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Tourism in America before World War II

THOMAS WEISS

This article surveys the history of tourism in America from colonial times to World War II. In that time there were substantial increases in the numbers of tourists, in the extent to which middle-income classes participated, and in the number and type of tourist destinations; but most of that growth may have been confined to the period after World War I. The growth of income and reduced costs of travel no doubt explain most of the growth, but some cultural factors helped to shift out the demand curve. The industry also possesses characteristics that should make further study of interest to economic historians.

> *"I am moved to confess that day by day the mass of my memories of the excursion have grown more and more pleasant as the disagreeable incidents of travel which encumbered them flitted one by one out of my mind."*[1]
>
> Mark Twain

Tourism today is an activity of substantial economic importance worldwide. It is important enough to have called forth the first, but less well-known, WTO—the World Tourism Organization.[2] According to their studies, tourism is the number one industry in many countries and one of the world's most important sources of employment. It is "the fastest growing economic sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings and job creation. . . . International tourism is the world's largest export earner and

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Thomas Weiss is Professor, Department of Economics, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045; and Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research. E-mail: t-weiss@ ku.edu.

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[1] Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, p. 488.

[2] This is an umbrella organization for world tourism that was started in 1925 as the International Congress of Official Tourist Traffic Associations and became the World Tourism Organization in 1975. See "About the World Tourism Organization," at http://www.world-tourism.org.

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an important factor in the balance of payments of most nations."[3] Alastair Durie is more circumspect saying it is "the mainstay of some regional economies in the first world and national economies in the third."[4]

Moreover, tourism has been around in one guise or another for a very long time. There is little doubt that there were tourists among the Greeks and Romans.[5] According to Lionel Casson, around 500BC. "Along major routes there were inns, and in towns, inns and taverns. And, among the regular users of the sea-lanes and roads, the official and commercial travelers, we begin to catch a glimpse of the traveler for travel's sake, the tourist."[6] Perhaps more to the point, tourism appears to have been well established in Europe by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, especially among the English.[7]

What about America? Today, tourism is also of substantial economic importance in the United States, sufficient to warrant the Bureau of Economic Analysis's establishing special accounts on travel and tourism.[8] Those estimates show that in 1997 tourism accounted for 3.5 percent of both GDP, measured by final demand, and the nation's employment.[9] Travel and tourism employment was twice that in agriculture and eight times that in mining. Comparisons with 1992, the first year for which the BEA made estimates, show that both of these indicators of tourism activity had grown faster than the economy as a whole.[10] Final domestic demand (in nominal terms) grew at 6.9 percent per year from 1992 to 1997 while the industry's employment had risen at 2.7 percent per year.[11] These accounts also make clear that domestic demand for tourism is of greater economic value than demand by international travelers to the United States, and, Americans' demand for tourist services within the United States dwarfed their demand for foreign travel.[12]

[3] Ibid.
[4] Durie, "Leisure Industry," p. 292.
[5] John Towner, "Tourism History," p. 721; and Durie, "Leisure Industry," p. 293.
[6] Lionel Casson, *Travel*, p. 57. Casson describes Herodotus as the "the First Travel Writer" (ibid., chap. 5).
[7] Withey, *Grand Tours*, p. 6. See also Durie, "Leisure Industry."
[8] Tourism is not an industry as defined in national accounts, but rather is an economic activity comprised of goods and services produced and consumed in an assortment of industries, most notably the lodging, food services, and transportation industries.
[9] Kass and Okubo, "U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts," p. 9, table 1. Its share of value added was 2.2 percent. Because of the difficulty in estimating certain components of the tourism industry, the BEA produces a range of estimates; the figures reported in the text are the midpoint estimates.
[10] The initial estimates prepared for 1992 indicated that tourism's share of GDP was 4.7 percent, but included some business expenditures for travel. Okubo and Planting, "U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts," p. 8, table 1. The revised figure for 1992 was 3.3 percent compared to 3.5 percent in 1997.
[11] Kass and Okubo, "U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts," pp. 8–9.
[12] In 1997 demand by international travelers to the United States amounted to $96 billion, which comprised around 19 to 22 percent of total tourism demand. Expenditures by U.S. residents traveling abroad amounted to $53.5 billion in 1997, equal to only 12 percent of all tourism expenditures

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Despite the industry's importance, economic historians have not become engaged. There are, no doubt, many reasons for this. It could be the nature of the discipline. After all, economics is not known as the dismal science without reason. Historical or economic investigations into things we like, or things that might be interesting, may be frowned upon.[13] And, economists are inclined to study those things that can be defined clearly and measured; products for which one can find both a quantity and a price. Tourism does not fit that bill. There is no identifiable, homogenous product; tourism does not come in easily observed units; there are no quantities of output.[14] Perhaps too there have not been any controversial issues to attract attention: no one has claimed, for example, that tourism was indispensable to the nation's economic growth.[15] We have, of course, had other things on our minds. We have been busy trying to determine, among other things, what raised productivity, what led to convergence, whether institutions mattered, and what pushed out the production frontier. As I hope to show, tourism impinged on all of these.

The general history of tourism is that it was initially confined to the elite, who traveled for lofty purposes. As incomes rose and transportation costs declined over time, travel became increasingly popular, but was still seen as extraordinary behavior. Eventually, so many could afford to travel, and did so, that tourism became a product—advertised widely and produced on a large scale by profit-seeking firms.[16] Foster Rhea Dulles put it this way for America: "The wealthy could make the fashionable tour in 1825, the well-to-do built up the summer resorts of the 1890s, but every Tom, Dick and Harry toured the country in the 1930s—thanks to the automobile."[17]

This general story captures the broad sweep of the industry's history, but there is greater complexity to it, as well as some uncertainty as to exactly when these different phases actually occurred. This is my attempt to flesh out that story; to tie together the tourist activity in its different guises and locations that has taken place in America from colonial times up to

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in that year. Kass and Okubo, "U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts," table 12.2, pp. 22 and 10.

[13] There may be some difficulty in getting funding. Many funding agencies might look aghast at a proposal to study the ingredients that made for fine dining, or the amenities that yielded the most restful and energizing vacations.

[14] One could focus on industries, such as the hotels or restaurants, that serve tourists, and for which inputs and outputs are more readily measured, but even those have been neglected.

[15] Nevertheless, there are issues wherein controversy exists, such as the environmental impact of tourism on wilderness areas. This has been recognized for a long time, but has been largely the domain of environmental historians or historians of the West, not economic historians.

[16] The progression is described somewhat differently by those who see mass tourism as being detrimental to the site. See for example, Hal Rothman, "Shedding Skin," p. 107.

[17] Foster Rhea Dulles, *America*, p. 319. This last stage of mass tourism is seen by some as a desirable democratization of travel, whereas others, such as Boorstin, see it as a diminution of quality, a "vulgarization" of travel. See Engerman, "Research Agenda," p. 13 for a discussion of this point.

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World War II. And, although international travel is typically what comes to mind when one thinks about tourism, this survey is confined to travel within America, whether it was done by Americans or foreign visitors.[18] The survey resembles to some extent a travel guide, albeit incomplete and structured differently. It highlights, to a large extent, the well known places simply because we know what they were and we know more about them. At any time there were other lesser known tourist destinations; places that Dona Brown refers to as an army of resorts. We may not know all of them, and we certainly do not know yet how important they were at any time, but they must have become increasingly important over time. The industry's expansion cannot be accounted for by the growth of the well known places; an essential feature of the industry's growth is its diffusion throughout the nation.

The travel guide is presented for the most part in narrative fashion simply because reliable, comprehensive statistics on tourism are not available much before World War II. Nevertheless, I have presented what I call a "quantitative impression" of tourism at four selected dates before World War II, to give a rough approximation of the size of the industry, its growth over time, and the extent to which middle-income Americans may have taken it up. The quantitative impression is that travel and tourism expanded greatly from the colonial period up through the Depression; but we do not know precisely when the increase occurred, especially not the increase among large numbers of middle-income Americans, because we do not know enough about the emergence and expansion of the lesser known places.

The survey also shows that although the general rise in tourism might be readily explained by movements of demand and supply—most notably rising incomes and transportation improvements—there is much more to it. The industry has more than its share of unusual circumstances, including the importance of seasonal labor, the public-goods nature of the product, the role of civic leaders versus entrepreneurs, and some interesting questions about the substitutability and complementarity of different tourist attractions.

TOURISM IN AMERICA BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

There is, and has been, a fine line between travel, exploration, tourism, recreation, and leisure activities in general.[19] Scholars today debate

[18] In the early nineteenth century, the term tourist seemed to refer primarily to someone who was going to Europe or seeing the natural scenic wonders in America. See Cocks, *Doing the Town,* p. 10.

[19] In Europe the word tourist "became current early in the nineteenth century as a somewhat contemptuous synonym for traveler," Ogilvie, "Tourist Traffic," p. 661. In the American context, the term may have come into use in the late nineteenth century to distinguish the increasingly common middle-income travelers from the aristocratic ones. Wrobel and Long, *Seeing*, pp. 3–4. The term was used in neutral fashion, however, throughout Bryant's *Picturesque America.*

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whether all travelers are tourists; whether travelers are superior to tourists; and why people travel and tour at all.[20] The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), however, is more practical: a tourist is someone who "either travels outside of his or her usual environment for a period of less than 1 year or who stays overnight in a hotel or motel."[21] The "usual environment" is the place of normal residence, leisure, study, and work, but in any case is defined by the area within some specified minimum distance of home.[22]

Those who did travel in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America were not called tourists and their travels were not entirely akin to what today we think of as tourism.[23] Whatever we call them, there could not have been many tourists in the earliest decades of the nation's history, even among the elite. The earliest settlers would simply have been too busy trying to achieve subsistence to have time for a vacation, and they would have been deterred from doing so in any case by laws and regulations reflecting Puritan and Anglican values about the paramount importance of work and the inappropriateness of anything frivolous.[24] Then too, the costs and slow speed of transportation, and the risks involved, would have kept vacation travel to a minimum.

Nevertheless, the industry started surprisingly early, and innocently enough to have assuaged any concerned puritans.[25] The first American tourist may have been Dr. Alexander Hamilton, who in 1744 traveled "a course of 1624 miles" from his home in Annapolis, Maryland.[26] More generally, people went to nearby spas and mineral springs to soak in or drink the waters. This was done on the pretext that this was good for you—perhaps curing an ailment, perhaps simply maintaining one's health. In any

[20] See Durie "Leisure Industry," pp. 290–96. Boorstin (*Image*), for example, draws a distinction between "traveler" and "tourist" in which the former is seen as the idealized adventurer, traveling for purposes of advancing him or herself and perhaps civilization as well. Sears, (*Sacred Places*) argues that natural wonders, such as Yellowstone, were seen as sacred places, and tourists were akin to pilgrims. Aron, *Working at Play*, p. 128 classifies tourism as a type of vacation.

[21] Okubo and Planting, "U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts," p. 11. The BEA prefers the term visitor to tourist because it is more descriptive of the travel activities included in the satellite accounts. Ibid., p. 8.

[22] For the United States, the BEA defines this area as within 50 to 100 miles of home, whereas the Consumer Expenditures Survey of the Bureau of Labor Statistics uses 75 miles, the American Travel Survey of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics uses 100 miles, and private surveys use 50 to 100 miles. Ibid., p. 11. In any case, the distance would be determined by the existing technology and costs of transportation, so would surely vary over time.

[23] Towner and Wall ("History," p. 77) argue that because the United States is so large geographically most travel was done domestically and has been thought of as recreation rather than tourism, whereas in Europe where one crosses international boundaries in short journeys, travel is seen as tourism.

[24] Dulles, *America*, chap. 1 and pp. 315–16, describes how these values held all recreational activities in check, especially in the colonial period, and did not give sway until the advent of the automobile. Dona Brown, *Inventing New England*, sees tourism as "the crowbar that pried [Americans] away from these attitudes." Aron, *Working at Play*, provides a more recent history of the evolution of attitudes towards leisure and recreation.

[25] Travelers, such as de Tocqueville, Bartram, or Fannie Kemble would today be labeled as tourists.

[26] Bridenbaugh, ed. *Gentleman's Progress*, p. 199.

