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Neil Harris's scholarship of the past twenty-five years has helped to open up the study of American cultural history. This long-awaited collection gathers some of his rich and varied writings. Harris takes us from John Philip Sousa to Superman, with stops along the way to explore art museums and world fairs, shopping malls and hotel lobbies, urban design and utopian novels, among other artifacts of American cultures.

The essays fall into three general sections: the first treats the history of cultural institutions, highlighting the role of museums; the second section focuses on some literary, artistic, and entrepreneurial responses to the new mass culture; and the final group of essays explores the social history of art and architecture. Throughout Harris's diverse writings certain themes recur: the redefining of boundaries between high art and popular culture, the relationship between public taste and technological change, and the very notion of what constitutes a shared social experience. Harris's pioneering work has broadened the field of cultural history and encouraged whole new areas of inquiry. Cultural Excursions will be useful for those in American and culture studies, as well as for the general reader trying to make sense of the culture in which we live.