UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Driven Abroad: American Autotourism in the Early Cold War, 1947-1963

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in HISTORY

by

NICOLE K. REBEC

Thesis Committee:
Professor Jon Wiener, Chair
Professor Emily S. Rosenberg
Professor Jeffrey Wasserstrom

2015

DEDICATION

To

Franc Rebec

~

It is after all so easy to shatter a story. To break a chain of thought. To ruin a fragment of a dream being carried around carefully like a piece of porcelain. To let it be, to travel with it…is much the harder thing to do.

--Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is the product of a dissertation committee manned by individuals who exhibited patience—even when I wandered down streets labeled "no thru traffic"—and insisted that, while forging a path of my own, I take care with my steps. Jon Wiener welcomed me as a student, mentee, and aspiring writer; he saw in me an ability to produce compelling historical narratives long before I thought I had anything particularly compelling to say. His incisive words of criticism and celebration alike taught me to get to the point—in life as in writing. Jeffrey Wasserstrom was the first faculty member to greet me when I arrived as a graduate student at UC Irvine; along with nurturing confidence in the power of my own written words, he gave me the courage I needed to play with new ways of giving them voice. Emily Rosenberg critiqued the earliest instantiation of my tentative dissertation topic and pushed me to rethink my approach to do my ideas, and thus myself, justice. This dissertation would not exist without their willingness to furnish honest and untempered criticism alongside unwavering support.

Leila Neti, Jeremiah "Jem" Axelrod, Michael Near, and Lynn Dumenil defined my undergraduate experience at Occidental College; they held me to the highest standards of personal and academic critical self-reflexivity and helped ensure my graduate endeavors were well met at a premier institution like UC Irvine. At UC Irvine, my dissertation committee and other faculty members pushed me to work within and against the boundaries of academic discourse, to develop critical vocabularies, and to intervene in, and be held accountable for, moments of my own production as an academic subject. As colleagues, fellow historians, and lifelong friends, Tina Shull and Nick Bravo furnished a much-needed support system and emphasized that what I have to offer to the world cannot be quantified by the sum of my dissertation.

I want to thank Morgan Yates of the American Automobile Association, who granted me access to their archives, the complete run of the organization's magazine, *Westways*, and the wealth of knowledge housed in his head. I also owe much to the countless libraries and institutions who have embraced the 21st century and digitized portions of their collections. This dissertation was also made possible by the generous support of the University of California, Irvine and, in particular, the Department of History and the School of Humanities.

To Arlene Brill, who opened her heart and her home. To Lee Posthuma, my undergraduate partner in analytic and argumentative crime. To my brother, Mark, whose successes I admire. To Joseph Merritt, my co-pilot who, despite being unsure about the nature of this long journey, jumped on board midway through and willingly relieved me at the wheel when I, too, felt lost, tired, or unsure. To my mother, Joanne Woods, who is my greatest source of joy simply because I know I am hers. And to my father, Franc Rebec, the hardest working person I know. To the wall that he jumped and the walls that he spent his life painting to make possible the taking of my own big leaps.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Nicole K. Rebec

2007	BA in History, *phi beta kappa*, *summa cum laude*, Occidental College
2007	BA in English and Comparative Literary Studies, Occidental College
2008-2012	Chancellor's Fellowship, University of California, Irvine
2009-2013	Teaching Assistant, History Department, University of California, Irvine
2011	MA in History, University of California, Irvine
2013-2015	Teaching Associate, Humanities Core Course Program, University of California, Irvine
2015	PhD in History, University of California, Irvine

PUBLICATIONS

"My Painted Tale, His Spoken Portrait," *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice, Volume 15, Issue 1 (2011)*, 139-148.

"1989 as a Year of Great Significance," co-authored with Jeffrey Wasserstrom, in John R. McNeill and Kenneth Pomeranz, eds., *The Cambridge World History, Vol. 7, Part II: Production, Destruction, and Connection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Driven Abroad: American Autotourism in the Early Cold War, 1947-1963

By

Nicole K. Rebec

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Irvine, 2015

Professor Jon Wiener, Chair

American autotourism abroad during the middle of the twentieth century reveals the formative role of the automobile and the act of driving in constructing an understanding of the world and the United States' place within it. In motoring abroad during the Cold War, American drivers transported domestic idealizations of the "freedom of the road" to foreign landscapes and, in so doing, used the automobile to mediate and frame their encounters in geographically and historically specific ways. Through a cultural history of American autotourism in the Soviet Union, Mexico, France, and the Alaska Territory in the first two decades after World War II, this dissertation takes a comparative approach to examine the ways in which American tourists used the automobile to construct, mediate, and give meaning to their encounter with these various "foreign" spaces and the ways in which these touristic encounters were also constructed, mediated, and made meaningful by the automobile. Popular sentiment in the United States cast the American relationship with the automobile as a "love affair," but this dissertation argues that a coinciding Cold War sentiment informed the ways in which autotourists encountered, related to, and represented the foreign spaces they drove through. Drawing upon midcentury travelogues, travel guides, travel advertisements, newspaper reports, first-hand accounts, and

other cultural ephemera produced for American audiences about motoring abroad in the 1950s and 1960s, this dissertation contends, that while automobility shaped the daily social interactions and cultural landscapes of the postwar American public at home, autotourism during the same period reflected and drew upon this extant lexicon of automobility and the act of driving to variously position, construct, and make sense of the world.

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

American autotourism abroad during the middle of the twentieth-century offers a new perspective for examining the social and cultural history of automobility and automotive travel for pleasure in the United States and the ways in which this history emerged from and within a global historical context. During the first two decades of the Cold War, the automobile and the act of driving in the United States more than ever became attached to dominant American cultural and ideological values in an era that witnessed similarly intensifying efforts to promote these values abroad; more than a mere machine, the automobile signified the superiority of the free market and democratic governance, the promise of social and economic mobility, and new patterns in consumption and leisure ushered in by the abundance and affluence of the American Century. In writing of the driving American public in 1952, the *Los Angeles Times* positioned the peculiarly (and particularly) American love of the road as one part nurture, one part nature. While a distinct national heritage of "rugged individualism" led Americans to "express this urge in their automobiles," the biological inheritance of a competitive instinct made it "natural" for "a race of mechanically minded people who want to do everything better and faster, to express this in their automobiles."[1]

But the growing primacy of American road travel for pleasure was not a solely domestic postwar phenomenon as foreign roads across the globe were literally and figuratively opened to American drivers. In May of 1955, 125 delegates from 30 countries convened in Washington D.C. to attend a conference held by the World Touring and Automobile Organization (Organisation Mondiale du Tourisme et de l'Automobile, henceforth OTA). The organization, whose goal was to "make travel easier for the motorist around the world," held the meeting to

[1] "Southland Called Sports Car Capital," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1952.

discuss the state of international highways, the need for uniformity in traffic regulations and road 'sign language', concerns about road safety, and the necessity for reciprocal easing of visa and customs barriers in order to "break[] through the paper barriers at frontiers." Representing the interests of some 20 million touring and automobile club members around the world, the delegates in attendance exchanged ideas in English, Hindustani, Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Spanish and French. One of the representatives in attendance, Count H. de Liedekerke Beaufort, chairman of the Automobile Club of France, summed up the challenges faced by internationally touring motorists: "Governments are slow…they wait for the cars and then build the roads. You must build roads to put cars on them." The *Washington Post* described the "courtly count" as an individual who viewed the automobile as a "social force that can bring many men around the world together—if only the nations would abolish their customs documents." In the "OTA circles" the count traveled within, "'leftist' and 'rightist' d[id not] refer to politics but what side of the road you drive on."[2] Waiting just around the corner from the bureaucratic easing of travel restrictions for touring motorists lay a utopian fantasy of global coexistence and mutual understanding ushered in through the act of international automotive congress.

Through a cultural history of American autotourism in the Soviet Union, Mexico, France, and the Alaska Territory in the first two decades after World War II, this dissertation takes a comparative approach to examine the ways in which American tourists used the automobile to construct, mediate, and give meaning to their encounter with these various 'foreign' spaces and the ways in which these touristic encounters were also constructed, mediated, and made meaningful by the automobile. Drawing upon midcentury travelogues, travel guides, travel advertisements, newspaper reports, first-hand accounts, and other cultural ephemera produced

[2] Jean White, "Travel Experts From Around the World Convene Here," *The Washington Post*, May 9, 1955.

for American audiences about motoring abroad in the 1950s and 1960s, this dissertation contends that while automobility shaped the daily social interactions and cultural landscapes of the postwar American public at home, autotourism during the same period reflected and drew upon this extant lexicon of automobility to variously position, construct, and make sense of the world. Popular sentiment in the United States cast the American relationship with the automobile as a "love affair", but this dissertation argues that a coinciding Cold War sentiment informed the ways in which autotourists encountered, related to, and represented the foreign spaces they drove through and contemporaneous discourses about the effects of their driving. From the Baja Peninsula to the French Riviera and Alaska's Mount McKinley to Moscow's Red Square, American autotourists used the automobile and represented their time spent abroad to audiences back home in historically, geographically, and geopolitically contingent ways. In historicizing and shedding light on this oft overlooked chapter in the history of midcentury American automobility, this dissertation strives to initiate a broader reorientation in the relevant historiography which tacitly treats postwar American car culture as a uniquely and purely domestic development; while transnational treatments have used American automobility to understand the world, very rarely is the world used to interrogate and understand postwar American car culture.

The cultural and social importance of the automobile, automobility, and the road in post World War II America is manifested in the sheer volume of scholarship produced on the topic, but two decades of American autotourism to foreign countries during the middle of the twentieth century has primarily gone unremarked upon in this otherwise extensive catalogue. To my knowledge, no historians have written at length about American autotourism abroad during the

postwar era.[3] Frank Schipper includes a brief portion on American motorists in postwar Western Europe in a broader analysis of postwar transatlantic technology transfer and the importation of road-building models from the United States. He contends that the presence of American motorists on European roads helped in the push for countries to adopt American road infrastructure and mobility paradigms under the Marshall Plan.[4] Schipper's conclusions about the effects of American autotourists upon transportation networks are sound, but they tell us more about the postwar structural transformations in Western Europe than they do about the cultural and social contours of driving abroad. Schipper's focus reflects the tendency of transnational studies of the automobile and automobility paradigms to focus primarily on the automobile's movement as a commodity[5], its impact upon the construction of roads and overland transportation corridors[6], and/or the development of multinational car companies.[7] In top down,

---

[3] I was expecting to see some analysis of Beat writer Jack Kerouac's trips to Mexico by automobile but the only study of him as an [auto]tourist poses this question of traveller versus tourist. Roger Bill, "Traveller or Tourist? Jack Kerouac and the Commodification of Culture," *Dialectical Anthropology* 34, no. 3 (September 2010): 395-417. Roger Bill leans toward Kerouac as a tourist but readily admits Kerouac's travels could just as easily fit the definition of an "antitourism" as developed by Dean MacCannell, "The Commodification of Culture" in *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*, ed. Valene E. Smith and Maryann Brent (New York: Cognizant Communications Corp., 2001), 380-390, 382.

[4] Frank Schipper, "Changing the Face of Europe: European Road Mobility during the Marshall Plan Years," *The Journal of Transport History*, 28, no. 2 (2007): 211-228.

[5] On the transnational movement of the Volkswagen Beetle and the "Europeanization" of American culture in the specific context of one automobile, see Bernhard Rieger, "From People's Car to New Beetle: The Transatlantic Journeys of the Volkswagen Beetle," *Journal of American History* 97, no. 1 (June 2010): 91-115*;* Andrea Hiott, *Thinking Small: The Long Strange Trip of the Volkswagen Beetle* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2012); Phil Patton, *Bug: The Strange Mutations Of The World's Most Famous Automobile* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).

[6] Most studies on American transport history are national in scope, most notably Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Bruce E. Seely, "Getting the Interstate System Built: Road Engineers and the Implementation of Public Policy, 1955-1985," *Journal of Policy History* 2 (1990): 23-55; and Mark H. Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1941-1956* (Lawrence, Kansas: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979). Various scholars in the field of transport history have addressed

policy-oriented studies of this transnational flow of automotive goods, ideas, and practices, less emphasis is placed upon the cultural and social importance of the internationalization of the act of driving. In a recent comparative volume on the social history of automobility, transportation networks, and the landscapes of the United States and European nations, Rudy Koshar argues that "modern roads and highways derive their resonance not from the actions of engineers or political authorities but rather from the people who drive cars."[8] This dissertation builds on this limited historiography and responds to Koshar's call to attend to drivers in order to understand how American autotourists gave meaning to the roads they drove on through the automobiles they drove in.[9]

---

the transnational flow of ideas about and models for mobility patterns. On transatlantic technology transfer and the "Americanization" of Western European mobility patterns during the Marshall Plan years, see Frank Schipper, "Changing the Face of Europe" and Frank Schipper, *Driving Europe: Building Europe on Roads in the Twentieth Century* **(**Amsterdam: Aksant Press, 2009); Bruce E. Seely, "'Push' and 'Pull' Factors in Technology Transfer: Moving American-Style Highway Engineering to Europe, 1945–1960," *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society* 2, no. 3 (2004): 229–46; Gijs Mom, "Roads without Rails: European Highway-Network Building and the Desire for Long-Range Motorized Mobility," *Technology and Culture* 46, no. 4 (October 2005): 745-772. On British and German cross-cultural exchange see Rudy Koshar, "Cars and Nations: Anglo-German Perspectives on Automobility between the World Wars," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21 (October 2004): 121-144.

[7] Few scholars have produced micro and macro transnational histories of foreign cars and/or car companies in America or American car operations abroad beyond wieldy corporate and economic analyses. Two noted exceptions are Wanda James and Greg Grandin. James provides a thorough history of the arrival of Japanese cars in the United States in the 1950s, public reactions, marketing obstacles and the eventual cooperation of American and Japanese manufacturers. Grandin adds a transnational dimension to studies of Ford Motor Co. in an incisive examination of Henry Ford's utopian vision for an American-styled industrial town in the Amazon basin. Grandin melds corporate, biographical and environmental history into a tale about globalization and failed idealism. Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: the Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (New York: Picador, 2010). Wanda James, *Driving from Japan: Japanese Cars in America* (North Carolina: McFarland and Co. Publishing, 2007).

[8] Rudy Koshar, "Driving Cultures and the Meaning of Roads: Some Comparative Examples" in *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe* ed. Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 14-34, 15.

[9] In positioning autotourism as a purposeful and meaningful cultural act, the interlocking dimensions of people, machines, and landscapes within automobility—what Jörg Beckmann refers to as auto-objects, auto-subjects, and auto-scapes—helps us to consider automobility as a system. Jörg

Much of the attention paid to the automobile in American life during the middle of the 20th century emerged from its dual position as a material and symbolic good. The first four decades of the twentieth century witnessed the transformation of the automobile from a specialized technology into a widely accessible consumer durable. Henry Ford's assembly-line production of the Model T revolutionized the scale of manufacturing capacity while concomitant new patterns in labor, leisure, and urban living produced a mass-market of American consumers eager to capitalize on the increasing availability and affordability of automobiles. [10] The 1920s marked the rise of advertising and the therapeutic ethos which helped engender a relationship between individual subjectivity and consumer goods predicated less upon the utilitarian value of objects and more upon the symbolic value projected through and within commodities; purchasing, owning, and driving an automobile became signifiers of individual subjectivity and a whole range of social relations, cultural aspirations, and national values.[11]

Beckmann, "Automobility –A Social Problem and Theoretical Concept," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19 (2001): 593-607, 593-594. For a theoretical assessment of transport and mobility history post-cultural turn, see Colin Divall and George Revill, "Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology," *Transport History* 26, no. 1 (2005): 99–111.

[10] On the development of American consumerism see Gary Cross, *An All Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). John Rae writes that the notion of a "mass-market for automobiles was uniquely American" and manufacturers in the United States enjoyed a "larger domestic market than any European producer could command and its higher standard of living made proportionally more Americans potential purchasers of cars;" as such, American automobile manufacturers were "unmistakably the pioneers in making the motor vehicle an article of general consumption and use." John Rae, *The American Automobile Industry* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 31. In this same vein, James Flink asserts that "during the 1920s automobility became the backbone of a new consumer-goods-oriented society and economy that has persisted into the present." James Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1976), 145.

[11] For more on the development of non-representational advertising, the rise of the therapeutic ethos, and the transformation of the automobile into a symbolic, aspirational good imbued with a range of socio-cultural associations see Fredrik Brogger, "Grinding the Gears of Production and Consumption: Representational versus Nonrepresentational Advertising for Automobiles in the Mid-1920s," *Prospects* 15 (1990): 197-224. For the therapeutic ethos, see T.J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization" in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* ed. Richard W. Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon

By the post World War II era, which saw the furthering of a national consensus about, and assimilation of, a mass-produced consumer society, the automobile obtained the position of commodity par excellence. Fordism laid the framework for the development of a mass-market for automobiles in the 1920s that fueled the rise of domestic autotourism, and after World War II "Sloanism" positioned the automobile as a core component of an increasingly consumer-oriented society.[12] Amid postwar fears of market saturation and the slow growth of sales in the early years of the '50s, leading men like Alfred P. Sloan of GM developed strategies to meld style and growing commodity fetishism with low production costs and consumer affordability—capturing a staggeringly broad swath of the consuming American public in the process through the phenomenon of mass design and appeal. Fueling continued desire through stylistic obsolescence and superfluous material embellishment and merging the fantasy of newness with instant gratification through mass-production, the emphasis upon styling and design of Detroit made and manufactured automobiles of the 1950s exemplified this middle-class enthusiasm.[13] Placed within a pervasive paradigm of the 'right to choose' in a mass-produced consumer society, the automobile came to define and solidify individual and national ties of belonging in the United

---

Books, 1983); and Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[12] Karal Ann Marling argues that by the mid-1930s everyone "who could afford a car already had one, and in 1927 production and sales declined for the fist time." The solution to this dilemma "was not Fordism—the durable, dependable, unchanging model T" but rather "Sloanism, [] the annual style change named for Alfred P. Sloan, president of General Motors." Marling writes that the "objective of this superficial change on a yearly basis" was, as Sloan said, "to create new demand for new value and, so to speak, create a certain amount of dissatisfaction with past models as compared with the new one." Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: the Culture of Everyday life in the 1950s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 136. According to John Rae, during the post-WWII era "American passenger automobiles grew rapidly in size and horsepower" and the "emphasis on selling was on style, on selling the car as a 'status symbol,' with the result that styling became extremely elaborate, with lavish use of chrome and exaggerated tail fins," 99.

[13] See, e.g., Donald J. Bush, "Emotive Power," *Design Quarterly* No. 146, Autoeroticism (1989): 21-31.

States during the Cold War conflict. And consumerism was never a simple function of procurement as an end in itself, but rather a method for accessing modern constructs of upward mobility and individuated identity while legitimating the superiority of American free enterprise through these experiential frameworks during the Cold War.[14] Detroit models represented nationalistic identifications of market capitalism with materialism, high living standards and social mobility with postwar freedom, and luxury and consumption with Cold War power.[15] A 1952 homage to the democratic egalitarianism of the automobile appearing in the *New York Times* under the headline "United States of the Automobile" suggested that driving was becoming a fundamental, inalienable right:

> Fifty years ago the average American traveled scarcely more than 200 miles a year away from his own fireside or coal stove. Today's yearly average of the family motorcar is more than 10,000 miles. Half of all our adults hold drivers' licenses….According to the Federal Reserve Board, one-third of all automobiles are owned by families with incomes under $3,500. Ownership of a car no longer disqualifies claimants for welfare payments.

While the design ethic of Detroit models embraced superfluous embellishment and consumer luxury, ownership of an automobile was "no longer a luxury."[16]

---

[14] On the postwar centrality of consumerism and its perceived relationship to democratic egalitarianism, see Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Random House, 2003). Arguing domestic containment and conspicuous consumption existed in tandem with Cold War ideology, Elaine Tyler May believes the deployment of familial and social constructs served to, as Lizabeth Cohen similarly argues, reinforce and redirect the role of everyday living as an exercise of citizenship in service to the nation. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). On the automobile in the context of American consumerism see Gary Cross, *An All Consuming Century*, 49-65.

[15] On the automobile as commodity and soft power, see Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997). Also see Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge M.A.: Belknapp Press of Harvard University Press, 2005) for an example of the role of soft power in the projection of the United States as an "irresistible empire" of mass prosperity and social progress in postwar Western Europe.

[16] Samuel T. Williamson, "United States of the Automobile: From Horse to Horsepower," *New York Times*, March 9, 1952.

Functioning as both metaphor and machine, in the postwar United States the automobile and automobility were signifiers of dominant cultural values, the means by which these affective, aspirational values were exercised and given animus,[17] and the method through which these values could be obtained (or, in some cases, rejected).[18] Countless scholars in a wide-range of disciplines have interpreted the car as an iconic text of American social and cultural identity—signaling anything from freedom, status, and social mobility to control, governmentality, and the policing of class, race, and gender hierarchies.[19] In addition to a commodity which produces social and cultural affects, scholars have positioned the automobile as a material good, and

[17] See, e.g., David Gartman, "Three Ages of the Automobile: The Cultural Logics of the Car," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 4-5 (2004): 169-195 and Mimi Sheller, "Automotive Emotions: Feeling the Car," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 4/5 (2004), 221-242.

[18] As James Flink argues, once the "utilitarian virtues of the product came to be taken for granted by the consumer" the automobile became not only a signifier of cultural values but the means through which to obtain them, 149. On the automobile as both metaphor and machine, see Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The American Automobile and the City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). According to McShane, the automobile became "what the French social critic Henri Lefebvre called 'the epitome of possessions," and "symbolized wealth and psychic liberation for an enormous number of groups within American society," 225-226. For an early but incisive collection of essays on American car culture see in the United States, see *Automobile and American Culture* ed. David Lewis and Laurence Goldstein (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1983); and Mark Foster*, A Nation on Wheels: The Automobile Culture in America Since 1945* (New York: Wadsworth Publishing, 2002).

[19] Regarding regulation and control, see Cotten Seiler, "Crafting Autonomous Subjects: Automobility and the Cold War" in *Republic of Drivers* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008). For treatments on the intersection of gender and race, see Michelle Ramsey, "Selling Social Status: Woman and Automobile Advertisements from 1910-1920," *Urbana* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 26-38; and Laura L. Behling, "Fisher's Bodies: Automobile Advertisements and the Framing of Modern Female Identity," *Centennial Review* 41, no. 3 (1997): 515-528. On car aesthetics and social class, see David Gartman, *Auto Opium: A Social History of American Automobile Design* (New York: Routledge, 1994). On the racial politics of power and access see Cotten Seiler, "'So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By': African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (December 2006): 1091-1117.

automobility as a practice, which, in transforming the economic and spatial landscape of the United States during the 20th century, also produced cultural and social effects.[20]

In conjunction with the rise of automobility as a technology of transport and a symbolic paradigm imbued with meaning far beyond a purely utilitarian function, the modern tourism impulse in the United States emerged as a cultural response to the disruptions associated with industrialization and capitalism as a mode of production and social organization in the early twentieth century.[21] Access to the funds and time necessary to engage in travel for the sake of pleasure democratized tourism as a leisure activity in the United States during the early 20th century; ushered in by the paradigm shifting economic mode of mass-production exemplified by Henry Ford's Model T, the growing affordability and reliability of the automobile as a technology of transport, and the growing national trend of road travel for pleasure, the tourism industry in the United States readily evolved and expanded at the local, regional and national

[20] The automobile (and attendant ideas about automobility) functions as both a category of historical analysis and a technology of historical transformation; in other words, automobility must be approached not simply as a reflection of broader cultural and social processes, but as a vehicle actively propelling and shaping shifts in social and cultural experience, economic, political and industrial interests, and spatial and temporal patterns. On the functional role of the automobile in reshaping American spatial and social patterns, see Christopher Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History*, (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2012) and Joseph Interrante, "The Road to Autopia: The Automobile and the Spatial Transformation of America" in *The Automobile and American Culture* ed. David Lewis, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1983) 89-104. On the automobile and urban ecology, see Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: the Automobile and the American City.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford, eds., *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992). On the relationship between automobilty, (sub)urbanization, and the environment, see Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburbanization and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[21] See, e.g., Cotton Seiler's chapter "Individualism, Taylorization and the Crisis of Republican Selfhood" in *Republic of Drivers*.

level to meet the demand of a newly mobile, newly motivated consumer base.[22] A wide body of literature interrogates the complicated historical relationship between road travel and nature tourism—an uneasy affiliation of technology and nature (what David Nye has termed the "technological sublime") that vacillates between pure antagonism and absolute conflation. With domestic tourism to nature preserves conducted by automobile under the egis of campaigns like "See America First," as Paul Sutter argues, "our love for wild nature is intimately connected with our affection for the automobile."[23] The intersection of private passenger cars, scenic routes, widely interspersed and isolated state and national parks, and the semi-formal, self-guided

---

[22] On the relationship between Taylorization, leisure, and the rise of tourism, see Cindy Aron's formidable *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), particularly 229 and 244-246 where she includes a brief discussion of the automobile's role in facilitating mass-tourism. For an insightful comparative study of vacationing and leisure in the United States and Europe see Orvar Lofgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Peter Boag, "Outward Bound: Family, Gender, Environmentalism, and the Postwar Camping Craze, 1945-1970," *Idaho Yesterdays* 50, no. 1 (Spring/Summer2009): 3-15 provides a concise assessment of recent scholarship on the topic. For a general study of the relationship between economic factors producing leisure and promoting temporary migration and tourism, see Valene L. Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 35-36.

[23] On the relationship between technology and nature, see David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 18. According to Sutter, "modern wilderness advocacy sprang from a sense that as roads and the automobile carved up the nation's remaining wild spaces, the American desire to retreat to nature traditionally a critical gesture, was becoming part of the culture's accommodation to the modern social and economic order," 16. The works of Gabrielle Barnett and David Louter similarly analyze the fraught (and often paradoxical) relationship between the automobile/automobility and the environment/environmentalism in the 20th century United States through the lens of domestic autotourism. Gabrielle Barnett, "Drive-by Viewing: Visual Consciousness and Forest Preservation in the Automobile Age," *Technology and Culture* 45, no. 1 (Jan., 2004): 30-54; David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

characteristic of tourism to nature preserves meant that "although railroads initially promoted See America First, ready access to the Model T served as the movement's driving force."[24]

Road travel for the sake of pleasure grew in popularity throughout the first half of the 20th century, and by the post-war era 'road tripping' had become a national pastime and an American right of passage.[25] Along with the massive, postwar federal investment in constructing intercontinental highways and roads crystallized in the 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act, postwar affluence ensured the presence of an American population to willing and able to drive on them. While the American "love affair" with the automobile was in full swing across the nation with over nine million new cars sold in 1955—what Karal Ann Marling has called the the "banner year of the decade,"[26] as early as 1952 the American Automobile Association (AAA) predicted a "banner highway travel year" with more Americans than ever before hitting the road in their personal cars at a pace that showed no signs of slackening.[27] Midcentury discourses about road travel shared basic assumptions of the road as a fundamental means by which to produce experiential knowledge, rejuvenate and liberate the individual, and establish social and national

---

[24] Boag, 5.

[25] According to Shaffer, the growing popularity of road travel was boosted by the promotional efforts of the automotive industry, motor clubs, road builders, and other related consumer-based supply and service industries as well as advancements in technology and affordability. Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National identity 1880-1940* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2001). On public and private promotional efforts to construct a culture of motoring tourists in the United States see, James R. Ackerman, "American Promotional Road Mapping in the Twentieth Century," *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* 29, no. 3 (2002): 175-191.

[26] Elaine Tyler May, 158; Karal Ann Marling, 134. In the years between 1935 and 1950, spending on automobiles rose 205 percent; whereas 70,000 cars were produced in 1945, by 1950 the figure was 6,665,000 and the number of registered motor vehicles doubled between 1945 and 1955. Elaine Tyler May, 158, 193.

[27] "More Drivers Asking for Tour Information," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 29, 1952; "A.A.A. Reports 25% Increase in Car Travel," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 15, 1952; "On the Road," *New York Times*, January 1, 1956. Over one million of AAA's members filed requests for travel itineraries with the organization in the first nine months of the year.

ties of belonging. The idealization of the road entailed a paradoxical position in postwar American life. As Warren James Belasco has argued, on the one hand the open road suggests immediacy, accessibility, authenticity and counterculture. On the other, the open road is a built landscape of homogeneity, spectacle and consensus wherein the development of standardized roadside services, accommodations, and advertising technologies fostered and participated in postwar consumer and conformist culture.[28]

Driving to and within nature as tourists gave rise in the early 20th century to a national sense of identity linked to individuality, freedom, autonomy of movement, and the promise of continual rejuvenation in nature. According to Marguerite Shaffer, concomitant with this new paradigm of nature tourism, however, was a re-scripting of "political rights in consumer terms, celebrating seeing over speaking, purchasing over voting, and traveling over participating."[29] In this new understanding of and investment in "mobile citizenship," the unprecedented prosperity of the post-World War II era facilitated tourism's transition from a patriotic rite of passage to the "ultimate quest for self-indulgent individual pleasure and hedonistic personal freedom in a culture of mass consumption that revolved around spectacle, fantasy, and desire."[30] As Cotton

---

[28] Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910–1945* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1979) catalogues the escapist desire for non-conformity inherent within midcentury road travel and the ways in which subsequent commercial developments designed to capitalize on the growing popularity of road travel increasingly chipped away at this fantasy. For a collection of essays on roadside and road-related culture in the United States including the built landscape, see Jan Jennings, ed., *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990). On roadside advertising see Catherine Gudis, *Buyways: Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Landscape* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2004). For a cultural history of Route 66 as a material and symbolic corridor see Peter Dedek, *Hip to the Trip: A Cultural History of Route 66* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2007). For an analysis of road travel in popular culture, see Thomas Heaney, "The Call of the Open Road": Automobile Travel and Vacations in American Popular Culture, 1935-1960" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2000).
[29] Shaffer, 6.
[30] Ibid., 320.