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case, it was not a vacation, or so we are to believe. Although taking the waters was undertaken ostensibly, or perhaps initially, to cure some ailment, that does not seem to have remained the primary purpose.[27] It may have begun as an attempt to drink mineral waters for medicinal purposes, but by 1744 had become a fashionable indulgence. As Carl Bridenbaugh put it, this was "the familiar guise of taking waters at a summer resort [for] restoration of health and relief of ennui."[28]

This type of tourism—taking the waters at a mineral spring—started in the 1660s, by which time Bostonians were doing so at the Red Spring in nearby Lynn.[29] About a century later, business picked up; as the Seven Years War wound down, seasonal migrations to back-country spas became a regular event.[30] Bostonians, for example, after 1765 traveled much farther afield to the baths in Stafford, Connecticut, a journey of 70 miles.[31] These were not the only such spas; nor were Bostonians alone in their pursuit of these pleasures.

Among the more famous rural baths and spas before the Revolution were those found in Virginia, and in particular in Berkeley county, where George Washington had sampled the waters in 1748. In August, 1761 he returned again and found about 200 people at the place.[32] By 1770, Berkeley Warm Springs had become a "great resort where the planting aristocracy, Jefferson's sturdy yeomanry, and coonskin democrats of the backwoods mingled."[33] Philadelphians had their own nearby rural spas and may have engaged in this form of leisure to a greater extent than colonists in other regions.[34] The spas at Bristol, in Bucks county, and Yellow Springs, in Chester county, were among the more prominent places.

[27] According to a substantial literature, it is unlikely that taking the waters would have produced any cure. John Adams, who tried the waters at Stafford Springs, thought "this journey was of use to me, whether the waters were or not." John Adams, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 267, cited in Bridenbaugh, "Baths ," p. 158.

[28] Bridenbaugh, "Baths," pp. 152, 161–62. In 1827 a visitor to Saratoga Springs wrote that "One would suppose that we should find everybody here on the sick list—but it is far from being the case, . . . many of the visitors come here probably in good sound health, for amusement, & for the sake of spending a week or two among the fashionable to see & to be seen." Sterngass, *First Resorts*, p. 11.

[29] Bridenbaugh, *Cities*, p. 118. Another early spa was the Cool Spring in St. Mary's county Maryland, near which the colony of Maryland purchased land on which "to erect houses for the Entertainment of the said poor." Maryland State Archives, *Proceedings*, p. 279. The spa appears not to have functioned for very long. See Guyther, *Charlotte Hall*, chap. 4.

[30] Bridenbaugh, "Baths," pp. 151–81. Bostonians may have increased their usage earlier in the eighteenth century, after the Red Spring in Lynn had changed owners. Bridenbaugh, *Cities*, p. 276

[31] Bridenbaugh, "Baths," p. 156.

[32] Bridenbaugh, "Baths," p. 161. Its apparent popularity occurred despite the fact that accommodations were lacking; Washington considered himself fortunate to have arranged for a tent. By 1767, however, facilities had been improved so much that Mrs. Washington accompanied her husband on a 17 day trip.

[33] Bridenbaugh, "Baths," p. 161

[34] The greater popularity may have been a consequence of the baths being in closer proximity to the city center and being more readily accessible after a public road was built to it in 1750. Bridenbaugh, "Baths," p. 165.

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In all, between the Seven Years War and the early 1800s, tourism was confined almost entirely to 22 spas scattered around the country outside the major cities.[35] The season at these resorts may have been as long as four months in Virginia and elsewhere in the South, but only three months in the North; guests stayed from less than a week to the full season; and the number of guests found at each spa at any time varied widely across spas and from year to year at each spa.[36] With enough observations about each of these, or with enough reports on the annual number of visitors to individual spas, one could construct a reasonable estimate of the number of tourists using spas throughout America.[37] In the absence of those data, I have used the simpler expedient of assuming that the average annual attendance at each spa ran between 500 and 2,000, yielding a total of between 11,000 and 44,000 tourists for all the spas known to exist.[38] Either of these numbers would seem to confirm the notion that only the elite were making these sorts of excursions; even the higher estimate of 44,000 represents less than 1 percent of the nation's population in 1800.[39] Although a few sturdy yeoman or coonskin democrats may have shown up at one or another spa, for the most part the statistical impression is that only a very small segment of the American population could afford vacations.

In this initial phase, there was little, if any, competition among these resorts. The mineral baths in cities no doubt attracted some of the same customers as the rural spas, but that would have been for recreational use by the day, not tourism. Among the tourist destinations, i.e., spas that involved overnight stays, it is unlikely there was any competition; they were not substitutes for each other. Indeed, in some, perhaps most cases, each spa held a monopoly in its geographic area. In other instances, they were more likely complements than substitutes for each other, as visitors stopped at more than one spa during the season. This was most clear in Virginia where there developed a circuit of spas, growing from four spas shortly after the Revolution to dozens by the mid-nineteenth century.[40]

[35] The list included Cool Springs, Maryland and places cited in Bridenbaugh, "Baths"; Weiss and Kemble, *They Took to the Waters*; and Corbett, *Making of American Resorts*. These 22 spas are those that likely required at least an overnight stay. Each of the major cities, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, even Brooklyn and smaller places, had spas that were used on a daily basis.

[36] Lewis, *Ladies*, p. 20, says White Sulphur Springs, Virginia could accommodate 1,600 guests, but smaller places only 300 to 400. She reports that most guests stayed three to four weeks (ibid., p. 3), but Carson, "Early American Tourists," p. 396, says that at Hot Springs, Virginia in 1828, "most parties stayed less than a week; very few stayed more than two."

[37] Where annual attendance was not reported, one could estimate an annual figure for any spa as equal to the [length of the season / average length of stay] × number of visitors per stay.

[38] The range is based on average annual attendance for those few spas for which I found an observation or enough information to estimate an annual figure.

[39] The 44,000 would have been 1.1 percent of the population in 1790, 0.8 percent in 1800, and 0.6 percent in 1810. Even if we made allowance for those who went to Newport, Nahant, and a few other seaside resorts, the figure would not be noticeably above 1.0 percent.

[40] See Carson, "Early American Tourists," p. 395; Lewis, "Ladies," p. 155; and Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, p. 100.

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Competition in the tourist industry does not seem to have arisen until well into the nineteenth century.

These early spas were joined in the nineteenth century by those at new locations, including Hot Springs, Arkansas, and what was to become the nation's most famous spa of all in Saratoga, New York.[41] The mineral water springs at Saratoga had been discovered in the mid-eighteenth century, but the resort did not flourish until after Gideon Putnam built a large tavern and guest house in the opening decade of the nineteenth century. Nearby Ballston Spa had already established itself as one of the fashionable resort destinations, but it was unable to retain its status.[42] The chief reason for Ballston's decline was most likely the inferiority of its mineral springs, but Saratoga appears to have had better leadership and taken steps to assure its success.[43] With the construction of new hotels, including the Pavilion Hotel in 1819 and the United States Hotel in 1823, Saratoga was not only a featured stop on the summer tour, it was not to be missed.[44] Improvements in transportation also contributed greatly to its success, especially after 1824 when competition among steamboats was allowed on the Hudson River and a railroad line connected Schenectady to Ballston and Saratoga Springs.[45] By then the resort drew people from all over and perhaps from different social classes.[46] Despite the development of many alternative tourist destinations, near the end of the nineteenth century, Saratoga was still described as "the most noted inland watering-place in the United States and in some respects the most remarkable in the world."[47]

Although spas and mineral springs were the earliest tourist destinations in America and the most frequented in the early nineteenth century, there were other sites that attracted visitors as well. The new nation may not

[41] Hot Springs, Arkansas began to develop at about the same time as Saratoga. In the 1820s it was described as a place of great resort with 400 visitors a year, including a sizable number of Methodist campers. It seems to have been more of a health resort than a fashionable one, but some thought that it would become "'the Saratoga of Louisiana.'" Ruth Irene Jones, "Hot Springs," pp. 7–10; and Dee Brown, *American Spa*, p. 12.

[42] According to Corbett (*Making of American Resorts*, p. 225), by 1806 Ballston Spa "was the nation's premier resort."

[43] Saratoga became a separate township in 1819 and quickly took steps to encourage tourism. Sterngass, *First Resort,* p. 14. After 1830, Ballston shifted its emphasis towards manufacturing rather than tourism, although it continued to attract visitors and was mentioned in travel guides for most of the nineteenth century. Part of Ballston's decline as a tourist center might be traced to the fact that Nicholas Low, the leading businessman, was an absentee landlord. Corbett, *Making of American Resorts*, pp. 37–38.

[44] Brown, *Inventing*, p. 36, argues that part of Saratoga's success was due to the efforts of Gideon Davis, who as author of *The Fashionable Tour*, was a "one-man tourist development agency."

[45] Before steamboats and trains, a trip from New York City would have taken a week, including a day-long journey over land to Saratoga, and cost $7.00 dollars. By 1840 a round-trip from New York to Saratoga by steamboat and train took only 18 hours and cost about $2.00. Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 16–19.

[46] Ferguson, "American Resort Hotel," p. 11; and Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 20–25.

[47] Baedeker, ed. *United States*, p. 180. Ballston Spa at that time was described in Baedeker as "now little visited." Ibid, p. 144.

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have had many historical sites or museums, but it did have perhaps more than its share of scenic wonders. Based on descriptions provided by travelers at the time, John Sears has labeled some of the more popular ones as "sacred places" to which visitors went as though on a pilgrimage.[48] The list of places to which these pilgrims went came to be known by some as The Fashionable Tour, this country's nineteenth-century version of the Grand Tour of Europe.

According to Sears, Niagara was the paramount attraction on the Fashionable Tour even before the Erie Canal made travel there much easier, and it "remained the most famous American destination for the nineteenth-century pilgrims."[49] Indeed, Niagara was so successful that tourists began to complain. As early as the 1830s some travelers noted that the landscape surrounding the falls was being destroyed by commercialization and industrialization. By 1860 many felt that the multiplication of shops and the aggressiveness of guides, souvenir sellers, and photographers had spoiled the falls.[50] And things got worse after the Civil War when lower railroad fares brought larger numbers of tourists.

The attraction of Niagara and the less sacred Saratoga Springs drew visitors to the northeast. As a consequence, the Hudson River assumed an importance on the tour greater perhaps than its inherent attractiveness. Nevertheless, travel on the river did provide a moving panorama of rich and varied scenery, as well as "a touch of aristocratic European elegance," and travelers expressed opinions as to whether it was as appealing as the Rhine.[51] The most famous destination along the Hudson Valley route was the Catskill Mountain House, which provided "luxurious accommodations in a wild setting. . . . [and] provided a window on the infinite for those in search of the transcendental elements of the tourist experience."[52] Likewise, the Connecticut River Valley was another leg of the Fashionable Tour as travelers made their way to see the White Mountains in New Hampshire and Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts.

[48] One description of Niagara Falls read, "'The power and presence of the Almighty seem fearfully manifest.'" Sears, *Sacred Places,* p. 5. Of course, not all visitors felt this way. Alexander Wilson's reaction upon seeing Niagara Falls was to claim "Lord, what a monstrous mill-dam that must be." Irwin, *New Niagara*, pp.8 and 12. See also Schullery, who thinks many of these travelers' accounts are untypical, "Privations," p. 239.

[49] Sears, *Sacred Places*, p. 6. Before the Erie canal was completed, visitors favored the Canadian side of the Falls. Norris, "Reaching the Sublime," p. 53.

[50] Sears, *Sacred Places*, pp. 30 and 184. To deal with the excessive commercialization, in 1883 New York passed legislation to establish a state park "for the purpose of preserving the scenery of the Falls of Niagara and of restoring the said scenery to its natural condition," Adams, *Niagara Power*, p. 104. See Irwin, *New Niagara*, chap. 3, for a history of the episode.

[51] Sears, *Sacred Places*, pp. 57–59 and 65.

[52] The Catskill House opened as a small inn in 1823, added 50 rooms in 1825 and eventually had a capacity of 500 guests. (Sears, *Sacred Places*, p. 66.)

