



UNITED STATES PAVILION NEWS

HEMISFAIR '68

U.S. Department of Commerce/U.S. Expositions Staff

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For release at will.

"U S"

Narration written by W.H. Auden for the documentary film "U S," shown in the Confluence Theatre, United States Pavilion, at HemisFair '68.

The waiting land

Was this the Vineland the Vikings' legend
Said they saw? If so, the glimpse
Was soon forgotten. Centuries passed.
The map was blank till Iberians looking
For a less expensive passage, a quicker
Route to the Indias, rich in spices,
Stumbled instead on a strange continent.

Vast, unhumanized, a virgin wilderness,
The land lay in her long sleep,
Waiting to be woken by western man.

Quite empty? No. There were noble savages,
Indian tribes, tillers and hunters,
Roaming freely through the forests and plains,
Well content with their way of life.

Early settlement.

When we came to these shores and encountered the Indians,
There was good-will at first: gifts were exchanged
And treaties sworn. Presently though...

Each year the coast became more civil,
Till we broke with England to be our own masters,
And founded a republic, the first on earth
Where all men should be equal and free.
Immigrants were needed. Immigrants came.

Immigration

Most were poor, peasants and such
From the underlayers of the old world's
Stratified heap. They streamed to join us,
Men and women, a million a year.
These came by choice: as they crossed the Atlantic
They looked forward with hope....

....Unlike those earlier
Luckless millions who were made to come,
Torn from their African homes by force.

No rejoicing, though, for Indians:
We wanted their land,
With war and whiskey we worsted them.

Scenes of American achievement

America: A land of great plenty with promises to keep.

The highway sequence

Our frontier lands are fully settled;
Overcrowding is our headache now.

So we have built superhighways and automobiles
To give us freedom of movement.

We have pinned our hopes on our machines.

Yes, we have pinned our hopes on our machines.

The wild landscapes

However, for our rare moments of escape, we have managed
to preserve a few landscapes that are still wild. Here,
we still may wander by ourselves and fall again under the
spell of nature, and re-enter her magic circle where we
lived when we were children.

These precious places are few and far between.

The beach sequence

Solitude and privacy are not easy to come by in a
mechanized world.

Devastation of our natural resources

The marvelous machines we have made obey us,
And couldn't care less for the consequences:
Nothing good or evil can happen to them.
If we want it that way, they will lay waste the earth,
Loot the land and leave behind them *
An irredeemable desolation.

Yes, we are free in our greed to let poisons
Befoul the streams till the fish die,
Discommodate cities, turn smiling fields
Into junk graveyards and garbage dumps,
Let noxious effluvia fill the air, polluting our lungs.

The American neighborhood

Pleasant places exist, of course, comfortable retreats
Where the air smells good, the nights are quiet, and
One can forget about all the problems of the world outside.

The American poor

For the unskilled, the unschooled, there is now no
place in this world, neither on the land, nor in
the city.

Nobody needs them, and they know it.

Finale

The eyes of the world are upon us
And wonder what we're worth,
For much they see dishonors
The richest country on earth.

Shamefully we betray
Our noble dead if we,
After two hundred years,
Cannot or will not see,
Behind their conscious ideas,
More clearly what is meant
By certain truths that they
Believed self-evident.

On each of us depends
What sort of judgment waits
For you, for me, for our friends,
And these United States.