



William Dean Howells

(1837-1920)

Resident of Hamilton, Ohio

Author, Editor, Friend of Mark Twain

HOWELLS SPENT HIS BOYHOOD in Hamilton, Ohio. He fondly recalled his youth in *A Boy's Town*, published in 1890. He wrote that Hamilton "was a town peculiarly adapted for a boy to be a boy in." For the rest of his life, he broke in new pens by writing, "W. D. Howells, Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio."

ONE OF AMERICA'S literary giants, Howells wrote 35 novels, 35 plays, 34 miscellaneous books, 6 books of literary criticism, 4 books of poetry, and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. He shaped the destiny of fellow writers by editing their work for *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine*. Howells described his good friend Mark Twain as "the Lincoln of our literature."

VISIT SITES that Howells knew as a boy between 3 and 11 years of age.

ALTHOUGH HAMILTON HAS CHANGED in the century and a half since Howells lived here, you can walk to many places he knew and drive to others. Numbered signs designate sites on the William Dean Howells "A Boy's Town" Tour.

HOWELLS RESIDED IN HAMILTON between 1840 and 1848. Later, he lived in Eureka Mills (a utopian settlement near Dayton), Columbus, Boston, and New York. For a time, he was U.S. Consul in Venice. As a lad in Hamilton, he was most impressed with the Miami River, the Miami and Erie Canal, the Basin, and the Hydraulic. The lock (11 on map printed here and on "A Boy's Town" Tour sign) that Howells termed the First Lock existed just north of Dayton Street. He recalled the days when a vast canal system transported goods. Famous Cincinnati artist Henry Farny illustrated *A Boy's Town* with a drawing of the First Lock.

HOWELLS WROTE that the Hydraulic (9) "brought the waters of the Old River for mill power through the heart of the town, from a Big Reservoir and a Little Reservoir" and that it "ran



under mysterious culverts at every street-crossing." He remembered the fish in the streams and the wild ducks in the Reservoirs (10).



Farny also sketched a canal boat on the Six-Mile Level.