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Seaside and Mountain Resorts

Alternatives to the spas and the scenic wonders emerged at the shore, in the mountains, and at lakes, but did so slowly before the Civil War. There had been seaside resorts early on in Newport, Rhode Island, and Nahant, Massachusetts, but the era of the shore resorts does not seem to have begun in earnest until the early nineteenth century.[53] Even then it is unlikely that any single seaside resort rivaled Saratoga or Niagara in terms of numbers of visitors. The prominence of the seaside as a tourist destination did not occur until after 1854 and especially after the Civil War.[54]

Newport had been primarily a commercial city in colonial times, but did have a small resort business that drew heavily from among Southern and West Indies planters. The city's manufacturing and commerce declined substantially during and immediately after the Revolutionary War, so much so that it was predicted that "'there must be still a further decay till [Newport] becomes a small neat summer residence for idle people of easy fortune only.'"[55] Tourism in Newport also suffered during the War, and although it may not have declined as much as manufacturing or commerce afterwards, it was not a flourishing trade until the 1820s. With the opening of a new hotel that could accommodate 85 guests, tourism picked up, and in 1831 it was estimated that there were "'upward of 1,000 strangers'" visiting the city.[56] Tourism was favored as well by visits of President Millard Fillmore and Presidential candidate Franklin Pierce, the publication of favorable books and articles about the resort, the establishment of regular steam boat service from New York in 1847, and perhaps especially by the attitudes and policies of city leaders.[57] Newport consciously fostered tourism, providing the amenities and infrastructure that would assure success in the fashionable resort business. In 1859 it was known as "a celebrated watering place."[58] Nahant, meanwhile, was described in 1831 as a "very pleasant and fashionable resort" and in 1859 as "a delightful watering place."[59]

[53] Bridenbaugh (*Cities*, p. 442) indicates that Newport attracted many visitors after about 1730, and became the nation's "earliest fashionable watering-place."

[54] Coney Island, which was to become perhaps the best known of America's seaside resorts, got a much later start than those in New Jersey or even others on Long Island, and its legendary development did not take place until after the Civil War. Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 76–81. Atlantic City, perhaps Coney's only serious rival for most famous seaside resort, likewise did not experience much development until just prior to the Civil War. (Stansfield , "Development," p. 47)

[55] Sterngass, *First Resort,* p. 44.

[56] Sterngass, *First Resort,* pp. 44–46. Curiously, Newport, with its 1,000 strangers, has long been described as the premier destination of many southern planters, whereas Beaufort, South Carolina, which may have attracted 1,000 tourists a year in the 1830s, is not often singled out for attention. See Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, p. 14.

[57] Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 46–53, 61.

[58] W. Williams, *Traveler's and Tourist's Guide*, p. 221.

[59] Dwight, *Northern Traveller*, p. 324. By 1883, it was listed as "formerly the gayest and most popular watering-place on the Massachusetts Coast." *American Seaside Resorts*, p. 37.

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In addition to Newport and Nahant, the history of the seaside resorts before the Civil War revolved largely around two fashionable Jersey locations, Cape May and Long Branch. Perhaps not surprisingly, the original settlers did not immediately exploit what we now think of as prime ocean front property. The shore front at Long Branch was regarded as practically worthless by the pioneer settlers, who preferred to be inland where they would be protected from storms and heavy seas. As a result, West Long Branch developed first.[60]

The seaside resort business in New Jersey was hampered severely in the first half of the century by transportation difficulties. The shore was not on the post roads that ran from New York to Philadelphia, and there was little in the way of stagecoach service to the shore. Stage coach routes were established at least as early as 1823 to provide service for those who wanted to go to the shore for a vacation, but the trip was long, not always pleasant, and expensive.[61] Visitors to Cape May, especially those coming from the South, had it somewhat easier as they could cover much of the trip by water.[62] By the 1850s Cape May was arguably "America's premier resort," with enough hotel rooms to accommodate 2,400 guests.[63]

Although tourists visited the White mountains in New Hampshire in small numbers as early as the 1820s, the number increased after 1826, the year in which the Willey Family was killed in an avalanche. The Willey House, which was spared by the avalanche, became one of America's better known tourist attractions.[64] Among those who vacationed in the area were aspiring writers and artists, such as Thomas Cole, Washington Irving, and Henry David Thoreau, who in pursuit of their own careers helped publicize the region's scenery. Dona Brown argues that this was part of the emergence of a cult of scenery, a movement that promoted the appeal of natural attractions and fostered the market for such tourist destinations.[65] If artists had not helped to create this appeal, and if the local community had not taken advantage of opportunities such as that provided by the Willey

[60] When the original land grantee, Thomas Budd, sold acreage in the 1790s, beach land went for four cents an acre, while inland land was valued at ten times that amount. Similarly, in 1816 when land was leased on Absecom Island, near present day Atlantic City, access to the shore seemed secondary to "the privilege of erecting a dwelling house and salt works and of pasturing two cows and a team for the works." Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 79 and 527.

[61] The fare from Absecom to Philadelphia was $5.00, but perhaps more discouraging is that it was a long day's journey. It departed Absecom at three or four in the morning, stopped in May Landing for breakfast and a change of horses at 8:00 AM, stopped at Long-a-Coming for dinner at 3:00 PM, and passengers were disembarked at Camden for a ferry ride into Philadelphia—scheduled to arrive there by sunset. Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 249–50.

[62] And, by 1820, direct steamboat service from Philadelphia to Cape May was established. Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 419–20.

[63] Cunningham, *New Jersey Shore*, p. 114.

[64] Sears included the Willey house among the sacred places. Sears, *Sacred Places*, pp. 74–75.

[65] Anne Hyde makes a similar point as regards the development of western resorts in the late nineteenth century, *American Vision*, chaps. 4 and 6.

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disaster, then the mountains would have remained "nothing but huge piles of earth and rocks."[66]

It is not completely known how large an increase in tourism resulted from these promotional efforts. Albert Carlson says that Mount Washington attracted an estimated 5,000 visitors per year by way of the carriage road before the Civil War, but the boom in travel to New Hampshire's mountains and lakes would take place after the opening of the Mount Washington railroad in 1869.[67] Brown, on the other hand, argues that tourism exploded in the White Mountains and elsewhere in New England between 1840 and 1860, spurred by railroad developments. By the mid-1850s, hotels in the area could accommodate 2,000 guests, and the White Mountains were accorded a leading position on national tours described in the 1857 edition of Appleton's guidebook. She says that by 1860 there may have been 10,000 visitors to the White Mountains each summer.[68]

Elsewhere, tourist destinations and numbers of visitors had been increasing as well before the Civil War. When published in 1825, the guide book *The Fashionable Tour* described 106 tourist attractions.[69] They ranged from the well known places such as Niagara and Saratoga Springs to lesser ones such as the Palisades in New Jersey and Bellows Falls, Connecticut. Only six states had one or more destinations listed, with New York at the top of the list with 80 sites, well ahead of second place Massachusetts with 13. This narrow geographic distribution could be expected given that the industry was still in its infancy, but it reflects also that the second edition was noticeably incomplete.[70] As its subtitle indicates it was about "Excursions to the Springs, Niagara, Quebec and Boston," and even then there were no listings of the springs in Pennsylvania or Virginia. An enlarged and improved fourth edition in 1832, which provided more complete, but still partial, coverage, surveying only the middle and northern states, mentioned 368 places, spread around 16 states. By the Civil War there had been further increases. For example, the number of spas had grown to at least 94 by 1855, including Saratoga Springs and Hot Springs, Arkansas.[71]

The number of tourists visiting the nation's spas must have risen substantially after 1800 and could have totaled 100,000 by the Civil War.[72]

[66] Quote attributed to Sarah Joseph Hale, one of the aspiring writers. Sears, *Sacred Places*, p. 78.
[67] Carlson, "Recreation Industry," p. 256
[68] Dona Brown, *Inventing New England*, pp. 52, 70.
[69] Davison, *Fashionable Tour*. I have been unable to locate the first edition that was published in 1822.
[70] Dona Brown, *Inventing New England*, p. 3 and chap. 1, argues that the guidebook was intended to focus on the Northeast, the nation's first tourist region.
[71] Disturnell, *Springs*, pp. vii–x. The list of 94 excludes springs in Canada.
[72] It was estimated that 8,000 people visited Saratoga alone in 1833, perhaps 35,000 in 1850, and around 40,000 in the years immediately before the Civil War. Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 9, 18, 21–22, 25, 146; Grover, *Luxury* pp. 13 and 108. It was reported in 1854 that 3,000 people visited Hot Springs, Arkansas annually. Jones, "Hot Springs," p. 26. If 40,000 went to these two spas alone, a total of 100,000 implies an average of 650 at each of the other 92 spas.

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Tourism on the Jersey Shore and at beaches elsewhere likely equaled this. One estimate put the figure as high as 110,000 at Cape May alone in 1850, but a more likely figure is 17,000 reported by Wilson in his monumental study of the Jersey Shore.[73] There may have been approximately the same number at Long Branch, New Jersey, and perhaps somewhat less at Nahant, Massachusetts, Newport, Rhode Island, and Rockaway and even Coney Island in New York. In other words, there were likely 100,000 tourists or so at the shore before train travel made access to the Jersey and Long Island shores much easier and cheaper. Niagara, meanwhile, was likely drawing larger numbers of visitors than any other single spot. The estimated number of tourists rose from around 20,000 in 1838 to 45,000 in 1847 and to 80,000 in 1850.[74]

Adding these various places together—the spas (100,000), a handful of beach resorts (100,000), the White Mountains (10,000), and Niagara (80,000)—there were roughly a quarter of a million tourists, and perhaps as many as 300,000, annually at the better known destinations in America around 1855. This is a large increase over the 10,000 to 44,000 estimated around the opening of the century, and could give the impression that tourism had exploded onto the scene. The increase, however, was roughly proportional to that for the population as a whole; a quarter of a million tourists equaled about 1.0 percent of the 1850 population and 0.8 percent of the 1860 population.[75] Unless there were large numbers of tourists meandering around the more obscure destinations scattered around the countryside, the industry on the eve of the Civil War was still serving an elite group.

However many more tourists there were, it may have been enough to have altered the nature of tourism, at least in New Hampshire, and perhaps throughout New England. Brown argues that it had become a commercialized industry with a product to sell, and was now characterized by competition.[76] Before the Willey disaster, there was not much competition; all tourist services in the area seemed to be in the control of Ethan Allen Crawford. Only after the disaster drew increased attention to the site did competition arise, and in sufficient strength to have driven Crawford out of business. In New Hampshire the most noticeable competition may have been among hotels, but that was no doubt part of a broader development of

[73] Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, p. 552.
[74] Irwin, *New Niagara*, pp. 17–18.
[75] During that same time period, the estimated number of foreign visitors to America rarely ran above 3,000, and exceeded 4,000 in only 1854. The number of Americans traveling abroad averaged 2,000 to 5,000 before 1850, and then rose noticeably to average 27,000 for the decade of the 1850s. Thus the estimated number of visitors to a handful of America's resorts and scenic attractions would have to be very far off the mark to alter the picture that domestic tourists were more important than foreign, and that domestic or internal tourism was more important than overseas travel.
[76] Dona Brown claims that by 1860 tourism was a large scale industry with high technological and capital requirements (*Inventing New England*, chap. 2, especially p. 48).

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substitute attractions. Competition among tourist destinations, absent during the early era of the spa, began in the 1820s with the rivalry between Saratoga and Ballston. It materialized elsewhere as well during the late antebellum period, with the growth of shore resorts in New Jersey, other mineral springs scattered throughout the nation, and perhaps the emergence of resorts all along the New England coast and in the mountains. As yet, however, we do not know which destinations were truly competing with each other, and when and how this competition may have changed over time.[77]

POST–CIVIL WAR DEVELOPMENTS

The Jersey shore experienced its greatest development, both in terms of new resorts and increasing population, after the Civil War.[78] The first railroad to the shore, from Camden, New Jersey to Absecom, was completed in 1854 by the Camden and Atlantic Railroad and extended to Atlantic City in 1855. In 1877, when a second line was built by the narrow gauge Philadelphia and Atlantic Railroad, a fare war resulted in the price of a ticket falling from $3 to $1, and at times to as low as 50 cents for a round trip. This drew larger crowds to the shore, some of them permanently, as the population of Atlantic City doubled in four years after the opening of the second line. A third line, built by the Pennsylvania Railroad, opened in 1880 and supposedly gave the city a national reputation.[79]

Cape May, which had depended heavily on attracting Southerners to its hotels, suffered somewhat from the effects of the Civil War. It also had to contend with erosion of its beach and the bluffs along the ocean, the destruction of its pier, and by the development of competing resorts all along the coast.[80] Its decline was hastened perhaps most of all by three serious fires. The first of these occurred after the 1856 season and destroyed the Mansion House, which had had accommodations for 300 guests. That was a minor setback compared to the fire of 1869 that destroyed the Atlantic and the United States Hotels, which combined could accommodate 600 guests; and the even greater fire of 1878 that wiped out 30 acres of the city, including five major hotels and several smaller ones, as well as board-

[77] Sharon Springs, New York, is illustrative of the problem of determining the extent of competition among resorts. Little-known today, it was among the destinations of the nation's elite until the 1890s, with its comings and goings reported in the *New York Times*. It aspired to be another Saratoga, and although it clearly lost out in that competition it flourished from around the mid-1830s until the opening decades of the twentieth century in part because people stopped there en route to Saratoga. Blumin, *Short Season*.

