

Revolutionary Roads: Mapping America's Innovation Capitals

30 tales of following where the spirit leads

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- 1. Seattle, 1967** The Lakeside Mother's Club uses the proceeds of a rummage sale to install an ASR-33 Teletype machine for kids to experiment with. Seventh grader Bill Gates finds his calling.
- 2. Portland, Oregon, 1982** Dan Wieden and David Kennedy set up their ad agency. Wieden uses a borrowed typewriter to tap out this slogan for their first client: "Just do it."
- 3. Sioux City, Iowa, 1985** Ted Waitt and Mike Hammond launch Gateway out of Waitt's dad's farmhouse; they load cattle trucks in lieu of paying rent. To play up their roots, they ship computers in boxes patterned like a Holstein.
- 4. Sausalito, California, 1998** The naming wizards at Lexicon Branding note that the tiny keys on Research In Motion's new device look not unlike the seeds on a strawberry. Come to think of it, a BlackBerry.
- 5. Danville, California, 1990** Having devoured five PowerBars during a 175-mile bike ride, Gary Erickson can ingest no more. The Clif Bar is born.
- 6. Berkeley, California, 1971** Under the aliases Berkeley Blue and Oaf Tobark, two guys peddle illegal devices dorm to dorm that "phreak" the phone system into making free calls. They use their real names -- Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs -- when they start Apple Computer in 1976.
- 7. Burlingame, California, 1982** During a kitchen-table discussion, Signe Ostby grumbles to her spouse about the tedium of paying bills. Putting all other husbands to shame, Scott Cook begins work on a solution. Within two years, Intuit and its flagship personal-finance software, Quicken, emerge.
- 8. Hawthorne, California, 2002** Elon Musk just has a thing about Mars. It takes \$100 million, but SpaceX, his follow-up to PayPal, launches a rocket 180 miles above Earth.
- 9. La Honda, California, 1997** Reed Hastings contemplates lying to his wife about the \$40 he owes Canyon Video for a misplaced copy of *Apollo 13*. Then, he gets a better idea: Netflix.

10. San Jose, California, 1995 Pierre Omidyar launches eBay from his apartment. One of the first items sold, for \$14.83, is a broken laser pointer. When Omidyar contacts the winning bidder to make sure he knows that it's broken, the bidder writes back that he is in fact a collector of broken laser pointers.

11. Palo Alto, California, 1995 Stanford grad student Sergey Brin and prospective student Larry Page meet -- and disagree about almost everything. They get over it and start a search engine called BackRub. Two years later, it's renamed Google.

12. Black Rock Desert, Nevada, 1999 Philip Rosedale drives to the Nevada desert for the Burning Man festival. *Dude: Reality is what you make of it*. He follows that insight directly to the creation of Second Life.

13. Scottsdale, Arizona, 2005 Bob Parsons's company needs more exposure. So he commissions a 30-second Super Bowl ad featuring a buxom gal *in medias* wardrobe malfunction. In 2006, GoDaddy.com becomes the world's largest Web host.

14. Dallas, 1992 Southwest Airlines's Herb Kelleher and Stevens Aviation's Kurt Herwald arm wrestle in the Dallas Sportatorium over rights to the slogan "Just Plane Smart." Herwald wins (but lets Southwest keep using the slogan).

15. Minneapolis, 1994 A bicycle and an insane knowledge of computers -- that is all Robert Stephens needs (and all he has) to start Geek Squad. His nerd uniform of white shirt and black clip-on tie is a stroke of marketing genius.

16. Londonderry, New Hampshire, 1983 Which is worse -- the Dumpster fire that nearly burns down the barn or the flood of fermented curds? No matter; Stonyfield Farm survives to become the country's best-selling organic yogurt.

17. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004 Skyhook Wireless embarks on a three-year project to map Wi-Fi hot spots around the country. Now, coddled iPhone users nationwide rely on Skyhook to calculate their location -- and direct them to the closest Starbucks -- wherever they go.

18. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965 The Feds start clearing 29 acres in Kendall Square to build a space center. Lyndon Johnson reroutes the center to Houston, but by the '80s, the area is known as A.I. Alley for its slew of artificial-intelligence businesses. Now, it's a biotech hotbed.

19. Burlington, Vermont, 1979 Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield celebrate their company's first anniversary by offering free ice cream to anyone who stops by the parlor they are running out of a converted gas station.

20. Boston, 1979 Bernie Goldhirsh is an avid sailor, so if he has to work in an office, he wants to at least smell the sea. He bases his first magazine, *Sail*, at Boston Harbor, and later launches *Inc.* there, too.

21. Stamford, Connecticut, 1994 At Walker Digital headquarters, Jay Walker reimagines Thomas Edison's invention lab for the knowledge economy. The '90s equivalent of the light bulb? Priceline.com.

- 22. West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1992** Susan Lucci is hawking hair products from the QVC studio when Diane von Furstenberg walks in. The designer decides then that she will make her comeback with a line for the channel. She sells out the entire collection, worth \$1.3 million, in two hours.
- 23. Lakewood, New Jersey, 1989** Marc Milecofsky asks his parents for a compressor and airbrush. Soon, he is making up to \$700 a week selling custom airbrushed T-shirts to the student body of Lakewood High. These days, people know Milecofsky as Marc Ecko, of the Ecko apparel empire.
- 24. New York City, 1984** Unable to get a liquor license after serving time for evading income taxes and skimming cash from Studio 54, his Manhattan disco, Ian Schrager tries his hand at the hotel game, launching the sleek, modern Morgans. World, meet your first boutique hotel.
- 25. Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, 1995** City officials hesitate to give Sam Calagione a liquor license for Dogfish Head Brewings & Eats, pointing out that he has a recent arrest for driving under the influence. He reminds them that although he did indeed run into a parked car, he did it while riding his bicycle. The "extreme beer" movement finds its mascot.
- 26. Durham, North Carolina, 2007** Vivek Wadhwa and his students at the Pratt School of Engineering show that 25 percent of the tech companies started in the U.S. from 1995 to 2005 had at least one foreign-born founder. Barack Obama promises in his presidential campaign to support an increase in the number of H-1B visas for skilled workers.
- 27. Houston, 1980** Michael Dell persuades his parents to let him buy an Apple II for his 15th birthday. They are furious when he promptly takes it apart. Four years later, he decides that selling computer parts sounds like more fun than premed.
- 28. Lafayette, Louisiana, 2005** Being the kind of guy who likes to control his own destiny -- and a bit of a worrier -- Richard Zuschlag keeps on hand 18 500-foot towers and a supply of satellite phones for Acadian Ambulance Service. When Hurricane Katrina strikes, Acadian's staff employs the communication system and the company's vehicles to rescue 7,000 people.
- 29. Atlanta, 1998** Sara Blakely spends her nights researching pantyhose patents and trademarks at the Georgia Tech Library. Starlets discover Spanx, her waist-cinching miracle hose, and finally exhale.
- 30. Cary, North Carolina, 1980** James Goodnight of SAS never got the memo about the owner being in it just for himself. He sets up an on-site day care center at his four-year-old company. Over the next 10 years, he piles it on with a cafeteria and a gym and generally raises the bar for employee care.