Seiler has shown, this sense of "mobile citizenship" was not the sole purview of nature travel but rather part of a broader process through which automobility as a lexicon and organizational principle emerged in conjunction with a 20th century concept citizenship in the United States. Giving birth to a postwar "republic of drivers," American subjectivity was "organized and reinforced by driving" and the "horizons of citizenship came to look very much like those of driving."[31] It is within this domestic understanding of "mobile citizenship" manifested by and through the act of driving that American autotourism abroad during the Cold War was given meaning and made meaningful far beyond the pragmatic use of the automobile as a technology of transport.

Despite variations in interpretation, however, analyses of both the road and the car as interlinked "American" symbols remain dominated by nation-centered approaches that leave untreated the acceleration of global contact and exchange in the mid to late 20th century evinced by activities like driving abroad. Meanwhile, transnational historical approaches to the Cold War have worked to dismantle the notion of purely autonomous domestic spaces in a century defined by increasing cultural exchange; building upon this theoretical and historical framework, this study of postwar American autotourism in foreign spaces seeks to question the concept of a purely "homegrown" American car culture. Furthermore, because the Cold War was not a formally declared military conflict, ideology was not merely an outgrowth of government propaganda and international diplomacy but rather a dispersed and malleable arena characterized by multiple points of origin.[32] The ideological and political labor of culture and cultural

[31] Cotten Seiler*, Republic of Drivers*, 3.
[32] Traditional political and intellectual histories have not been merely supplemented by cultural approaches but taken in a new direction altogether with important expansive properties. These methods have become rich ground for extrapolating further significance from early analyses of the Cold War and elevating this field to one where culture becomes a key explanatory

diplomacy was deployed as a form of what Joseph Nye has termed "soft power" which, as opposed to "hard power" (e.g. the military), "soft power" leverages the hegemonic force of attraction through cultural seduction.[33] While both the automobile as a good and tourism as an activity have been examined as a register of perceived American superiority and prosperity and the means through which the United States wielded "soft power" abroad during the Cold War, this study weds the two to unpack the ways in which driving abroad informed American perceptions of the world and the United States' place within it.[34]

This history of autotourism abroad during the middle of the twentieth century is not designed to revise our understanding of the domestic history of the automobile and automobility in the United States. Nor do I suggest that these four case studies can adequately account for the complexity of international road travel for pleasure undertaken by American autotourists given methodological and archival limitations. But the history of midcentury autotourism adds several layers to the history of domestic automobile culture and the history of international travel during

---

component in uncovering the nature of ideological conflict. For instance, see Musya Glants and Pamela Kachurin, "Culture, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 3-5. According to Glants and Kachurin, "Cultural studies trace the complex matrix of factors that contribute to a particular historical moment, allowing us to discern events and influences that often go unnoticed. The relationship between the Soviet Union and the West during the Cold War is an excellent example of how culture--both mass culture and high culture--was employed as a mode of communication and manipulation," 3.

[33] See Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990) and Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004). For various theorization of mobility as power, see Divall, "Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology."

[34] On tourism and soft power see Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), particularly his introduction "Mass Tourism, Empire and Soft Power;" and Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). On American travel to Asia the specific context of the Cold War and the promotion of positive sentiment about the U.S. intervention overseas, Christina Klein chapter "How to be an American Abroad" in *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 100-142.

the Cold War and provides a preliminary set of tools with which to further understand these pasts. As the United States emerged as a world power in the years after World War II, American autotourists reflected American understandings of the world in which they drove and were agents actively (re)shaping new cultural webs of significance. [35]

The history of tourism, like the history of the automobile and automobility, has been positioned by scholars as a powerful lens for theorizing space and place; this study of American autotourism abroad positions the automobile as a technology of movement and a modality for seeing the world that intersects—both historically and theoretically—with the evolution and democratization of tourism and travel in the 20th century. By bringing together disparate scholarship on tourism and automobility during the Cold War to further examine the conflicts cultural registers, this interdisciplinary study seeks to intervene in both fields by examining how automobility shaped tourism and tourism shaped automobility. For example, tourism studies are often delimited by a focus upon immediate zones of temporary touristic inhabitance where tourism becomes synonymous with arrivals at destination points. Studies of tourism often fail to account for the intrinsic ways in which forms of mobility shape the touristic encounter, produce a particular mode of seeing, and facilitate a particular relationship to place and space.

Building on scholarly configurations of the category of the tourist, this study defines an autotourist as an individual who primarily uses the automobile to undertake temporary private travel for pleasure primarily to and/or within a place in which he or she does not usually reside; I

[35] This study understands culture as a constellation of symbols that carry social meaning. See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). Cultural productions create as well as alter meaning and achieve importance through their affiliation with other types of historically significant meaning-making activities. The challenge, according to Pierre Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production*, lies in "explain[ing] the coincidences" that bring specific cultural products into intertextuality with other powerful fields of discursive production. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 42-65, 57.

use the term autotourism to refer to as the set of practices and activities associated with this travel, the most prominent of which is the act of driving. Tourism is a cultural activity and social practice that has been analyzed through a variety of lenses of immediate relevancy to this study of American autotourism abroad. Sociologists and anthropologists are concerned with theorizing the relationship between tourism and culture among host and guest populations—including push and pull factors informing why people travel and the effects of such travel on guest and host peoples and cultures alike. Modern tourism is an exchange premised upon a power dynamic wherein the visitor has the ability to access, consume, commodify, and, upon return home, represent for an audience the people and places acting as host. [36] Tourism is an ongoing negotiation between visitor and host and although power dynamics are entrenched, particularly when dealing with issues of first world tourists in third world locales. Nonetheless, hosts capitalize upon, resist, and perform their own relationship to visitors that rescripts the modern day imposition of Western uniformity in postcolonial tourist destinations. In midcentury autotourist accounts, the act of driving imagined and constructed destinations in ways that had less to do with reality and more to do with tourism as an imaginative vista and a co-optative process of fantasy and desire on the part of the visitor. Despite the active staging of touristic destinations and the host community's ongoing process of negotiating, subverting and/or crafting their own performative representations, American autotourists viewed the act of driving as a

[36] See Valene L. Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Ellen Furlough, *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America. (*Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001); and Jane Desmond*, Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, eds., *Postcolonial Geographies* (New York: Continuum, 2002). John Urry's enduring configuration of the "tourist gaze" accounts for the visual dynamic inherent within the transformation of tourism from the educational and experiential interaction of the "grand tour" to the emphasis on spectacle and sightseeing. John Urry and Jonas Larsen *The Tourist's Gaze* 3.0, 3rd ed. (Sage: London, 2011).

method of transportation which furnished an "authentic" encounter with the people and places visited (which was then represented for popular audiences at home). Historians working in the field of tourism studies contextualize tourism as an historical phenomenon to unpack the myriad ways tourism connects with, for example, modern subjectivity, consumerism, nationalism, industrialization and globalization.[37] Like all tourists, American autotourists were both consumers and producers of culture and information who used the clout purchased with American dollars to access foreign spaces and interpret (and often invent) the cultural identities and imagined communities of self and other.[38] Through driving in foreign spaces and representing these activities for audiences back at home, American autotourists constructed identities for those they visited and themselves through the prism of automobility, used the windshields of their automobiles to frame and mediate these encounters, and participated in a broader postwar discourse which sought to heighten international awareness of foreign countries at home.[39]

There are documented cases of African Americans traveling abroad as tourists, sojourners, and/or eventual expatriates during this period, and domestic and international travel

---

[37] On the history of U.S. tourism, see, e.g., Belasco, *Americans on the Road*; Shaffer, See American First; Aronson, *Working at Play*, Foster Rhea Dulles *Americans Abroad: Two Centuries of European Travel* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1964); and John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, K.S.: University of Kansas Press, 1998), particularly "Chapter 6: Intraregional Tourism: Automobiles, Roads and National Parks."

[38] Stuart Hall has argued that identity is a discursive activity that emerges through "the marking of differences and exclusion" as opposed to some authentic, static, or pre-discursive essence. Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and P. du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 1-17, 5.

[39] This study owes much to the model provided by Christopher Endy's *Cold War Holidays American Tourism in France*, which situates French-American foreign relations in a socio-cultural context and argues American tourism to France during the Cold War bolstered mutual anti-communist commitments across the Atlantic.

has, of course, never been the sole purview of the dominant, majority white population. But cases of non-white travel abroad, particularly in terms of autotourism, were exceptions that proved the rule. In addition to holding a clear demographic majority, white Americans in the post war era possessed the resources and entrenched sense of economic, cultural and social privilege that arguably made something like crossing an international border less monumental and more run of the mill than for members of racialized minorities. I am aware that the usage of "American" is problematic for a variety of reasons. My use of the term here is in the context of white, middle to upper class citizens of the United States embodying many of the tropes associated with American cultural and social norms in the middle of the 20th century. Characteristics include whiteness as social, economic, and spatial mobility, dominant access to and representation in popular culture and political culture, a *de facto* sense of national belonging and patriotic sentiment, and suburban idealizations of nuclear family life, conspicuous consumption, and, of course, the car ownership entailed therein.

While many couples and families traveled abroad by car to enjoy a vacation, much of the descriptions of autotourism contained here were figured as masculine and drew upon constructs of masculinity tied to notions of rugged individualism, adventure, and freedom of movement. Even when trips made by couples or families are described, save for a few noteworthy exceptions the male head of household is almost always implicitly or explicitly present as a figurehead of patriarchal protection and authority.[40] Thus, when deployed, gender as an analytic

[40] On the topic of women drivers and the relationship between gender and automobility, see Charles Sanford, "'Woman's Place' in American Car Culture" in *The Automobile and American Culture*. eds. David Lewis and Laurence Goldstein (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 137-152. Deborah Clarke, *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Maggie Walsh, "At Home at the Wheel?: The Woman and Her Automobile in the 1950s," (The Third Eccles Centre for American Studies Plenary Lecture: British Association of American Studies Annual Conference,

is used here to explore the variety of ways autotourism became a vehicle through which social and cultural constructs of masculinity were variously projected, exercised, reclaimed and/or envisioned, either symbolically or materially. Much of the richness of representations in these midcentury automobile excursions emerge through the implicit gendering of such trips as specifically masculine—whether a husband/father was leading the trip or men went afield by car in homosocial groups. As portions of this dissertation will show, an agreed upon understanding of American drivers as male determined the contours of what American autotourists found or could hope to find on trips abroad.

Through four chapters, I demonstrate the geographically and historically contingent ways in which Americans related to their automobiles in specific foreign landscapes, related to these foreign landscapes through their automobiles, and used a well-established lexicon of automobility honed through travel in their own country to understand and represent their relationships with these very different foreign spaces. In so doing, this dissertation seeks to use autotourism to further interrogate the cultural, political and social dynamics of American travel abroad during the first two decades of the Cold War. At the most fundamental level American autotourism abroad entailed a relationship of power which, predicated on the personal usage of a well-established mid-century symbol of American superiority, carried not only basic assumptions about the automobile's place in American life, but America's place in the world, along for the ride. For Americans travelling abroad, the automobile became an epistemological tool, an enclosed space providing a way of producing knowledge and acquiring information

---

2006); and Maggie Walsh, "Gendering Mobility: Women, Work and Automobility in the United States," *History* 93, no. 311, (July 2008): 376-395.

about foreign countries while, at the same time, defining the scope or extent to which a given type of foreignness could be known. American autotourists used the automobile on the ground in pragmatic ways in order to, like all tourists, maximize their experiences, respond to the challenges of travel, attempt to understand and/or relate to unfamiliar environments, and label their encounters as authentic as opposed to the carefully staged performance of authenticity that came to increasingly characterize modern, mass tourism in the mid to late 20th century.[41]

The first chapter moves beyond the literal limits of the "free world" by examining accounts of American autotourism in the Soviet Union during the 1950s. Building upon scholarship on cultural diplomacy, soft power, consumerism, containment, and espionage during the Cold War, I argue that accounts of autotourism behind the Iron Curtain positioned the automobile and the act of driving as an idiom through which average Americans at home could better understand Soviet society writ large. Accounts of American autotourists in the Soviet Union leveraged official and popular discourses of an ideological battle between democracy and totalitarianism fraught with intrigue and positioned autotourism as a daring adventure into the unknown. Functioning as a form of Cold War knowledge production, driving through the Soviet Union was perceived as providing an unimpeded way to catalogue and reveal information about the state of Soviet society to the American public. By documenting the reception of Western cars and American car drivers in the Soviet Union, describing the structural and cultural contours of automobility behind the Iron Curtain, and simply driving as visitors through the Soviet landscape, the car as a mode of travel (and a way of knowing) was deployed as a common,

[41] For more on tourism and authenticity, see Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Schocken Book, 1989.

comparative language for making the secretive and strange seem, if not more familiar, at least more knowable.

The second chapter examines the influx of American "autotourists" to Mexico during the 1950s and 1960s as facilitated by a series of transformations in both nations: the strengthening of diplomatic ties forged through wartime alliance, the cooperative construction of connective overland transportation corridors, the deliberate development of tourism infrastructure as part of a larger project of state-building in Mexico, and a cultural preoccupation with road travel for the sake of pleasure in the United States. While the construction of the Pan American Highway was part of a mutual, decades long cultivation of both literal and symbolic corridors of exchange and "good neighborliness," in America the highway was discursively positioned as a one-way road transporting modernity and progress southward. In this vein, I draw upon postcolonial theorizations of tourism and spatiality to argue that in American hands the automobile mapped Mexico symbolically as a frontier zone awaiting American exploration, discovery, and conquest. Narratives of Americans driving South of the Border presented autotourism as a way to come into unmediated and autonomous contact with an "authentic" Mexico uncorrupted by the staging of the modern tourism industry. By employing a language of vehicular "conquest," autotourism to Mexico was a recreational activity conjoined with the exercise of (real or imagined) American power wherein American drivers in Mexico imagined themselves as actively (re)creating and (re)enacting a frontier heritage of "westering" lost to history in their own country.

The third chapter examines American autotourism in France—with some attention paid to the implications for Western Europe more broadly—in the context of Marshall Plan rebuilding and scholarship on the "Americanization" of postwar mobility patterns in Western Europe. Arguing that tourism was identified by the European Recovery Program early on as a leading

dollar earner and a means for cultivating social and cultural connective ties, the chapter sketches out the ways in which the postwar tourism industry in Western Europe actively worked to develop a highly-sophisticated tourism infrastructure catering to the highly mobile American tourist. In the specific case of France, I argue that autotourism in the country became *en vogue* during the 1950s and resulted in contemporaneous conversations in the United States about the perceived 'costs' of the Americanization of mobility patterns and the French tourism industry—which increasingly catered to the spending power of American tourists. An analysis of the rhetoric surrounding the postwar development of the Frenchman's new 'love affair' with the car and debates about the arrival of the American-style road-side motel shows how American autotourism in postwar Europe engendered questions about the ways in which pleasure-bound American road travelers abroad were fueling the transformation of France's tourism industry from a quaint, service-based, and uniquely French enterprise into the image of the mass-consumed, mass produced tourism paradigm found at home in the United States.

While Alaska was not a 'foreign' country per se, the final chapter examines autotourism to the Alaska Territory during the post-World War II era as a point of destination as psychologically foreign and geographically distant as any other remote part of the globe. Positioning autotourism in the context of a lengthy historical trajectory that imagines the far north as a frontier zone awaiting development, I examine the ways in which the postwar tourism industry worked to boost the draw of the territory more broadly. Starting with the World War II construction of the Alaska Highway, I argue that the highway was reimagined as a travel corridor helping to funnel tourist dollars into the territory after other promised benefits failed to materialize. As tourism-related revenue continued to climb steadily in the years leading up to statehood in 1959, Alaska's rapidly developing but still somewhat nascent tourism industry

struggled to meet the infrastructural challenges posed by the postwar massive influx American tourist traffic. As a result, I argue, the territory worked to develop campsite accommodations and capitalize upon the increasing popularity of 'roughin' it' that characterized the experiential desire for outdoorsmanship among the American public during the postwar decades. In the interim between the territorial referendum for statehood in 1946 and the beginning indications of massive oil reserves in the late 1950s, the Alaskan tourism industry banked on autotourism, camping, and attendant outdoor recreational activities requiring limited investment that promised great gain if, like gold before it and oil after, all panned out according to plan.

Throughout these chapters, I integrate the 'on the ground' ways in which autotourism functioned in response to the demands of material conditions related to the tourist enterprise with the discursive ways in which autotourism was symbolically positioned and imagined by postwar writers as transcending the purview of tourists' daily reality. By historicizing the ways in which Americans drove abroad in a machine wedded to American concepts of subjectivity and selfhood, this study seeks to begin unpacking the ways in which the world and the act of driving abroad helped these citizens of a "republic of drivers" further define and give meaning to what it meant to drive at home. Pierre Martineau, the director of motivational research for the *Chicago Tribune* in the 1950s, described the automobile as that which "tells us who we are and what we think we want to be… It is a portable symbol of our personality and our position…the clearest way we have of telling people our exact position."[42] In examining the transnational movement

[42] Pierre Martineau, quoted in Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: David McCay, 1957), 52. Pierre Martineau's quote is widely cited in historical and theoretical scholarship on the automobile in postwar American life. See, e.g., Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: the Culture of Everyday life in the 1950s*,136; Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption II: Markets, Meaning, and Brand Management* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 64; and Tom McCarthy, *Auto Mania: Cars, Consumers and the Environment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 138.

facilitated by automobile and undertaken by American drivers, we can get a sense of the ways in which autotourism channeled the automobile's symbolic and literal portability to inform domestic understandings of America's material and discursive position in a world that was increasingly globalized, increasingly polarized, and increasingly automotive.

CHAPTER ONE
Free-Wheeling in a Totalitarian State: Americans Drive the Soviet Union, 1955-1960

In September of 1955 an American dentist from Chicago "parked his jeep outside the Kremlin walls…and asked flabbergasted Moscow tourist officials for permission to drive through the Soviet Union." According to news accounts from the period, Dr. Berthold Schulz was the first American civilian to drive a car into the Soviet Union since World War II. Armed with an American flag "displayed on his window" and an international driver's license, the intrepid "tourist on wheels" startled Soviet officials at the Finnish-Soviet border who, "caught with their curtain down," let him in.[1]

As if it weren't enough for everyday Americans to drive across and through their own country, Dr. Schulz took his love of motoring to the literal limits of the "free world" and beyond. When the story broke in the United States, *The New York Times* announced, "The inevitable has happened."[2] The characterization of Dr. Schulz's trip as "inevitable" channeled, among other things, the presumption that American automobility was both impossible to stymie and a paradigmatic method of mid-20th century American travel and exploration. When interviewed by a reporter in Moscow the "lean matter-of-fact bachelor…protested that his trip was not news" and insisted, "I am just a tourist."[3] Given the unexpectedness of both his mode of transportation and his chosen destination, Dr. Schulz's protestation of being "just a tourist" encapsulates one of the central premises of tourism studies: tourism matters *because* it often appears to be benign. Despite his insouciant description of his motor tour into and through the Soviet Union, Dr.

---

[1] "Surprises Reds," *The Washington Post*, September 29, 1955; Andrew Herrmann, "Dr. Brethold Schulz, Noted World Traveler," *Chicago Sun-Times* December 18, 1989; "Soviet Is Entered By U.S. Motorist: Chicago Dentist in Station Wagon," *New York Times,* September 27, 1955; "Tourist on Wheels," *New York Times*, September 28, 1955.
[2] "Soviet Is Entered By U.S. Motorist."
[3] Ibid.

Schulz's unsanctioned trip was, in fact, very much news.[4] His successful automotive penetration of the Iron Curtain unfolded across the pages of major American news outlets; at the most basic level, his journey complicated the ways in which the Cold War ideological divide between East and West was manifested and reinforced through the literal policing of territorial borders and checkpoints.


Chicagoan Drives Into Moscow

Dr. Brethold F. Schulz, 3929 N. Hoyne av., beside his British station wagon, which he drove from Finland along Russian highways to Moscow to become the first American tourist to visit the soviet union by automobile since World War II.

Figure 1.1: Pictured in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dr. Brethold Schulz poses with the British station wagon used on his journey through the Soviet Union as "the first American tourist to visit the Soviet Union by automobile since World War II." "Chicagoan Drives into Moscow," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 28, 1955.

Dr. Schulz's four-wheeled excursion occurred after the post-1953 easing of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union and interrogating the presence of American drivers in the Soviet Union during the 1950s and early 1960s requires an analytical framework that draws upon cultural history through lenses of automobility, tourism and consumerism. Americans drove into and through the Soviet Union as tourists at the very moment the automobile served as a commodity through which the ideological contest between the Soviet

[4] The story even appeared on the pages of *The Singapore Free Press* under the headline "He Can't Just Drive Around Russia," *The Singapore Free Press,* October 11, 1955. The story was also picked up by smaller news outlets: *Altoona Mirror*, October 10, 1955; *Brownsville Herald*, September 27, 1955; *Ogden Standard Examiner*, October 10, 1955; *Radford News Journal* September 29, 1955; *Danville Bee*, September 28, 1955.

Union and the United States unfolded. During the 1950s, tourism also became one of many methods for engaging in "cultural diplomacy"—a mutually understood (un)official foreign policy weapon in an ideological war wielded by both the Soviet Union and the United States. With the "darkest days" of the Cold War drawing to a close after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, the end of the Korean War, the advent of the July 1955 big-four Geneva summit talks, the reunification of Austria in 1955, and the ushering in of the "First Détente," cultural diplomacy assumed a functioning role in Soviet-American relations. The underlying premise of cultural diplomacy is the potential of joint gain through cultural exchange; the "logic" of cultural exchange emerges through the strategy of "gaining [] access to the other side's society in return for the granting of corresponding access to one's own." The fluctuation of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States impacted the granting of tourist visas—resulting in periodic contractions and expansions of American visitors to the Soviet Union and vice versa. This exchange was predominately one-sided with the Soviet Union granting many fewer annual travel visas to the United States and other capitalist countries than vice versa. The Soviets, as Davies phrases it, preferred "to treat [tourism] primarily as an 'import.'"[5]

[5] During the post-Stalin period (1953-1964), Nigel Gould Davies argues that "both sides came to accept a role for cultural relations, and while unilateral methods of influence continued to be used, those regulated by mutual agreement became increasingly significant." Nigel Gould Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 2, (April 2003): 193-214, 213, 208. Although tourism was part of a larger, complex network of formal and informal cultural exchange between the two superpowers during the Cold War, Anne E. Gorsuch makes note of the fact that while "increasing attention has been paid to the history of tourism in western Europe and North America and to its contributions to questions of identity formation, political mobilization, nation building, consumption, and practices of daily life, little has been published on tourism and its significance in the Soviet context." While much effort has been made in recent years to remedy this paucity, much of it focuses either on domestic tourism inside the Soviet Union or Soviet citizens travelling outside of the Soviet Union. Anne E. Gorsuch, "'There's No Place like Home': Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism," *Slavic* Review 62, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 760-785, 761. Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough make note of this same dearth in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and*

Between 1956 and 1957, 3,250 American tourists visited the Soviet Union. In January of 1958, the Soviet Union and the United States signed the "Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in the Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields." Also known as the Lacy-Zarubin agreement (named after President Eisenhower's Special Assistant on East-West Exchange, S.B Lacy, and Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Georgi Z. Zarubin), it covered broad measures for mutual exchange in "science and technology, agriculture, medicine and public health, radio and television, motion pictures, exhibitions, publications, youth, athletics, scholarly research, culture, and tourism."[6] By 1959, the 1956-1957 figure had nearly trebled with 12,000 Americans entering the Soviet Union on tourist visas.[7] Elsewhere in the world tourism was an economically thriving industry; for the American and Soviet governments, the cost/benefit relationship of tourism, however, was measured more in terms of "soft power" than hard currency.[8]

While tourism was one weapon wielded by Americans in cultural relations with the

---

*North America (*Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 20. Also see Anne Gorsuch, *All this is your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Anne Gorsuch, *Turizm: The Russian And East European Tourist Under Capitalism And Socialism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006). For an analysis of the contours, goals and intended (and unintended) outcomes of Soviet tourism programs, also see Diane P. Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Itacha, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). On Soviet tourism to foreign places, see: Vladislav Zeubok, "The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Leadership, Elites, and Stability" in *The Fall of Great Power: Peace, Stability and Legitimacy* ed. Geir Lundstead (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[6] For more information on Soviet-American cultural exchange through tourism (particularly Soviet visitors to the United States during the 1950s), see Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2004).

[7] Travel figures from Nigel Gould-Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," 208.

[8] For more on the ideological role of consumer goods in the ideological contest between the US and the USSR, see Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, eds., *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology and European Users* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

USSR during the Cold War, consumerism arguably delivered the definitive blow. Theorist Don Slater has persuasively contended that the rise of consumerism during the post-war decades was a major catalyst for framing ideological opposition between Soviet and American society: "Consumer sovereignty was the most popular cold war wedge between East and West, one that—unlike the apocalyptic balance of nuclear terror—struck into the heart of everyday life. The contrast between bounteous West and the grey, sclerotic Soviet East turned on the notion that stifling the individual's capacity to define and pursue even the most trivial of their desires." In "Another Mission to Moscow: Ida Rosenthal and Consumer Dreams", Emily Rosenberg similarly contends that "From the early Cold War on, [U.S. informational officers] began to invoke consumer abundance as an emblem of the sharp differentiation between the potential futures offered under capitalism and communism."[9]

The phenomenon of American drivers in the Soviet Union and elsewhere during the Cold War coincided with a broader cultural preoccupation with cars and driving in the United States. Part and parcel of this "love affair" with the car as a commodity *par excellence* was a corresponding tendency to use the superiority of the American automobile to help account for and reinforce the global supremacy of American democracy and capitalism. Detroit models represented nationalistic identifications of market capitalism with materialism, high living

---

[9] Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press, 1997), 35; Emily Rosenberg, "Another Mission to Moscow: Ida Rosenthal and Consumer Dreams," in *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present* ed. Choi Chatterjee Beth Holmgren. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 127-138, 128. Also see Emily Rosenberg, "Consumer Capitalism and the End of the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume III* ed. Odd Arne Westad and Melvyn P. Leffler (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 489-512. For relevant discussions of cultural politics in the Cold War, see Karal Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the '50s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front;* and Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

standards and social mobility with postwar freedom, and luxury and consumption with Cold War power. I have shown elsewhere that the car's well-documented relationship to aggregate growths in perceived standards of living in the United States was discursively leveraged against the Soviet Union as validation of American political, economic and social superiority; while Soviet citizens were unable to get their hands on cars for mere use-value, Americans were enjoying a surplus, an excess that allowed automobility to move from a purely utilitarian necessity into the realm of prestige value.[10]

Throughout the 1950s, American and Soviet government officials, political pundits and popular news outlets engaged in conversations about, and debates over, the state of automotive production in their respective societies. In both the United States and the Soviet Union, these conversations often utilized information about each other's automotive progress to make comparisons and claims to jockey for global power. Soviet analysts and officials in the 1950s were concerned with the scope and shape of American car culture, down to detailed technical specifics and gauges of manufacturing innovations: "Detroit's magic did not go unnoticed in the Soviet Union. In 1956, the "Journal of the Ministry of Automobile Production published an article…on the year's American cars. The article, replete with graphs, charts and photographs,

[10] For background on how the Cold War competition unfolded through the bodies of Soviet and American automobiles, see Nicole Rebec, "'Detroit Shows Russia How': The Landing of the 1952 Pobeda" (Graduate Seminar Paper: University of California, Irvine, 2010). For information on the automobile and automobility in the Soviet Union, see Lewis Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile.* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008); and Lewis Siegelbaum, ed., *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011). If the penultimate symbol of American power through conspicuous consumption and advanced design in the post-war years was the automobile, the growing culture of automobility in the Soviet Union, according to Siegelbaum, was provocational to both ideological and practical Soviet assumptions—rendering the dividends of what Communism advocated for and what it was able to deliver to its subjects. His focus on the development of a unique and complex culture of automobility in the Soviet Union during the post-World War II decades illuminates a process both contradictory and correlational to the "homegrown" evolution of cars and car culture in the domestic United States.

evaluated the performance of new engine designs, commented on the new elongated spark plugs, referred to new gadgets."[11] The consensus in the United States was that Soviet auto production could not compete with domestic, American manufacturing power; even more damning, the Soviet Union continually failed to meet the internal number of consumers looking to purchase new cars. In April of 1953, an article focused on the constrained nature of Russian car consumption appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* with the headline "When Russ Buy Autos, It's News:" "[S]o-few Russians have their own automobiles that it is considered news when individuals do buy them. And so Russian newspaper editors periodically devote columns of their precious propaganda space to articles on such purchases."[12]

Within this Cold War framework, both signaled by and argued through the bodies of automobiles, dwelt ideological irreconcilability and, ultimately, a belief in the incapacity for global coexistence. Americans constructed an understanding of Soviet society and the Soviet landscape through the trope of automobility; the collision of American civilians with the Soviet landscape leveraged well-entrenched beliefs in the United States about the automobile as one of the purest forms of democratic expression. If, as Cotten Seiler argues, a "republic of drivers" emerged in conjunction with a 20th century lexicon of citizenship in the United States, American drivers in the Soviet Union became literal mobilizations and representations of this modality of belonging despite being abroad. If the automobile was used as a common idiom for advancing and contesting the claim of certain crucial Cold War "truths", what did it mean to enter and travel freely in one within the confines of a totalitarian state?