[78] There is reason to think that the rest of the Eastern seaboard followed this same pattern. Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 407 and 501.

[79] Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 470–73.

[80] Stansfield, "Development," p. 50; and Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 502–03, 557–58. Nevertheless, it was reported to have had more than 50,000 visitors in 1866. Cunningham, *New Jersey Shore*, p. 114.

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ing houses and private cottages.[81] Although Cape May was in decline, Long Branch remained for a while as the best known of the New Jersey resorts; but it too began to lose some of its appeal for the wealthy and fashionable. As they went elsewhere, the city built an inexpensive amusement park to cater to other classes of tourists, but that only forestalled change.[82] Long Branch was in turn supplanted by Atlantic City as the more popular beach resort in New Jersey, and sometime in the twentieth century Long Branch became an industrial town.[83]

Coney Island's postwar growth hinged on increased hotel capacity, improved transportation, and the development of a host of additional attractions. A number of grand hotels were opened, including the Manhattan Beach Hotel in 1877, the Oriental Hotel in 1880, and the Brighton Beach Hotel ca. 1880, all of which enhanced Coney as a tourist attraction, in the sense of visitors staying over night. These three hotels increased the resort's capacity for tourism by 1,200 guests per night.[84] But Coney was unlike Saratoga and Newport in that day-trippers made up some portion of the visitors, and after the war this became paramount.[85] Transport improvements that had occurred between 1865 and 1878 increased Coney's appeal to the day-tripper, as did the development of ancillary attractions, such as racetracks.[86] Daily use received further stimulus in 1896 when the island could be reached by streetcar for a nickel and with the opening of several grand amusement parks.[87] Coney's attendance was no longer measured in thousands, but the bulk of it was now recreational use on a daily basis.[88]

Meanwhile, Newport had taken off in a different direction after the Civil War.[89] The development of private homes, or "cottages" as they were

[81] Alexander, *Ho! For Cape Island*, pp. 129–30.
[82] There were ethnic influences as well. Italians, who had first gone to Long Branch in the 1870s as gardeners, became summer visitors by the turn of the century. Jewish tourists arrived in increasing numbers as well, while tourists of German descent who had been coming to Long Branch went elsewhere. Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, p. 505.
[83] Resort development took place further south in New Jersey as well, albeit a bit later than in the northern counties. See Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 518–24. Methodist Camps, which appealed to middle-income classes, were established at several locations along the coast, perhaps most notably at Ocean Grove and Ocean City. Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 507–09; and Cunningham, *New Jersey Shore*, p. 52.
[84] Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 87–92.
[85] The hotels fostered daily use by providing many more bathhouses than were needed by their guests, and reserving space with tables and chairs for brown-baggers. Sterngass, *First Resorts*, p. 88
[86] The key transport improvements were the construction of major railroad lines that ran from Brooklyn, as well as two cross-island spurs. By 1878 there were more than 250 trains daily. Sterngass, *First Resorts*, p. 82. For expansion of ancillary attractions, see Sterngass, *First Resorts,* pp. 230–32.
[87] George Tilyou opened Steeplechase Park in 1897. A second, Luna Park, opened in 1903 and Dreamland followed in 1904.
[88] Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, p.38. It was estimated that by 1900 eight million visited Coney in a season, and in 1909, when all the amusement parks were in operation, twenty million came. Sterngass, *First Resorts,* p. 255.
[89] Nahant and Bar Harbor, Maine seem to have followed a similar path whereas Saratoga appears to have made only a feeble effort in this direction and that did not pan out. Sterngass, *First Resorts,* pp. 197, 212.

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known, for use during the tourist season had begun before the war, but hotels had still dominated the resort's accommodations. Once August Belmont had rented a villa for the summer of 1860 the future trend was set. The construction of private cottages, homes, and villas to be used during the season proceeded so far as to all but drive the hotels out of business by 1870.[90] Newport was now "the mecca of fashion," but, without hotels, it was no longer on the grand tour. The wealthy residents wanted it that way and warded off attempts to resurrect the hotel industry.

Any number of places arose to fill that gap. The most noticeable ones were the resorts nearby around Narragansett Bay and the Methodist Camps on Cape Cod.[91] Even though Cape Cod was not too distant from Newport, it was a latecomer to tourism, except for the Methodist camp meetings that had begun in 1819.[92] The cape did not have its first resort hotel until 1860, and apparently could not compete well with seaside resorts closer to Boston and New York until the automobile era.[93] Efforts to attract tourists were made up and down the coast of New England, as well as farther inland, even though such developments had high failure rates in the 1870s and 1880s.[94] The states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and perhaps others, took steps to attract tourists and shape the industry. Although the success of individual resorts coaxed into business by those state's efforts may have waxed and waned, in the aggregate the programs appear to have been successful. By the end of the century there may have been 174,000 tourists in New Hampshire and 50,000 to 60,000 per year in Vermont.[95]

The growth of Florida and other southern destinations, such as the coastal resorts in Georgia and South Carolina, or inland sites such as Asheville, North Carolina, Thomasville, Georgia, and Aiken, South Carolina, was largely a post–Civil War phenomenon.[96] Although planters had spent extended time during the "sickly season" in Charleston and the nearby sea islands, or in resorts on Mobile Bay, some wealthy southerners

[90] Sterngass, *First Resorts,* pp. 182–91. According to Sterngass, "By the summer of 1874, barely a dozen families spent an entire summer at a Newport hotel."
[91] Sterngass, *First Resorts,* pp. 194–219. Dona Brown, *Inventing New England*, p. 101, claims there was an army of seaside resorts by 1870. *American Seaside Resorts* reported only 75 places in New England in 1883, and that total included places, such as New Haven and Providence, and the Cape had eight separate listings.
[92] The camps may have attracted 5,000 campers before the Civil War. Schneider, *Enduring Shore*, pp. 309–10.
[93] Alexander, "Impact," pp. 322–23.
[94] Brown, *Inventing New England*, pp. 101–14, 133. Inland places such as Litchfield, Connecticut and Deerfield, Massachusetts were transformed into tourist areas, but it is not clear how successfully.
[95] Brown, *Inventing New England*, p. 155.
[96] Point Clear on Mobile Bay was the oldest resort on the Gulf Coast, having begun in 1847. Despite the disruption of the Battle of Mobile Bay during the Civil War and a disastrous fire a few years later, Andrew Hepburn (*Great Resorts*, pp. 101–02) claims it rebuilt and "again became the leading resort of the South." A similar claim has been made for Aiken, South Carolina, which incorporated as a resort town in 1835. Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, p. 49.

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preferred to travel north; whereas northerners did not migrate south as they were to do in years to come.[97] This changed after the Civil War as the numbers of northerners heading south for the winter season rose, and rapidly so near the end of the century. Writing in 1869, Ledyard Bill claimed "Visitors to the State [of Florida] are already numbered by thousands, and each year since the war has witnessed a rapid increase."[98] Local boosters throughout the South saw tourism as an important component to economic recovery in the years immediately after the Civil War. On the coast of South Carolina it was claimed that the "locals lived off fish during the summer and 'Yankees in winter.'"[99] Aiken, South Carolina is alleged to have been "the most frequented winter resort in the United States" in 1884, in large part perhaps because it served those northerners migrating to and from Florida.[100] To accommodate northern travelers, as well as southern tourists who now vacationed in the region, hotels sprang up all over, not just on the coast but in the interior as well. In some instances, such as Eastman, Georgia, tourism transformed the place from "an insignificant railroad depot into a thriving town."[101]

St. Augustine may have been the mecca of all Florida tourists before the 1880s, but tourism was a fledgling industry in Florida, and perhaps even in St. Augustine, at that time.[102] Before 1884, there were only three major hotels in the city, and only one could accommodate as many as 300 guests.[103] Two things spurred the tourist industry in St. Augustine in the 1880s. First, the city council decided in 1880 that the city should become a winter resort, and resolved to improve the city's image. Second, Henry Flagler began to develop the east coast of Florida.

Flagler is best known for his railroad building and land developments in Florida, but he was also instrumental in the development of the state's tourist industry. Indeed, his legendary career in the state began with the construction of the Ponce de Leon, a luxury hotel in St. Augustine that opened in January of 1888. That same year, Flagler purchased the Casa Monica, a first-class hotel with 200 rooms that had been built the previous

[97] Kettel (*Southern Wealth*, p. 75) puts the expenditures of Southern travelers in the North at $53 million around 1857.
[98] Bill, *Winter*, p. 7. Bear in mind that it was not a simple trip to make—requiring at least three days. (Ibid., pp. 23–25). Bill thought that a widespread story that 50,000 people had visited Florida in 1868 was much exaggerated, but half that number was believable. (Ibid., p. 174)
[99] Wetherington, *New South*, p.90.
[100] Babcock, ed., *Our American Resorts*, p. 49
[101] Wetherington, *New South*, pp. 88, 244.
[102] It was difficult to travel to St. Augustine and to find accommodations, and for those reasons Jacksonville may have attracted more tourists, perhaps as many as 2,000 each season in the decade before the Civil War. Bill, *Winter*, pp. 82–84. Tourists were more likely to have traveled along the St. John River, not the seashore, and Middle Florida was one of the more developed parts of the state. Bill, *Winter*, pp. 23–25; and Babcock, *Our American Resorts*, pp. 45–47.
[103] The San Marcos was opened in 1884, but the Hotel St. Augustine was destroyed by fire in 1887. Braden, *Architecture*, p. 143.

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year; and by the end of the year opened the Alcazar, which was primarily a casino but had 300 guest rooms that served a less wealthy crowd.[104] In that one-year span, Flagler nearly doubled the hotel capacity of St. Augustine.

The tourist business in St. Augustine may have done well after Flagler's infusion of capital, with perhaps 5,000 visitors per year, but it did not live up to his expectations, in part because the weather was not as reliably mild as it was in places farther south.[105] It was from this starting point, however, that Flagler developed rail transportation southward along the east coast of Florida, developed the tourist industry in that area, and eventually became involved in land development.[106] In 1893 his rail system reached Lake Worth, which was to become Palm Beach, and by 1896 had been extended 60 miles farther south to what would become Miami.[107] In both locations he expanded his hotel operations, with the Royal Poinciana and the Breakers in Palm Beach, and the Royal Palm in Miami.[108] Although Flagler regarded his hotels as "auxiliaries to my Railroad interests," they were the "center of Florida east coast resort life."[109] Moreover, Flagler's luxury hotels, as well as those of Henry Plant on the west coast of the state, helped to create an image that the entire state of Florida was an exotic tourist destination.[110] By World War I, Palm Beach had become the leading winter resort in the country, with its season running from mid-December to mid-April, and Miami's hotels, spurred by Flagler's initiatives, could accommodate 100,000 guests per day.[111]

The decades after the Civil War saw also the development of mountain resorts that competed with the shore because both places offered the same things: fresh air and a much healthier environment than was found in urban America in the nineteenth century. The Adirondack region exemplifies this sort of tourism. Tourism there revolved largely around hunting, fishing, and camping and included the establishment of a number of clubs and preserves devoted to those activities.[112] Accommodations were camps and log

[104] Akin, *Flagler*, chap. 6. Flagler renamed the Casa Monica as the Cordova. He "termed [the Alcazar] his 'two-dollar-a-day,' hotel." Ibid, p. 124.
[105] Akin, *Flagler,* p. 132. In 1893, Baedeker's *United States*, p. 356, reported that 5,000 people visited St. Augustine each season.
[106] Henry Plant, meanwhile, had been building railroads and hotels on the west coast, and although his resort system may not have achieved the same fame as Flagler's, it was of considerable importance to southwest Florida. See Braden, *Architecture*, chap. 1, especially pp. 32–39. Although Tampa had already established an economic base of shipping and cigar making, the city thought Plant's resort hotel was worth subsidizing. See Braden, *Architecture*, p. 259.
[107] At the time it was known as Ft. Dallas. Akin, *Flagler,* pp. 143–44, 160–62.
[108] Akin, *Flagler,* pp. 145–47, 163. The Royal Poinciana opened in 1894, and with additions had by 1905, become the world's largest hotel.
[109] The hotels appear to have been profitable, which was not true of his rail operations. Akin, *Flagler,* pp. 199–200.
[110] Braden, *Architecture*, p. 13.
[111] Akin, *Flagler,* pp. 155 and166.
[112] Gilborn, *Adirondack Camps*, especially chaps. 6 and 7. Some artists also seem to have made their way into the Adirondacks before the Civil War. William Trost Richards, for example, painted *In the Adirondack Mountains* in 1857.

