



The Imperial Season: America's Capital in the Time of the First Ambassadors, 1893-1918

William Seale

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This story of the young city of Washington coming up in the international scene is populated with presidents, foreign diplomats, civil servants, architects, artists, and influential hosts and hostesses who were enamored of the idea of world power but had little idea of the responsibilities involved.

Between the Spanish American War and World War I, the thrill of America's new international role held the nation's capital in rapture. Visionaries gravitated to Washington and sought to make it the glorious equal to the great European capitals of the day. Remains of the period still define Washington--the monuments and great civic buildings on the Mall as well as the private mansions built on the avenues that now serve as embassies.

The first surge of America's world power led to profound changes in diplomacy, and a vibrant official life in Washington, DC, naturally followed. In the twenty-five year period that William Seale terms the "imperial season," a host of characters molded the city in the image of a great world capital. Some of the characters are well known, from presidents to John Hay and Uncle Joe Cannon, and some relatively unknown, from diplomat Alvey Adee to hostess Minnie Townsend and feminist Inez Milholland. *The Imperial Season* is a unique social history that defines a little explored period of American history that left an indelible mark on our nation's capital.

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