---

[11] Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades,* 65-66.
[12] Frank Rounds Jr., "When Russ Buy Autos, It's News," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1953. As early as October of 1950, the *Los Angeles Times* was reporting on Soviet road travel for the sake of pleasure. See, for instance, "Reds Taking Long Vacations by Car," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1950.

Occurring in an era when the automobile functioned as a very powerful register for measuring and qualifying social progress, these narratives of automotive travel behind the Iron Curtain dwell in an uneasy relationship with much of the ideological rhetoric ensconced within and projected through the bodies of American cars during the Cold War. Like other scholars who argue for the influence of the cultural arena of commodities in understanding the Cold War, historians have positioned the car as symbol of an ongoing battle for technological advancement, living standards, and the superiority of the free market.[13] Americans toured the world by car. Using the automobile as a signifier of home despite the momentary inhabitation of foreign terrain out-of-the-way locales, these intrepid travellers also serve as a reminder of their homegrown technological prowess. Recent studies have detailed the function of automobility and automobile culture in postwar Eastern Europe.[14] A body of scholarship has emerged in the last few decades surrounding the specific case of East and West Germany where, as Paul Betts summarizes, close proximity meant "The difference between, say, a West German Mercedes and an East German Trabant has not been construed simply as alternative automobile styling but seized upon as the very expression of each country's historical destiny."[15] In *Cars for Comrades,* Lewis Siegelbaum

[13] As Donald Bush argues, "If one were to choose a unique symbol for America's economic vigor from the twenty-five years following World War II, the automobile would more than qualify. Beautiful, comfortable, and affordable, it bore witness to the abundance of our natural resources, our technological ingenuity, our manufacturing prowess, and our commitment to a democratic design ethic. Donald J. Bush, "Emotive Power" *Design Quarterly*, No. 146, "Autoeroticism" (1989), 21-31, 23.

[14] Recent car scholarship has also turned its attention to Cuba, which lays claim to an eclectic collection of mid-century American cars still widely in use today as well as post-embargo Soviet imports. See, for instance, Viviana Narotzky, "Our Cars in Havana: Riding the Survivors of the Soviet Union," *Autopia: Cars and Culture,* ed. Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr (London: Reaktion Books, 2004).

[15] Paul Betts, "The Twilight of the Idols: East German Memory and Material Culture," *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 3 (September 2000), 731-765, 739. Also see Daphne Berdahl, ""'Go, Trabi, Go!': Reflections on a Car and Its Symbolization over Time," *Anthropology and*

provides a definitive study of a uniquely Soviet car culture, one that took much of its inspiration from rejecting Western automotive influences in styling and design.[16] To my knowledge, no scholar has detailed at any length American tourism to the Soviet Union during the Cold War or, for that matter, autotourism specifically.

Loosely organized around three case studies, this chapter analyzes the presence of American autotourists in the Soviet Union from the mid 1950s to the early 1960s. The first portion uses the microhistory of Dr. Schulz's unsanctioned 1955 transgression behind the Iron Curtain to begin situating the midcentury importance of the automobile as one method of seeing and producing knowledge about the Soviet Union. Dr. Schulz's journey made headlines not merely because of his chosen destination, but because of the way in which he went about travelling through it. The second portion builds upon these ideas by presenting two different but interrelated 1957 American automotive excursions behind the Iron Curtain published in *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics,* respectively; journalists as autotourists gained access to the Soviet Union via a mode of transportation that allowed for, at least theoretically, unmediated contact with a socio-cultural and geographical landscape often thought to be inaccessible; while the thrill of adventure and the danger of the unknown or unknowable was an important component of the respective narratives, the two accounts also worked to make the Soviet Union

---

Humanism 25, no. 2 (June 2008) 1-11; and Jonathan R. Zatlin, "The Vehicle of Desire: The Trabant, the Wartburg, and the End of the GDR," *German History* 15, no. 3 (1997), 358-380.

[16] Jason Vuic chronicles the agreement between the United States and Yugoslavia to import the Yugo in an approach that merges the business needs of an American company, the State Department's interest in Yugoslavia's non-aligned communist government, the inability of Detroit to deliver an economical, subcompact car to market, and the mechanical failures that led to the Yugo's demise in the United States. Jason Vuic, *The Yugo: The Rise and Fall of the Worst Car in History* (New York Hill and Wang, 2011). Peter Hamilton offers a brief recounting of the reception of Soviet built Ladas in Great Britain and attributes much of the car's early success to the "newly consumerized ex-working classes" who purchased the car in a bid to reflect their new class status. Peter Hamilton, "The Lada: A Cultural Icon," *Autopia: Cars and Culture* Ed. Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr, (London: Reaktion Books, 2004).

and its citizenry more intelligible to average Americans. The third and final portion deals with the bumpy road two Americans encountered in 1960 after driving through the Soviet Union and being detained on charges of espionage; their highly-mobile activities behind the Iron Curtain raised broader implications about counter-intelligence in an age where tourism was a boon for both host and guest countries but also a real and/or imagined threat to internal security.

Dr. Brethold Schulz: American Dentist, International Autotourist

Dr. Schulz's desire to drive through the Soviet Union was the product of a well-documented personal interest in motoring, an interest arguably resulting from the post-war realization of decades of infrastructural planning in the United States, the cultural growth of motoring as a recreational activity it facilitated, and the presence of an advanced homegrown tourism industry many Americans were taking advantage of (often by automobile). The *New York Times* noted the convergence of these post-war historical developments when introducing Dr. Schulz to its readership:

> When travel restrictions to the Soviet Union were relaxed recently applications for visas flowed into Washington. Tourists who had exhausted a good part of the world in normal guide books and camera expeditions took aim on Moscow, Leningrad and the places 'hardly anyone else had ever seen.' The Russians prepared themselves for an increase in normal tourist activities. No one was prepared, however, for a Chicago dentist to pull up at the Finish-Soviet border. [17]

Prior to his rather impudent expedition into Russia, Dr. Schulz had accrued thousands of miles on his own personal odometer; he had previously travelled by car from London to Capetown, London to Calcutta and through South America.

His saga of driving around the world evinced the arrival of a broader historical moment when extensive car travel was not simply technologically and mechanically possible but a way to expand the figurative and literal reach of American tourism abroad. "It seems that Dr. Schulz is

[17] "Tourist on Wheels."

quite accustomed to getting around the world by automobile," one newspaper noted. His personal interest in motoring became an extreme example of a modality of exploration—at home and abroad—that more and more Americans were embracing in the post World War II decades. As a man with a history of travelling the world by car, we cannot attribute to him any premeditated desire or attempt to "open up" Soviet society through a conscious act of cultural diplomacy.[18] But we can read the contours of his journey, regardless of intent, as illustrational of the functionality of the automobile and automobility to everyday Americans during the post-war and early Cold War decades and the ways in which this mode of travel was deployed as a means of experiencing people and places outside of the United State's borders. His journey into and through the Soviet landscape evinces the very real, but often uninterrogated, presence of American tourists and pleasure-seekers in the Soviet Union during the early decades of the Cold War.

It is difficult to determine with any certainty what impact the mere act of driving in the Soviet Union had on the Soviets who encountered American drivers like Dr. Schulz; descriptions of the Soviet response to American autotourists in their midst comes from the accounts of the drivers themselves and thus must be taken with a grain of salt. The hopeful belief that Dr. Schulz performed some type of ideological and cultural "Americanness"[19] for a Soviet audience remained steadfast despite the (not unexpected) challenge of reception that plagues this type of cultural history. Whatever the contours of Soviet reception, the coverage of Dr. Schulz's journey in American newspapers depicted him as representative of decidedly American traits: ingenuity, curiosity and intrepidity. Dr. Schulz was one driver and one actor within a mobile, cold war

[18] Ibid.
[19] While in the present day the vagueness of this term seems problematic, the conception of an "American" was understood as more homogenous (white) and ideologically powerful in its starkness compared to, for instance, Sovietness.

tableau of knowledge production; through his novel and unexpected but "inevitable" 1955 trip through the Soviet Union by car, the dentist served as something of an unlikely cultural diplomat at least in the minds of Americans back home; his travel promised to not only provide information about Soviet society for American citizens, but the possibility of (ideologically) influencing the people he encountered—not simply through the presence of an American behind the Iron Curtain but through the performance of Americanness vis-à-vis automobility in a Western car. As the *Chicago Daily Tribune* announced, "He gets attention."[20]

While Dr. Schulz was the first known American civilian to motor through the Soviet Union after the war,[21] he was not the first American autotourist in the Soviet Union after World War II. That designation belongs to the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Harrison E. Salisbury. In July of 1954, Salisbury undertook an expedition through Ukraine and the Russian Black-Earth region—the "first of its kind by an American reporter for many years" despite "twenty or thirty automobile excursions by diplomats." In "A Picture Report: From Moscow Down the Volga and Back through the Ukraine," Salisbury provided visuals of his trip to Russia across the pages of the *New York Times* for everyday Americans to view on August 9th, 1954. Salisbury's trip occurred thirteen months after the Soviet Government eased travel restrictions for diplomats and foreign correspondents, allowing for travel "through considerable areas previously closed." Starting in Moscow and traveling by steamer down the Volga to Stalingrad then on to Rostov—the 1,970-mile journey took nine and a half-days—Salisbury then returned north by automobile. Traversing over one thousand miles by car, Salisbury took advantage of newly liberalized photography policies to grant American readers visual access to the Soviet geographic and socio-cultural landscape—described by Salisbury as "a panorama of cities and villages almost

[20] "A Chicagoan Drives In and Sees Moscow," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 27, 1955.
[21] "Tourist on Wheels."

unknown in the United States." During his journey, Salisbury described his encounter with some aspects of Soviet society that "evoke[d] recognition—traffic on the Volga, which he found comparable to life on the Mississippi, modern architecture and even, amid the roadside propaganda signs, some advertisements."[22]

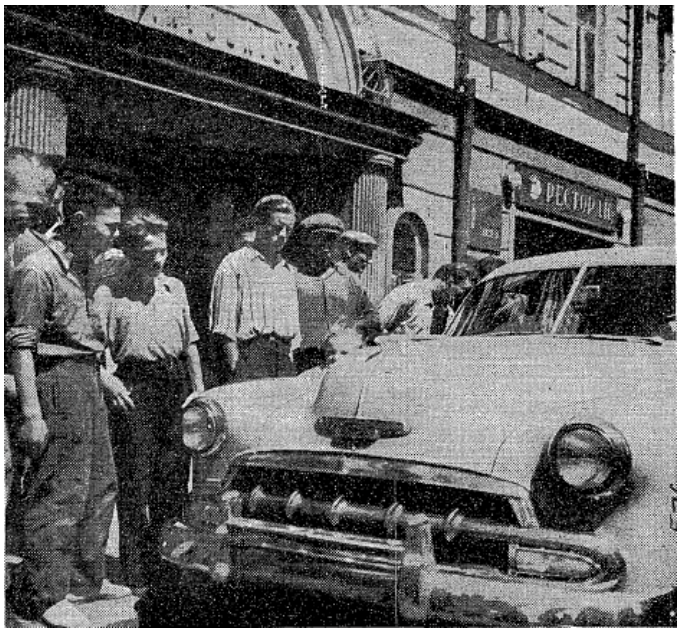


Figure 1.2: One of the many images included in Harrison Salisbury's "Picture Report" that documents the attention the journalist (and his automobile) received from Soviet citizens on his 1954 trip. The accompanying caption read, "Rare Sight for Ivan: A 1952 American car used by Moscow correspondent of The New York Times on a tour of the Ukraine attracts passerby in front of the Intourist hotel in Kharkov. The car caused a minor sensation everywhere it went." Harrison E. Salisbury, "A Picture Report: From Moscow Down the Volga and Back through the Ukraine," *New York Times*, August 9, 1954.

One year later Dr. Schulz's unsanctioned journey through the 'red' landscape by car—the first known motor tour by an American civilian—achieved a level of notoriety in the press that Salisbury's privileged designation as a journalist was unable to attain. The story of this intrepid motorist made its rounds in major American news outlets by late September and his automotive

[22] Harrison E. Salisbury, "A Picture Report: From Moscow Down the Volga and Back through the Ukraine," *New York Times*, August 9, 1954. The first regular *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow after World War II, Salisbury won the Pulitzer Prize in 1955 and was most known for his later coverage of, and early vocal opposition to, the Vietnam War and his reporting from Communist China where he witnessed the Tiananmen Square uprising. For more information on Harrison Salisbury in the Soviet Union, see Lisa Kirschenbaum. "Establishing a Cold War Epic: Harrison Salisbury and the Siege of Leningrad" in *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present,* ed. Choi Chatterjee and Beth Holmgren. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

journey became something of a cause célèbre in the United States—serving as a symbol of the exceptionalism of American four-wheeled ingenuity seasoned with a dash of Cold War daring-do. If the *New York Times* was unfazed by the "inevitability" of Dr. Schulz's automotive journey, the Soviets were described as anything but: "A private motorist was evidently the last thing the Russians had expected to see on the highway for there were no customs and immigration facilities available."[23]

Despite the *New York Times'* characterization of his trip as "inevitable," the Soviets had apparently missed the memo about an American motorist's arrival at their poorly provisioned border. Considering the extensive coverage in major stateside news outlets, a fascinated American public and press confronted Dr. Schulz's "inevitable" automotive penetration of the Iron Curtain with an equal measure of wonder. One report praised Dr. Schulz for "weather[ing] the inconveniences he encountered because of the *irregularity* of his visit" [italics mine], noted that he "seems to be made of fine, sturdy tourist material," followed with the qualification that "we hope he encounters no serious mechanical difficulty on his journey." The report then rhetorically asked, "What does one do when he gets a flat tire between Maimana and Faizabad?"[24]

During the borderside confrontation "[a]ll formalities were conducted in pantomime" and, after being cleared for entry by customs and immigration officers in a railway station in the town Viborg, Dr. Schulz spent his first evening in the Soviet Union sleeping in his car on the side of the road. After being told to move by a uniformed man "tapp[ing] on the window of his

[23] "Soviet Is Entered By U.S. Motorist."
[24] "Tourist on Wheels"; According to his 1989 obituary, "Dr. Schulz drove around the world in his lifetime, always traveling in his car, which he had shipped from one continent to another. After his retirement, he and his late wife, Helen Jerene, took a five-year, around-the-globe driving vacation in a motor home." "Dr. Brethold Schulz, Noted World Traveler."

car," he drove until he found a railway station to park the car. The lot was patrolled throughout the night by two policemen who arrived by motorcycle and side car[25] and Dr. Schulz wasn't sure if "they were watching him or protecting him."[26] He spent the next day sight-seeing in Leningrad then motored his way to Moscow—sleeping in his car for the "third successive night…right in the middle of Moscow" after unsuccessfully looking for the United States embassy. Finding it the next day, Dr. Schulz was put up at the National hotel.[27] The *New York Times* reported that Dr. Schulz's original intent was to drive through the Soviet Union and when done exit the territory by way of Kabul, Afghanistan. But things were not that simple. Dr. Schulz's trip skidded to a halt after "tr[ying] to persuade officials to let him buy gas for his vehicle and go on a tour." In Moscow, officials from Intourist, the Soviet state-run tourist organization, told him he could travel anywhere in the country by train or plane, but he could not continue his journey by car except to retrace his route and exit the way he had entered.[28]

Aside from the details related to his automobile or the act of driving recounted above, reports of his automotive trespass offer little (if any) insight into what Dr. Schulz actually saw during his time in the country as an (auto)tourist. Instead the reports chose to focus on the incredulity of his method of entry and travel. While the fact he was a dentist added an interesting twist to the story, the unsanctioned nature of his movement—and the fact that the Soviets let him in—undoubtedly added to the fascination surrounding his trip. In the eyes of stateside news outlets and the minds of American readers Dr. Schulz's journey down a deserted highway and through a Soviet border crossing displayed the intractability of American curiosity.

---

[25] "A Chicagoan Drives In and Sees Moscow."
[26] "Soviet is entered by U.S. Motorist."
[27] "A Chicagoan Drives in and Sees Moscow."
[28] "Russia Stops Auto Tour of a Chicagoan," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 9, 1955. Shulz described how "there had apparently been a misunderstanding in letting me into the country." He has planned to exit through Afghanistan upon concluding his travels. "Tourist on Wheels."

Equipped with a machine capable of carrying him to the limits of the free world and beyond, Dr. Schulz not only breached the reputedly ideologically and materially impenetrable walls of the Soviet Union—he "caught them with their curtain down"; his *performance* as an American actor driving in the Soviet Union raised, at least momentarily, the American tally in a proverbial game of symbolic Cold War one-upmanship. According to his 1989 obituary, when Soviet officials informed him that he "couldn't just drive all over Russia," he responded, "I told them "I'm not driving all over Russia, just going to Lenin's old home." That seemed to stop them." In his description of Soviet officials attempting to set limits on his freedom of automotive movement in a foreign "totalitarian" state, Dr. Schulz "stop[ped] them" and motored on his merry way to Moscow.[29]

Dr. Schulz drove behind the Iron Curtain during a period when America's love affair with the automobile was at a cultural apex and the United States had very little love to spare in its relationship with the Soviet Union; Cotten Sieler has argued that during the 20th century the act or performance of driving became, in and of itself, a critical mode of constituting, understanding, and reinforcing concepts of citizenship and subjectivity in the United States.[30] In considering how access to automobility (or lack thereof) functioned in America as a way to both claim and exercise national belonging, Dr. Schulz's novel—and, yes, not fully realized—1955 road trip in the Soviet Union can be read as a multi-layered representation of belonging and non-belonging, of a purely democratic expression of Americanness in a foreign, restrictive authoritarian regime, of autonomy of movement enacted in a landscape continually depicted in the United States during this period as having no place for this (let alone any) kind of freedom. By driving into something that is supposed to be off limits or *inaccessible* by automobile and to

[29] "Dr. Brethold Schulz, Noted World Traveler."
[30] Cotten Seiler*, Republic of Drivers* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

automobiles, Dr. Schulz used his Western station wagon to temporarily lay unapologetic claim to a space he did not belong in just like he'd done when crossing the border into the Soviet Union. Dr. Schulz claimed that once he was in Red Square he "drove in a big circle, right up to the tombs of Lenin and Stalin" and was eventually detained by police.[31] Despite being "inevitable", there are multitude of reasons why Dr. Schulz and his Western station wagon did not belong in the Soviet Union; trespassing into both the country and its iconic red square by car in an individual act of flagrant daring, Dr. Schulz performed a type of collective belonging in the United States and affirmed his Americanness through the act of driving abroad in the Soviet Union.

On October 15th, weeks after his September 23rd entry, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported Dr. Schulz was preparing to leave the country; as quickly as he burst onto the Soviet borders—and into national headlines—for an "inevitable" but sensational journey, Dr. Schulz slipped from the historical news records until his death in December of 1989 after which, unsurprisingly, his Cold War trespass was the highlight of his obituary.[32] The last mid-century newspaper report to feature Dr. Schulz's journey was a November 1955 *New York Times* article entitled "Touring Russia: A guide for those planning to try freer travel in the Soviet Union." Pointing to Dr. Schulz's foray by auto into the Soviet Union, reporter Harry Schwartz provided information on the finer points of travel—by car or otherwise—in the Soviet Union. Describing the US State Department's 1955 announcement that it had removed passport bans for visits to

[31] "Dr. Brethold Schulz, Noted World Traveler." This story of driving in Red Square that appeared in Dr. Schulz's obituary is quite a bit different from reports published at the time of his trip that tamely describe him sleeping in his car, locating the American embassy in Moscow and being put up in a hotel.

[32] Ibid. Dr. Schulz served in the Army between 1942-1946, was a longtime resident and practitioner in Chicago before his retirement and move to California; he died in Loma Linda, California in December of 1989.

Russia and its Eastern European satellites, the article also noted that "For the first time in almost twenty years, the Soviet Union opened its doors to tourists this year. An American dentist from Chicago was even allowed to drive his jeep from Helsinki to Moscow….You, too, may soon be able to go behind the Iron Curtain" Although the *New York Times* noted that "may" was the key word in, this prediction would soon ring true.[33]

In later years American autotourists provided detailed information, information not just about the experience of driving in the Soviet Union but information about the country and its people as culled from the perspective of a motorist. Their travels by car became the mode through which the landscape and its inhabitants were consumed and the car, as focal point, tinges every aspect of this encounter. In other words, American autotourists in the Soviet Union constructed and propagated an understanding of Soviet society and the Soviet landscape through the trope of automobility. Thus, despite a dearth of recoverable information about Dr. Schulz's activities, his journey served as an eventual precursor to later automotive journeys through the Soviet Union by Americans. In setting the wheels in motion, others soon followed in his seemingly unfathomable tread.

Harry Walton and David Scott: Mobile Knowledge Producers

In 1957, both *Popular Mechanics* and *Popular Science* sent correspondents across the globe with the specific task of touring Russia by car. In December 1957 and January 1958, *Popular Mechanics* published the two-part special "I Drove Thru Russia" on the experiences of Michael Scott and an unnamed companion who traveled through the Soviet Union in a G.M. built Vauxhall Victor. In February 1958, *Popular Science* dedicated its cover-story, "Uncensored: Inside Russia by Car," to the road trip of Harry Walton and Michael Dennis

[33] Harry Schwartz, "Touring Russia: A Guide for Those Planning to Try Freer Travel in the Soviet Union," *New York Times*, November 13, 1955.

O'Connor in a 1957 Rambler station wagon. Billed on the cover-page as a "firsthand report by a *Popular Science* editor in a US station wagon" that included "15 new color photos," Walton told readers his assignment was to drive 3,5000 miles through Russia and "report on how it differed from, say, a transcontinental U.S. trip."[34]

Making the literal and figurative Soviet landscape intelligible was to be accomplished through juxtaposing the experience to driving across the United States; the automobile and automobility were positioned as windows through which Americans could better understand Soviet society and vice versa. By documenting their experiences on Soviet roads and as tourists more broadly, detailing the state of Soviet automobility and automobile infrastructure and describing the reception of Western cars and American car drivers in the Soviet Union, the car as a mode of travel (and a way of knowing) was deployed as a register for making the strange seem, if not more familiar, at least more knowable.

[34] David Scott, "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," *Popular Mechanics,* December 1957, 81- 85, 244-246; David Scott, "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," *Popular Mechanics*, January 1958, 116-121, 268-270; Harry Walton, "Inside Russia by Car," *Popular Science,* February 1958, 90-104, 234. Exact data on the extent and nature of the circulation of these two magazines at the time of these articles' publication is difficult to come by, but approximate information on circulation figures can be gleaned from later figures published by both *Popular Mechanics* and *Popular Science* under new regulations requiring the statement of information on ownership, management and circulation regardless of publishing frequency (eg. daily, weekly, or monthly). In December of 1960, *Popular Mechanics* reported a monthly circulation figure of 1,365,166 for the preceding 12-month period (*Popular Mechanics* , December 1960), 38. In January of 1960, the editorial team of *Popular Mechanics* reported a monthly circulation figure at 1.5 million for the American edition of the magazine and an additional 500,000 from eight foreign editions, (*Popular Mechanics*, January 1960), 6. In December of 1961, *Popular Science* reported an average monthly circulation figure of 1,268,727 in the preceding 12-month period "sold or distributed, through mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers"; this figure did not include sample copies distributed free of charge. (*Popular Science*, December 1961), 195.

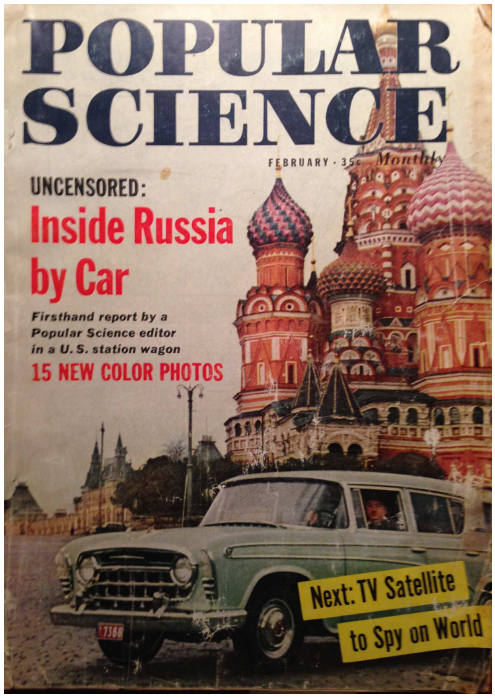


Figure 1.3: The cover story of the February 1958 edition of *Popular Science* featuring Harry Walton sitting in the driver's seat of a 1957 Rambler parked in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow. The front page reads, "Uncensored: Inside Russia by Car—Firsthand report by a Popular Science editor in a U.S. station wagon—15 new color photos." Harry Walton, "Uncensored: Inside Russia by Car," *Popular Science,* February 1958, 90-104, 234, cover page.

Aided by a form of travel that facilitated extensive access to "unimagined" and previously "unknown" areas, these journeys by car differed greatly from travel by plane, train or ship and their attendant limitations: fixed itineraries, dependence upon mass transportation, one-destination stops. With several thousand American tourists visiting the Soviet Union "this season alone," in October of 1958 Fred Warner Neal described the basic tourism process once Americans arrived in the Soviet Union: "The tourist must select one of several fixed tours and pay for it before he gets a visa. In return, Intourist, the official Soviet tourist agency, provides the traveler with a guide, a car when needed, internal rail or air transportation, hotel accommodations and four meals a day. Except that he must visit only cities provided for in his tour plan, the tourist is quite free to go about by himself."[35] In contrast to the delimitations of a formally booked trip, entry by car lent the promise of, to a certain extent, unfettered movement.

[35] Fred Warner Neal, "U.S. Tourists in the Soviet Union," *Los Angeles Times* October 2, 1958. Neal went on to report that "[w]hat most of these tourists get out of their Soviet travels is open to question, but one thing is certain: the Soviet Union gets lots of dollars. Being a tourist in the

The autonomy of travel facilitated by the automobile meant that their journeys across Russia's highways, city streets and rutted roads would, in the words of Walton, "take [them] east to Moscow and south to the Black Sea—to such little known cities as Kursk, Kharkov, [and] Zaporozhe through (at least the promise) of unmitigated access to, and uncensored reportage about, previously unknown spaces and places veiled to American eyes by the Iron Curtain."[36] The appeal of driving through Soviet Russia hinged upon not only the autonomy of movement provided by the automobile, as explored in other chapters, but also the contradictory sense of free travel in a totalitarian state this wheeled medium provided. Despite their tourist visas and sanctioned presence in the Soviet Union, accounts of driving behind the Iron Curtain leveraged official and popular discourses of an ideological battle between democracy and totalitarianism fraught with intrigue, espionage and secrecy; positioned as a daring adventure into the unknown, driving through the Soviet Union provided an unimpeded way to catalogue and reveal information about the state of Soviet society "closed off" to the American public.

Transparency and the open flow of information became synonymous with free-world endeavors during the Cold War and Walton billed his journey through this lexicon of opening up, describing himself as the "first American journalist to drive a U.S. car through the interior of the Soviet Union."[37] This sense of freedom was always described in a manner which implied this autonomy was afforded only to the American tourist—not just because the average Soviet citizen could not afford a passenger vehicle, and thus by default had no freedom of movement, but also because tourists were depicted as receiving special treatment: "Tourists are privileged

---

Soviet Union is expensive, to the tune of $30 a day, exclusive of transportation, itself no mean item."

[36] "Inside Russia by Car," 91.

[37] "Inside Russia By Car," 91.

characters."[38] And if American's could drive at their leisure with only an Intourist (The official Soviet tourism organization) interpreter riding along in the back seat and a "small route plan with instruction printed in English,"[39] the ease of actual entrance into the Soviet Union was even more astounding for these American drivers.