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cabins, often former lumber camps, that evolved slowly into "Decorous Camps," especially after 1892.[113] Whether they chose outdoor activities at the beach or in the mountains, however, Americans, it seemed, still could not simply take a frivolous vacation.

The Westward Movement

The most notable development after the Civil War was likely a westward movement of tourism that paralleled the more general migration that was taking place.[114] Some very adventuresome travelers had trekked west before the Civil War, including hunting expeditions as early as the 1840s, but tourists did not go there in numbers until after the war.[115] Then they went for any number of reasons; most commonly to enjoy the scenery and experience the frontier, but also to see Indians and Spanish-speaking settlers, to go hunting, to "rest and reinvigorate the mind and body," and even to participate in conference tourism as early as the 1890s.[116] And they went as part of the more well-known westward movement of population. Many came as tourists or hunters, but stayed on, or returned subsequently, to take up residence.[117]

San Francisco and Denver were among the earlier destinations, aided by the construction of luxury hotels such as the Palace in 1875 and the Windsor in 1880, but the chief attractions were not cities. Just as had occurred in the northeast, the earliest attractions were mineral springs, including those at Hot Springs, Arkansas, Manitou, Colorado, Calistoga, California and numerous other places scattered around the region.[118] Although Texas

[113] Ibid, chap. 4 and p. 219. Not all mountain resorts were so rustic. Railroads catered to those who wanted a healthful vacation in somewhat luxurious accommodations with resort hotels in Deer Park and Cresson, Pennsylvania. See Babcock, *Our American Resorts,* pp. 56ff.

[114] In this first phase of the westward movement, travel was often difficult and time consuming, depending on the extent to which stage coach travel was needed, but improved as the railroad network established depots closer to the tourist destinations and built hotels to accommodate the travelers. There were subsequent movements west, first as the automobile opened up the area, and then with the boom in travel to Hawaii, Las Vegas, and the southwest after World War II.

[115] Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 74–76.

[116] The California Methodists started Pacific Grove Retreat in 1875 for rest and reinvigoration. The International League of Press Clubs met in San Francisco in 1892; the Christian Endeavor Society met there in 1897, and the National Education Association met in California in 1899. Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 73–76, 113, 133–34. The West was also seen as a substitute for Europe, perhaps epitomized by the development of Venice, California as a seaside resort. Ibid, chap. 3, especially p. 38.

[117] See Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 28, 131–37; and McWilliams, *Southern California*, p. 143. A similar phenomenon took place in the Adirondacks where some who had taken summer jobs to earn money for college married and settled down. Gilborn and Gilborn, *Museum*, p. 17.

[118] The latter two each seem to have been known for a time after the Civil War as the "Saratoga of the West." Babcock, ed., *Our American Resorts*, p. 63; and Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 20 and 50. Hot Springs, Arkansas, perhaps the first major tourist destination west of the Mississippi, was the first land set aside for park-like purposes by the Federal government in 1832. It was redesignated Hot Springs National Park in 1921. See Barry Mackintosh, *National Parks*, Appendix: Park Origins Chronological Summary. Available on line at www.cr.nos.gov/history.

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has been largely ignored in the histories of the nation's watering places, the state had 150 or more spas that were locally and sometimes nationally famous.[119] Tourists were also drawn west to lakeside resorts, such as Lake Geneva, Wisconsin or Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, and to mountain scenery, such as Pike's Peak and the Garden of the Gods in Colorado.[120]

Developments were slower west of Colorado. The Northwest in particular was slow to develop tourist facilities, while the southwest, except for Santa Fe, did not begin to attract visitors until the 1890s and did not experience a boom until the 1930s. Farther north, dude ranches had begun as early as the 1870s, and received a boost from Teddy Roosevelt's visit and move to Sheridan, Wyoming in 1904. It was not until the 1920s, however, that ranchers had come to realize that tourism was a serious business and they could "make on dudes what [they] lost on cattle."[121] Even in California, tourism was limited aside from San Francisco, Monterrey, and the Yosemite Valley until near the close of the nineteenth century.[122] As late as 1884 California was still seen as being too great a distance from the populous East to have much tourist traffic, even though a few places were known internationally. Southern California in particular had few visitors before the Santa Fe Railroad established a route to the state in 1883 that competed with the Southern Pacific's line.[123] With the opening of the grand Hotel Raymond in 1886, on land donated by the railroad, Pasadena became one of the premier resorts in southern California, joined soon thereafter by San Diego when the Hotel del Coronado was completed in 1888.[124]

The emergence of the National Parks is surely the best known feature of this first phase of tourist developments in the West. Today, national parks, monuments, and recreational areas, as well as state parks, are found all over the United States, attract large numbers of visitors, and have a substantial economic impact. That sort of quantitative importance, however, is a twentieth-century phenomenon.[125] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the importance of the parks is seen by some as having helped the Western region find its identity and the nation to come to terms with the conflict between nature and economic growth. This conflict was seen

[119] Valenza, "'Taking the Waters'," pp. 57–70.
[120] Babcock, *Our American Resorts*, pp. 63–65, 102, and 112–13.
[121] Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 158–59, and 167–68.
[122] Monterey, California may have been the most famous of the early western resorts thanks to the Hotel del Monte which opened in 1880 (Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 18–19).
[123] Babcock, *Our American Resorts*, pp. 69–74.
[124] Pomeroy (*In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 24–28) claims that Santa Barbara, which had the first tourist hotel in southern California in 1876, did not attract many visitors until 1903 when the Southern Pacific built its coast line. The city was described favorably as a resort in Baedekers' *United States* (p. 443), and was cited as the most frequented health resort in Southern California in *Appleton's General Guide*, p. 398.
[125] Haines puts the annual number of visits to Yellowstone at 500 near the beginning of the 1870s, 1,000 by the end the 1870s, and 5,000 to 6,000 by the end of the 1880s. Official counts beginning in 1890 show an average of 6,855 for that decade, rising noticeably to 17,189 for the opening decade of the twentieth century. Haines, *Yellowstone Story*, pp. 478–80, appendix C, table 2.

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early on, as was the need for government support and regulation to both establish and preserve these natural wonders. Even though Yosemite was not to become a national park until 1890, the area had been granted to the State of California in 1864 for use as a public park, suggesting that people were aware of the cultural and economic importance of tourist attractions and of the need to balance commercial development with the preservation of national culture and the provision of recreational areas.[126] Nathaniel Langford, a member of one of the first exploratory expeditions into Yellowstone, had predicted that it too would become a fashionable resort, but he and others were apparently concerned about the nature of that development. Niagara Falls had already been spoiled by uncontrolled commercial developments and that, no doubt, influenced opinion about the way to preserve both Yellowstone and Yosemite.[127]

Major Cities

Although travel to the shore or the mountains was what urban dwellers may have had in mind for a vacation, some of the cities from which they came were also tourist destinations throughout the century, although the extent to which they were remains uncertain. On the one hand, American cities may not have been the most pleasant places even for a short visit; they "tended to offend the sensitive with their ugliness and vulgar commercialism," and they lacked the cultural, historical, and architectural attractions that drew tourists to European cities.[128] Catherine Cocks claims that "American cities [were] never as popular as domestic rural or European destinations," and that only Washington, D.C. enjoyed "a prominent place on the tourist circuit in the mid-nineteenth century."[129] On the other hand, the major cities had to be tourist destinations: almost all foreign tourists arrived in New York, and travel guides described the other sights in relationship to these places.[130] Dona Brown argues that cities were the main destination for European tourists, and a survey of the writings of European travelers indicates that they visited a number of cities from Boston to Savannah on the coast, not only New York and Washington, D.C.[131]

[126] Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, p. 92; and Sears, *Sacred Places*, p. 124

[127] Sears, *Sacred Places*, pp.130–31 and 160.

[128] Cocks, *Doing the Town*, p. 11. She also paints them as dangerous places, at least morally and politically. (ibid., p. 5). According to Sears, (*Sacred Places*, p. 89) cities did offer asylums and other benevolent institutions, which were important tourist attractions before the Civil War, but not after.

[129] Cocks, *Doing the Town,* pp. 39, 144, and 272.

[130] In that first Baedeker guide to the United States, route no. 4, for example, was New York to Boston, route 44 was Pittsburgh to Chicago, and so on. Baedeker, ed., *United States,* pp. xv–xxiii. Earlier guide books as well were presented in this same format.

[131] Brown, *Inventing New England*, pp. 18, 30. She also says that rural destinations became increasingly important after 1820. It may be that rural areas were more popular with American tourists. Mulvey, *Anglo-American Landscapes*, chap. 9. In Mulvey's view, Washington was not a favored destination until perhaps the 1880s.

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Over the century the number of those who went to cities for purposes of sightseeing increased as transportation to and from cities improved, and as cities developed better accommodations and public spaces.[132] This growth was most pronounced after the Civil War, sparked in part by the efforts of railroad passenger departments to attract pleasure travelers and by the growth of tour companies that had started up in the 1870s and which, by the 1890s, were exploiting the new urban environments and began to offer shorter tours to cities.[133] The growth was stimulated as well by booster groups in the destination cities and by the occurrence of world's fairs and international expositions.[134] The publication of Appleton's Illustrated Hand-Book of American Cities in 1876 was a clear signal of the rise of urban tourism, and the trend was confirmed in 1893 with the coverage of major cities provided in the first Baedeker guide to the United States. In each of these cities, Baedeker's described the hotels, restaurants, and assorted sights in some detail, indicating there was more to these raw, young cities than met the eye.[135]

Regrettably we have no statistics on the number of visitors to cities, so we cannot be sure of the extent to which urban tourism had grown and been diffused more widely to cities throughout the nation over the closing decades of the century.[136] In Cocks's view, by World War I, urban tourism had expanded to include substantial numbers of visitors who were less well-to-do than those who had been in the vanguard, but it was still a modest industry; "mass tourism, by any commonsense definition, was not possible until after World War II."[137] On the other hand, historians of the world's fairs indicate huge attendance figures, with perhaps 100 million people having visited the 12 international expositions held in American cities between 1876 and 1916.[138] And, Carey McWilliams says that 30,000 to 60,000 tourists arrived in Southern California each year between 1901 and 1903, and concludes that "From 1900–1920 Los Angeles was essentially a tourist town."[139]

[132] Cocks, *Doing the Town*, pp. 6–7, 72 and elsewhere.
[133] Cocks, *Doing the Town*, pp. 107, 113, 125–30. Cook's offered a three-day tour to Washington D.C. at a price of $9 to $13.25, ibid., p. 123. Conference tourism was becoming increasingly important at the turn of the century as well. Ibid., pp.85 and 139.
[134] Tourism appears to have played a noticeable role in the rebuilding of Atlanta after the Civil War, although it did not foster desegregation until after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. See Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, chaps. 1, 2, and 6. See Aron, *Working*, pp. 150–54 on world's fairs.
[135] The description of New York City went on for 45 pages, plus three more on Brooklyn; that for Philadelphia was 12 pages; Chicago, 8 pages; Pittsburgh, 4 pages; and San Francisco, 9 pages.
[136] According to Williamson (*American Hotel*, p. 29), as early as 1835 there were more than 60,000 transient guests in New York city's 26 hotels. Of course many of these were likely commercial travelers, and although they may have done some sightseeing it was not the primary purpose of their visit.
[137] Cocks, *Doing the Town*, pp. 6 and 87.
[138] This averages 2.5 million per year, but of course was episodic in nature. For example, there were 27 million visitors to the Columbian World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. Aron, *Working*, p. 150.
[139] McWilliams, *Southern California*, pp. 130–32,

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All these various developments and the geographic diffusion of tourism after the Civil War translated into much larger numbers of tourists, even if we do not know exactly how many. By the end of the century the number of tourists visiting only the better known destinations likely ran around 1.5 million. Although the number of visitors to spas may have fallen off as the century wound down, other places took up the slack.[140] The number visiting Niagara, Saratoga, the White Mountains and the Jersey shore rose considerably. In the 1890s Niagara alone may have been attracting well over a half million visitors.[141] Saratoga and the White Mountains attracted close to 200,000 each.[142] The Jersey shore might have hosted more than 150,000 overnight tourists, with perhaps Coney Island and Newport attracting an equal number of tourists.[143] Yellowstone National Park drew nearly 7,000 a year, and there must have been a similar number attracted to Yosemite.

