Germany. Many great writers have taught or lectured in its classrooms over the decades: William Styron, Joseph Heller, Edward Albee, W. H. Auden, Robert Frost, Nadine Gordimer, Max Lerner, Maya Angelou, Joyce Carol Oates, Arthur Miller, I. B. Singer, Susan Sontag, and numerous others.

Turn right up Sixth Avenue and left onto 13th Street to:

36. **138 West 13th St.** Max Eastman and other radicals urged revolution in the pages of the *Liberator,* headquartered in this lovely building on a pleasant tree-lined street. The magazine published works by John Reed, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Ernest Hemingway, Elinor Wylie, e.e. cummings (who later became very right-wing and a passionate supporter of Sen. Joseph McCarthy's Communist

witch hunts), John Dos Passos, and William Carlos Williams. The *Liberator,* established in 1919, succeeded *The Masses,* an earlier Eastman publication (see stop 38).

Further west along the block is:

37. **152 West 13th St.** Offices for the *Dial,* a major avant-garde literary magazine of the 1920s, occupied this beautiful Greek Revival brick town house. The magazine dated from 1840 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where transcendentalists Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Emerson were its seminal editors. In the '20s, its aim was to offer "the best of European and American art, experimental and conventional." Contributors included Marianne Moore, Hart Crane, Conrad Aiken, Ezra Pound, Theodore Dreiser (who once wrote an article claiming that American literature had to be crude to be truly American), and artist Marc Chagall. T. S. Eliot, who once grumbled of the *Dial,* "there is far too much in it, and it is all second rate and exceedingly solemn," nevertheless published *The Waste Land* in its pages.

Continue west on 13th Street, and make a left on Seventh Avenue, a right on 12th Street, and then another right for some afternoon tea.

Take a Break When Londoner Nicky Perry moved to New York, she was disappointed to find no proper British teahouses where she could get a decent cup of tea, so she opened her own in 1990. **Tea and Sympathy** (☎ **212/807-8329**), at 108 Greenwich Ave., is straight out of the English countryside, a hole-in-the-wall crammed with a few tables (always crowded), a friendly British wait staff, and plenty of old-time charm in the form of Anglo paraphernalia plastered over the walls. Elbow room is at a minimum here, but it's worth the squeeze for a $14 full afternoon tea, which includes a tiered serving tray stuffed full of finger sandwiches with the crusts cut off (cucumber and mayo or egg salad), cakes, biscuits, scones, jam, and clotted cream, plus, of course, a pot of tea (go for the Typhoo). Cheaper, bona fide British dishes include shepherd's pie, bangers and mash, and Welsh rarebit. For dessert, try a treacle pudding

or warm ginger cake. Tea and Sympathy is open daily from 11:30am to 10:30pm.

From Tea and Sympathy, turn left to walk back down Greenwich Avenue to the corner of 12th Street and:

38. **91 Greenwich Ave.** At the beginning of the 20th century, Max Eastman was editor of a radical left-wing literary magazine called *The Masses.* This magazine published, among others, John Reed, Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson, Upton Sinclair, Edgar Lee Masters, e.e. cummings, and Louis Untermeyer. John Sloan, Stuart Davis, Picasso, and George Bellows provided art for its pages, which a newspaper columnist dismissed thusly:

> *They draw nude women for The Masses,*
> *Thick, fat, ungainly lasses—*
> *How does that help the working classes?*

Reed wrote the magazine's statement of purpose: "To everlastingly attack old systems, old morals, old prejudices." *The Masses* was suppressed by the Justice Department in 1918 because of its opposition to World War I (it called on Woodrow Wilson to repeal the draft and claimed that America's enemy was not Germany but "that 2% of the United States that owns 60% of all the wealth"). Reed, Eastman, political cartoonist Art Young, and writer/literary critic Floyd Dell were put on trial under the Espionage Act and charged with conspiracy to obstruct recruiting and prevent enlistment. Pacifist Edna St. Vincent Millay read poems to the accused to help pass the time while juries were out. The trials all ended in hung juries.

Continue another block down Greenwich Avenue; turn right on Bank Street and look for:

39. **1 Bank St.** In 1913, shortly after the publication of *O Pioneers!,* Willa Cather, at age 40, moved to a seven-room, second-floor apartment in a large brick house here. Here she lived with her companion, Edith Lewis, and wrote *My Antonia* (the third of a trilogy about immigrants in the United States), *Death Comes to the Archbishop,* and several other novels. In 1920, H. L. Mencken called

My Antonia "the best piece of fiction ever done by a woman in America . . . I know of no novel that makes the remote folk of the western farmlands more real than *My Antonia* makes them, and know of none that makes them seem better worth knowing."