Both Walton's and Scott's accounts begin with the thrill of arrival and the realization that entry into "another world," a world thought to be cut off from or inaccessible to inhabitants of the West, is imminent. As Harry Walton told readers of *Popular Science*, "not another car was in sight as I pulled up at the loneliest border post I had ever seen. This was the beginning of an adventure into another world."[40] As Walton and his companion, Dennis Michael O'Connor, "rolled onto the iron-railed bridge that spans the Bug River between Poland and the USSR" a Soviet soldier armed with a riffle stopped the car. Walton tried speaking German to him and then offered the guard a cigarette, which was refused. A "sudden gust of wind blew [Walton's] hat off and instinctively [he] started after it. But [he] was not to enter the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics so informally. "Nyet!" barked the guard, and sprinted after the hat himself." A while later a car approached and a "hawk faced young Russian officer" checked the Americans' passports.

After this brief border-side formality, Walton and O'Connor followed the officer in their by car to the Russian city of Brest-Litovsk where they met their Intourist guide and interpreter for the journey, Valentine Salin. After getting an oil-change and some air for their tires at a nearby service station, "[they] set formally off beyond the Iron Curtain. In the back seat was Calin—our guide, interpreter and (perhaps) private eye. I had an eerie *what-am-I-doing-here?*

---

[38] Ibid., 93.
[39] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 83.
[40] "Inside Russia by Car," 91.

feeling." Thus began their journey through Russia by car in a 1957 Rambler station wagon a beginning marked more by the endpoint of the known and the thrill of trespassing (however officially) into the forbidden and undertaking "an adventure into another world."[41]

David Scott's 1958 trip by car through Russia for *Popular Mechanics* began in much the same manner—entering at the same point at the Polish-Russian border as Walton and manned by a similarly armed Soviet guard: Upon "roll[ing] slowly over the bridge spanning the Bug River—1200 miles and 12 frontier posts from London….A Russian sentry [greeted us] at the barrier, his carbine shoulder-slung under a raincoat, [and] eyed the GM-built Vauxhall Victor." Shortly thereafter, an ambulance arrived carrying an Intourist assigned interpreter who, climbing into the back seat, directed them to follow the ambulance.[42] Scott was "taken aback by [the] informal penetration of the last iron curtain of all" while Walton, whose anecdote of trying to run after his wayward, border-crossing hat, provided a humorous tone to offset the seriousness of an American's encounter with Soviet border security. Like Dr. Schulz before them, the thrill of trespass into the unknown was contradicted by the ease of entry into the supposedly impenetrable, secretive state.

According to Scott, there were no customs inspections and, upon entry, their carnet, an international travel document that allowed for the temporary importation of cars duty-free, was waved aside. All they had to do was "sign a declaration that we carried no opium, hashish or live ammunition!" and complete a form guaranteeing the removal of the car from the country when they left. Passports were stamped. Gas was bought for fifty cents a gallon with special coupons provided to tourists. Lunch was eaten. And Vladimir, the 22 year old guide and interpreter assigned to Scott for the duration of their trip, said, "Let's go." As easy as that the American

[41] "Inside Russia by Car," 91
[42] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 81.

journalists were "off on [their] motor trip to Moscow."[43] If, after a similarly easy entry, Dr. Schulz ran into a bureaucratic brick wall blocking access to the roads he hoped to traverse during his 1955 attempt, Russia's broad highways stretched endlessly on for Walton and Scott during their respective trips and their tires ate up miles of Red landscape.

Figure 1.4: A photograph captured by David Scott of the checkpoint at the western terminus of the German autobahn (and the "free" world) encountered by the author (replete with an American flag at the border). Hinting at the seeming innocuous appearance of the border, the caption reads, "This is the Iron Curtain. Gate on German autobahn serves as checkpoint into Communist territory." David Scott, "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," *Popular Mechanics,* December 1957, 81- 85, 244-246, 81.

Despite the disconnect between the reality of entry by car and the prevailing fantasy of a closed Soviet state, these stories of automotive penetration and exploration countered, at least symbolically, the mid-century American obsession with "escapology narratives." Stories of penetration coincided with the development of, as Susan Carruthers' work *Cold War Captives* explores, "a new cold war type: the eastern bloc "escapee"" or the Soviet defector. Leveraging similar tropes of espionage, daring, and adventure, automotive travel behind the Iron Curtain echoed but inverted the broader allure of pervasive tales of defection and escape. While Americans entering the Soviet Union reversed the plot line of the escapology stories Carruthers

[43] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 82-83.

presents, the "adventure story dimension" of popular escapology narratives was echoed by these accounts of automotive penetration: the dread of imagining oneself captive offset by the exhilaration of 'outwitting the Reds.'"[44]

While Dr. Schulz's unannounced arrival in 1955 had caught Soviet border officials "with their curtain down," the more demure entries of Walton and Scott exhibited a sanctioned—but no less noteworthy—adventure of their own; being armed with appropriate documentation and the blessing of the Soviet state did not mitigate the thrill and danger associated with being an American behind the Iron Curtain. Even more importantly, their decision to travel by car—an undertaking fraught with very real hazards in the United States (let alone Soviet Russia!) before late 20th century engineering advances in safety and mechanical reliability—added another layer of risk and reward to their Cold War exploits. If, as Carruthers writes, "defection was a zero-sum game in which Moscow's infuriating losses would directly profit Washington,"[45] then tales of Americans penetrating the Iron Curtain by automobile inverted and complemented the widely-circulating trope of Soviet defection.

After exceeding the much-mythologized border of an "impenetrable" Iron Curtain, American autotourists in the Soviet Union took pains to record their first-hand impressions of Soviet society. In February of 1958, Harry Walton told readers of *Popular Science* that "The scenic vistas [of Soviet Russia] rival the beauty encountered during continental road trips across the United States." Scott echoed Walton's impression: "Driving through this vastness, so like the American great plains, we saw many places where grain spread out across half the width of the

---

[44] Susan L. Carruthers, *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape and Brainwashing* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 59, 85. Of particular interest is her chapter entitled "Bloc-Busters: The Politics and Pageantry of Escape from the East."
[45] Ibid., 65.

road to dry in the sun."[46] Walton and Scott tried to articulate the experience of encountering a foreign (Soviet) landscape through the American landscape as reference point; in making sense of what they encountered while behind the Iron Curtain, Walton and Scott leveraged the automobile as a recognizable mode of seeing or encountering people and places that many Americans were already familiar with: "[T]he vision of wide-open spaces came to life as we sped eastward."[47]

At the beginning of his narrative, Walton described how he began the journey with "standard preconceptions" about subpar roads, "hostile natives" and the belief that if anything broke on the car that "couldn't be fixed by a tractor mechanic" he would be plum out of luck. Many of his preconceptions turned out to be false: "The Russians I met were not hostile, the roads and mechanics were first-rate. [And] [i]n several cities I met friendly, curious, wide-awake students (including some who regularly read *[Popular Science]* in the technical library)." What Walton did find "Beyond, down the empty road that lay ahead" was a country "of broad highways and tiny hamlets, of grim national police and obsequious service, of women laborers and pretentious hotels."[48]

Part of their commitment to a road narrative, Walton's and Scott's respective travelogues dedicated significant space to a cataloguing of basic tourist amenities—or, rather, lack thereof. O'Connor, Walton's clever American compatriot on the journey, dubbed one resort hotel on the road from Moscow to Simferopol as "the Last Resort" upon taking a look at the plumbing.[49] Rooms "boast[ing] more old fashion luxury, with lace curtains, furniture upholstered in rich silk brocade, a marbled desk and a huge rubber plant" are described as being "in strange contrast" to

[46] "Inside Russia by Car," 104; "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 244-245.
[47] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 83.
[48] "Inside Russia by Car," 92.
[49] Ibid., 104.

exposed plumbing, cold water, stopperless sinks and mirrorless bathrooms; they also serve to illustrate the "many paradoxes of Soviet life" encountered by the autotourists in a "country that has tried to telescope into 40 years what advanced western nations have taken over 100 to accomplish." While accommodations and meals were booked and paid for in advance through Intourist, additional expenses were "paid for in cash, but at a special tourist rate of exchange that gave us a ruble for 10 cents instead of the usual 25 cents. With that we could buy a bottle of beer for 35 cents and cigarettes at 10 cents a pack."[50] The amenities and quality of construction at many tourist hotels left much to be desired (despite being newly built and Walton's fear of gaudy Eastern aesthetics). Tales of rest stops and luxury resorts describe six-year-old hotels fitted with "deplorable" plumbing and rooms already "shedding plaster."[51]

Both Walton and Scott described in great detail their experiences as drivers on Russian roads and highways. Their narratives reflect a broader investment in using the automobile and automobility to compare American and Soviet societies. For Walton and Scott, automobility became a way in which to communicate and make meaningful their experiences for an American readership. Whether or not the Soviets embraced ideas about the laws of driving or the spirit of driving that were similar to widely-held beliefs about driving in the United States, driving became a language for communicating to their American audience ideas about the Soviet Union and Soviet life more broadly. "When it comes to moving violations," Walton wrote, "the legal system is a clear aberration of American values needing no editorial comment." But comment he did: "The militiaman is cop, judge, court clerk all in one, for in the USSR, traffic court is held

[50] ""I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 85.
[51] "Inside Russia by Car," 104 Walton also reported that "tourists stay in designated tourist hotels"—a practice which viewed as serving, on the one hand, to keep American tourists (and the perceived danger of their ideological influence) separate from Soviet citizens and, on the other, to ensure basic touristic standards were met.

right on the road. Drivers who violate a traffic law pay their fine on the spot. The officer gives the offender a receipt and punches his driving license." As if this despotic approach to moving violations weren't shocking enough, Scott's guide informed them that motorists in Moscow "can be fined for driving a dirty car" and it is illegal to honk your horn or "drop a cigarette butt in the street." [52]

Service stations for maintenance and repair were described as being few and far between and "gas is where you [can] find it in the Soviet Union." [53] While in Minsk, Scott engaged in a two-hour search for a gas pump that worked and stocked the high-test fuel required for Western cars, "bounc[ing] over bone-rattling cobbles in a road booby-trapped with flooded potholes, with manhole covers sticking two inches about the surface" during the search.[54] Rush hour traffic in Moscow "flows at quite an alarming pace on the city's broad boulevards (I clocked taxis at 55 m.p.h.)," pedestrians enact death-defying maneuvers simply to cross a street—"driving is a battle of wits between motorists and pedestrians, who pay no heed to lights."[55] Scott similarly describes driving in Moscow is a "running battle between cars and pedestrians….Experiencing this continuous war of man vs. machine, we recalled the laconic advice of the English-language guide to motorists in the U.S.S.R.: 'When necessary, the car should be stopped in time to avoid an accident.'"[56]

Highways and signage ranged from very good to poor and, even on the best, most travelled highways, slow-moving trucks and horse-powered carts wreak havoc when pitted against the powerful engines of Western cars. The accounts detail the hazards of driving across

---

[52] "Inside Russia by Car," 102; "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," 117.
[53] "Inside Russia by Car," 104. Western cars at the time required 74-octane gasoline, a grade only available at certain service stations.
[54] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 244.
[55] "Inside Russia by Car," 101.
[56] "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," 117.

what, for all intents and purposes, the journalists see as a pre-industrial obstacle course peppered with horse powered wagons and antique trucks lumbering slowly down the roadway much slower than the maximum speed the purring engines of their Western cars are capable of putting out. What appeared at first as a motorist's dream,

> sparse traffic [soon] became a real hazard. The first hazy form caught in our headlights suddenly became an unlit wagon, and the scream of our tires woke the peasant asleep at the reins. After this near escape we cut the speed to about 45 and flicked on the piercing spotlight. The wisdom of this precaution was demonstrated a few minutes later when we eased passed several logs lying in the road. Beyond them were splintered wooden boards, and finally a dead horse—but no trace of the vehicle that had apparently plowed into the cart.[57]

Road conditions differ as widely as the roads and the individuals giving the report. While the road east to Moscow is "superb" with more than enough room for "four cars abreast," hidden dangers emerge at high speeds with pedestrians, wagons and livestock traveling down the same road.[58] While one report comments on clear and plentiful directional road signs and the fact that "concrete guard posts, drainage ditches, guard rails and warning signs are substantial and well kept," another claims reflexes must be sharp to avoid wrecking or missing turnoffs and transitions as "the few reflecting signs were aimed at the wrong angle to catch oncoming lights."[59] The inadequate state of road signage was, of course, exacerbated by the journalists' inability to make sense of "occasional signs in the [sic] *strange* Russian letters" (emphasis mine).[60]

In addition to the challenges faced while driving in a country with no readily discernible infrastructure or, as in Moscow, an overburdened and poorly controlled one, the autotourists detailed a particular culture of automobility in the Soviet Union. American readers are told that

---

[57] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 84.
[58] "Inside Russia by Car," 99-100.
[59] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 84.
[60] "Ibid., 83.

"Russian drivers are different." In addition to being "less competitive," they were described as being "notably helpful" when encountering a distressed motorist on the side of the road: "if you run out of gas, you put an empty jerry can on the car roof—it will stop the first truck that goes by." Venturing the hypothesis that because Soviets motorists "seem[ed] rather fatalistic about breakdowns," Walton noted that they embraced a code of helping others on the highway more readily than their American counterparts who maintained a more individualistic relationship with the road and road travel. Walton described Soviet motorists as "conscientious" but couldn't resist detailing other, more humorously stereotypical particularities of Soviet road culture; motorists in the Soviet Union indicate left turns by "opening the left-hand door wide" and sometimes "sticking their heads out." The wish to pass slower-moving traffic was indicated by honking "since outside mirrors apparently haven't yet been invented in the Soviet Union."

Descriptions of the Soviet reception of Western cars echoed claims to automotive superiority circulating in the United States—claims that were used to make broader arguments about the dominance of American economic, political and social systems. Greater than the cultural influence of Western tourists behind the Iron Curtain could possibly impart to the Soviet people was the impact of Western autotourists who showcased Western cars: "Shy tourists should stay home, for any foreigner in the USSR is conspicuous, and one in a foreign car is triply so. Our station wagon galvanized Russians into attention everywhere. Women stooping at work fields would straighten up to stare. School children plodding home at dusk from double sessions cried out in amazement. Whenever we pulled up on the road, people appeared from nowhere."[61] Wherever Scott went "people were interested in his car." Russian highways were dominated by

[61] "Inside Russia by Car," 100. Walton went on to provide an anecdote that crystallized Soviet enthusiasm for their Western car where "[a]s we passed a road repair crew, a young woman bellowed enthusiastically at us. I asked what she had said. O'Connor translated: 'I What a car!,'" 104.

four-ton trucks and long-distance coaches with "few passenger cars [] seen"—an observation that echoed his belief that consumer goods in the Soviet Union were "generally shoddy, expensive and scarce." When Soviets surrounded the car for a closer look, "Their questions were always the same. 'Americanski?' eyeing the Victor's panoramic windshield and tailfins" even though the car was actually made in England.[62] While Western cars were a source of fascination for Soviet citizens, "To Russian officials, the Rambler was evidently a course of embarrassment. We were repeatedly asked to park it out of sight behind locked gates. In Kursk, a militiaman appealed to a large crowd: 'Comrades, don't just stand here looking at this car. You have work to do. And you children, you should be going to school. Move on.' Nobody budged—it was the militiaman who rather sadly moved one."[63]

Figure 1.5: One of many images captured by both Walton and Scott, respectively, conveying the Soviet fascination with the Western cars used during their motor trip through the Soviet Union. This particular image was captured during Scott's trip and the accompanying caption reads, "Everywhere Scott went, people were interested in his car. Here bus drivers and kids peer under the hood." David Scott, "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," *Popular Mechanics,* December 1957, 81- 85, 244-246, 83.

[62] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 246.
[63] "Inside Russia by Car," 104.

Walton and O'Connor were often nervous when the car needed service and had to be taken to a Soviet mechanic—afraid something would be done wrong or a part misplaced. His micro-managing was unnecessary although the Soviet approach to solving an automotive problem was often remarkably different. When a Soviet man asked if they were going to start the engine before putting new oil, O'Connor "told him *we* didn't do it that way" (Walton's emphasis). Despite the occasional technological lapse where, for instance, "the hose fitting split while adding air to the tires and the mechanics scrambled around to join it, finally in desperation held it together by hand," most repairs went smoothly—much to the surprise of the American motorists.[64] The knowledge and the roadside improvisational skills of Soviet mechanics and citizens greatly impressed both Walton and Scott. Nameless "roughly dressed" men were always helpful and willing to assist if the car needed air in its tires and other easy fixes as well as more demanding work like making a new gasket for a gas can. Two old women washed the wagon until it was sparking and when the car needed more antifreeze, instead of having an antifreeze hydrometer, they "taste[d] the stuff in the radiator instead. Savoring the coolant, they said it hadn't much antifreeze."[65] Even the mechanical ingenuity of the Soviets was not immune to mockery.

Given the nature of the specialized publications and their readerships, extensive word-length was dedicated to the novelty of a road trip through Russia. And yet the reporters also stated their desire to provide information about the state of Soviet society for their readership. The reports, however, end up revealing very little about the people or their society beyond stereotypes: "In Yalta as in every other city our American station wagon was a magnet for

[64] "Inside Russia by Car," 100.
[65] Ibid., 102.

crowds."[66] Aside from describing encounters with a person or persons providing some kind of service, the continual presence of "crowds" and "groups" dominate the authors' representations of Soviet people. The most notable and detailed moment of contact with an actual *individual* was literally by car when, while driving through the Soviet satellite of Poland, Scott hit a woman on a bicycle who cut in front of him just as he was preparing to pass her: "Braking furiously and swinging far to the left in a flanking movement, I hit her. She rolled over the hood, snapped the radio antenna, smashed the windshield and bounced forward in a series of somersaults on the road. By some miracle she was not killed-not even any bones broken." Surprisingly enough, this short little anecdote and a photo of the woman (perhaps to assure American readers she had not been killed by a wayward automotive journalist) was all the mention made. Instead, we learn of her only because she is responsible for the damage to the car that gives Scott the "unique chance" at a factory to "sample personally the Russians' technique proficiency and seal" while acquiring replacement parts. The Polish woman comes across a collateral damage in a country of plurals "where travelers to Russia must reckon with peasants asleep at the reins of horse-drawn carts, small children teetering about on man-sized bicycles, animals grazing along the roadway and other hazards."[67]

Figure 2.6: The Polish woman David Scott hit, shown none the worse for wear, in an image captured shortly after the incident. The accompanying caption read, "In a near-disaster in Poland, woman cyclist shown at right was struck by author's car, shattering windshield. David Scott, "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," *Popular Mechanics*, January 1958, 118

[66] Ibid., 90

[67] "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," 120

Although Walton told readers that many of his preconceptions would prove to be faulty, he was not immune to the cultural stereotypes ingrained in American understandings of the Soviet Union during the early years of the Cold War. At one point, Walton, feeling particularly tongue in cheek, told readers about "[running] across evidence of private enterprise: women and children selling melons along the highway."[68] Both Walton and Scott variously referred to Soviet citizens as "peasants" and inevitably exhibited clear instances of perceived American and capitalist superiority—automotive or otherwise. Soviet citizens ultimately emerge as a series of cardboard cutouts or caricatures: the rough peasant, the woman doing man's work, the children (even girls in pigtails!) inundated with science, the indistinguishable groups of Soviets awed by western cars. As Nigel Gould Davies points out,

> In a review of Soviet-American relations, the representative of the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (SSOD) to the United States described efforts to make use of the growing numbers of tourists to the Soviet Union to "strengthen our propagandistic activity in the U.S.A." But, he added, "among the many Americans who now strive to form contacts with the USSR, a significant section is not yet ready for a correct perception and understanding of the slogans of friendship and cooperation. Many Americans…still set as their goal only the receiving of reliable information about the Soviet reality, with which to form their own opinion about the Soviet Union and determine their own position in relation to it…[69]

Lending credence to these fears, Walton and Scott aimed to reveal the "real" contours of life in the Soviet Union for their American readers but, ultimately, propagated American fantasies and dominant American understandings of the Soviet Union ushered in by the Second Red Scare, McCarthyism and the Cold War more broadly with more fodder.

In 1968, a decade after the publication of Walton and Scott's respective accounts, the *Los Angeles Times* ran article on tourism to Russia that chided the Soviet Union for "creat[ing] the illusion (which could be turned into a reality) of much greater contact with the ordinary life of

[68] "Inside Russia By Car," 104.
[69] Nigel Gould Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," 209.

the country." The importance of this critique is two-fold. On the one hand, American autotourists a decade earlier possessed the autonomy of movement (and unmitigated access) to "encounter" the people of the Soviet Union and report back to the American public; while the road, the car, and the experience of driving took unarguable primacy in these accounts, face to face moments of "contact with the ordinary life of the country" clearly occurred. Less an outgrowth of the magazines in which the accounts were published, I would argue, the failure to describe the "ordinary life of the country" arose from the fact that no country, let alone one that was the result of an imperialist enterprise, is monolithic and therefore remains "uncontactable" or "unrepresentable."[70] The *Los Angeles Times'* mid-20th century chastisement of the Soviet Union for "staging" the touristic experience and presenting a "false reality" for tourists to consume mistakenly overlooked the fact that, as recent scholarship on tourism and tourism studies have shown, this process is necessary to the logic of tourism itself—the "staging" and "performance" underwrites both the birth of the tourist industry and its capacity to continue to exist. As Walton noted, "formal sightseeing was encouraged always" and both Walton and Scott variously spent time visiting Soviet automotive manufacturing plants, technical, agricultural, industrial and scientific museums and exhibits.[71]

Thus, in the search for a decisive representative of a mythic "Sovietness," Walton and Scott could not have delivered. Perhaps their greatest contribution is exactly the fact that their

---

[70] Adrienne K. Cohen, "Russ Blinkers on Foreign Tourists," *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1968.
[71] "Inside Russia by Car," 93; In addition to the Muskovich and ZIL automobile factories, David Scott visited Moscow's Polytechnical Museum which was "filled with 20,000 examples of working models of modern machinery and equipment." When he arrived, the exhibit was "filled with conducted groups of school children, and it was an eye opener to see 10-year-old girls in pigtails intently studying a steel-rolling mill or complicated machine tools." "I had another glimpse of this scientific fervor when I visited the offices of Tekhnika Molodehi (Technology for the Young). Backed by state funds, this monthly has a half-million circulation—limited only by paper supplies," "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," 268.

narratives focus so much on the literal landscape and the state of Soviet automotive infrastructure—a concrete, sprawling edifice as "real" as the idea of "ordinary life" in the Soviet Union is *imaginary*. Despite the inevitable shortcomings of their midcentury adventure narratives, at the very least Walton and Scott tapped into, described, and made recognizable to American readers the Soviet counterpart to their own widespread and ever-growing automotive infrastructure in the United States. More illuminating than the particularities of culture was the dominating presence of broad, lengthy swathes of red roads and the American drivers brave enough to travel along them—a method of traversing the Soviet Union but never fully coming into contact that unfolded across the pages of *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics* in 1957 and 1958. Intentionally leveraging the trope of automobility, the audacious journalists challenged ideological and material borders, created a register through which to draw comparisons, and counter-intuitively established common ground with America's psychological boogeyman: "Looking at the rolling wheat lands, you could imagine yourself in the American Dakotas, until you ran across a knot of long-skirted, quilt-coated farm workers waiting for a bus or holding out a hand, palm up—a startling gesture that turned out to be the Soviet version of the hitch-hiker's thumb."[72]

Mark Kaminsky and Harvey Bennett: Bona Fide Autotourists or Driven CIA Operatives?

While by the mid- to late-1950s McCarthyism's grip on the American political and social landscape had begun to wane, the fears fostered by the Second Red Scare maintained a powerful discursive presence in American cultural representations of the Soviet threat. The first decade of the Cold War drew, according to Katherine Sibley, a "compelling picture of US vulnerability."[73]

[72] "Inside Russia by Car," 104.
[73] Katherine A.S. Sibley, *Red Spies in America: Stolen Secrets and the Dawn of the Cold War* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 7. The issue of espionage has been

Global and domestic developments infected American institutions and its citizens with a "broadly dispersed anxiety" about compromised national security, the dangers of internal communist ideological influences, and the possibility of Soviet infiltration and espionage. A cultural preoccupation with these conventions of defection, espionage and infiltration remained in the United States—if not as immediate material threats then as popular, well-entrenched modes of understanding and representing the Cold War ideological conflict. It is within the genre of the Cold War spy narrative that accounts of driving behind the Iron Curtain in the late 1950s partially reside.

At a moment when "books, magazines, film, radio and television were filled with the exploits of secret agents, real and imagined," tales of Americans driving in the Soviet Union exhibit characteristics of highly popular true crime and espionage genres through rhetoric of counter-intelligence and secret agents. If the State Department and policy makers "eyed high-profile defectors from the Soviet bloc as prized assets who could help win the Cold War in numerous ways," their complementary counterpoint, the American spy, shared the throne of (real and imagined) Cold War cloak and dagger intrigue.[74] The rhetorical power of these stories dwelt within the confines of American interest in what, exactly, the Soviets were up to behind their Iron Curtain: "Spying would play an important role throughout the Cold War and beyond assisting Soviet economic developments, countering American military advantages, and convincing counter-intelligence officials and the public of the need for vigilance against an ever-

---

approached in various ways in contemporary scholarship, and the overall consensus reached amongst various authors suggests the pre-occupation with subversion during the Cold War reached endemic heights—with the commingled response of cultural productions, official policies and social norms to fears of Communist expansion abroad and infiltration at home in the United States. Also see Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage and Cold War Culture*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[74] Carruthers, 65.

present Russian threat."[75] Seen as shrouded in secrecy, engaged in surveillance, and reliant upon the suppression of all freedoms, Soviet society was the opposite of everything the United States stood for both domestically and internationally. If the midcentury paradox of American entry by car into the purportedly closed Soviet state inverted official and popular preoccupations with Cold War escapology in the United States, the act of driving once inside the Soviet Union exhibited a complementary victory over the closed world of Soviet control. Accounts of driving behind the Iron Curtain presented the disconnect between the freedom of movement afforded by an automobile and its occurrence in a totalitarian state positioned as the ultimate foil to American hallmarks of democracy, self-determination, transparency, privacy, and autonomy where the open flow of information was a central component of liberty itself and knowledge production functioned as a register of democratic political structures.

While Walton and Scott's accounts of their time driving behind the Iron Curtain leveraged common American cultural discourses (and fantasies) of counterintelligence and knowledge production through the theme of "opening up," steps were taken to ensure that foreign tourists in general, and these extremely mobile American journalists specifically, were not privy to information the Soviets deemed militarily or politically sensitive: the continual presence of Intourist "guides" (perhaps a better word is "minders") were a bulwark against venturing where unwelcome; the implementation of furnished, preplanned routes likely functioned more as a directive than suggestion to keep American motorists from veering too far "off the beaten path"; and the very real fear that photographing objects and locales deemed sensitive to Soviet national security could quickly be (mis)taken for espionage. By the summer of 1960, however, at least one American made headlines in the United States for using the

[75] Sibley, 220.

automobile behind the Iron Curtain for less-than-innocent purposes. After renting a Volga sedan in Helsinki, Finland, Mark I. Kaminsky and Harvey C. Bennett arrived at the Finnish-Soviet border on July 26th/27th and, much like those before them, were granted entry. The two possessed papers—assumed here to be travel visas—describing the purpose of their visit to the Soviet Union was "to brush up on their Russian [language skills]" during a "month's [long] motor trip through the Soviet Union"[76]

On September 17th, 1960, The *Washington Post* reported the two had "disappeared." Bennett's wife, Rena Bennett, had one week earlier contacted the US State Department; the State Department then alerted the U.S Embassy in Moscow of the men's plight and sought assistance in locating the missing autotourists. Describing herself as "very much concerned," the last communication Mrs. Bennett received from her husband was a postcard dated August 19th, postmarked Vinnitsa, U.S.S.R., and received on September 6th communicating to her their "intent to leave Russia in [six] days." [77] The two had driven to Leningrad, Moscow, and Minsk, then back to Moscow and on to Kharkov, Kiev, and Uzhgorod; by the time their 2,000 mile journey ended in city of Urzhogod, Ukraine at the Ukraine-Czechoslovak border, the two men had run into much bigger problems than a flat tire during their motor trip through the Soviet Union.[78] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported in October that on September 23rd "an American tourist told the

---

[76] Various news agencies reported the 26th or the 27th. "Have Camera, Will Travel" *Time Magazine*, October 31, 1960; "Soviet Sentenced Ousted American," *Special to The New York Times*, October 17, 1960.

[77] "2 Americans Disappear on Soviet Tour," *The Washington Post*, September 17, 1960. August 25th was the date that the two men went missing according to "Soviet Sentenced Ousted American"; "Russia Frees, then Expels 2 Americans: Secret Court Hearing Given Pair," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 15, 1960.