And yet, as large as these numbers appear to be, and as large an increase as they represent over the previous benchmark figure, domestic tourism may still have been an elite activity. A million and half tourists at the better known destinations amount to less than 2.0 percent of the nation's

[140] The peak of the health-spa industry may have been around the time of the Civil War, and it had all but disappeared by World War I. Around 1930 there remained Saratoga and perhaps nine comparable spas. Weiss and Kemble, *They Took to the Waters*, p. 5 and chap. 19. The number of visitors to most spas may have fallen, but not at Hot Springs, Arkansas. In 1885 nearly 20,000 bathers had used the government's free pools (Brown, *American Spa*, p. 35), and in 1904 the official number of visitors was over 100,000 (*National Park Service website*).

[141] Data provided by Jeremy Atack, collected from various annual *Reports of the Commissioners of the State Reservation at Niagara*, show that the number of excursionists traveling to Niagara was between 128,000 in 1885 to 324,240 in 1892, and they may have comprised only 40 percent of the total number of visitors. Irwin, (*New Niagara*, p. 86) cites a larger number of excursionists in 1885 (188,000) and says there were an equal number of nonexcursionists. Baedeker's, *United States*, p. 202, reported in the 1893 edition that 400,000 went to Niagara Falls each year. These figures were well above the 70,000 or so who visited annually between 1873 and 1885 when everything was privately owned. Irwin, *New Niagara*, p. 65. Some of those at Niagara were there for only the day, and should not be counted as tourists.

[142] Brown ("Twentieth-Century," p. 132) reports 154,000 guests in hotels in 1898 and another 22,000 in cottages and farms. Carlson ("Recreation Industry," pp. 256 and 260) indicates slightly smaller numbers of 120,000 in hotels in 1902 plus those staying in 2,759 farmhouses. I have assumed for purposes of this calculation that the number of visitors to Saratoga equaled those going to the White Mountains, but it was probably much less given that Baedeker's *United States*, p. 180 indicated only 12,000 summer visitors in the early 1890s.

[143] In 1911 the summer population of Long Branch was reported to have been 100,000. With a resident population around 13,000, there must have been 85,000 or so who vacationed there. Wilson, *Jersey Shore*, pp. 505 and 1130. The many more millions who visited places such as Coney Island or Atlantic City were there for recreation, not tourism. Coney Island was reported to have had 10,000,000 visitors in 1893. Baedeker's, *United States*, p. 56. In 1900 it was reported that 700,000 visitors went to Atlantic City although most of them, as at Coney Island, were day-trippers. Cunningham, *New Jersey Shore*, p. 101. Nevertheless, I have assumed that the rest of the Jersey Shore drew the same number as Long Branch, and that Coney and Newport combined also attracted 150,000 tourists, as opposed to day-trippers.

Although Florida was emerging as a winter resort destination, it had not quite blossomed by 1900. If St. Augustine was attracting around 5,000, it seems unlikely the state's total could have exceeded 100,000. Southern California may have been attracting 30,000 or more in the early 1900s. The number of visitors in the 1890s is not known, but must have been much less.

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population at the end of the nineteenth century.[144] If the middle-income classes were truly taking up tourism, it seems we might expect to find that 5 percent or so of the nation's population had been tourists each year. This would require that there be another 2 million tourists beyond those I estimate were likely found at the better known destinations. Although there was the occasional episodic event, such as the Columbian World's Fair in Chicago, that drew huge attendance, on an annual basis there had to have been a host of lesser known places that were attracting large numbers of tourists. It is possible to identify a few lesser known places to which some substantial number of tourists traveled, such as the 50,000 to 60,000 who went to Vermont annually, and the 60,000 to 100,000 who visited Chautauqua, New York, but it would be difficult to account for where another two million tourists might have gone.[145] Until we can account for them, we are left with the likelihood that tourism was still an elite activity before the impact of the automobile, just as Foster Rhea Dulles had alleged.[146]

TWENTIETH CENTURY

The trends established in the late nineteenth century not only continued in the twentieth, they accelerated—first with the widespread use of the automobile and then with air travel after World War II.[147] Among other consequences, these developments altered the nature of tourist travel. In the nineteenth century tourists who vacationed in the White Mountains, Saratoga, and elsewhere went for an extended stay—for the season in some cases. This practice was shaped by the available means of travel; one did not hop on a train or boat for an overnight stop.[148] This changed with automobile touring, although perhaps not entirely for that reason. By automobile, tourists did not need to settle in for the season; they could

[144] International tourism pales by comparison. Foreign tourists made up a miniscule fraction of the total number of tourists traveling around the United States; ocean-bound foreign travelers peaked in 1893 at 38,000. Although travel abroad must have cut into the domestic market, at its peak in 1900 it drew off only 124,000 Americans.

[145] Brown, *Inventing New England*, p. 155; and Aron, *Working*, p. 113. Hadlyme, Connecticut may be the sort of unknown place to which middle-income working girls went, but it could only accommodate 22 people at a time. Moreover, only a tiny minority of working girls took advantage of vacation premises provided by churches, employers, and civic groups, and working-class men were not included in those fresh air relief programs. Aron, *Working*, pp. 190–95.

[146] Baedeker's first guide to the United States listed 4,000 items in the index, some of which were small places along a major tourist route and many others were specific attractions located in a city like New York. Even if we assume that all of those listed were independent tourist destinations, then to account for another two million tourists would require that on average they each were visited by 500 people who would not be counted among visitors to any of the other places.

[147] Jakle (*Tourist*, chap. 12) describes the growth of city tourism in the early twentieth century, spurred in part by pamphlets, books, and exhibits, such as a world's fair.

[148] Railroad companies knew this and catered to the trade by building grand, elegant, luxurious hotels at the stations, or a short carriage ride away, as for example the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire.

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travel at their own pace, move around from place to place, wander off the beaten track, and even enjoy the trip to one's destination.[149]

The change in the nature of travel was most evident in the accommodations used by tourists. Along with the growth of automobile touring, came auto-camping. Even though many, perhaps most motorists, preferred hotels in the early 1900s, large numbers preferred camping, because of its lower cost and the freedom it offered.[150] The boom in auto camping led initially to the establishment of public campgrounds, often in city parks.[151] Although they were a way to lure tourists into towns, they were also seen as a quasi-public good designed to keep campers and residents from conflict, to control environmental damage, and even to protect public health.[152] By the early 1920s, however, cities and towns came to realize that the hoped-for economic impact of the camps had not materialized, decided that the camps did not deserve to be subsidized, and turned to privatization and user fees. This opened the door to competition from private camps, and by 1930 many cities had gone out of the camp business.[153] Private camps were but a short phase in the development of roadside accommodations. The more rustic camps that provided only campsites gave way first to cabins, then cottages, and then motels.[154]

The change in the kinds of accommodations available to tourists was not the only consequence of the automobile. Equally important was the impact on the number and composition of tourist destinations. Although some of the nineteenth-century destinations were favored by automobile travel, not all sites benefited. The flexibility of the automobile and the concomitant expansion in the network of roads increased the set of tourist sites, some of which competed directly with places that had been popular in the nineteenth century. The expansion in the number of tourist sites came about in two ways. On the one hand, travelers could visit places in areas, such as

[149] Long-distance trips were the vogue for some—perhaps as many as 20,000 Americans made a cross-country trip by auto in 1921—but for most Americans, auto travel meant vacations nearby. Belasco, *Americans*, pp. 42–43, and 74.

[150] It was estimated that 9 to 15 million Americans went auto-camping each year in the 1920s. Belasco, *Americans*, chap. 3. Camping was seen to have had many advantages, but perhaps most importantly, campers did not have to pay "'first class prices for fourth-class accommodations.'" Ibid., p. 47. Camping may also have been stimulated by the increased interest in roughing-it, which had developed as an alternative to taking the waters, especially in the West, and by a shortage of hotels in Yellowstone. Sears, *Sacred Places*, pp. 176–77.

[151] Among the first such camps was Overland Park in Denver, Colorado, which when built in 1915 could accommodate over 2,000 campers.

[152] Municipal camps were established earlier and were more common in the West, perhaps because hotels there were worse and because local boosters hoped some campers would choose to move in permanently. The first public camp in New England did not open until 1921, by which time private campgrounds were starting to make inroads in the West

[153] A poll of 59 cities in 1930 indicated that 29 had done away with their municipal camp. "By the mid-1930s, most remaining municipal camps had to be shut down as public nuisances by state health inspectors." Belasco, *Americans*, pp. 125–26.

[154] The addition of cabins seems to have begun in California and Arizona. Tent sales peaked in 1923/24 and by 1929 had fallen to pre–World War I levels. Belasco, *Americans*, p. 131.

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the Connecticut River Valley, that had previously been simply the route to the tourist destination.[155] More importantly, perhaps, they could more easily travel to areas that had been largely inaccessible during the rail or stagecoach era. Even when travel was by train, boat, or stagecoach, the industry was pervasive, albeit circumscribed in location. With the arrival of first the automobile and then the airplane, tourism became even more ubiquitous, with many smaller, lesser known destinations to be found everywhere.[156] The sheer numbers and geographic spread makes it virtually impossible to identify and summarize all the attractions, but a few major developments are worth noting.[157]

Perhaps fittingly, one of the first tourist events of the century was the Sierra Club's first annual outing in 1901, which was held in Yosemite Valley.[158] National Parks in the western part of the country were among the places that seem to have been favored by automobile travel, although it was not so at first. National parks had banned automobiles initially, fearing among other things that they would frighten horses and threaten visitors' safety.[159] Mt. Rainier National Park was the first to allow cars in 1908, Yellowstone did so in 1915, and the number of visits soared.[160] Although the automobile may not have been the only reason that attendance rose so much, it must have mattered a great deal. Statistics for all eight parks that had been established before World War I are not available, but for Yellowstone, the increased relative importance of autos versus trains was remarkable. In 1916, shortly after cars were allowed into Yellowstone, the railroad was still the more important means of travel, having brought 15,762 visitors that year, compared to 13,599 visitors by car. A decade later the automobile was clearly the preferred mode of travel: 141,644 entered by car and 40,960 by train. Yet another decade later, as the nation tried to recover from the Depression, the automobile dominated, bringing 409,471 visitors compared to only 19,472 by train.[161]

[155] Brown, "Twentieth-Century Tour," pp. 126–28

[156] Aron, *Working*, pp. 212–16 describes the establishment of resorts and tourist accommodations for blacks that took place during the early decades of the twentieth century.

[157] Aggregation of tourist activity by state is one way of summarizing developments, but it, of course, misses the underlying forces at work to foster the growth of some destinations, often at the expense of others. In summary, it would seem that those states that had been the domain of major destinations, such as Niagara Falls or Yosemite National Park, in the nineteenth century continued to draw visitors, but new destinations arose within those states as will be described below, while yet other new attractions pushed other states, such as Florida and Hawaii, to the fore. The latter, of course, depended on the development of air travel, and is primarily a post–World War II phenomenon. See Blackford, *Fragile Paradise.*

[158] Brower, ed. *Sierra Club*, p. 83.

