



Friends, Writers, and Other Countrymen: A Memoir

Sidney Offit

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“Sidney Offit has devised a marvelous mirror of his unique personality as well as a one of a kind tour of the New York literary world in the last half century. Anyone even faintly interested in books will find it impossible to put down.”---Thomas Fleming, bestselling author of *Liberty! The American Revolution*

Sidney Offit’s charming memoir of a writer’s life ingeniously reflects some of the greatest (and most infamous) literary, political, and sports personalities of our century. His early days in Baltimore (where he met H. L. Mencken and entertained Robert Frost) are as engaging as his later encounters with Dylan Thomas, John Steinbeck, Pablo Neruda, Heinrich Böll, and some of the era’s greatest ballplayers: Robinson, Mantle, Mays, and Williams.

Mixing with a remarkable and diverse crowd, led Sidney to run-ins and adventures with Truman Capote (“What kind of guy are you?”), Jackie Kennedy (in a corner), Kurt Vonnegut (who identified Sidney as his “best friend”), the incomparable Toni Morrison, and other bards, muses, and just plain folk. Their conversations are recalled with gentle humor and a keen eye for a New York where casual and spontaneous encounters may shape what the country reads or where a stroll around the corner can change a life.

Praise for Sidney Offit's "Friends, Writers, and Other Countrymen":

“It is possible that Sidney Offit knows more famous and interesting people than anyone else on earth, and what is more, has a funny and shrewdly observed story about each of them.... He is truly 20th Century New York City’s answer to Samuel Pepys.”---Michael Korda, author of *Charmed Lives and Ike*

“Sidney Offit was the man. He was there.... For more than a half century Offit has interacted with one big cheese after another. And now he recounts to our utter glee, what he saw, did, and heard. Sid pushes the reader---already satiated---to the greedy expectation after each chapter of: who’s next?”--- Barry Beckham, author of *My Main Mother*

“What a wonderful book—as they say in Dublin, “I couldn’t leave it down!” His novelist’s eye, boundless generosity of spirit, and robust delight in the strenuous pleasures of metropolitan life are evident on every page of this irresistible memoir by a perennially youthful gentleman of letters.”--Joel Connaroe, President Emeritus, J.S. Guggenheim Foundation

“[Sidney Offit’s] latest contribution to American letters is wise, intimate and historically invaluable. I gulped it down with amazement. Offit made me laugh. And in just one sentence, he made me cry...I love every word. I even love the commas. But most of all, I love a big-hearted gentleman curious about people who writes like an angel.”--Patricia Volk, author of *To My Dearest Friends*

“This astonishing memoir proves that if you know Sidney Offit, as I do, you are no more than one degree of

separation from everybody you ever heard of, and I mean Pearl Buck, Sly Stallone, Borges, Pele....”---Roy Blount Jr. *Long Time Leaving: Dispatches From Up South*

“This book stands in the first rank of American autobiographies, and gives us a matchless contribution to our recent social and cultural history.”---Charles Bracelen Flood, Former President, PEN, American Center.

“More than a memoir about the writers life, this is a book about how at their best writers speak and dream for us all.”---Marita Golden author of *After*

“Knowing Sid has been one of the great pleasures of my life—he is unique in today’s world: a true man-about-town, but one who views his friends and acquaintances with the greatest generosity and compassion.”---Mary Pope Osborne, author of *The Magic Tree House* series

“Offit has been as important to American arts and letters as any of those to whom he characteristically defers. He is our wise and cheerful host. And the nation’s writers would be lost without him.”---Roger Rosenblatt, author of *Lapham Rising* and *Beet*

“There’s a rumor that if you wake Sidney in the middle of the night, he sticks out his hand and says, “Nice to meet you!” In this warm, funny book, Sidney’s gregarious spirit goes rollicking through the pages as he introduces the reader to one fascinating character after another.”---James Stevenson, author, cartoonist, originator of *Lost and Found New York*

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Terry Dansby:

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