[78] The order of cities visited in their travel itinerary was reported in M.S. Handler, "2 Freed by Soviet [sic] Arrive in Vienna: Americans Detained on Spy Charge Deny Subversive Activities in Russia," *Special to The New York Times*, October 19, 1960; Figure of 2,000 miles from "Have Camera, Will Travel."

State Department he had seen Kaminsky at the Russian border checkpoint in the Intourist hotel in Uzhgorod" and that Kaminsky said "he was under detention for having taken a photograph." [79] This would turn out to be quite an understatement according to the Soviets and, more even surprisingly, Kaminsky himself as the story unfolded.

The two had apparently deviated from their "permitted itinerary" and learned of this digression the hard way when attempting to cross into Czechoslovakia through the border town of Chop: "Russian border police told them that they were in an area closed to tourists" and, "[a]fter spotting a camera, guards seized Kaminsky's films and had them developed." According to numerous reports in the American press, the Soviets claimed the film showed pictures of radar installations, military work gangs, radio antennas, railroad stations, airfields, industrial installations—all images in clear violation of state photography restrictions for tourists to ensure state security.[80] Soviet officials claimed that Kaminsky also had in his possession notebooks with information about the photographs, maps with markings detailing their respective locations and "other objects proving he was collecting intelligence data on Soviet territory."[81]

Both Kaminsky and Bennett were immediately apprehended and detained for a total of seven weeks, first at a hotel in Uzhgorod (today Uzhhorod) upon which, after nine days, they were transferred to Kiev; during that time, Kaminsky was kept in military custody and continuously interrogated while Bennett was held under guard at a hotel as an associated

---

[79] "Russia Frees, then Expels 2 Americans: Secret Court Hearing Given Pair."
[80] "Have Camera, Will Travel." Information on the circumstances of their arrest were reported in various news outlets. According to TASS, the official news agency of the Soviet Union, Bennett and Kaminsky "deliberately deviated from their route near Uzhgorod" and were apprehended "at a considerable distance inside a restricted border area." Quoted in "Russia Says One Yank Accused Other as Spy," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 17, 1960.
[81] Quote from TASS from Reds Convict 2 'Spy' Tourists *The Washington Post,* October 17, 1960; According to Walton, tourists were not even supposed to photograph the "ancient, dirty, usually hand-operated" gas pumps at service stations—let alone industrial and military installations.

witness.[82] By the time the majority of American news outlets picked up the story in late October, the two men were already back on the other side of the Iron Curtain and awaiting transportation home to the United States. During the interim between reports of their disappearance and coverage of their return stateside, a strange series of events had transpired. Kaminsky was charged with espionage under Article II of the Soviet Code of State Crimes, the Soviets were claiming Bennett had turned witness for the prosecution and Kaminsky had confessed his guilt. Kaminsky was convicted of the crime of espionage and sentenced to seven years of hard labor; after appealing his conviction, he succeeded in getting the sentence commuted to banishment.[83] Bennett, on the other hand, was never charged with any crime.

What had started as a seemingly innocent motor tour through the Soviet Union by two Americans interested in refining their foreign language skills morphed into an extremely bizarre international incident. While Bennett denied he had cooperated with the state in their prosecution of Kaminsky, Kaminsky was denying that he confessed to being a spy; although American news outlets were simply reporting on what TASS (the official news agency of the Soviet Union) was claiming had transpired, the American court of popular opinion did not exactly swing in the two men's favor upon their expulsion and return stateside; in denying both his guilt and subsequent confession to the crime of espionage, Kaminsky's own account of the purpose of his time spent driving through the Soviet Union raised more questions than answers:

---

[82] Various reports, see "Kaminsky Says He 'Spied' Only To Write Book: Photographs Confiscated," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 1960.

[83] "Russia Says One Yank Accused Other as Spy." The expulsion was "disclosed after several inquiries by the American embassy" and the Presidium of the Supreme Court (parliament) headed by President Leonid Brezhnev had commuted the sentence laid down under Article II of the criminal code regarding crimes against the state; this was the same article downed pilot Gary Powers was prosecuted under in 1960 during the infamous Cold War "U-2 Incident". See M.S. Handler, "2 Freed by Soviet Arrive in Vienna: Americans Detained on Spy Charge Deny Subversive Activities in Russia," *Special To the New York Times*, October 19, 1960.

> "They told me it would be foolish not to plead guilty," Kaminsky told a news conference today. "They gave me a lawyer. He was not of much assistance, but he cheered me up. He advised me to confess to the charge wholeheartedly and tell the court I felt very remorseful. He stressed the part about 'remorseful' time and again…I did not carry out espionage nor did I confess to espionage. I did confess though that I was gathering material for a book."[84]

Although he had no publisher, Kaminsky had a tentative title: "Soviets Talk about Peace and Prepare for War."[85] In defending himself, Kaminsky admitted, both to the Soviets and the American press, "that he took pictures of soldiers, radio antennae and trains" but the purpose of such photographs was "not for espionage;" rather, he desired to document "such facts as that there are soldiers everywhere in Russia" to further his thesis on Soviet military preparations while averring that "he had not violated Soviet security."[86] And as to Bennett's denial of the Soviet's claim that he had "denounced Kaminsky as a spy during the trial" and served as a witness for the prosecution, "I explained to the Russians that Mark was writing a book and that was why he gathered information. But I had to agree that this was not the sort activity a normal tourist would do."[87] Even though Kaminsky clearly had a tentative title for his tentative book and went about researching it in a questionable manner, it is uncertain whether or not Kaminsky had

---

[84] Kaminsky made this statement after his release during a press conference held in Vienna, Austria about the incident. "Kaminsky Says He 'Spied' Only To Write Book: Photographs Confiscated."

[85] See "Have Camera, Will Travel." Kaminsky "[c]laimed the seized films were "commonplace," said "some of [the photos he took] were of Soviet soldiers in work gangs, railroad, airfields, and something that appeared to be a gas tank," and that he had not taken photographs in the restricted zone near Uzhgorod [as alleged] when he was trying to leave the Soviet Union" and that "a roll of film found in his camera when he was detained was blank" ("2 Freed by Soviet [sic] Arrive in Vienna: Americans Detained on Spy Charge Deny Subversive Activities in Russia").

[86] "2 Americans Ousted by Soviet [sic] Land Here," *New York Times*, October 21, 1960; "Kaminsky Says He 'Spied' Only To Write Book: Photographs Confiscated."

[87] While it is uncertain what, exactly, Bennett's role was during the trial, he was never charged with committing any crime. "Kaminsky Says He 'Spied' Only To Write Book: Photographs Confiscated." "Have Camera, Will Travel" referenced Bennett as commenting on the "hardly usual nature of his tourist subject" given the activities Kaminsky was engaged in. See "Yank Set Free by Russians Tells of Trial: Notes for Book Called Spy Material," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 19, 1960.

a loyal friend in Bennett. And while he had no publisher, he had a source of funding for his trip—a source that turned out to be as dubious as the explanations he gave for his activities while driving through the Soviet Union.

The story gained traction when it was revealed that Bennett and Kaminsky's "strictly educational" motor tour through the Soviet Union was made possible by a $2,000 grant for each of them from the Northcraft Foundation of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; the Foundation was purportedly supposed to receive a report when he returned home.[88] TASS referred to the foundation as a "spy organization."[89] Drew Pearson, a well-known and widely read American journalist famous for his muckraking style of journalism and his nationally syndicated "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column, echoed the charge:

> It isn't pleasant to admit that the Russians are telling the truth, but they are in the case of Harvey Bennett and Mark Kaminsky, two ex-airmen whom the Russians arrested as American spies. Both men, though posing as tourists, actually were working for Central Intelligence, and now that they are safely outside Russia and the Russians know the facts, the American people should know them too. Both men speak Russian and Bennet [sic] was an expert radio operator. Both had been in the air force, through they are not, as described in news despatches [sic], air force buddies. They never served together in the same place….They had agreed to lend their eyes and ears to Central Intelligence [Agency] on a tour of Russia by automobile which began July 27. When the CIA injects its operations into the tourist and people-to-people programs it puts other legitimate tourists under suspicion and jeopardizes one of the few successful programs for peace.[90]

The State Department insisted the innocence of the two men, stating that they were "satisfied"

---

[88] "Have Camera, Will Travel."
[89] "U.S. Denies 2 Tourists Were Spies," *The Washington Post*, October 22, 1960. The article also reported that the Northcraft Foundation is "not a tax-exempt educational organization."
[90] Drew Pearson, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," October 20, 1960, American University Archives and Special Collections Library, Digital Research Archive, Drew Pearson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round Collection," Box 16 Folder 16, accessed July 20, 2015, http://dspace.wrlc.org/doc/bitstream/2041/42533/b16f16-1020zdisplay.pdf#search='mark%20kaminsky'

that both Kaminsky and Bennett were "legitimate" tourists: "State Department press official Joseph Reap was asked at a news conference yesterday what he would say about a report by Columnist Drew Pearson that the two men were under contract with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to report on their observations in the Soviet Union. "The only comment I can make," said Reap, "is that we are absolutely satisfied that Mr. Bennett and Mr. Kaminsky were bona fide tourists."[91] Kaminsky and Bennett adamantly denied reports that they were working for the Central Intelligence Agency. "I can definitely say that I was not a CIA agent," Kaminsky stated. Bennett agreed and was quoted as stating, "This report is completely false."[92] Both Kaminsky's brother and Bennett's wife defended the innocence of their excursion.[93]

While Pearson's clear disdain for the "official" narrative of events was being picked up in other major news outlets,[94] *Time Magazine*'s profile of the incident also questioned the veracity of their story:

> Though the Northcraft Foundation is not on the list of some 12,000 tax-exempt foundations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service, the State Department blandly insisted that it is an organization giving scholarships to worthy students for foreign travel, [and] referred further queries to the foundation's Philadelphia Lawyer Alex Adelman. Adelman in turn explained that he was only the agent for a group of unnamable "Midwest" businessmen "who don't want any publicity." [95]

Noting that other tourists had been picked up and banished for such "sinister" activities as "distributing the Holy Bible and copies of the U.S. Information Service's picture magazine *Amerika*," *Time* claimed the incident was a major boon to the Soviets who "never before had a

---

[91] "U.S. Denies 2 Tourists Were Spies."
[92] Have Camera, Will Travel; "Two U.S. Tourists Free by Russians Deny Spy Charge," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 21, 1960. Kaminsky's selective language in claiming he was "not a CIA agent" is perhaps undermined by Drew Pearson's description of him as "under contract"—which implies he could have been operating as an "independent contractor."
[93] "Russia Says One Yank Accused Other as Spy."
[94] "U.S. Denies 2 Tourists Were Spies"; "Soviet Charges Denied: U.S. Terms Two Ousted Men Bona Fide Tourists."
[95] " "Have Camera, Will Travel."

case like this and they made the most of it." Seven years later, in 1967, a *Congressional Quarterly* report included the Northcraft Foundation on their extensive list of "Suspected CIA Dummies."[96]

Kaminsky was charged and convicted under the same article as Francis G. Powers, the pilot of the American U-2 spy plane shot down in Soviet airspace in early May of the same year (1960). According to *Time*, "[t]he Russian press called Kaminsky 'a Powers of the ground.'"[97] The phrase explicitly drew parallels between Kaminsky's activities while traveling through the Soviet Union by automobile on "the ground" with official (albeit covert) American air surveillance programs revealed by the U-2 incident (and the United States' subsequent attempts at a cover up). After the Kaminsky incident, *Time* noted how the Soviets were "warning the Russian people to beware of American spies traveling in tourists' clothing….The last word came from the Russians. Moscow asked the State Department to kindly use its influence to see that in the future tourism is kept separate and apart from intelligence activities."[98]

Both Walton's and Scott's respective automotive exits from the Soviet Union met with none of the complications that Kaminsky (and Bennett) would face a few years later. As Walton writes, "Because we had overstayed our visas, there were hints we might have some trouble leaving the country. It didn't develop. We were courteously cleared at the Bug River bridge, and

---

[96] Ibid. When the *Time Magazine* report made it to print on October 31, 1960, the US State Department had "refused all comment" but maintained that Kaminsky and Bennett were normal tourists. "On CIA Disclosures: Foundations, Private Organizations Linked to CIA," *Congressional Quarterly Special Report*, February 24, 1967. Courtesy of The Weisberg Collection. Hood College, Frederick, MD, USA, accessed July 20, 2015, http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/Weisberg%20Subject%20Index%20Files/C%20Disk/CIA%20Foundations/Item%20041.pdf

[97] "Have Camera, Will Travel"; "Reds Convict 2 'Spy' Tourists"; "Russia Says One Yank Accused Other as Spy."

[98] "Have Camera, Will Travel." Time Magazine also warned of a "campaign to alert Russian citizens against the dangers of foreign spies…in full swing since the downing of the U-2."

bade our guide and friend of three weeks goodbye. There was no inspection. We were allowed to take out all our film, to develop our impressions of Russia back home." While Kaminsky and Bennett's exit was much bumpier than their automotive entry, by October 15th, the Chi*cago Daily Tribune* cited U.S. State Department, who reported that both Bennett and Kaminsky were already out of the Soviet Union and "apparently [] driving toward Prague."[99]

While the aims and intentions of Dr. Berthold Schulz, Harry Walton, David Scott, Mark Kaminsky, and Harvey Bennett differed greatly, embedded within all these accounts of autotourism in the Soviet Union was the assumption that automobility could be used, both as a mode and as a concept, to provide information about the current state of Soviet life—information that then became available to the Americans watching their respective stories unfold across the pages of major newspapers and widely circulating magazines. If the lack of transparency about Soviet Cold War maneuverings was remained a concern in the United states, the accounts of autotourists into the Soviet Union by car broached the possibility of constituting knowledge of the "other" by way of dynamic, independent movement through the literal geographies of a culturally foreign terrain.

Convicted spies like Michael Kaminsky wielded binoculars and photographic equipment to collect intelligence similarly to the characters depicted in popular books, film, radio, and television at the time, but his method of automotive counter-intelligence intersected with the investment in well-meaning exploration (Dr. Schulz) and/or knowledge production (Walton and Scott) of his predecessors. At either extreme on the continuum of "tourism" that separated Dr. Schulz from someone like Mark Kaminsky, timely oil changes, a full tank of gas, properly pressurized tires, and a clear windshield were autotourists' tricks of the trade while in the Soviet

[99] "Inside Russia by Car," 234; "Russia Frees, then Expels 2 Americans: Secret Court Hearing Given Pair."

Union. And, for all of them, the automobile was understood to be the preeminent method of travel through which to achieve their goals. The significance of the car windshield as lens, as a means of accessing and viewing and a filter or mediator of that being viewed, was symbolism not missed by Walton who informed readers upon entry that "Ahead lay Soviet Russia, a strange and contradictory land…viewed through the windshield of a U.S. car."[100]

On a Sunday evening in 1957, after motoring into the Ukrainian city of Zaporzhye, Walton was approached by two Soviet teenage machinist apprentices who "told us elatedly of Sputnik I." The Soviet launching of the first manmade satellite into orbit is widely viewed as the initiation of the Cold War space race and the surprising but unequivocal event that forced the global recognition of the Soviet Union as a major contender in these fields. An indication of Soviet technological and scientific capabilities, Sputnik's success emphasized the primacy of industrial and scientific output as a dominating factor in the competition for global supremacy. With science and technology functioning as comparative registers of national advancement, Walton described how "[o]ften I talked with earnest, unsmiling but not unfriendly adults who took to heart their government's much-repeated slogan: 'Beat America.' Everywhere I saw evidence of a dedicated national effort to cram into two decades the industrial revolution that has taken the west two centuries."[101]

After driving back to Moscow, the collision of rocket and automotive technologies occurred once again. Describing the incident, Walton explained,

> [W]e were approached by four students who had spotted us as foreigners and wanted to talk. I produced a copy of [*Popular Science*] with color photos of 1958 US cars. Though calmly proud of Sputnik, the youngsters were frankly envious. "We won't have cars like that for two years," said one student. "Two?" scoffed another. "Ten would be nearer."[102]

[100] "Inside Russia by Car", 92-93.
[101] Ibid., 234.
[102] Ibid.

Decades before historians sought to interrogate the co-constitutive relationship between consumer goods and scientific technology, Walton managed to articulate the conjunction in his 1958 narrative. Despite the historic boosting of Soviet nationalism vis-à-vis major scientific and industrial advancements, the youth expressed profound disappointment; while the car as personal vehicle was widely available in the West, in Soviet Russia the pictures Walton exhibited to counter Sputnik I seemed, despite their recent victory in space, a decade beyond the grasp of Soviet citizens.[103]

Following in the wake of the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957, the 1959 Kitchen Debates at the American National Exhibition in Moscow was a definitive moment of Cold War confrontation enacted in the arena of consumer goods. While "Nixon was willing to concede Russian successes in the space race," he defined America's manufacturing power as the "most meaningful measure of American superiority over the Soviet Union."[104] As Emily Rosenberg has noted, international exhibitions "were not trade fairs in the narrow sense of the term, planners emphasized, but efforts to show American lifestyles—that is, to advertise America through its products and the values they represented."[105] Scott's account, like Walton's, called attention to the paradoxical launch of Sputnik I by a nation lacking modern consumer conveniences; he described the Soviet Union as a "country of paradoxes" that "leads America in hurling a manmade satellite into space, but runs the inefficient side-valve engines that power more of its vehicles on 66-octane gas" and "hasn't given its bicyclists the humble but effective reflector button."[106] This juxtaposition between space and automotive technology described over and over

[103] "When Russ Buy Autos, It's News."
[104] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*, 146.
[105] Emily Rosenberg, "Another Mission to Moscow: Ida Rosenthal and Consumer Dreams," 129.
[106] "I Drove Through Russia (Part I)," 85.

again in Walton and Scott's accounts exhibit, as Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann write, that "The superpower politicians may have disagreed on many issues during the Cold War, but they found common diplomatic ground in the idea that science and technology were the true yardsticks of a society's progress….The superpowers were aiming missiles at each other, but the culture arena offered a diplomatic meeting point with science and technology as *lingua franca*."[107]

Walton and Scott attempted to make sense of the contradiction between Soviet technological prowess and the inability or unwillingness to translate this capacity into their consumer sphere not merely during their time spent motoring through the Soviet Union, but *through* the act of driving itself. In concluding his narrative, Scott used a rather forgiving tone while recounting an anecdote about driving away from the capital city:

> The last thing we saw on the Moscow skyline as we drove westward was the tower above the 32-story "Palace of Science"-claimed to be the tallest building in Europe. This is the new university, conceived on a massive scale with 150 lecture halls and 1000 laboratories to take care of 17,000 students. But the paradoxes of Russia re-emerged with the first sight of the wooden shacks and broken-down trucks. Politics aside, this country

[107] Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, *Cold War Kitchen, 3*. In this otherwise discerning collection of essays, Oldenziel and Kachmann write in their introduction that the kitchen must be understood "as a complex, technological artifact that ranks with computers, cars and nuclear missiles" 2. In an understandable attempt to bridge the gap between what appear to be more "important" objects and the kitchen, Oldenziel and Kachmann engage in unnecessary reductionism—expanding the distance between readily available consumer goods like the car and kitchen gadgets at the moment they seek to bring them into a proximal relationship. While the automobile undoubtedly functioned as a marker of engineering advancements, its mid-20th Century status will never be as cut and dry as that of the computer or the long-range nuclear warhead. Indeed, to suggest the conflation of cars with these inventions elides the central social and cultural function of the automobile. While indeed the automobile functioned as an ear-marker of engineering advancements, its status was not as cut and dry as that of the computer or long-range nuclear warhead. To suggest the conflation of cars with these technologies elides the pivotal, cultural function of the automobile—equating it with other specialized inventions that did not yet possess a functioning role in everyday consumers' lives. Rather, the car was a register, much like the kitchen, of abundance and social progress, one whose proliferation functioned as much as a concrete litmus test and symbolic indicator of present day prosperity as a sign of future trajectories.

> with nearly three times the area of America appears to have the pioneering spirit of the Midwest 100 years ago, along with a massive appetite for 20th-century technology."[108]

Using the American past as a a frame of reference for his readers alongside a vivid description of Moscow's fading skyline, Scott's broad impressions of the Soviet Union during his time there as a tourist were intrinsically shaped by and refracted through the windshield of his Western car. If, in the United States, cars, concepts of automobility, automotive technologies, and automotive infrastructure functioned as one type of *lingua franca* or register through which to measure the relative progress of the Soviet Union, at the most basic level the ability to compare in the first place resulted in the acknowledgment, however discursively, that Soviet society shared at least one recognizable set of values with the United States. American drivers behind the Iron Curtain believed they accessed, and depicted for popular audiences, literal and figurative geographies of legibility predicated upon the automobile as a technology of movement that promised tourists, at its most theoretical purity, unmediated and autonomous contact with the Soviet Union.[109]

In the 1968 *Los Angeles Times* article that chided the Soviets for presenting a façade of access to Soviet society through the premeditated staging of tourism spaces and touristic experiences. Adrienne K. Cohen wrote that, "Even today the visitor to the Soviet Union is isolated and insulated by a number of factors that seem inimical to the whole conception of holidays as they are known. It says much for the totally apolitical nature of international tourism that it can be grafted onto such an unlikely superstructure with every chance of success."[110]

---

[108] "I Drove Through Russia (Part II)," 270.

[109] Among the earliest of mid- late- 20th century travel guides for motorists in the Soviet Union was Victor E. Louis and Jennifer M. Louis, *A Motorist's Guide to the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1967). A 1989 report in the New York Times also suggests autotourism to the Soviet Union was not a passing fancy. On August 27th, 1989 the *New York Times* published an article on autotourism in the Soviet Union after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the advent of 'free travel.' Celeste Bohlen, "Steering Your Way to a Car Vacation in the Soviet Union," *New York Times*, August 27, 1989.

[110] "Russ Blinkers on Foreign Tourists."

Ironically, Cohen's surprise that tourism as a modern day, profitable industry could function under a communist regime was misplaced; in fact, it worked too well—just not in the right way. Throughout the early decades of the Cold War, American and Soviet officials viewed the very act of tourism that Cohen described as "apolitical" as one possible weapon in their respective cultural arsenals for waging the ideological Cold War. As Davies argues, by the early 1960s the Soviets were beginning to have reservations about the role of tourism in cultural diplomacy and came to believe that the possibility for mutual gain had turned into a one-sided boon for the Americans because the very politics of travel and tourism were not working in their favor.[111] One year later another *Los Angeles Times* article described the development of the tourism industry in the Soviet Union in decidedly different terms; Jerry Hulse warned readers that "Russia's newest ism today is tourism" and that "while our government still fiddles with the world's third biggest industry, the Soviets are well into orbit." [112] Hulse's fear that the Soviets were overtaking the Americans in the realm of tourism was communicated using language of the Cold War space race.

Amidst countless other historical and theoretical conceptualizations of the automobile and automobility, the car has unarguably come to be understood as a powerful, highly-developed method for understanding space and place—both at home and abroad. Part of a *Life Magazine* special issue on the Soviet Union in September of 1963, "How to Visit the Soviet Union" explained to readers in the first sentence that "All Soviet roads lead to Moscow and most tourists begin there."[113] And tourism, like automobility, is a modality for understanding the role of "soft

---

[111] See Nigel Gould-Davies, 209-210.
[112] Jerry Hulse, "Travelines—Soviet Union doesn't want Tourism to Wither Away," *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1969. Also see, e.g., "Tourists Find Iron Curtain Looks More Like a Venetian Blind," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1965.
[113] "How to Visit the Soviet Union," *Life Magazine,* September 13th, 1963, 22. In September of

power" in the ideological contest between the Soviet Union and the United States. While only one tiny piece of the cultural history of the Cold War, mid-century American tourists in the Soviet Union used the automobile, however imperfectly, to understand and make legible Soviet society. When the *New York Times* labeled Dr. Schulz's attempt to motor behind the Iron Curtain in a Western station wagon as "inevitable," the choice of wording channeled something grander and more pervasive than the comical possibility of an American-led traffic jam at the Finnish-Soviet border. Driving in the United States during the 20th century was an exercise in belonging, and when Dr. Schulz arrived in Moscow, he took a wrong turn "'at a place [he] shouldn't have'" and "ended up in Red Square, where automobiles were forbidden." [114] The description of this literal automotive dis-placement, of not belonging, is representative of the ways in which, despite brief forays into the "other" side, the automobile and autotourism functioned to delineate which side of the Iron Curtain you "belonged" on.

1963 American's could spend time vicariously with the people of the Soviet Union for 25 cents through *Life Magazine*'s special issue, "In this Year of Change: A Long Visit with the Soviet People." Billed as a "10000 mile trip to find out how the Soviet people live," the issue featured a wide array of articles on the economic, political, cultural, and social contours of the Soviet Union. By 1969, "Hertz was waving its rent-a-car banners in major cities across Russia." "Travelines—"Soviet Union doesn't want Tourism to Wither Away."

[114] "Dr. Brethold Schulz, Noted World Traveler."

CHAPTER TWO
Mobile 'Gringos': American Autotourists in Mexico after World War II

In 1969, David Dodge, a well-known travel writer of the period, began *The Best of Mexico by Car* by savoring the importance of road culture in American society: "We Americans are the drivin'est people on earth. We own more private automobiles than the rest of the human race lumped together, we log more mileage *per capita*, or would it be per *fundum*, on our tires. Much of it is pleasure driving, on holiday….[O]ver a hundred million of us take to the family bus and the open highway every year for our vacations, rolling up something like a hundred and seventy five billion miles on America's roads. We aren't a particularly restful people, but we sure do get around."[1] Two decades before him, the American Automobile Association (AAA) was already publishing its annual *Mexico by Motor* travel guide; available to members free of charge, *Mexico by Motor* manifested a singular goal of promoting and facilitating tourism to and in Mexico via automobile. Along with signifying the ever-increasing global phenomenon of tourism, these publications encapsulated the importance of a culture of road travel for the sake of pleasure in the United States. Seemingly no longer satisfied with driving on their own roads, Americans began going further afield on four wheels to nourish and exercise this peculiarly American right of citizenship.[2]

Driving to Mexico for touristic purposes was by no means a new activity in the early decades of the Cold War, but a series of historical transformations in both the United States and Mexico during the previous decades created a perfect storm for the promulgation of American autotourism south of the border. The influx of these American "autotourists" to Mexico during

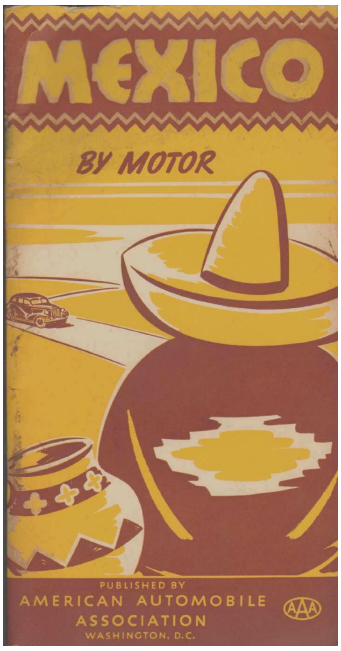
[1] David Dodge, *The Best of Mexico by Car: A Selective Guide to Motor Travel South of the Border* (Toronto, Canada: Collier-Macmillan Publishing, 1968), vii.
[2] *Mexico by Motor*, *1956* (Washington D.C.: American Automobile Association, 1956). Although published annually by the American Automobile Association, I have only managed to locate *Mexico by Motor* for the years 1947, 1948 1952, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957.

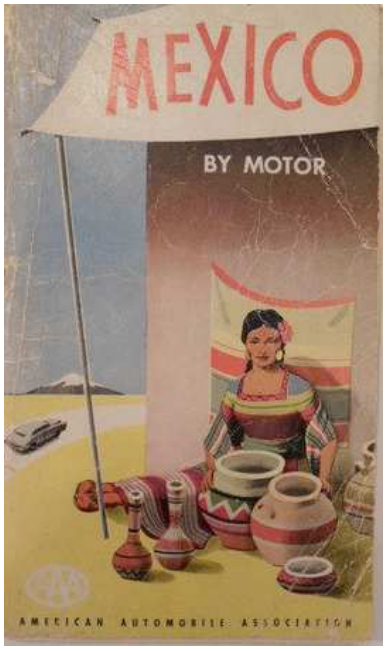
the 1950s and 1960s was facilitated by a series of transformations in both nations: the strengthening of diplomatic ties and "good neighborliness" forged through wartime alliance, the cooperative construction of connective overland transportation routes, the deliberate development, and promotion abroad, of Mexican tourism infrastructure as part of a larger project of state-building, and a cultural preoccupation with road travel for the sake of pleasure in the United States. In 1958, a trip to Mexico by car was described by one contributor to *Westways Magazine* (the official publication of AAA) as a "journey for travelers who love the intimate touch of the land, the genuine acquaintance of friendly and hospitable people, and the mobility that one's own automobile provides."[3] While the cooperative construction of new roads and transportation arteries between Mexico and the United States remains one of the most significant and materially recognizable indications of the popularization of autotourism to Mexico, the changing political and cultural landscapes of both countries after the Second World War set the stage for the realization of these corridors.