[159] Hyde, *American Vision*, p. 297; and Schullery, "Making," p. 253.

[160] Baringer, *Selling Yellowstone*, p. 62. The average annual number of visits to the eight national parks established before World War I for the period 1915–1925 was 353,000 compared to 43,000 in the previous decade. Compiled from data provided by the Public Use Statistics Office of the National Park Service at www2.nature.nps.gov/stats.

[161] Baringer, *Selling Yellowstone,* p. 192, fn.3.

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The explosion of the Catskill Mountain resorts onto the tourist scene can be dated from the opening of Kutsher's in 1907 and Grossinger's in 1914, and reflects the influence of the automobile.[162] Before the Civil War the Catskill Mountain House in Pine Orchard, overlooking the city of Catskill, was one of the primary stops on the Fashionable Tour, but it was located relatively close to the Hudson River. Places deeper in the mountains could not be reached as easily.[163] As late as 1893, readily identified tourist sites in the Catskills still seem to have been limited.[164] Baedeker's notes "numerous good hotels and boarding houses (mostly open June–Sept) now sprinkle the entire district," but only two—the Catskill Mountain House and the nearby Kaaterskill Hotel—seemed worth mentioning, and they were located within 15 miles of the Hudson River.

The Adirondacks were another area bolstered significantly by the automobile. What little tourism there was in the Adirondacks before the Civil War had been confined to small groups of hunters, fishermen, and adventurers.[165] After the Civil War there was a bit of an upsurge in tourism, fostered by improved rail transportation, but also by the development of tuberculosis sanitaria in the vicinity of Saranac Lake after 1885. Although the number of patients was never very great, "By 1890 the Adirondacks had become a fashionable [health] resort."[166] Lake Placid was one of the more popular destinations, with perhaps as many visitors as in the area around Saranac, but Keene Valley was only just growing in favor, "while the less mountainous districts to the West [were] rarely penetrated by visitors."[167] The automobile opened up this vastly underutilized region to increased tourism, and in the process altered the destinations to which travelers went in the area.[168]

There is reason to think that the Great Depression did not have as severe an impact on tourism within the United States as it did on other industries.

[162] And according to Blumin, (*Short Season*, p. 60) there were hundreds more resorts opened in the 1920s. See also Arthur Adams, *Catskills*, p.140. The resort industry in the Poconos, which had not been mentioned in Baedeker's guide for 1893, emerged at about the same time as the Catskills, beginning with the opening of the Inn at Buck Hills Falls in 1901. Hepburn, *Great Resorts*, p. 117

[163] However, a few places such as Lake Mohonk developed before the automobile.

[164] Aron, *Working*, p. 218 indicates that Fleischmann's existed in the early 1890s as a resort for well-to-do Jews, but most places were small, boarding houses.

[165] Gilborn and Gilborn, *Adirondack Museum*, p. 45.

[166] Gilborn and Gilborn, *Adirondack Museum*, p. 49. The Trudeau Sanitarium opened in 1885 but even by 1929 its capacity had been increased to only 160 patients.

[167] Baedeker's *United States*, p. 166. Gilborn and Gilborn say that most towns in the area had accommodations for tourists, (*Adirondack Museum*, pp. 17 and 44), although they appear to have been smaller lodges. Aron (*Working*, p. 163) refers to this as camping for the wealthy. In any case, until 1892 transportation difficulties held the numbers in check. Gilborn, *Adirondack Camps*, chap. 7.

[168] The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also saw the development of children's camps. Gilborn, *Adirondack Museum*, pp. 47–49. The region was also among the first to have winter sports. These began as a diversion for the patients at the sanitaria in Saranac Lake, but had developed enough by 1932 that Lake Placid was host to the Third Winter Olympics. Winter sports elsewhere, especially downhill skiing, were an even later development. See Pomeroy, *Search*, p. 209; and Hepburn, *Great Resorts*, pp. 43 and 140.

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Tourism may very well have increased, at least in terms of numbers of tourists, but they likely traveled shorter distances and spent less money.[169] As a consequence, the Depression did not affect all tourist destinations or types of accommodations equally, and in particular hurt hotels more than auto camps and motels.[170]

By 1930 the auto-camping industry had reached a size where coast-to-coast chains of camps were being considered by several oil companies, with the possibility of mass production. By the start of the Depression the original auto camps had given way to what would become the motel. At first these camps with tent cabins or cottages were known as "cottage courts," "motor inns," and "highway hotels," but eventually came to be known as motels, with the first use of the term being ascribed to James Vail in San Luis Obispo, California in 1924.[171] The Depression does not seem to have stopped this development, or at least not the planning of it. Early in 1931 the National Autohaven Company of Chicago announced plans to establish 1,000 Wayside Inns by 1 January 1933.[172] In October of 1931, it was announced that National Motor Inns would establish a chain of "glorified auto-camps," but the description of the property reads much more like what came to be known as a motel. "Each major unit will consist of a group of one- and two-story detached buildings, offering accommodations and garages for about 100 motoring parties."[173]

Long-distance travel appears to have been hit sooner and harder by the downturn. In the more remote Yellowstone National Park, attendance fell off immediately from 260,775 in 1929 to 227,901 in 1930 and to a low of 157,624 in 1932.[174] Yosemite and Sequoia, which were more accessible to the population of California, continued to attract the same or more visitors until 1933, when Yosemite's attendance fell from 498,492 in 1932 to 296,088 in 1933.[175]

Although we do not have a complete count of the numbers of tourists elsewhere in the years before World War II, let me provide one last quantitative impression of the industry's growth and its likely spread to the middle-income classes. This last glimpse is for 1930—before the Depression

[169] See Aron, *Working*, pp. 238–41, for a discussion of this period.
[170] Hotel occupancy rates were only 51 percent during the Depression. Belasco, *Americans*, pp. 144ff. Moreover, during the Depression, tourist homes came into vogue, especially on the East Coast, as home owners sought ways of picking up some income. Belasco, *Americans*, p. 153
[171] White, *Palaces*, pp. 167–68.
[172] Colby, "Standard Oil, p. 313.
[173] "National Motor Inns Will Establish Chain of 'Super-Camps,'" *Sales Management*, 3 October 1931, p. 30.
[174] This had a severe impact on the park's hotels. The campgrounds were not as hit hard, and in fact showed a net profit to the Yellowstone Park Lodge and Camps Company of $100,000 per year in 1932 and 1933. Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone*, p. 89.
[175] Sequoia's attendance fell by only 5,000 or so from 1932 to 1933, and the latter figure was above that for 1929. The eight parks with pre–World War I origins combined saw a decline from 1.37 million in 1929 to 948 thousand in 1933. Compiled from data provided by the Public Use Statistics Office of the National Park Service at www2.nature.nps.gov/stats.

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would have cut into travel—and focuses again on the well-known tourist destinations that I used in the earlier calculations. For several of these places we have reported figures on the number of visitors: 3 million at Niagara, 1.4 million at the National Parks that had been established before World War I, and 168,000 at Hot Springs, Arkansas.[176] For the other places, I have based the 1930 estimate on possible changes since the 1890s. In the White Mountains, we do not know how the number of hotel guests changed between 1890 and 1930, but we know that the number of summer homes rose from around 450 in 1892 to 10,600 in 1930.[177] I have assumed that hotel occupancy did not change, and those summer homes averaged four persons per home, so they provided accommodation for 40,000 more tourists than there were in the 1890s. For the remaining sites on the list—Saratoga, the Jersey Shore, Newport, and Coney Island—I have assumed the number of tourists increased by the same 20 percent as that estimated for the White Mountains.[178] Combined, these well known sites alone attracted 5.4 million people, or 4.4 percent of the U.S. population in 1930. We know further that new popular destinations had emerged with the automobile, especially in the Catskills, and the number of tourists visiting other areas, notably Florida and perhaps California, had grown substantially.[179] Clearly by 1930 the subset of well-known tourist destinations was attracting more than 5 percent of the population, and it seems certain that the middle-income classes were indeed tourists by this time.[180] Beyond this, there were all those lesser known places that might have been attracting many more tourists in earlier years, and by now surely were. For 1930, we can get some idea as to how large that component of the industry might have been because the number of areas included in the National Park System increased over the years. The reported number of visitors to these newer, lesser known parks had been a mere 29,000 in 1907, but had risen to 1.6 million in 1930, or another 1.4 percent of the population.[181]

[176] Aron, *Working*, p. 238; and National Park Service website. The eight parks were: Yellowstone, Yosemite, Sequoia, Mt. Rainier, Crater Lake, Wind Cave, Mesa Verde, and Glacier.
[177] Brown, "Twentieth-Century Tour," p. 131; and Carlson, "Recreation Industry," p. 260.
[178] Many millions went to Coney Island and Atlantic City, but they were day-trippers, not tourists according to the BEA definition.
[179] A report by the California Chamber of Commerce, "Tourists and Their Expenditures in California, 1928–1964, *Economic Survey Series* No. 13, 1955/56, reported 887 thousand visitors to California in 1930. That same year there were 663 thousand visitors to the state's national parks: Yosemite, Sequoia, King's Canyon, and Lassen Volcanic. Assuming there was no duplication, there were at least 200,000 tourists in California outside the national parks. Given Florida's closer proximity to the population on the east coast, the number of tourists there must have exceeded a quarter of a million.
[180] Bear in mind that these figures may have a large degree of inaccuracy, there is no doubt duplication as some tourists went to more than one location, and there are some day-trippers included.
[181] To say these are lesser known is somewhat misleading. The list of additions includes lesser known parks, such as Platt National Park, Oklahoma, which had been Sulphur Springs Reservation, and was subsequently incorporated in the Chickasaw National Recreation Area in 1976. But it also includes places, such as Acadia and Rocky Mountain National Parks, which were already well known by the time of their addition.

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These figures can be contrasted with the number of visitors to places such as Coney Island, where 20 million may have gone in 1909 and perhaps that many or more in 1930, most of whom, however, would have been day-trippers. This suggests that although tourism was of growing interest among the middle-income classes, they were still taking up recreation and entertainment more readily or earlier than they were able or willing to make overnight trips to distant tourist destinations.[182]

POST WORLD WAR II

Tourism after World War II differed noticeably from that which had occurred before. Before the war the industry encompassed a wide variety of destinations and sites, and the numbers of tourists involved had increased substantially, but the scale was different than that which took place afterwards.[183] After the war one might say that all hell broke loose! For those who were critical of the sort of mass tourism that seemed to have materialized in the early twentieth century, the boom in tourism after World War II would have been unfathomable. Not only had automobiles become more widely owned, making it feasible for larger numbers of Americans to go touring, other factors too contributed to a strong upsurge in tourism. As automobile ownership continued to climb, roads and highways were being improved and extended. Incomes rose as well, and not just from the very low levels of the Great Depression. Air travel added another dimension, the ability to deliver large numbers of visitors to specific locations in far less time than the train or car. And, on top of all this, increased numbers of workers had gained paid vacation time. Before the Depression, paid vacations were limited almost entirely to salaried employees, but between 1930 and 1937 paid vacation plans were initiated that covered 37 percent of the wage earners in manufacturing, laundries, and extractive industries, and 40 percent of those plans were started in 1937.[184] After World War II, the practice increased to the point that 100 percent of employees in medium and large establishments had paid vacation plans by 1979.[185]

To some extent this boom was simply an enlargement of the sort of tourism that had occurred before the war. Visitors flocked to the National Parks and beach resorts in larger and larger numbers. More noticeable than the continued success of tourist destinations of longstanding was that the transportation developments and changing tastes altered the relative impor-

[182] Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, pp. 7–8 argues that the development of the amusement parks best expresses the increased interest in recreation among the middle class.
[183] Indeed, in the earliest years it is conceivable that one could compile a complete list of all tourists traveling in America.
[184] Jones and Smith, "Extent," pp. 269–70. See Aron, *Working*, pp. 203–05, for a discussion of the spread of paid vacations.
[185] Sutch and Carter, eds., *Millennial Edition*. Data tables were prepared by Bill Sundstrom and provided by Susan Carter.

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tance of various tourist destinations and led to the development of new tourist sites, most notably Hawaii, Las Vegas, Orlando, Florida, and ski resorts all over the country, as well as new types of activities, such as working vacations, and a large increase in conference tourism.[186] This however must be the subject of another article.

