

When I started graduate school in 1967 a whole new world of thinking opened up for me, and I began to play around in it by thinking about the neighborhood I'd left behind. This was in the Graduate School of Geography at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts just after I'd learned about J. K. Wright's idea of geosophy: "the study of geographical knowledge from any and all points of view."

Why not the point of view of a 6th grader, I wondered, a 6th grader who'd just moved from a housing project on the West Side of Cleveland to a strip of apartments in Cleveland Heights? Me, in other words. No doubt I was also homesick but 1967 wasn't the first time I'd thought about this. When we moved to Cleveland Heights we kids rode in the closed-in back of the moving van – for the thrill – so that when they opened the doors and let us out it was almost like, I don't know, being born again. There was light snow on the ground. Everything else was new.

And then, little by little, it wasn't.

*How did that happen?*

I made a bunch of maps. The first three were attempts to map my earliest impressions: the apartment building, its driveway, the garage and backyard, the walk to the sidewalk and street, the facades of the apartment buildings we could see, a playground. There are notes like, "I knew the street continued but no more," and "discriminate between areas known and noticed/*known*: my apartment, sidewalk to playground, playground/*noticed*: the rest." Another three maps explored my increasing awareness of the walk to school, this variation, that. Next came a couple that tried to get at our explorations, mine, my brothers (we were inveterate explorers). And then I made a map to update the map of first my impressions. I called this "Second State Overlook" because Overlook was the name of the road our apartment was on. I guess it was the name of the neighborhood too. This map tried to discriminate places where I felt really at ease from those where I didn't, either because we could be hassled by janitors or because I was plain intimidated. I was mapping a bigger area now. This was no longer the space in front of my apartment, but some four or five blocks.

We hadn't lived on Overlook long when the *Plain Dealer's* District 9 manager offered me and my brother Chris a paper route. I think it was Route 11, but I was to have a lot of routes over the years. In any case it was just one building, 2489 Overlook, across the street from us and four buildings south. (I say "south" pretty casually today – with Google World up on the screen in front of me – but it wasn't anything I knew in 1956.) After a while Chris got another route and I took over 2489 by myself. The building had just shy of 60 units and more than half took the paper. So, though it was a decent size route, I could deliver it in no time and when my manager offered me a second route I took it. And when he offered me a third, I took that too. Pretty soon I had a paper route empire. And if, like most empires, its borders shifted with time and circumstances, for a good many years – through my second year at Western Reserve University – I had well over 200 customers.

Needless to say I made a map of all that too, and a few others; and when I was home for Christmas break I took some photos and tried some writing. But graduate school proved distracting and in the end I put the sketchbook with the maps and the writing and photos away and forgot about it.

In 1974 I started teaching in the landscape architecture program at North Carolina State University in Raleigh and in 1976, casting around for a project to sink my teeth into, the sketchbook popped into my head. I took a look at the maps I'd made and found them less interesting than I'd remembered, and one day, doodling during a lecture Gary Gumz was giving in a class we taught together – I'd heard the lecture before – I sketched another map, the one here. This is about my paper route empire too, but it names the kids who'd carried the routes before me.

Ignore the manic arrows. They don't mean anything. They're me mimicking the *landscape architecture arrows* Gary was drawing on the blackboard. Landscape architecture arrows weren't anything like the arrows I'd grown up with – you can see those shooting from that tube thing in the upper left – and they fascinated me. The hatching on the other hand, well, that's what the map's about: they're the routes. I numbered them left to right on the west side of Overlook and then started again on the east side. I never finished the map: there should be another route east of Overlook but south of Kenilworth (where the arrow pointing to Overlook is).

So from left to right: number I, a bunch of apartments – more than shown here – that my brother Peter had carried for a little while and that later Chris Bellamy did; II, double hatched with a star, 2489, to which for a while Lewis Manor was added (to lessen the burden on the kid handling the route north of it); III, a really strange route that looks sensible on the map but less so on the ground that my friend Stuart Schaffner had carried; IV, my second route, which for some reason I drew smaller than it was (it went all the way to Hampshire), I never knew who had it before me; and then east of Overlook, V, Stuart's core route, one he had for years with adoring customers who took a while to warm to me. The route I left off? I never had it for long anyway, though like many of the routes I had it more than once. It made my empire too hard to deliver and, frankly, I never cared for the buildings or the people who lived in them. (Though Robert Crumb may have lived in one for a while during the years I had it. Or maybe he lived around the corner on Hampshire where Harvey Pekar lived.)

It would be cool if the map displayed the sequence in which I added and subtracted routes or the sequences in which the routes gained or lost territory, to say nothing of customers; for the routes were none of them givens, but evolving, just as my grasp of Cleveland Heights was. If the maps I'd originally drawn had been about how the Cleveland Heights I knew was growing larger and larger, this map of my routes was about how it was getting deeper and deeper. I didn't just know where these buildings were, I knew *in my feet* the number of steps in each flight of stairs, the handholds, where I'd have to stand to toss the paper onto a door mat without leaving the stair, the smells of

the hallways, how to get a locked lobby door to open by yanking hard on the outer door and getting across the lobby fast enough to grab the inner door before it clicked shut again after it popped.

But history too, not only of the buildings, but of the routes, the carriers. For example Chris Bellamy – and his brother John carried the route for a while too --, it wasn't just that his father wrote for the very paper we delivered but that ... his grandfather had edited it for 26 years. I mean ... And when I understood that that grandfather was the son of the Edward Bellamy who'd written *Looking Backward* – that utopian socialist novel! – it just picked the whole paper-route thing up and whirled it into, I don't know, into world history.

I loved delivering the paper, the city with no people, the dawn, getting it done efficiently, the intimacy of the knowledge. But this historical dimension, it put a patina on the shine.

And with a little of the freshness rubbed off it was suddenly obvious that every bit of it was caught up in world history, in the history of the world: the newspapers to begin with, and child labor, newsboys, routes, the asphalt, the bricks in the walls and the idea of apartment buildings, central heat, streetcar suburbs ... The road was called Overlook because from it you could look out of the Heights to the lake, to downtown Cleveland; and you could stand there when you'd finished your route on a driveway that was cantilevered out along the side of the northernmost building of route number I and watch the rising sun light up the Terminal Tower six miles away.

The spreading light connected everything, not just in space but in time. And then you'd go home and have breakfast.