Propelled by a larger focus on state-led modernization programs, the building of roads and the development of tourism in Mexico took off during the postrevolutionary period (c. 1920-1960). Within this complex period of nation building, attempts to locate and consolidate the contours of an "authentic" Mexican culture became key. This governmental drive to locate "one Mexico" out of "many Mexicos" occurred at a moment when tourism was also becoming a popular individual activity in Western countries as well as a lucrative industry for countries willing to capitalize on new trends.[4] While the Mexican government worked to project, both at

[3] Ed Ainsworth, "Down the West Coast of Mexico," *Westways*, January 1958.
[4] See Wendy Waters, "Remapping Identities: Road Construction and Nation Building in Postrevolutionary Mexico," in *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*, eds. Mary Kay Vaughn and Stephen E. Lewis (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 221-242.

home and abroad, an image of a country both modern and traditional, the growing profitability of mass-tourism, the bulk of which was coming from the United States, unfolded alongside broader nation building efforts in the period between the 1930s and 1950s: "[T]ourism in the postrevolutionary era reflected the gradual, selective appropriation of cultural forms to 'image' the country through the articulation of notions of national identity and its attendant heritage."[5]





Figures 2.1 and 2.2: From left to right, the 1947 and 1951 covers of the American Automobile Association's annual *Mexico by Motor* publication. Note how both depict an American automobile traveling along the road in the background and a selective imaging of Mexican cultural heritage in the foreground. *Mexico by Motor Mexico by Motor*, 1951 (Washington D.C.: American Automobile Association, 1951); *Mexico by Motor Mexico by Motor*, 1947 (Washington D.C.: American Automobile Association, 1947).

Along with a period of sustained stability in the postrevolutionary era, Mexico's position as a newly democratized country and a World War II ally helped rehabilitate Mexico's relationship with the United States—both from a foreign relations standpoint and in broader cultural sentiment. Mexico became one of the most common American tourist destinations after World War II—mainly because "sanitized" and "modern" imagery had been extensively promoted in the United States by the Mexican government and the Mexican tourism industry

[5] Alex Saragoza, "The Selling of Mexico, Tourism and the State, 1929-1952," in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940*, eds. Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein and Eric Zolov (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 91-115, 91.

during and after the war.[6] The promotion of "good neighborliness", the undertaking of a "vacation with purpose," leveraged and improved relations between the United States and Mexico.[7] From efforts to standardize the ratings of hotels to municipal level efforts to create an atmosphere desirable and comfortable for American tourists, the broader task of nation building and international diplomacy became linked to the expediency of promoting tourism.[8] The 1956 edition of *Mexico by Motor* called attention to the political implications of travel as emerging in a world where "modern transportation has made all countries neighbors, [and] each tourist a diplomat."[9]

By the post-war decades, the cooperative building of roads and the internal emphasis in Mexico on developing a sophisticated tourism infrastructure over the previous two decades yielded a massive influx of tourists spending foreign dollars, an overwhelming proportion of

---

[6] See Eric Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico," in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940*, eds. Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein and Eric Zolov (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 234-272. For contemporaneous reports on modernity and Mexico see R.L. Ruffus, "Mexico Goes Modern, Unmodernly," *New York Times Magazine,* September 29, 1957, 45-61 and Don Eddy, "On the Road to Utopia," *American Magazine*, July 1956. For tourism statistics, see G. Donald Jud, "Tourism and Economic Growth in Mexico Since 1960," *Inter-American Economic Affairs* 28, no. 1 (Summer 1974), 19.

[7] Dina Berger, *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night.* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 73. Also see Dina Berger, "A Drink Between Friends: Mexican and American Pleasure Seekers in 1940s Mexico City," in *Adventures Into Mexico: American Tourism Beyond the Border*, ed. Nicholas Dagen Bloom (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 13-34.

[8] On the development of Mexico's tourism industry and American tourism to Mexico, see Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, eds., *Holiday In Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010); Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Adventures into Mexico;* Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, "The Evolution of Tourism in Twentieth-Century Mexico," *Journal of the West* 27 (October 1988): 14-25; and James Oles, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1947* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1993).

[9] Mexico by Motor, *1956* (Washington D.C: Automobile Association of America, 1956), 17. This quote echoes Emily Rosenberg's assertions about the importance of cultural diplomacy in addition to official political discourse in *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

which traveled to Mexico by car. Dina Berger has written about the phenomenon of American tourists entering Mexico in the late 1930s by way of the newly constructed Nuevo Laredo-Mexico City Highway. Berger explores the cooperation of governmental officials charged with molding Mexico for the tourist industry and civic- and business-minded social elites who, drawn by the promise of high returns on investments in a lucrative but nascent industry, took an interest in building tourism infrastructure. Tracing this mingling of private enterprise and public capital, Berger provides a top down recounting of internal policies leading to Mexico's designation as a "premier holiday destination" by the end of World War II directly linked to the construction of roads and the influx of Americans willing to drive them on their leisure time.[10]

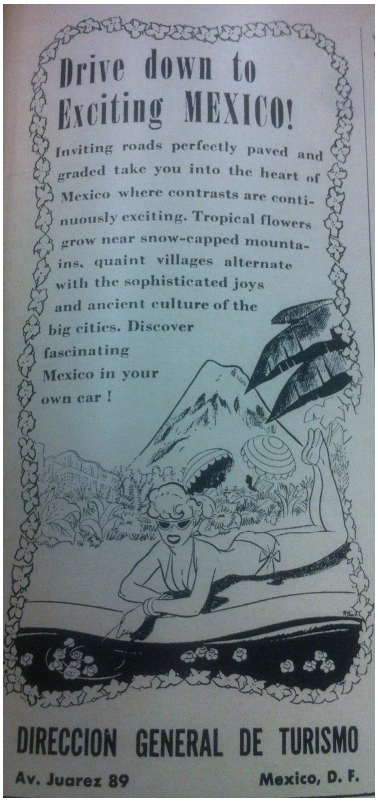


Figure 2.3: An advertisement, "Drive Down to Exciting Mexico," created by Mexico's Direccion General De Turismo that appeared in the May 1952 issue of *Westways Magazine*. The text reads: "Inviting roads perfectly paves and graded take you into the heart of Mexico, where contrasts are continuously exciting. Tropical flowers grow near snow-capped mountains, quaint villages alternate with the sophisticated joys and ancient culture of the big cities. *Discover fascinating Mexico in your own car!* (emphasis mine)." "Drive Down to Exciting Mexico," Advertisement, *Westways*, May 1952, 33.

[10] Dina Berger, *The Development of the Mexico's Tourism Industry*, 7. For an analysis of earlier driving to Mexico and the development of the Mexican tourism industry, see Dina Berger's chapter "Motoring to Mexico: Highways, Hotels and *Lo Mexicano*, 1936-1938," in *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night,* 45-70.

This chapter provides a critical examination of the stories and depictions of American autotourists in Mexico during the 1950s and 1960s. While the analytic territory covered here may sometimes seem as vast as the miles Americans drove while in Mexico, a few interconnected themes emerge. First, the building of roads as communication networks connecting the United States with Mexico often led to a self-congratulatory narrative in the United States; newspapers and other forms of print-media often credited Mexico's quick evolution into a modern and prosperous country with its highway ties to the United States. According to depictions in the United States, roads brought progress to their southern neighbor but these same roads also threatened to steal some of the "authentic charm" and "foreign exoticness" autotourists were looking to find. Depictions of American autotourism in Mexico often leveraged historically deep-rooted notions of Western conquest and discovery that positioned Mexico as a land where new adventures and encounters with the unknown could still occur despite a lengthy history of human settlement and inhabitation. For the American driving in Mexico in the 1950s and 1960s, the country was a liminal space—not simply because of the fleeting amount of time they spent there as tourists, but because of their ability to imagine a Mexico awaiting (their own) discovery. American autotourists grabbed the steering wheels of their private passenger cars with both hands in search of a faraway land made close through an activity that could symbolically ameliorate a growing sense of postindustrial, postwar conformity at home. This Mexico, a land recurrently described as a place of contradiction, allowed Americans to reimagine time and space in accordance with their own needs and desires; the manner in which they chose to make meaning of what they saw was dependent upon and linked to the usage of a mode of transportation as American as concepts of autonomy, freedom and conquest.

Although scholarship on tourism in Mexico persuasively argues for a rehabilitated image of Mexico in the United States after World War II, and that made Americans more likely to travel there for leisurely purposes, the power to imagine, access and represent the geography of Mexico contributed to a trope of symbolic conquest that emerged in many accounts of driving through Mexico in the early decades of the Cold War. Because American autotourists were drawn by the juxtaposition of a geographically proximal but psychologically faraway country—an "exotic" destination made conveniently accessible—theoretical treatments of the tourist industry provide a lens to analytically frame this historical study. Building upon postcolonial theorizations of tourism and spatiality, this study of American autotourism in Mexico makes use of the imperial exercise of imagining and producing information about a given foreign destination in conjunction with the power to access, gaze and consume foreign-ness—a manner of encountering that exoticizes or others the foreign and reduces places and people into objects of Western fantasy. This ability to go and look creates a power dynamic that symbolically recreates a form of Western imperialism despite the apparent historical materialization of decolonization; the activity of driving through Mexico as an American tourist exemplifies this tendency. The case of Mexico is, of course, further exacerbated by geographical proximity to the United States as a nation readily willing to exercise global power in the decades after the Second World War when the Cold War often waged hot. As Mary Louis Pratt's theorization of travel writing as an activity that "produced 'the rest of the world' for European readerships at particular points in Europe's expansionist trajectory" suggests, accounts of autotourism South of the Border performed a renarrativizing of these mobile endeavors through metaphors of conquest, discovery and unmitigated access.[11]

[11] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York:

This analysis of Americans driving to and through Mexico addresses a major gap in the historiography of tourism studies of Mexico. The Mexican tourism industry grew alongside and in conversation with broader, government-led transformations in transportation and communications infrastructure and also capitalized upon the advent of affordable, wide-scale vehicular travel by American citizens into Mexico. Dominated by treatments of the road culture of the Beat generation when treated at all, the seemingly banal activity of everyday Americans driving through Mexico as tourists and writing about their experiences provides an opportunity to understand how Americans related to their automobiles in a foreign landscape, related to a foreign landscape through their automobiles, and used a lexicon of automobility to understand their relationship to Mexico more broadly. In this culture of autotourism, Mexico was framed as a series of contrasting images in the fantasies of everyday American travelers located on a complex interactional axis with notions of the primitive on one end and the modern on the other: As one journalist put it, "from the squalid thatch-roofed mud villages of the lowlands to the fabulous buildings of the University at Mexico City the whole country is a land of contrasts."[12] To further complicate matters, the same roads that allowed Americans to access Mexico, instead of merely imagining or reading about it, were also positioned in American narratives as undoing and unraveling an "authentic" Mexico—one of the very reasons for travel to Mexico in the first place. American autotourists to Mexico in the 1950s and 1960s inhabited a liminal space—enjoying a moment in time in a complex borderlands region that was rapidly modernizing but

---

Routledge, 1992), 5. For scholarship which develops Edward Said's concept of orientalism in the context of tourism and travel writing, see Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, eds., *Postcolonial Geographies* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 1-8, 9-28. On the relationship between colonialism, imperialism and tourism, see Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise* and Valene L. Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

[12] Thomas E. Stimson, Jr., "10 days abroad for $10 a Day," *Popular Mechanics*, May 1961.

still capable of retaining, and actively capitalizing on, an "authentic" vision of modern Mexico in the American fantasy. Mexico's modernization efforts created a transitory space where the presence of new roads allowed Americans to visit and explore by car but ultimately threatened with extinction these privileged forays into the "unknown."

Building a Transcontinental Boulevard

In the *Los Angeles Times* in August of 1929, Harry Carr imagined a future that, "if present plans materialize[d]," would place "Los Angeles [] on an automobile boulevard that starts at Vancouver, B.C., and ends at Cape Horn or Buenos Aires."[13] In 1930, Carr set out in a five-car expedition down the West Coast of Mexico sponsored by the Automobile Club of Southern California to test the status and future feasibility of this autopian dream. The expedition made it as far as Mexico City, and in 1931 a second exploratory caravan continued from Mexico City in an attempt to reach Panama—making it as far south as San Salvador before the rainy season brought a wet end to their attempt. The expeditions were designed to test the efficacy of the International American Highway—an endeavor of modern human engineering which, according to narratives of the time, pitted man and machine against some of the worst conditions nature and politically unstable territories could lobby. Thirty years after the 1930 and 1931 expeditions, another Automobile Club of Southern California sponsored car expedition set out in 1963 to provide a "progress report" on the possibility of motor travel to Panama, "prov[ing] rather conclusively that any American tourist—blessed with only a slight spirit of adventure—can drive from Los Angeles, or Vancouver if necessary, to Panama, a 4500-mile trip with few of the trepidations that accompanied the "pathfinders" three decades ago." According to narratives coterminous with its construction, both the Inter-American and Pan-American Highways were

[13] Harry Carr, "Road Plan to Link Coast with South America: Motor Boulevard from Canada to Cape Horn," *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1929.

endeavors of modern human engineering that pitted man and machine against some of the worst conditions nature and politically unstable territories could lobby.[14] The ever-lengthening web of the Inter-American stretch of the Pan-American Highway facilitated paved literal corridors for the advent of American road travel to Mexico. Affordable, safe, and autonomously undertaken, the phenomenon of drive tourism to Mexico coincided with and reinforced the democratization of American access to leisure travel in their own country. The construction of new corridors meant that for the average American driving through central Mexico or down the Baja Peninsula one was "never very far from home."[15]

Today, the Inter-American Highway stretches from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico to Panama City, Panama[16]; spanning some thousands of miles (3400 miles), the Inter-American Highway is a portion of the Pan-American Highway, the main north to south vehicular artery through the western hemisphere extending from the state of Alaska to the lower reaches of South America. Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico, Chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee from 1949 to 1953 and the first US born Hispanic elected to the United States Senate, succinctly

---

[14] "Los Angeles to Panama: No Bandits or Barrancas for 1963 'Pathfinders,'" *Los Angeles Times*, April 21, 1963. The group consisted of David Packwood, Art Watkins, Howard Goetzman and Bill Escherich of the Automobile Club of Southern California traveling "into Mexico at Nogales on the Arizona border, along the west coast of Mexico to Mexico City, southward through Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and finally Panama." Also see Art Watkins, "Rendezvous at Chepo: The Exciting Story of the Club's 1963 Inter-American Highway Expedition," *Auto Club News Pictorial,* June 1963, 7-12.

[15] Russ Leadabrand, "Lets Explore a Byway: From Tecate to Mexicali," *Westways*, March 1968.

[16] According to the *Guinness World Records*, the Pan-American Highway is the world's longest "motorable road." The Darién Gap is the only portion of unpaved road remaining and is the missing link of the Pan-American Highway. See Carolyn McCarthy, "Silent Darien: The Gap in the World's Longest Road" *British Broadcasting Company (BBC) News Magazine*, August 14, 2014, accessed September 20, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-28756378; William Pentland, "The World's Most Dangerous Roads," *Forbes*, August 20, 2008, accessed September 20, 2014, http://www.forbes.com/fdc/welcome_mjx.shtml.

articulated the numerous benefits for the tourist industry upon completion of the Inter-American Highway:

> The possibilities of private passenger automobile traffic on the Inter-American Highway are believed to be tremendous when one considers the magnitude of the increase in the number of automobiles operated by citizens of the United States; the rapidly increasing tendency of such citizens to travel, particularly southward; the continuing economic leveling process in the United States which makes it possible for an increasing percentage of the populace to travel in their own automobiles; the trend toward longer vacations, increased vacationing in the wintertime, and earlier retirements; the ease with which it will be possible to reach the gateways to Mexico when the Interstate System of Highways is completed in the United States; the eventual psychological attraction of an interesting highway through a new environment; and the anticipated increased prosperity of Central America and Panama that will enable citizens of these countries to travel reciprocally.[17]

Senator Chavez certainly had his finger on the future pulse of the modern tourism industry and the supposed dreams of governments and everyday inhabitants of the Western hemisphere. Perhaps more importantly, Senator Chavez's vision was one shared by many like-minded American and Latin American government officials as well as by leaders of private organizations like the American Automobile Association (AAA) and one of its largest subsidiary organizations, the Automobile Club of Southern California (ACSC). As Berger and Saragoza persuasively argue, Civic, private and governmental organizations like the Mexican Tourism

[17] Mexico completed border-to-border construction of the Inter-American Highway in 1950 with more southern countries in Central America completing portions of the route as time passed. The Inter-American Highway was officially completed in the late 1960s. The international conventions governing travel by automobile were also "established for the purpose of simplifying and standardizing the requirement which foreign motorists must comply with on entering a country." Senator Chavez quote from "The Pan American Highway System: A Compilation of Official Data on the Present Status of the Pan American Highway System in the Latin American Republics," Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union General Secretariat, Organization of American States, 1963. Unprocessed Collection, Archive of the American Automobile Association, 2601 Figueroa St. Los Angeles, California, 2.

Association and private organizations like the Comité Nacional de Turismo shared this vision and worked actively to promote tourism to Mexico.[18]

Ed Ainsworth was present when the vision of two men and other likeminded elites came to fruition with the dedication of the West Coast Highway in 1958. The cooperative goals of Henry Keller, the director of the Automobile Club of Southern California, and Don Cayetano Blanco Vigil of Mexico City shared the "courage, vision and pioneering spirit" to construct a road in the badlands region between Tepic and Guadalajara—" dream[ing] the dream that made the highways possible when the area had been considered impassable for vehicular traffic." Reflecting back on the experiences a decade later, Ainsworth wrote that, "At the moment, those of us who took part genuinely thought that we had reached a peak in the progress of motor transportation and in international goodwill that could hardly be surpassed."[19] A report detailing the incredible scale and scope of the highway's construction was generated by the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1963; the report asserted with little doubt that, "within a few years the Inter-American Highway will develop into one of the world's greatest thoroughfares" offering "unlimited possibilities for the expansion of the tourist industry….In Mexico alone, which officially completed its section of the highway from border to border in May 1950, tourism has developed into one of the leading industries and the greatest single source of foreign exchange."[20]

---

[18] For more on governmental and private initiatives to promote tourism, see Dina Berger's *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry* and Alex Saragoza, "The Selling of Mexico, Tourism and the State, 1929-1952."

[19] "Down the West Coast of Mexico"; Ed Ainsworth, "Mexico in Motion," *Westways,* December 1967.

[20] "The Pan American Highway System: A Compilation of Official Data on the Present Status of the Pan American Highway System in the Latin American Republics," 2-3.

The Pan American Highway traces its routes back to the early 1880s, when the United States congress approved an exploratory committee to consult with the governments of other American countries over a proposed Pan American Railroad. Over the course of the next 50 years, the International Railway Commission continued to take part in a succession of International American Conferences but failed to "actually reach the construction stage" by 1923. During this passage of time, the automobile became a feasible transportation device rather than a luxury item and had "begun to challenge the supremacy of the 'iron horse.'" What would come to be known as the Pan American Highway was, after the 1923 Fifth International Conference of American States, the result of over a decade of complex interaction and cooperation between the United States and various countries in the western hemisphere with the Pan American Union and the Pan American Highway Congress taking center stage in its unfolding.[21] In 1929, The Second Pan American Highway Congress asked all participating countries to "prepare a complete study of its highway system plan, in order to meet the needs of intercommunication of its political subdivisions, and to provide the most convenient junction with the highway system of the neighbor countries" as well as a plan to incorporate main transportation arteries to and from capital cities, designating them as international highways and including them in the highway schematic.[22]

By 1940, the stretch of highway between Nuevo Laredo and Mexico City had been complete, along with 62 percent of the highway between Mexico and Panama either successfully paved or "all-weather" certified; sixteen-percent was only traversable in dry weather and only twenty-two percent was considered impassable. In addition to the notable successes in the

[21] Ibid., 3, 3-11.
[22] William Manger, "The Second Pan American Highway Congress," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, November 1929, as cited in Ibid., 5.

Northern regions of Mexico and Central America, "in South America, the West Coast sector of the highway traversing Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Argentina had 5,000 miles of paved or all-weather road completed, out of a total distance of 5,757, including only 206 miles of impassable trails." In light of this incredible accomplishment, a non-governmental association, the Inter-American Federation of Automobile Clubs, was founded to address the continual advancement of road construction as well as tourism and "related aims." [23]

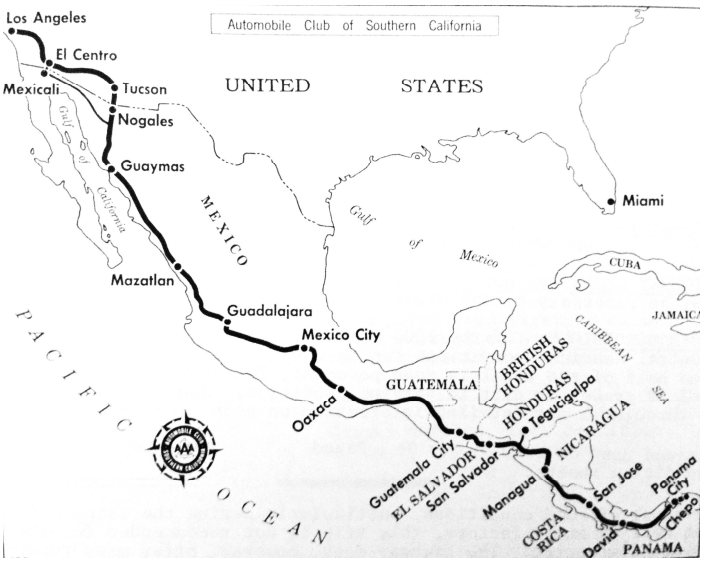


Figure 2.4: A circa 1963 map produced by the Automobile Club of Southern California showing the main route of the Inter-American Highway from Los Angeles, California to its terminus in Chepo, Panama. "Inter-American Highway in Central America," Automobile Club of Southern California, circa 1963. "Mexico and Central America Seminar Folder, 1963." Archive of the American Automobile Association, 2601 Figueroa St. Los Angeles, California.

As with the 1942 construction of the Alaska Highway (see chapter 4), the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor and subsequent U.S. mobilization for war "stun[ed] the American republics into the realization of the highway's new strategic role in the military defense of the hemisphere, in addition to its magnified importance as an artery of transportation and communication in war time." The US Congress authorized $20,000,000 on December 4th, 1941 to close the gaps existing on the Inter-American highway in Central America under the foresight of the U.S.

[23] Quote from Stephen James, Director of Pan American Highway Confederation, in a speech given to the American Road Builders' Convention on January 28, 1941 as cited in Ibid., 7.

Bureau of Public Roads Between 1942 and 1943; engineers in the United States Army expended around $35,773,000 of War Department funds to make the Inter-American Highway "passable all the way from the United States to Panama." As of late 1962, the OAS reported that, in total, the United States Congress had authorized $170,703,000 for the uninterrupted completion of the Inter-American Highway portion of the Pan American Highway.[24]

By the time of the 1963 OAS report, the original concept of a Pan American Highway morphed into the Pan American Highway System to address the miasma of alternate routes holding international significance that emerged after its earliest incubation period: "Officially, the System runs from the U.S.-Mexican border down the West Coast of South America, travels across the Andes to Argentina, then up the East Coast to Brasilia, glamorous new capital of Brazil, and includes connections with Caracas, La Paz, and Asuncion." Despite the fact Canada and the United States had not officially designated their internal highways as part of the Pan American Highway System, "the challenging appeal of the highway, to travel editors and adventurous motorists alike, inspires them to consider that it begins at Dawson Creek, Alaska, and runs as far as Tierra del Fuego."[25]

The building of the Pan-American Highway during the early decades of the 20th century facilitated a highly sophisticated culture of road travel by Americans to Mexico that was affordable, a development that greatly democratized American access to its southern neighbor. In addition to the power to access and look, American autotourists in Mexico enjoyed an exhilarating sense of autonomy and mobility in a country where they could explore and conquer, at least symbolically, a foreign landscape by car. Along with the ability to set ones own itinerary and travel cheaply from place to place, a major attraction were vehicular excursions off the

[24] Ibid., 8.
[25] Ibid., 11.

beaten path' to 'undiscovered' outside of areas normally visited by tourists and ripe with attendant notions of risk, adventure and 'authenticity.'

From Northern Roads Comes Southern Modernity

Road trips to Mexico by American citizens were the outgrowth of what scholars have persuasively shown to be the mid-century democratization of travel the automobile enabled; if the advent of affordable road travel not only shrank time and space at home, it also allowed Americans to travel to beyond the confines of their southern border with Mexico on leisurely weeklong trips that did not "cost anymore than a week spent at any first-class resort in the states."[26] In a 1961 article in *Popular Mechanics* on spending ""10 days abroad for $10 a Day," Thomas E. Stimson, Jr. reported that, "Thousands of people are discovering this bargain in foreign travel. Last year more than 150,000 US citizens drove south of the border with their families on vacations that lasted from one to three weeks."[27] As Eric Zolov argues, Americans were drawn to Mexico due to the "appeal of experiencing a "premodern" culture without significant loss of luxury."[28] As early as 1952, *Westways Magazine* reported on the confluence of factors giving rise to increased interest in motoring South of the Border:

> Travel in Mexico, because of its increasing accessibility and reasonableness of cost, is getting to be the number one pastime for vacationers from the United states. With the new highway from El Paso cutting miles off of the auto trip…making it possible to work a Mexican visit into the budget, more and more Westerners are becoming familiar with the many attractive places below the border….travel dollars are building up the type of accommodations that United States visitors expect.[29]

In addition to the affordability of automotive travel, the tourist infrastructure in popular destination spots and along the roads leading there were top of the line and replete with the

[26] Ed Ainsworth, "Down Baja to the Tropics," *Westways,* April 1959.
[27] "10 days abroad for $10 a Day."
[28] Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico," 235.
[29] "Tours and Bargains in Travel," *Westways,* March 1952.

modern conveniences and amenities American tourists had come to expect. "Modern living has made inroads in Mexico" and motels and motor-courts catering to tourists were, according to numerous reports, as up-to-date as those in the United States and a good deal less expensive. Tourists "lived as comfortably as at home. They saw sights they never dreamed they would see. They took pictures they'll treasure all their lives. They learned they didn't need to know a word of Spanish" and that border regulations were eased to promote travel south:[30]

Above all else, articles and guidebooks reporting on and promoting travel to Mexico provided information on the logistics of driving in Mexico. While varying according to the year of publication and the extent of detail provided, prospective autotourists could easily acquire information on border crossing, customs, documentation, and fees; carrying replacement car parts and finding reputable service stations; avoiding health hazards through vaccinations, drinking "potable" water ("agua mineral" or "agua purificada") and avoiding uncooked foods; general advice on conducting oneself in a manner appropriate to a visitor; the current conditions of main highways and accommodations; descriptions of the quality of various roads and recommendations on routes to travel depending on points of entry and; estimations of expenditures ranging from car insurance and gasoline to nightly lodging rates and meals; and tips like not leaving your car unattended (particularly when packed with personal items/luggage), being on the lookout for road hazards like livestock and slow moving vehicles and remembering to never driving at night. Highways in Mexico were not equipped with orientation markers as extensive as those in the United States, but the overall driving in Mexico was comparable with

[30] "10 days abroad for $10 a Day."

driving at home as long as the driver was aware of hazards like livestock and obstructed vision around curves when traveling at high speeds.[31]

In 1956, an American tourist entering Mexico by car needed proof of citizenship, a tourist permit (good for 180 days), a certificate of smallpox vaccination, proof of insurance, a valid U.S. driver's license, a car permit obtained at the point of entry from Mexican customs, and proof of ownership or notarized permission from the lien holder to take the car out of the United States.[32] In 1952 a tourist permit was issued at the cost of $3.10 for each adult with children under the age of 15 included under the parent's issue. The car permit (and one for a trailer if brought) was issued free of charge. In addition to individual car insurance honored in the United States, tourists were urged to purchase Mexican insurance because "traffic accidents are handled on a criminal instead of civil basis." The customs inspection process, often described as painless or a mere formality, "usually consist[ed] of opening the trunk of your car and affixing seals to a couple of your bags. The seals should not be broken until after you stop at a second customs station possibly 100 miles south of the border. Returning to the United States is just as

[31] *Mexico by Motor, 1956,* 19. In 1963, the cost of Mexican insurance was $2.60 per day and lodging for two (excluding meals) averaged $6.15 per night Securing gasoline in Mexico was of no worry with 80 miles being the furthest distance noted between service stations. Gas was provided by government-owned Pemex at a cost of 30 cents per gallon. "Los Angeles to Panama: No Bandits or Barrancas for 1963 'Pathfinders.'" Two years earlier, in 1961, a contributor to *Popular Mechanics* took his wife and daughter on a 10 day motor tour of Mexico and spent an average of $29.95 a day—$9.75 per day for each of them—including all expenses (border fees, Mexican automobile insurance, lodging, tips, film, gas and oil, postcards and airmail postage) except souvenir purchases. The cost of lodging varied from $5.20 to $8.80 per night for all three of them. A friend of his had just driven to Mexico City and back to the United States, reporting an average cost of $20 per day for he and his wife. The accommodations at motels along their journey, found at the principal towns on all routes between the border and Mexico City, had showers, hot and cold water, "comfortable beds," restaurants on site and water safe for consumption. "10 days abroad for $10 a Day."