CONCLUSIONS

This has been only a sketch of tourism in America. It is incomplete, not only in that it focuses primarily on the period before World War II, and especially before 1900, but also in terms of its coverage of places and issues. Although it may be possible to identify all the watering places to which tourists went in the late eighteenth century, and perhaps even all the destinations in the first half of the nineteenth century, thereafter the sheer number of places and their ubiquitous locations make it impossible. Although I have omitted discussion, or even mention, of any number of tourist destinations, I hope the outline facilitates future work. And I hope I have indicated that there is work to be done.

Perhaps the most obvious task is to produce a quantitative history of the industry. The story I told was largely a descriptive narrative because quantitative evidence is sorely lacking. The history of American tourism in general, especially for the nineteenth century, now rests largely on anecdote, the views of that handful of the elite who wrote about their travels, or in some cases the opinions of boosters of a specific community.[187] Even when scholars have written thoughtful histories about particular places, they have used only a handful of illustrative statistics. It may not be possible to produce as reliable and continuous data series as we have for other industries, but the reward for some effort in this direction would seem to be quite large.[188] The new BEA satellite accounts are useful in this regard because they present detail about the component industries that produce tourism activities, and lay out the methodology used to construct the estimates of tourism's inputs and outputs.[189]

[186] The tourist season has been lengthened considerably from around two months in the nineteenth century to a year-long activity. Brown, *Inventing*, p. 211. In California, the All-Year Club had been formed in 1921 to create a summer tourist business. Until then, the season had been only two winter months long. Thomas, "In Competition," p. 29.

[187] The unrepresentative nature of the travel writings that survived from the nineteenth century can be seen in an analysis of the guests at Niagara's hotels. The travel writings suggest that visitors to Niagara were largely European, but the guest registers indicate that "The British tourist was a rare breed at the Falls." Norris, "Reaching the Sublime," p. 54.

[188] Cocks (*Doing the Town*, p. 212) is pessimistic stating "There is no good way to count tourists in [the period 1850–1915]."

[189] Among the chief components, measured by final demand purchases, are passenger air travel, hotels and lodging, and eating and drinking places. Kass and Okubo, "U.S. Travel," table 2, p. 9. Of course, one would have to contend with a number of difficulties in constructing estimates for the component industries, in particular determining which portion of an industry's output flows to tour-

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A more complete data base would permit a more general explanation of the rise of tourism. The increase in tourism might be largely explained by movements of demand and supply. There is no question that in the long run rising incomes made it possible for increasing numbers of people to become tourists, while an increase in the share of the labor force that got paid vacations helped further expand demand. At the same time, continued transportation improvements and improved tourist infrastructures, especially increased hotel capacity and lower priced hotels, made travel more affordable. Although most histories of tourism allude to these sorts of things, their emphasis has been on other factors, such as erosion of the puritan ethic, fostering new attitudes towards travel, or an increased appreciation for the value of leisure, that lie behind these two fundamental economic forces. If we had a fuller set of data, it should be possible to ascertain the relative importance of changing cultural values versus economic factors in explaining the rise of tourism, and whether that relative importance changed over time.[190] If my quantitative impressions are close to describing the trend in the numbers of tourist, then all these factors combined did not have a substantial impact until sometime after World War I.

While these forces may have been expanding the demand for and supply of tourist services in general, there were other consequences. Improved transportation not only made travel more affordable, it had a differential impact on various types of tourist activities and tourist destinations. One effect seems to be that some tourist destinations that were complements at one time became substitutes at a later date. The earliest tourists, the wealthy elite, visited more than one destination, perhaps many, on the fashionable tour, and repeated the pattern each year. In the early nineteenth century one would visit Niagara, but also go to Saratoga, the White Mountains, and perhaps Newport. Things changed when reduced travel costs made it possible to go farther afield and for more people to do so. Middle-income people chose to go to either Niagara or Saratoga or Yellowstone, and they might do one this year and the other next. Even the wealthy had to make choices when the possibilities increased greatly over time, and were spread across a wider geographic area.

Moreover, the history of tourism is replete with topics and issues that can be examined in the different and perhaps special circumstances that characterize the industry.[191] The matter of seasonal labor was endemic to the industry, as were questions of the racial, ethnic, and gender composi-

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ists or visitors and which to nontourists, and how far someone had to have traveled in order for his or her purchases of meals and hotel rooms to be classified as a tourist purchase. The mileage criterion today ranges from 50 to 100 miles, but that is based on current transportation technology and prices.

[190] Many of these histories refer to sources that would appear to allow a more complete statistical accounting. See especially the work of Aron, *Working*; and Brown, *Inventing*.

[191] Engerman, "Research Agenda," presents a case for the relevance of tourism research in diplomatic history and international political economy.

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tion of the labor force. Tourism, perhaps more so than other industries, is seen as being dependent on low-income, part-time workers for its success. The history of entrepreneurship in the industry is quite different than that in manufacturing. Until very recently, tourism seemed best appreciated on a small scale, so there was little room for an entrepreneur to exercise his or her skills in a monumental way. There were of course exceptions, such as Thomas Cook, Henry Flagler, Conrad Hilton, and Walt Disney. Even when the accomplishments of an entrepreneur in the tourist business may have been extraordinary, recognition seems to have been harder to come by.[192]

With tourism being small in scale and shaped enormously by local conditions, civic leaders may have been more important than individual entrepreneurs. This worked out well in some locations, but not others, as it depended among other things on the quality and insightfulness of the community leaders. In Saratoga, the civic leaders seemed to have made the right choices, but not so in nearby Ballston Spa.[193] Today, many locales are turning to tourism, or thinking of doing so, to shore up their economy, and would surely benefit from an understanding of how things worked out in previous cases. Some historians and sociologists are skeptical of rescuing local economies by turning to tourism, especially when it is guided by politicians, but as Patricia Limerick sagely points out, these communities have already exhausted their preferred options; "The rural extractive industries are undeniably on the ropes."[194]

Civic leaders have been involved at all levels of government because the industry's product seems to have a strong element of public good to it. Because the chief attraction is a common good, it has been subject to excessive use or development, as was evident in the commercial development around Niagara Falls or the congestion of the beaches on Long Island.[195] Attempts to deal with the public-goods nature of the product have arisen most noticeably at the national level, with the creation and expansion of the National Park System, but it was evident at the state and local level as

[192] Henry Plant, for example, was one of the premier hoteliers in Florida in the late nineteenth century, but that story is little known. In his biography of Plant, Martin devoted only two paragraphs to his system of hotels. "Henry Bradley Plant," pp. 261–76.

[193] Realizing the importance of tourism, the city petitioned the state to become a separate jurisdiction so it could set its own laws that were conducive to attracting tourists, and it managed to secure one of the first railroad connections in the state. Sterngass, *First Resorts*, p. 18. Frank Rollins, New Hampshire Governor, was farsighted enough in the 1890s to push for better roads, which he envisioned as the way tourists would come in larger numbers in the future. Brown, "Twentieth-Century," p. 130.

[194] Limerick, "Seeing," p. 54. Rothman ("Shedding Skin," pp. 107–08) is among the skeptics. In his view, "Tourism is barely distinguishable from other forms of colonial economies." See also his *Devil's Bargain*.

[195] This is one reason why the number of tourists is not the best index of the industry's growth. With congestion and despoilment, the average quality of the tourist experience may have declined over time.

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well. The establishment of the New York State Reservation at Niagara was a prominent example, as too were the auto-camps started by many municipalities. Perhaps the most notable examples of localities taking steps to protect their common property were the decisions made in Saratoga and Newport to prevent a crucial resource—the mineral springs in Saratoga and the famous cliff walk in Newport— from becoming private property.[196]

Those civic leaders seemed to know implicitly that tourism was a leading sector, an engine of growth; just as today it is seen as a leading sector in many parts of the world, as well as in regions, states, and cities of the United States. Saratoga Springs was almost completely devoid of manufacturing, preferring to make it as a tourist destination. Indeed, "The residents, entrepreneurs, and village government of Saratoga explicitly rejected industrial development, declaring, 'Nature did not intend Saratoga to be a manufacturing town.'"[197] There seems little doubt that the city's tourism had its impact on other businesses and attracted other subsidiary industries, such as a glass works to make bottles for the sale of the mineral water.[198]

Tourism, like institutions, matters. We may not know how, but there seems no question that tourism shifts out the production frontier. Although pleasure may seem to be the first order of business on vacation, that has not been its only reward. Tourism makes people more productive in the long run, or at least keeps productivity from declining.[199] Timothy Dwight, who was chosen President of Yale in 1795, was determined to preserve his health and intellectual vitality by touring—"to devote the vacations, particularly that in autumn, which includes six weeks, to a regular course of travelling."[200] Middle-income businessmen likewise took vacations for similar reasons.[201] As John Soane put it when describing the rise of famous resort towns, businessmen "weakened by the prolonged effects of entrepreneurship, both at home and abroad, were irresistibly drawn to these resort environments."[202] The early travel agencies and travel magazines also saw travel

[196] The state of South Dakota helped finance the sculpting of Mount Rushmore in order to attract tourists. Pomeroy, *Search*, p. 211.

[197] Sterngass, *First Resorts*, pp. 21–22, 35–37. St. Augustine was another case where the city council decided that the city's economic future lay with tourism. Braden, *Architecture*, pp. 140–42. On the other hand, the editor of the Nantucket newspaper hoped its citizens had higher ambitions. Brown, *Inventing New England*, p. 111.

[198] Sterngass, *First Resorts*, p. 30. Likewise, the building of the Royal Poinciana in Palm Beach, led directly to the growth of West Palm Beach, which was built up as a company town for the hotel staff. Braden, *Architecture*, p. 109. And similar stories could be told about the grand exhibitions, such as the Panama-Pacific Exposition that was held in San Francisco in 1915. Withey, *Grand Tours*, pp. 340–41.

[199] One might ask why have all, or almost all, American Presidents taken vacations, gone to the Presidential retreat, or taken "working vacations" at an alternative White House.

[200] Dwight, *Travels*, p. 9. In a similar vein, academicians realize the value of a sabbatical that leaves one refreshed and raring to go back to work with new insights into old problems and new ideas to take up.

[201] Some of them also realized that vacations could improve their employees' productivity. See Aron, *Working*, pp. 194–202.

[202] Soane, *Fashionable Resort Regions*, p. 54.

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as a way of enhancing productivity. A writer for Sunset magazine posed the question, "How can I increase my efficiency?" The answer was a country vacation. "The mind is strengthened and invigorated, and the spirits quickened by new and interesting experiences and adventure." All of these were gained more by traveling "a good distance from home."[203]

Notice that this is not saying that the tourist industries themselves experienced notable productivity gains, rather that they influenced productivity elsewhere. Indeed, tourist industries may have difficulty generating greater efficiency. If service is the essence of the industry, and if tourist services are best enjoyed on a small scale, then the industry is limited in the extent to which it can enhance productivity or take advantages of scale economies.[204] Some parts of the industry have engaged in "mass tourism," and produced a standardized tourist service on a fairly large scale, but these examples may be pushing the envelope in this regard, and even in these cases, the scale would not yet seem to have approached that of many manufacturing industries.

Whatever the reasons for having ignored the topic in the past, I suggest the industry deserves some of our time, and we have much to gain from the effort. I can put it no better than Daniel Boorstin. "Great stirrings of the mind have frequently followed great ages of travel." He has in mind, above all, enormous consequences such as the Renaissance that was induced in part by "the discovery of the Americas, [and] the voyages around Africa and to the Indies," and the Enlightenment stimulated by "travels of the seventeenth century around Europe, to America, and to the Orient."[205] Although the study of tourism may not have such profound effects, it should at least stir our minds and give us new insight into the sorts of economic issues with which we are familiar.

[203] Quoted in Cocks, *Doing the Town*, pp. 109 and 122. If one begins to think along these lines, other issues arise. What is the transmission mechanism by which touring raises productivity? Are some vacations more productivity-enhancing than others? Is it better to have several shorter vacations, or one long tour? And so on.

[204] Today it is possible that the computer has helped increase productivity in at least some parts of the travel industry.

[205] Boorstin, *Image*, pp. 78–79.

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