When she became successful, Cather rented the apartment above hers and kept it empty to ensure perfect quiet. Her Friday afternoon at-homes here were frequented by D. H. Lawrence, among others. Unlike many Village writers of her day, Cather eschewed the radical scene and took little interest in politics.

From Bank Street, take a left onto Waverly Place, cross 11th Street to take another left on Perry Street, and make a final right back onto Greenwich Avenue to:

40. **45 Greenwich Ave.** In 1947, William Styron came to New York from North Carolina to work as a junior editor at McGraw-Hill. He moved here in 1951 after a stint in the marines and the success of his first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness.* Styron originally showed manuscript pages from that novel, begun at age 23, to Hiram Haydn, a Bobbs-Merrill editor whose writing class he was taking at the New School. Haydn told Styron he was too advanced for the class and took an option on the novel.

Continue down Greenwich Avenue to West 10th Street and detour right to:

41. **139 West 10th St.** Today an Italian restaurant, this was the site, for decades, of a popular Village bar called the Ninth Circle. But it was in 1954 at a former bar at this location that playwright Edward Albee saw graffiti on a mirror reading, "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and, years later, appropriated it. He recalled the incident in a *Paris Review* interview: "When I started to write the play, it cropped up in my mind again. And, of course, 'Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf' means . . . who's afraid of living life without false illusions."

Double back up West 10th Street, cross Greenwich Avenue, and walk a block where you will see the gated entry to:

42. **Patchin Place.** The gate closing off Patchin Place is never locked; feel free to pass through it. This tranquil,

tree-shaded cul-de-sac has sheltered many illustrious residents. From 1923 to 1962, e.e. cummings lived at no. 4, where visitors included T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Dylan Thomas. The highly acclaimed but little-known Djuna Barnes (literary critics have compared her to James Joyce) lived in a tiny one-room apartment at no. 5. Reclusive and eccentric, she almost never left the premises for 40 years, prompting cummings to occasionally shout from his window, "Are you still alive, Djuna?"

Among other works, Barnes wrote a memoir called *Life Is Painful, Nasty, & Short . . . In My Case It Has Only Been Nasty* (it certainly wasn't short; she lived to the age of 90); an experimental poetic novel called *Nightwood* (for which T. S. Eliot penned an introduction); and a collection of poetry called *The Book of Repulsive Women.* Three of her one-act plays were produced at the Provincetown Playhouse in 1919 and 1920.

Louise Bryant and John Reed maintained a residence at Patchin Place for several years until Reed's death in 1920. During this time, he wrote his eyewitness account of the Russian Revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World.* To avoid interruptions from callers at Patchin Place, Reed rented a room atop a restaurant at 147 West 4th St. to do his writing. Theodore Dreiser and John Masefield were also Patchin Place residents, the former in 1895 when he was still an unknown journalist.

Turn left out of Patchin Place to cross Sixth Avenue. Continue down West 10th Street, but look to your right as you cross Sixth Avenue to see the:

43. **Jefferson Market Library** at 425 Sixth Ave., a former produce market. The turreted, red-brick-and-granite, Victorian-Gothic castle was built as a courthouse in 1877 and named for Thomas Jefferson. Topped by a lofty clock/bell tower (originally intended as a fire lookout), with traceried and stained-glass windows, gables, and steeply sloping roofs, the building was inspired by a Bavarian castle. In the 1880s, architects voted it one of the 10 most beautiful buildings in America.

Head east down 10th Street to:

44. **50 West 10th St.** After his great success with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,* Edward Albee bought this late-19th-century converted carriage house in the early 1960s. It's a gem of a building, with highly polished wooden carriage doors. Albee wrote *Tiny Alice* and *A Delicate Balance* here, the latter being a Pulitzer Prize winner. In 1994, he won a second Pulitzer Prize for *Three Tall Women.*

    Now look for:

45. **37 West 10th St.** Sinclair Lewis, already a famous writer by the mid-1920s, lived in this early-19th-century house with his wife, journalist Dorothy Thompson, from 1928 to 1929. Lewis fell in love with the recently divorced Thompson at first sight in 1927 and immediately proposed to her. When asked to speak at a dinner party, he stood up and said, "Dorothy, will you marry me?" and resumed his seat. Lewis later followed her to Russia and all over Europe until she accepted his proposal. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't last.

    Your final stop is:

46. **14 West 10th St.** When Mark Twain came to New York at the turn of the 20th century (at the age of 65), he lived in this gorgeous 1855 mansion. An extremely successful writer (Twain's first book was a travel book, *The Innocents Abroad*), he entertained lavishly. Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Twain was once a riverboat captain, and he took his pseudonym from the singsong calls of the sounding men stationed at the prows of Mississippi paddle boats ("mark twain" meant the waters were a safe 2 fathoms deep). Twain was famous for his witticisms, including a quip on the art of quipping: "How lucky Adam was. He knew when he said a good thing, nobody had said it before."