[32] *Mexico By* Motor, 1956, 13-14.

painless."[33]

The American Automobile Association's annual *Mexico by Motor* guidebook reported that highways in Mexico were normally good ranging from winding and rolling to straight and fast depending on terrain. Almost every section of Mexico a tourist desired to visit was accessible over paved roads constructed with the most modern techniques and machinery with older roads in the process of being rebuilt and updated: "Paved highways, stretching from the ports of entry along the U.S.-Mexican border, offer access to Mexico's cities, resorts and other sight-seeing attractions." All motor courts and restaurants included in Mexico by Motor were "approved by an AAA Field Reporter…based solely on quality;" prospective autotourists were advised to "not be misled by the use of our name or insignia on the billboards or literature of any establishment" because the AAA emblem was not approved for use in Mexico. In general, the pamphlet encouraged American autotourists to remember that,

> The ease with which a motorist enters Mexico may belie the fact that south of the border lies another country, differing in customs, standards and habits from our own. Most visitors arrive in Mexico curious about that country, and eager to understand the Mexican pattern of everyday living. Others, however, hardly cross the border before beginning to compare everything with its counterpart in the United States, obviously disdaining all things foreign.[34]

Advising tourists on etiquette and appropriate conduct, AAA warned prospective travelers that "beggars and ragged children are not the most interesting subjects you can choose" for photographs because "particularly in the more modern towns, the people resent the idea that Americans may consider such subjects typical."[35]

The affordability of travel to Mexico, according to much of the literature of the time published on the American side of the border, had the secondary bonus of bringing "progress" to

[33] "10 days abroad for $10 a Day."
[34] *Mexico By Motor, 1956,* 17.
[35] Ibid., 21.

America's southern neighbor, progress that followed not only in the wake of Western tourists but through the exchange of goods and ideas facilitated by the roads. Virginia Lee Warren detailed in 1947 Mexico's commitment to building new roads to "bring the United States and Mexico City many highway miles closer" and "attract[] U.S. motorists" to drive them. She reported that Mexico's Ministry of Communications and Public Works had received the year's largest single allotment from the Mexican federal budget; according to the *New York Times* article, the Ministry planned to spend $40,000,000 (pesos or dollars?) or almost one-third of its budget on highways with $4,000,000 in contracts officialized in under two months. Detailing the scope and estimated completion times of major road projects, the NYT attributed these developments to the hope of "luring more and more tourists south of the border. The visitor who comes in his own car is the best possible kind of tourist, according to many persons who have studied the manner."[36]

By 1950, the *New York Times*, reporting from Mexico City, told Americans of the overwhelmingly positive sentiment in Mexico regarding the continued frenzy of road construction: "Mexico feels that its investment in improving and building more and better roads is one of the best the country has ever made. More and more U.S. motorists are including Mexico in their vacation plans." Taking on a self-congratulatory tone imbued with a rhetoric of uplift, the article attributed the betterment of Mexico as a country not just to official policies of cooperation, let alone complex economic transformations occurring internally, but to a culture of "good neighborliness" embraced by everyday Americans entering and touring Mexico by car—the implication being that while doing so they were spending American dollars in the process.[37] The Mexican government's 1951 budget for tourism infrastructure, services and promotion

[36] Virginia L. Warren, "Mexico Expedites Highway Projects," *New York Times,* February 4, 1947.
[37] "Mexico Considers New Roads Top Investment," *Los Angeles Times,* November 19, 1950.

ballooned to $951,000, an increase as much an outgrowth of the economic benefits of foreign tourism as a smart gesture of "international good will" according to the *New York Times*. By 1968, foreign exchange revenue associated with the tourist trade and border-related transactions equaled sales from Mexican goods in foreign countries.[38]

Descriptions of major cities in articles on driving in Mexico during the post-war period exhibited the tendency of equating Mexico's budding car culture, attendant infrastructure, and automobility paradigms with tropes of modernity—descriptions that also worked to locate these developments in the context of increased exchange with the United States through activities like autotourism. Hermosillo exhibited the "fine up-to-date motels that have become a symbol of modern auto travel in Mexico" and the "spirit that is driving Mexico forward at such an accelerated pace." [39] The transformation of Guadalajara over the course of a decade [between 1948 and 1958] was striking according to Ed Ainsworth; an "immense fountain" now pays tribute to Minerva where "fields of corn and grain once were" and the construction of apartments, luxury motels, subdivisions, shopping centers, and fine dining restaurants showed no sign of slowing down. Symbolizing this development are "new American cars and Volkswagens [that] clog the streets while perspiring, whistle-blowing officers try to keep the mass of vehicles moving" but "despite the clamor and modernity, [Guadalajara] retains a remarkable charm."[40] While just outside of Mexicali are rows of narrow shacks running parallel to the road autotourists traverse on the way to the city, "shanties fashioned of sticks and paper and cardboard and tin cans, sometimes the house side by side with cattle pen, each yard crammed with children and peppered with dogs." While the shacks are without electricity or running water, "there is a

[38] See Roger Hansen, *The Politics of Mexican Development* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 65.
[39] "Down the West Coast of Mexico."
[40] "Mexico in Motion."

modern school in this suburb, with a well-used ball diamond" reminding Americans, whether driving by or flipping through *Westways Magazine,* that these people were not so different after all. As Zolov argues, "[c]ertain deeply embedded prejudices did not necessarily disappear but, rather, were renarrated with an emphasis on the positive aspects of Mexican culture and society."[41]

The city of La Paz, described as a place "emerging from a dim, unchanging past," had, according to one commenter of the time, benefitted greatly from the northern automotive influx: "Down broad Avenida Alvaro Obregon, lined with towering coconut palms and immense yucateca [sic] trees, streams of a succession of late model sedans and trucks, all honking unfeelingly at a little, wood-laden burro…Behind broad, plate glass windows in a modern concrete building facing the bay, in tiers ceiling-high are complete spare parts for every popular American car and truck."[42] Exhibiting an imperialist tendency to equate racialized "others" with a frozen state of cultural and social existence, one of the greatest indications La Paz entering into the 20th century was the presence of American sedans and replacement parts.

While Oaxaca was flippantly noted for the "Quite unique…parking area for burros," Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma was "one of the most beautiful boulevards in the world. Three miles long and 200 feet wide, it is shaded by a double row of trees and adorned with six Glorietas, or circles, in some of which monuments have been erected."[43] In the city of Jalapa, tourists are treated to a charming mixture of the old and the new signaled by the appearance of

---

[41] Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico, 234.
[42] "Down Baja to the Tropics." The article portrayed Ensenada in a similar manner as a location that "drowsed away in the sun for a long time like a sleepy infant; then it underwent a turbulent and sometimes gaudy adolescence." For American tourists, it was beginning to transform into "a very delightful senorita of a city with great promise for a dignified and useful future life."
[43] *Mexico by Motor, 1956,* 119, 81.

streets where "up-to-date buildings line the fine, wide streets of its newer section, while picturesque colonial structures with red tiled roofs flank the quaint and narrow, cobblestone streets in the older sections."[44] Although modern hotels and buildings are surrounded by "age-old" buildings, the "influence of modern progress has not spoiled traditions of former days." Monterrey exhibited a compromise between existing infrastructure and new automotive needs: "Narrow streets and heavy traffic require one-way streets…Blue and white arrows affixed to the walls of buildings on every corner indicate traffic direction. Parking of cars on one-way streets is allowed only on the left side"[45]

Ed Ainsworth, the man who was present at the dedication of Mexico's West Coast Highway in 1958, returned to re-travel the same road in 1967; not surprisingly, Ainsworth "discover[ed] some startling changes in our good neighbor below the border," changes which were directly associated with the traffic and exchange facilitated by the highways completion and "symbolic of that nation's progress" over a decade's time.[46] The expanse of routes linking Mexico with the United States brought progress with "signs and symbols of this expansion visible" everywhere. Describing more typical outgrowths like the progress of large-scale agricultural development and the modernization of church architecture, Ainsworth bemoaned subsequent epiphenomenon like the "invasion of the country by obscenely loud Japanese motorcycles and the wearing of trousers by Mexican women" as "downright ludicrous and…disturbing."[47]

---

[44] Ibid., 72.
[45] Ibid., 110.
[46] "Mexico in Motion." The West Coast Highway was described by Ainsworth as playing a significant role in the cultivation of "friendship, hospitality, and goodwill."
[47] Ibid.

Fearing that Mexico was being refashioned in the American image, Ainsworth's description of a modernizing Mexico evinces the anxiety housed in what Richard Butler describes as the "development ethic" associated with tourism in frontier zones.[48] Although Mexico became a "premier" tourist destination after World War II through the active "rehabilitation" of its imagine in the United States, the promotion of Mexico as a "modern" country, and the material transformations in domestic governmental policy that developed and capitalized upon tourism as an historical phenomenon, depictions of vehicular travel "off the beaten path" and outside of areas normally visited by Americans became the loci through which emphasized autotourists could, at least temporarily, circumvent the implications of Japanese motorcycles and pants-wearing women in the cities. Promising adventure and "authenticity of experience," while Americans could spend "10 days abroad for $10 a day," "crossing the border into Mexico" by automobile allowed American autotourists to imagine they were "entering another world."[49]

Unspoiled Territory Awaiting Vehicular Conquest

If building the Pan-American Highway evinced a pioneering spirit, those that later drove along it embraced a similar designation. The imagination and production of geographical knowledge played a major role in depictions of American autotourism to Mexico during the first two decades after the Second World War. Because discourse is intrinsically material, the production of geographical knowledge about both people and place located within mid-20th century travelogues, travel guides, and travel publications about Mexico conjoined with the exercise of (real or imagined) Western power. In this relationship between imperialism and

[48] Richard Butler, "The Development of Tourism in Frontier Regions: Issues and Approaches," in *Tourism in Frontier Areas* ed. Shaul Krakover and Yehuda Gradus (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002), 3-19.
[49] "10 days abroad for $10 a Day."

space/place, geographies of postcolonial representation find articulation through activities like photography, map-making, exhibitions and travel writing. In these activities, imagination, knowledge and power work together to create a representation of a given place; in the imaginations of mid-20th century American autotourists, Mexico became a place proximal yet imagined as remote or inaccessible, a place largely based on fantasy—on desires rather than realities. The power to represent, much like the power to gaze upon, serves to both create and bolster a power dynamic where travel by automobile and writing about automobile travel underscores the importance of geography in tourism studies. Aspiring autotourists could plan their own routes and itineraries without being subject to the restrictions of other forms of transportation; in this mixture of autonomy, mobility and power, the emphasis became just as much about where in Mexico Americans decided to go as how they got from one place to another; oftentimes the appeal of certain destinations in Mexico resulted from the belief that the automobile allowed tourists to travel to areas other tourists didn't go—thus allowing for a feeling of removal from the increasingly dominant "mass-tourism" experience.

According to "Off-Trails in Mexico," a 1955 article describing Mexico as a destination where "some of the best sightseeing is off the beaten path" because "local customs and color" can be readily sampled; in Oaxaca, "women are all beauties and the native costume is something for a Hollywood extravaganza." While the theory of history as a progressive narrative of Enlightenment is simultaneously sanctioned by and foundational to the formation of monumental Western truth, Mexican history here has been denigrated to a mere production, a Hollywood-esque "story" of Orientalist fantasy. Vallarta is sure to attract "the off-trail visitor" possessing the freedom of automobility looking for "a typically Mexican play spot with none of the trappings of Hollywood or Miami beach. It's a delightfully Mexican kind of fun." Within this Orientalist

fantasy is the power of looking with the gaze of the Western tourist commodifies and reduces Mexican culture into a production of their own making.[50] Thus, American tourists in Mexico, transported into "another world" via automobile, enjoyed unlimited access and movement through an "exotic" landscape where local customs and cultures became highlights in an act of objectification and othering that titillated Western eyes. As John Urry writes, "Isolated from the host environment and the local people, the mass tourist travels in guided groups and finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly enjoying 'pseudo-events' and disregarding the 'real' world outside" [51] In Oaxaca, the tourist's gaze is privy to the "strange beauty" of local celebrations and customs where the weekly market drew women from remote areas garbed in "the strikingly beautiful costumes of Tehuantepec" showcasing how "native Indian tribes still preserve their pre-conquest customs and dress" and the Oaxacan music was found to be "as lovely as the women are beautiful and the dancers graceful."[52]

Despite the emphasis placed upon tourists attractions from the period of Spanish conquest and colonization, or perhaps because of it, the other, "archaic" side of Mexico's cultural

---

[50] "Off-Trails in Mexico," *Westways*, July 1955.

[51] John Urry, *The Tourist's Gaze*. (Sage: London, 1990), 7. Borrowing Michel Foucault's concept of 'the gaze,' John Urry's concept of the "tourist gaze" remains a seminal theoretical concept in the field of tourism studies. Nonetheless, many scholars have developed, refined and criticized Urry's analysis, particularly in terms of tourist desires beyond mere gazing (e.g. tactile and sensory participation) and locating the agency and active participation in and selective adaptation of the tourism industry to suit the needs and desires of host populations. For a re-evaluation of the term and its impact, see Adrian Franklin, "The Tourist Gaze and Beyond: An Interview with John Urry" *Tourist Studies* 1 (2001): 115-131 and Dean MacCannell, "Tourist Agency" *Tourist Studies* 1 (2001): 23-37.There is a wide body of feminist literature that unpacks the relationship between gender and tourism, particularly in the context of sex work, labor, agency, and the commodification of third world bodies by the Western tourist gaze. For a starting point, see Sharon Bohn Gmelch, ed., *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*, (Long Grove, Ilinois: Waveland Press, 2010); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2014); and Jane Desmond*, Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[52] "Tours and Bargains in Travel"; "Mexico—Land of Charm," *Westways*, October 1956.

landscape was depicted at length, often in relation to or as a point of departure from the advent of Western culture (read: colonialism/imperialism) in Mexico. Tales of travel by car to Mexico take on an interesting tension where modern artifacts of Spanish rule butt up against the extant evidence of traditional "native" culture. What unfolds are a variety of gripping stories about conquest and rebellion, civilization and primitivism, history and myth accessed by Americans through travel on four wheels. As a selling point for the mid-century American tourist it couldn't be beat. While passing through San Bartolo on a 1959 trip down the Baja Peninsula to Cape San Lucas, a "journey not yet known to many tourists" a group of Americans encountered "Indian families riding in from the high mountains to trade. Non-committal and stern, superb horsemen, they could have been descendants of the wild Pericue tribe, whose warriors decimated the Spanish soldiers and murdered the padres in the dark days of Baja California's history."[53]

This collapsing of the past into the present to suit the orientalist fantasies of American autotourists was also visible on a trip to the ruins of Palenque by car undertaken by an American family of four. After learning the ruins were accessible by car, the family followed a route where "jungle vegetation f[ought] tooth and nail for a foothold and for sunlight on the 20 mile stretch from Playas to Palenque" and modern living quarters were huts "constructed in exactly the same manner they have been for hundreds of years…based on a design these Indians have been using for over 1500 years." While "relatively unknown and unvisited because of its inaccessibility," readers with a "zest for the exotic and unusual" and a spirit for travel by car were promised to return from their visit to Palenque "greatly enriched by [their] encounter with the Mayans of today and yesterday." In this fantasy of exploration come to life, a father, mother and their two children achieved entry into the "past" through their family car that allowed for an "encounter"

[53] "Down Baja to the Tropics."

with Mayan culture vis a vis the orientalist association of present day "native" populations with the "exotic and unusual" past of their ancestors.[54] Luckily for those who were neither "adventurous or hearty enough" for off-trail encounters like this spur of the moment trip to Palenque, many articles reminded readers that, for example, Mexico City was full of museums with artifacts "awaiting discovery by the adventurous and curious tourist."[55]

In 1964 the Automobile Club of Southern California produced an informational pamphlet that described the appeal of driving in Mexico for American tourists by drawing explicit connections between the Spanish conquest of the New World and mid-twentieth century motor trips: "The fascination of Baja California is not new. Early in the conquest of Mexico, this land loomed large in the plans and aspirations of the Spanish conquistadores. Today, over 400 years later, countless opportunities and attractions still exist in this relatively unknown peninsula." Granted free reign to "discover" and "rediscover" for themselves, the pamphlet went on to give a brief history of the region—highlighting Hernan Cortez's covetousness in Baja California, early sporadic attempts to colonize the peninsula, the eventual founding of Jesuit missions, and the establishment of "advance base[s] for the colonization of Alta (Upper) California—our present State of California." While the pamphlet made no mention of the region before the dawn of Western colonialism 'brought' both 'history' and 'civilization' to the pre-Columbian populations of what came to be known as Mexico, the inclusion of colonial precedents linked Americans' four wheel excursions to Mexico with the thrill of Spanish conquest—setting up a fantasy where autotourists to Mexico could "discover" previously "unknown" territory like the conquistadors

[54] "Road to Palenque," *Westways,* April 1964.
[55] "Treasure Trails in Mexico," *Westways,* January 1957.

hundreds of years before them.[56] What unfolded across the pages of magazines like AAA's Westways were gripping stories about conquest and rebellion, civilization and primitivism, history and myth accessed by Americans through travel on four wheels. Similarly, while passing through San Bartolo on a 1959 trip down the Baja Peninsula to Cape San Lucas, a "journey not yet known to many tourists" a group of Americans encountered "Indian families riding in from the high mountains to trade. Non-committal and stern, superb horsemen, they could have been descendants of the wild Pericue tribe, whose warriors decimated the Spanish soldiers and murdered the padres in the dark days of Baja California's history."[57]

Showing a broader tendency to depict Latin America as an exotic space, even the report generated by the OAS on road building was not immune to this cultural othering: construction teams "penetrated the jungle as far as the Columbian border, proving it was not impassable and disproving many ideas which hitherto existed, such as the idea that the Indians who inhabited this region were unfriendly and often cannibalistic."[58] This one sentence manages to encapsulate two central themes of the highway's construction and the later driving of Americans tourists along the route: the orientalism inherent in an endeavor seeking to bring to fruition decades of planning in service of Western notions of modernity and prosperity; and the sense of discovery and adventurism in/to/through distant, "ends of the earth" locales once believed to be inaccessible but now subject to this paved conquest. The OAS report went on to note how, "Good roads make good neighbors by facilitating the cultural and social intercourse which create mutual understanding and goodwill; but above all good roads make possible the economic

---

[56] "Log of Baja California Mexico." Automobile Club of Southern California, 1964. Unprocessed Collection: Bill Esherich Donation, 2009. Archive of the American Automobile Association, 2601 Figueroa St. Los Angeles, California.
[57] "Down Baja to the Tropics."
[58] "The Pan American Highway System: A Compilation of Official Data on the Present Status of the Pan American Highway System in the Latin American Republics", 15.

growth and development essential to higher living standards and prosperity." This disconnect between surprise at not finding "cannibals" dwelt along side this belief in" mutual exchange" through the promulgation of Western notions of modernity. Although the OAS united 21 republics of the Western Hemisphere for the purpose of ensuring the "peace and security of all member states and promoting, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development," this narrative of "mutual understanding" often devolved into the exoticization of local populations and the consumption of "ancient" cultures via road building and autotourism.[59]

By using the automobile as a technology for encountering a 'premodern' Mexico, midcentury accounts of autotourism South of the Border and "off the beaten path" functioned as what Walter Benjamin terms a "wish image"—a formulation whereby the promise of an ultramodern, futuristic utopia is conjoined with a premodern, mythic past. Gabrielle Barnett has similarly argued that autotourism along California's Redwood Highway in the first half of the 20th century functioned as a means through which drivers could "experience [a] premodern vision without leaving their cars" and "created an experience that seemed (to people accustomed to train culture) untouched by industrial technology at the same time as it used technology to meet modern American expectations for covering ground." Barnett contends, however, that by the post World War II period this symbolic and experiential framework came to an end due to increased awareness among preservationists of the logging threats entailed by roads as points of as well as shifts in highway and car design. New road standards accommodated automobiles capable of faster speeds and increased traffic volume "destroyed the nostalgia of redwood motoring" by the 1950s. In the case of Mexico, however, midcentury accounts evince how postwar autotourism continued to function as a wish image during the postwar period; the

[59] "Ibid., 1, 15.

rhetoric of vehicular conquest suggests that the construction of highways and new paradigms in automotive design and styling Barnett identifies did not stymie the impulse to channel an ultramodern technology of transport in service of contact with landscapes and peoples perceived as pre-modern.[60]

While experiencing Mexico by car, Americans entered into an encounter with a landscape perceived as premodern and foreign and this encounter was then renarrativized to suit a given, historically contingent desire or need. In other words, American autotourists actively constructed meanings and realities about Mexico in accordance with what they expected or hoped to find. In a recurring narrative style that transferred the historical precedent of Western conquest and reinstated it into present day autotours, a trip down the road to Cape San Lucas in Baja California, for instance, meant that "every mile you delve into the mystic past, following the route of conquering soldiers and the Jesuit fathers of centuries ago."[61] Despite the reality of continued inhabitation, the trope of virgin territory remained; American drivers in the 1950s and 1960s could still, at least in theory, come into contact with the unknown and enjoy the thrill adventures lurking just around the corner: A 1965? article in *Westways Magazine* on Baja California evinced this contradiction as, "[n]o part of Mexico gets more American tourists than [the Baja] peninsula. At the same time, no part of Mexico remains so generally unknown."[62] Reconciling this statement requires understanding how the imaginations of midcentury American drivers were sparked by a moment in time when roads allowed Americans to visit "unexplored" or "unknown" terrains but also threatened over time to contribute to their eventual obsolescence:

---

[60] Gabrielle Barnett, "Drive-by Viewing: Visual Consciousness and Forest Preservation in the Automobile Age" *Technology and Culture* Vol. 45, No. 1 (January 2004), pp. 30-54, 43, 41, 46. On Walter Benjamin and the "wish image," also see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).
[61] "Down Baja to the Tropics."
[62] James H. Winchester, "Back to Baja California," *Westways*, November 1965.

"While good paved highways…have made the Baja California coast relatively familiar to thousands of tourists, the interior country remains unknown territory."[63]

The liminal nature of automotive tourism in Mexico emerged through discourses emphasizing how the very roads that allowed for this sense of adventure and conquest were (implicitly and explicitly) positioned in American narratives of Mexico as something that ultimately would, but hadn't yet, spoiled the thrill of discovery. Although "a mere three day journey by car", a trip to Mexico was imagined as an entry into "another world beyond the tropic of cancer. Into the heart of a land still unspoiled by tourists or billboards."[64] Autotourism in Mexico was attractive because it allowed Americans to feel a sense of adventure and exploration linked to historical concepts of empire and expansion—even if only reading about them in magazines. Unlike more traditional travel by plane or rail, travel by automobile uniquely positioned American autotourists in the driver's seat of their own touristic destinies. Despites that face that the "American tourist has "arrived" in Baja, to be sure, but there are still many "discoveries" to be made."[65] Although the United States' period of formal imperialism had drawn to a close, autotourism to Mexico worked as a figurative balm; Americans experienced exotic destinations via car in order to symbolically re-create a glorious history of taming the frontier and a nostalgic desire to connect with that past: "Hidden away below the Mexican border in Baja California is a land of mystery, a land of unsurpassed scenic grandeur featured by towering peaks of jagged black rock, of deep arroyos—and almost no people."[66] The continual invocation of a terra nullis or virgin territory actively leveraged historical Western precedents of conquest to paint a picture of modern day Mexico as a place where gendered concepts of

[63] John A Ryan, "They Didn't Believe We Could Do It," *Westways*, March 1958.
[64] "Down the West Coast of Mexico."
[65] "Down Baja to the Tropics."
[66] "They Didn't Believe We Could Do It."

masculinity and autonomy could be reclaimed despite the coterminous conformity of American society dominated by the modern suburb: "Armed with his copy of Mexico By Motor and an AAA map of Mexico, the motorist should have no trouble choosing the area he wishes to visit while south of the border."[67]

This imaginative trope of terra nullis becomes even more apparent when compared to depictions of road building and exploration by car further south, into Central and South America, during the same era when "an army of 5000 men is carving a 1400-mile highway to pierce the Amazon heartland. The world's greatest jungle, the "green hell" of the Amazon that has withstood civilization for centuries, is finally being conquered."[68] As a result of the adventurous escapades of American men willing to test the route paved by a faceless army of 5000 (presumably "native") laborers, for future Americans "driving overland from North to South America [will no longer be] an impossibility." Instead, **"**one day, the motorists who follow us will drive along a fine highway carved out of green jungle in ease and comfort. But more important to us was the knowledge that, even in today's space age, man still has frontiers to cross in forgotten corners of his Earth."[69]

In perhaps one of the richest midcentury accounts of touring Mexico by car, Weldon Heald contributed an article to *Westways* in May of 1954 that focused on driving to Barranca del Cobre, "one of North America's greatest natural wonders [that], but 275 miles south of the border, has remained a legendary sort of place, inaccessible as the mountains of the moon to

---

[67] *Mexico By Motor, 1956,* 17. For an analysis of gender and masculinity in late 19th and early 20th century American forays by Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders that mirrors this rhetoric, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[68] "Jungle Road Knifes Through the Last Frontier," 105.
[69] Richard E. Bevir, "We Built Our Own Road through the Darien Gap," *Popular Science*, August 1961, 125.

most people."[70] Encapsulating this tension between the unknown and the increasing influx of American tourists, Weldon warned readers that "already cars have been driven to the rim and across the upper section, and more visitors are coming each year." While the trip was still rugged enough for adventurous spirits and recommended for "the experienced driver," already a passenger car carrying a load of Californians "accomplished the feat using new roads approaching from the east rather than the rough trails on the Pacific side." While these "pioneers on wheels need not hike, ride horses back or camp out to enjoy it…they must accept the fact that they are leaving most modern conveniences behind and will buck some of the world's worst roads."

The importance of Heald's depiction is two fold: Although new roads allowed for an encounter once thought impossible, over time this ability to access bore the threat of demolishing the thrill. In this recurrent, symbolic vehicular reclamation of rugged individualism loaded with tropes of conquest and discovery in a new "frontier", the American imagining of time and space south of the border is indeed a tricky one; in this strange juxtaposition of past/present temporality and known/unknown spatiality, Americans not only drove across and through a territory imbued with tropes of discovery and adventure coded by gendered constructs of masculinity, but could, by virtue of the roads that allowed for their very presence, attribute modernization in Mexico and further south (at least in part) to their own arrival.

---

[70] Weldon F. Heald, "Barranca del Cobre," *Westways,* May 1954, 12-13. Translating as "Copper Canyon," *Lonely Planet* describes Barrance del Cobre, located in northwest Mexico, as an "awe and wonder" inspiring conglomeration of "more than 20 spectacular canyons that altogether comprise a region that's four times larger than the Grand Canyon in Arizona, and in several parts it's much deeper. Imagine for a moment if a jagged key the size of the Florida panhandle was scraped across a car the size of North Carolina – the resulting damage would be akin to Copper Canyon's stunning chasms." "Introducing Barranca del Cobre," *Lonely Planet*, accessed June 5th, 2015, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mexico/northwest-mexico/barranca-del-cobre

As if the fleeting prospect of conquering heretofore "unexplored" lands by car was not impetus enough for America's rugged individualists—let alone a family of four—to go afield in Mexico, the concurrent portrayal of "primitive" people and "ancient" customs also did much to add a sense of adventure to the journey by leveraging Enlightenment notions of cataloguing and seeing. Heald multiplied the attraction of a pristine, little known territory for American autotourists through the corresponding presence of "native" inhabitants. As if the "sense of silence, immensity and agelessness" were not exhilarating enough, the American autotourist to Barranca del Cobre also found amongst the natural monuments "signs of human life in the[] awesome depths: trails crisscross the canyon walls everywhere and lead to aery Indian caves and farms."

Described as being among the "most isolated and primitive Indian tribes on the continent and one of the few remaining semi-nomadic cave-dwellers in the world," Heald's narrative unfolds as an 18th and 19th century colonialist dream brought to life by virtue of autototourism in the mid-20th century. Depicted as living outside of the bounds of history in a society that has failed to advance further than its premodern past, American readers and prospective autotourists to the region are privy to information about (and given the power to sample and consume) a "primitive" people thanks to the wonder of their own social and technological advancements; and yet, with the coming of roads and cars, the "age old isolation of the Barranca del Cobre" with its "gigantic canyons, sun-dappled pine woods and strange, primitive Indians" in the rugged Sierra Madre Occidental mountains appeared to be drawing to a close.[71]

In an effectively banal final analytic, Heald managed to exhort a sense of untouched isolation shared by indigenous people and geographic place alike and then mourn the eventual

[71] "Barranca del Cobre."

loss of the region's intrinsic off-the-map appeal—a loss he attributes to the arrival of modern (American) drivers—without losing sight of the subtle racism that shadows his entire portrayal: "[T]he land and its red-skinned inhabitants are bound to change drastically as the stream of settlers and tourists increases, but let us hope that the fresh allure and charm of this amazing Barranca country will remain for years to come." In the midst of wonder over an ancient civilization of "cave-dwelling primitives," a wonder Heald revels in and views as novel, the risk of progress and development looms—bearing both the threat and promise of change. Heald's premature eulogy to the inevitable demise of this "legendary sort of place, inaccessible as the mountains of the moon to most people" evokes Renato Rosaldo's notion of "imperialist nostalgia;" described as a tendency of imperial powers to mourn the loss of distinctive or authentic traits once found in cultures they played an active role in destroying, Heald's account exhibits these same characteristics of longing described by Rosaldo. Heald invoked history as looming over the Barranca del Cobre region, a region that roads and the Americans willing and eager to drive them are slowly chipping away at. Housed within the development ethic promised by the transportation of modernity down the Pan American highway, Heald's account of autotourism in Mexico also evinces the intrinsic fear that tourism in frontier regions participates in a broader process of remaking the space into an image of western European civilization.[72] The advent of the American autototourist in Mexico was ending both the pristine grandeur of the landscape and the "premodern" authenticity of the people who inhabit it—indicating both the sense of fleetingness that dominates these mid-20th century depictions of driving in Mexico as existing outside of contemporary mass-tourism and a concomitant sense of nostalgia about the

[72] Renato Rosaldo. *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston, M.A.: Beacon Press, 1989.

social transformations caused by automotive tourism—drive conquest in Mexico was an historical phenomenon that was feared would essentially lead to its own undoing.

In a seminal work on the development of American tourism in the United States, Hal Rothman analyzes the regenerative and mythic role of the American West in the development of the tourism industry in the United States. In the historic conquest of the frontier, Americans reinvented and reformulated their understanding of self—becoming whole again through invocations of rugged individualism and a pioneering spirit. And with the inevitable end of the frontier the "concept of the west and westering" became transformed into a modern day tourism industry catering to Americans wishing to relive the romanticism of American expansion as a symbolic salve to 20th century needs and anxieties. Mexico functioned in the same way for American autotourists in the post-war decades but with a greater sense of embedded "authenticity"; while 20th century tourism in the American west became a symbolic, staged stand in for manifest destiny in the 19th century, American autotourists in the 1950s and 1960s went further afield in their search for a new frontier to romanticize. In their imaginings, Mexico was a material, concrete frontier zone embodying the values of a frontier lost to history in their own country. And in their cars, these mere imaginings became realized, however symbolically, through the ability to conquer and discover a new frontier along with exercises that affirmed historical concepts of autonomy and freedom. Mexico functioned in the same way for American autotourists in the post-war decades but with a greater sense of embedded "authenticity."

Rothman succinctly encapsulates one of the central premises of tourism studies when he writes that all tourists "[p]lay the lead role in a script written to affirm their choices, they become

mesmerized by their own presence in the scene their culture and their imagination constructs."[73] American autotourists in the 1950s and 1960s saw themselves as engaging in an activity removed from and counter to the staging of mass-tourism becoming more and more popular at home: the concealing of tourism infrastructure in order to make a particular destination seem "authentic" despite a bevy of evidence to the contrary all around (fellow tourists, souvenirs, themed spaces etc.). While droves of Americans were driving to newly developed tourist sites in the West looking to reclaim an "authentic" American past, in Mexico other American drivers were (re)enacting their own mythic past in the present day. If the first group found comfort in the pilgrimage because their journey to a reproduced frontier past was temporally and spatially proximal to their 20th century lives, the second group reimagined their relationship to time and space all together.

In depictions and accounts of Americans driving south of the border, autotourists encountered a country full of perceived contradictions made more apparent by their automotive freedom of movement: despite centuries of Spanish rule, Americans could encounter out-of-the-way native populations deemed representative of pre-contact peoples and cultures; despite modern architecture and infrastructure in the cities, they possessed access to hinterlands that remained seemingly unspoiled and unexploited; despite droves of American tourists flocking to Mexico every year, the automobile embedded within the landscape a continued promise of discovery and adventure; despite the trappings of progress and concrete advancements arguably facilitated by connective roads from the north, for many American autotourists Mexico could, at least fleetingly, provide avenues for an encounter with a valorized, historical past of "westering."

---

[73] Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 7.

While droves of Americans were driving to newly developed tourist sites in the Western United States looking to experience an "authentic" American past, in Mexico other Americans were using the automobile as a technology and modality for (re)enacting their own past within a land "still unspoiled by tourists or billboards."[74] If the first group found comfort in the pilgrimage because their journey to a reproduced frontier past was temporally and spatially proximal to their 20th century lives, the second group reimagined their relationship to time and space all together. Although droves of American tourists flocked to Mexico every year, in American hands the automobile mapped Mexico's landscape as a frontier zone awaiting American exploration. As one 1959 Westways article phrased it, despite that face that the "American tourist has "arrived" in Baja…there are still many "discoveries" to be made."[75]

The arrival of American autototourists in Mexico evinces how the automobile helped Americans make sense of place and space—not just at home, but in a manner that showcased the transferability of the car, America's cultural hallmark, and all its symbolic baggage—abroad. While autonomy lent a sense of real and imagined adventure to some trips, entire families used the automobile in a utilitarian fashion to optimize time and value when south of the border. If the object of sociology is to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar, droves of Americans did just this during their time spent in Mexico on four wheels. On the one hand, Americans took cars abroad to experience the conventional activity of driving in a totally new, foreign place. On the other, the use of the car allowed the American autotourist to enjoy the foreign without deviating too far from the increasingly common precedent of experiencing landscapes and places at home. It is in this strange mixture of the familiar and the strange that autotourists dwelt within,

[74] "Down the West Coast of Mexico."
[75] "Down Baja to the Tropics."

far from the comfort zone of their suburbs and cognitive maps but ensconced in the second best representative of home—their automobile.

CHAPTER THREE
Tourism à la Mode: American Motorists in 1950s France

After making port in the French harbor of Le Havre and disembarking from the *SS America* on a foggy morning in 1948, Julia Child and her husband, Paul, sat around waiting for two hours. While "smoking and yawning, with [their] collars turned up against the drizzle," the reason for the wait eventually emerged from the ship's cargo hold. Nicknamed "the Blue Flash" by the couple, their sky blue Buick station wagon

> swung overhead in a sling and then dropped down to the dock, where it landed with a bounce. It was immediately set upon by a gang of *mécaniciens*, men dressed in black berets, white butcher's aprons, and big rubber boots. They filled the flash with *essence*, oil, and water, affixed our diplomatic license plates, and stowed our fourteen pieces of luggage and half a dozen trunks and blankets all wrong. Paul tipped them, and restowed the bags so that he could see out the back window. He was very particular about his car-packing, and very good at it, too, like a master jigsaw puzzler.

With this ritualistic display of American car-packing expertise complete, the Childs "wedged [them]selves into the front seat and pointed [their] wide, rumbling nose southeast toward Paris." Their extended sojourn on French soil (where her husband worked for the United States Information Service) officially began with their journey by car to Paris; their first sighting of the Norman countryside, which Julia described as "quintessentially French," was gleaned through the windshield of the "Blue Flash." While Julia "devoted [herself] to learning the language and the customs of [her] new home" and cultivated a love of French cuisine that she would later impart to the American public, the couple's decision to transport their Buick station wagon from the United States to Western Europe on the same ship they traveled on would soon become *de rigueur* for many Americans.[1]

Travel industry experts estimated that more than 3,000 cars would be shipped from the United States to Western Europe in 1950 alone, an estimate "compounded exponentially by the

[1] Julia Child, *My Life in France* (New York: Anchor Books, 2006), 14-15.

number of cars purchased, leased or rented there by American travelers."[2] A decade later, the *New York Times* identified Europe as the "most popular continent for the vacationing American motorist"; two-hundred and fifty thousand American tourists were "expected to spend at least a part of their holiday motoring Old World roads." [3] By 1956, the American Automobile Association estimated that they would "issue close to 50,000 international driving permits"—up from 30,000 in 1955. With only 500 international driving permits issued by AAA in 1946 and one thousand in 1947, motoring abroad did not simply expand in popularity rapidly, but exponentially.[4] By 1964, the European Travel Commission estimated that, out of a record 1.2 million American tourists in Europe, "at least 300,000 will rent or buy cars and drive themselves."[5]

Tourism to Western Europe, a profitable industry during the interwar years, slowed to a trickle with the advent of World War II; faced with economic and structural devastation, by the late 1940s Western Europe's tourism industry, like most other sectors, was showing signs of rebound and growth. The sustained increase of American tourism to Western Europe after World War II emerged within the context of massive post-war economic restructuring led by the American sponsored Economic Recovery Program (ERP); better known as the Marshall Plan, the aid program was designed to assist European countries in the postwar rebuilding process, ensure

---

[2] Lucille Popenoe, "Europe by Car," *Westways*, June 1950.
[3] Joseph C. Ingraham, "U.S. Motorists Head for Ends of the Earth," *New York Times.* February 2, 1960. The 1960 figure of 250,000 was an increase of 20 percent over the 1959 total. Walter W. Hubbard, "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto," *The Washington Post*, January 13, 1957.
[4] "AAA Expanding Inspection To Cover Much of Europe," *The Washington Post*, August 5, 1956. According to the 1957 "Today's Trend is to Tour France by Auto" report, AAA estimated that they would "take charge of shipping some 5000 [sic] American cars abroad for tourists. It also will process at least 35,000 international driving licenses and permits for Americans who will buy or rent European cars."
[5] Jerry Hulse, "The Camargue: An Adventure in France," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1964. Jerry Hulse was the Travel Editor for the *Los Angeles Times.*

future economic and political stability, and combat the spread of Soviet-style communism.[6] While the economies of Western European countries were receiving American economic aid, tourism was one sector identified early on as a way to narrow the dollar gap. In June of 1950, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) of the ERP, in collaboration with the Travel Branch, Office of International Trade, and Department of Commerce, published a study entitled "Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program." The study assessed past and present rates of American tourism to Western European countries participating in the ERP, forecasted future trends, and made recommendations for increasing the long-term numbers of annual American tourists. The arrival of American tourists in Western Europe after the war was, according to the report, "helping Western Europe purchase the goods they need from [the United States]" and "narrowing the dollar trade gap":

> In 1949, the ERP countries earned approximately $271 million from private travel by United States residents. This was equivalent to approximately one-third of the total merchandise exports of the Western European countries to the United States during

[6] Historiography on the Marshall Plan's impact on Western Europe's post-war economic boom runs the gamut from claims that the Marshall Plan's impact was fundamental to marginal. For early commentary on each view, see William Diebold, Jr., "The Marshall Plan in Retrospect: a Review of Recent Scholarship," *Journal of International Affairs* 41, no. 2 (1988): 421–435. For a "middle of the road" analysis, see David Reynolds, "The European Response," *Foreign Affairs* 76 no. 3 (1997): 171–184. For more recent assessments of the Marshall Plan's influence, particularly in terms of Americanization and American hegemony, see Emily S. Rosenberg, "Consuming the American Century" in *The Short American Century: A Postmortem*, ed. Andrew J. Bacevich (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012), 38–58; Rob Kroes, *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Richard H. Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War* II (New York: Basic Books, 1997); and Sheryl Kroen, "Negotiations with the American Way: The Consumer and the Social Contract in Post-war Europe," in *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*, eds. John Brewer and Frank Trentmann (New York: Berg, 2006), 251–77.

> 1949 and about equal to their combined shipments to us of whiskey and wines, textile products and fibers, wood pulp, automobiles, clocks and watches.[7]

Thus, the ERP provided a series of recommendations for developing and harnessing the economic power of Western Europe's tourism industry and attracting American tourists to help ensure tourism would remain a "leading dollar earner". In addition to urging ERP countries to invest in wide-ranging advertising and promotional campaigns in the Unites States and improve upon and expand domestic transportation and tourism infrastructure, the report called for the standardization of tourism-related statistics compiling, the removal travel and trade barriers,[8] and other collaborative efforts aimed at simplifying the transnational movement of tourists in order to share the wealth of tourism-related American dollars.

In September of 1955, the *New York Times* announced, "Tourism Now Europe's Best Dollar Earner." Relying on information furnished by steamship companies and airlines, Michael Hoffman reported that "[m]ore than a million people will have crossed the Atlantic eastbound and of these probably three-quarters fall into the category of American 'tourists.'" Referring to American tourism to Europe as an "invisible export," Hoffman projected that "receipts from Americans enjoying the sights, sounds or conferences of Europe this year seem likely to equal nearly a quarter of Western Europe's total earnings from all its exports to the United States and Canada." Echoing the 1950 ERP report on tourism, Hoffman reported that tourism had "definitely established itself as Europe's greatest dollar earner" and, perhaps even more significantly, 1955 was looking to be a "record year" with strong prospects of exceeding, for the first time, the 1929 figure of American tourists to Europe. Whereas in 1949 American tourists in

---

[7] "Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program," Economic Cooperation Administration Statistics and Reports Division in collaboration with the Travel Branch, Office of International Trade, Department of Commerce, June 1950, 1.

[8] See Frank Schipper's assessment of attempts to liberalise transportation networks in Frank Schipper, "Changing the Face of Europe: European Road Mobility during the Marshall Plan Years," *The Journal of Transport History* 28, no. 2: 211-228.

spent $48 million in France, by 1954 the figure had rose to $72 million. Other major recipient countries of American tourists (the United Kingdom, Italy, and Switzerland) saw similar rates of growth. While in 1937 and 1947 American tourism-related spending in Western Europe was approximately 97 million and 107 million, respectively, by 1954 it had risen to 352 million. Providing readers with the scope of individual and collective spending, Hoffman reported that "if past experience can be taken as a guide the American tourist will spend on the average about $900 in Europe. This year total receipts, therefore, may reach the huge sum of $750,000,000—give or take 10 per cent [sic], depending on how the travel cost is shared between American and European steamship companies and airlines. Anyway you look at it, it is big business."[9]

Along with combatting the dollar gap and laying the groundwork for long term economic growth and stability, which in turn increased the prospect of future reverse tourism from Western Europe to the United States, the 1950 ERP report identified the role of tourism and travel in cultural diplomacy; the increased volume of American tourism to Western Europe promised the "not inconsequential…stimulating effects of increased American and Intra-European travel from the viewpoint of enhanced understanding and closer integration of economic and cultural

[9] Michael H. Hoffman, "Tourism Now Europe's Best Dollar Earner: Reports Indicate More Americans are Spending More Than Ever," *New York Times*, September 4, 1955. The United Kingdom saw an increase in spending from 34 million to 64 million; Italy 32 million to 64 million; and Switzerland 18.5 million to 29 million. Hoffman took into account population growth in the United States by noting that "[t]he total had already been surpassed in 1953, but the growth in American population has been such that the proportion of Europe-bound tourists to population remained less than in the great boom year of the Nineteen Twenties." Along with tourism, various efforts were made to combat the dollar gap by, for instance, promoting the sale of European goods in the United States. See Stephanie M. Amerian, "Buying European: The Marshall Plan and American Department Stores," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 1 (2015): 45-69.

development."[10] Thus, early on, the role of tourism within Marshall Plan goals was as much cultural as economic.[11]

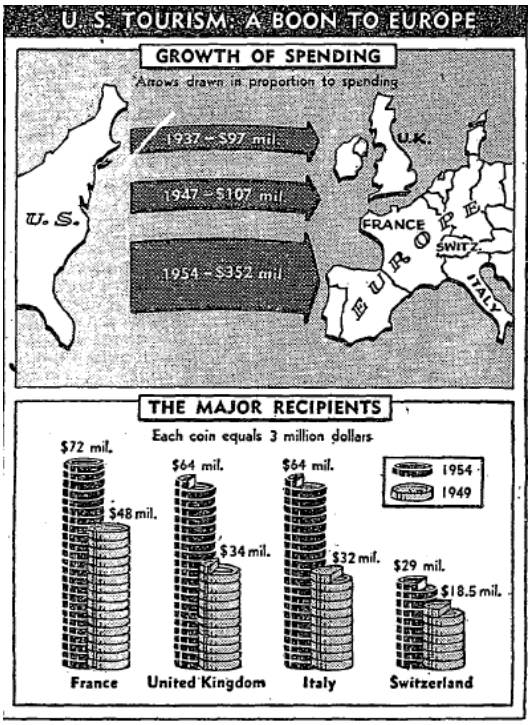


Figure 3.1: A visualization of the flow of American dollars into Western Europe through tourism provided for readers of the *New York Times* in September of 1955. Michael H. Hoffman, "Tourism Now Europe's Best Dollar Earner: Reports Indicate More Americans are Spending More Than Ever," *New York Times*, September 4, 1955.

[10] "Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program," 24.

[11] For a broad overview of the cultural and psychological influence of the Marshall Plan, see Tony Judt, *Postwar: a History of Europe since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005). As Brian McKenzie and Christopher Endy show in the specific case of France, American tourism to Western Europe more broadly was viewed as a means for cultivating good will and establishing an "on-the-ground" rapport by way of people-to-people exchanges. Christopher Endy's "Cold War Holidays" demonstrates how American tourism to France after World War II was not only a way to pump dollars into the recovering European economy, but a means of cultivating domestic support for the United States' commitment to Western Europe in the face of the Soviet threat. Endy details the goals—and failures—of people-to-people interactions that formed the basis of a "goodwill" ambassadorship in French-American cultural diplomacy and argues that American tourism to France did not quite work out the way policy makers had envisioned. Brian McKenzie similarly details the promotion of transatlantic tourism to France between 1948 and 1952 and similarly focuses on the policy goals on both sides of the Atlantic, and the ways in which the impact of this tourism was perceived by the end of the Marshall Plan. Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Brian A. McKenzie, "Creating a Tourists' Paradise: The Marshall Plan and France, 1948 to 1952," *French Politics, Culture and Society* 21, no. 1 (2003): 35–54; Brian A. McKenzie, *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan (*New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

The Marshall Plan era was a period during which the United States was actively working to "refashion Western Europe in [its] image" through massive economic aid and the wielding of what scholar Joseph Nye has termed "soft power,"[12] but both the contours and success of this "refashioning" have been the subject of debate. Literature on "Americanization" in the 20th century is vast and concerned primarily with, on one end, the exportation of American products and practices to other parts of the world, a process which dominated much of the century, and, on the other end, how recipient countries "selected, adapted, and transformed what America sent them"[13]; thus, rather than assuming a one-way transference of American goods and models, interrogating the relationship between sender and receiver as well as the relationship between Americanization and globalization has come to characterize recent analyses.[14] The "Americanization" of post-war Western Europe is a subject that dominates both scholarship on American tourism to Western Europe and the American importation of transportation and mobility paradigms to Western Europe. In the case of tourism, scholarship has reached the tentative consensus that while Marshall Plan policies promoted American cultural transfer (eg. practices of consumption and models for modernization) and American goods left an indelible stamp on the post-war landscape, recipient countries actively accepted, rejected and adapted what was on offer to suit their needs.[15] Scholarship has reached a similar consensus in the

---

[12] On the concept of "soft power," see Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004) and Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power (*New York: Basic Books, 1990).

[13] For an overview that situates Americanization in the context of globalization, see Richard Kuisel's, "Commentary: Americanization for Historians" *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 509-515, 509.

[14] See Kuisel's "Commentary" for a review of scholarship on both sides of the Americanization debate and an analysis of promising future trends.

[15] For scholarship on reciprocal exchange and influence, see Vanessa Schwartz, *It's So French!: Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). For an example of the "Europeanization" of American culture in the

context of transatlantic American technology transfer and the Americanization of European transportation models and mobility patterns during the post-World War II era.[16]

Drawing upon these studies of the Marshall Plan and analyses of the "Americanization" of tourism infrastructure and mobility paradigms, this chapter explores how American autotourists in France experienced the French cultural and geographical landscape by car, how American newspapers depicted the advent of American autotourists to France, and how these news outlets navigated the consequences created by this mode of exploration.[17] While the extent to which American cultural influence impacted post-war Western Europe remains contested, this chapter engages with the topic of Americanization in the context of France to shed light on how contemporary, state-side depictions of travel to France in American newspapers positioned the Americanization of the French tourism industry and French automobility patterns. After sketching out the historical contours and characteristics of American autotourism in post-war Western Europe more broadly—and France in particular—this analysis shifts gears to present two major, interconnected claims by analyzing how the *New York Times* and other newspapers

---

specific context of one automobile, see, Bernhard Rieger, "From People's Car to New Beetle: The Transatlantic Journeys of the Volkswagen Beetle," *The Journal of American History* 97, no. 1 (June 2010): 91-115.

[16] Frank Schipper addresses transatlantic technology transfer and the "Americanization" of Western European mobility patterns during the Marshall Plan in Frank Schipper, *Driving Europe: Building Europe on Roads in the Twentieth Century* **(**Amsterdam University Press, 2009); Bruce E. Seely, "'Push' and 'Pull' Factors in Technology Transfer: Moving American-Style Highway Engineering to Europe, 1945–1960" *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society* 2, no 3 (2004): 229-246. For a broader assessment of technology transfer, see Jonathan Zeitlin and Gary Herrigel, eds., *Americanization and its Limits: Responses to U.S. Technology and Management in Postwar Europe and Japan,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[17] For an extensive study of Americanization in post-war France, see Richard Kuisel *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). See Irwin Wall, *The United States and the Making of post war France, 1945-1954* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1991) for more on French-American relations in the post-war era.

depicted the advent of France's first American-style motel in 1956 and the growing impact of the 'Frenchman's love affair with the car' in 1961.

The adoption of the American-style motel to serve the needs of a growing number of American autotourists to France emerged within the broader context of the selective "Americanization" of certain aspects of the French tourism industry to appeal to American travelers. According to the *New York Times*, however, its arrival threatened the novelty and authenticity of the tourism experience for exactly these reasons. If the prospect of the motel as a roadside accommodation ruffled some feathers in 1956, by 1961 the increase in French motoring and the changing pace of traffic (touristic or otherwise) on French roads was being depicted as a troubling state of affairs. Once positioned as a way to alleviate congestion in major tourist destinations and share in the wealth of American tourist dollars, the speed at which tourists in general and autotourists in particular travelled had the perceived unexpected consequence of spreading the wealth a bit too thinly; the days of leisurely motoring down old world roads had the appearance of being supplanted by a mad-dash from place to place due, in large part, to the perception in the United States that tourism in France, automotive or otherwise, was no longer affordable. Paired with a sharp rise in French car ownership and a rapidly developing culture of automobility, the shift of domestic mobility paradigms in France threatened to detract from the charm of this novel (and distinctly American) mode of viewing and encountering foreign cultural and geographic landscapes.

Autotourism in Western Europe: From State to Private Enterprise

The Marshall Plan helped create the conditions for the rapid (re)development of tourism infrastructure in Western Europe; in conjunction with the rebuilding process, ECA policies pushed for the institution of tourist-class transatlantic airfare in order to attract more American

tourists to Europe. Affordable airfare transformed the tourist trade by democratizing transatlantic travel for the masses of relatively affluent Americans while also "benefit[ting] American commercial and industrial interests"; the number of American tourists in France rose to 360,000 in 1952—up from 280,000 in 1951. Of these tourists, one-third traveled by air. [18] The development of affordable transatlantic airfare, while paramount, was not the only form of transportation technology driving the post-war arrival of American tourists; the rehabilitation of overland European transportation and communication networks after extensive wartime damage was integral to Western Europe's economic recovery and thus a top ERP and ECA priority.[19]

Official Marshall Plan policy objectives for the redevelopment of Western Europe's transportation and tourism infrastructure paved the way for the arrival of American autotourists in the 1950s. As Herman Van der Wee writes, the Marshall Plan "provide[d] almost unlimited U.S. funding for the necessary repairs to Europe's cities, highways, and railways."[20] Frank Schipper has shown how the "machinery" of the Marshall Plan pushed for the adoption of American mobility paradigms and the liberalization of "individual motorized traffic." Cataloguing numerous instances of top-down policy objectives aimed at expanding European roads to meet commercial needs, Schipper argues that a "concern about European mobility formed part of the Marshall Plan from the start" while "the presence of American tourists in Europe created a subtle pressure to introduce road-related services" as they were visitors "who

[18] Brian McKenzie, "Creating a Tourist's Paradise," 42, 44. Briand McKenzie examines the promotion of transatlantic tourism to France between 1948 to 1952 and focuses on policy, debates over American influence, and how tourism was perceived in the country by the end of the Marshall Plan.
[19] Ibid., 44.
[20] Herman Van der Wee, *Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy, 1945-1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 44.

had become inseparable from their cars."[21] The 1950 ERP report cited specialty bus tours equipped with modern comforts, the availability of car-for-hire services in almost every ERP country on a "drive-yourself" or "driver-furnished" basis, the delivery of rental cars at major ports of entry for immediate use by American tourists, and the promotion of "delivery upon arrival" of cars purchased from European distributors as major factors influencing the growing popularity of mobile tourism.[22]

Rebuilt from the ground up, Western European countries offered a highly sophisticated, multi-tiered system to facilitate and support inter and intranational tourism by automobile. In addition to alleviating the congestion in major tourist destination spots during the peak tourism season, the development of infrastructure supporting automotive tourism attracted American tourists drawn to the concept of navigating a foreign landscape vis-à-vis a familiar mode of travel and unencumbered by traditional modes of mass transportation. Portions of the 1950 ERP report were devoted to assessing and predicting the role of automotive travel in the current and projected state of tourism in Western Europe. By the time of the ERP report, "[b]ridges and underpasses have been restored in all countries but Greece, where this is now being done, and motorists may travel from one end of Western Europe to the other with little difficulty." The report emphasized the enhancement and growth of infrastructure and industries catering to auto-related tourism and travel more broadly: the addition of ferry services for automobile transport over water routes, the proliferation of service repair shops equipped with spare parts, the dissemination of "information on inns and restaurants along the main routes for automobile travel beyond what it was prior to World War II," the availability of un-rationed gasoline in most countries, and the improvement of "road signs, maps and guidebooks for the motorist." While

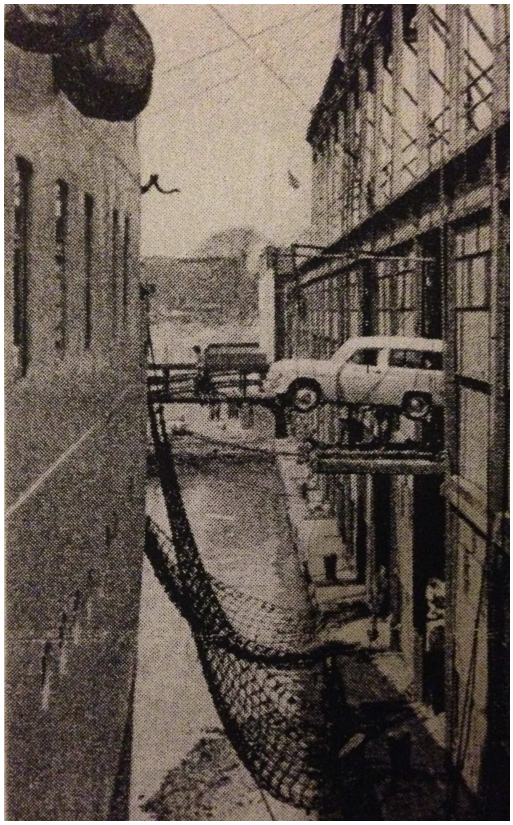
[21] Frank Schipper, 220, 223.
[22] "Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program," 12-13.

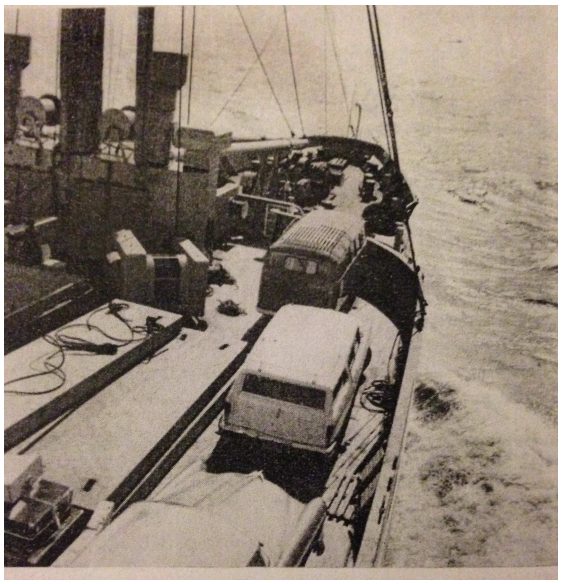
state led initiatives and Marshall Plan machinery worked in tandem to develop road and tourism infrastructure, shipping lines, car rental agencies, car manufacturers, and organizations like the American Automobile Association worked to address the various needs of private motorists interested in driving through Western Europe.

Westways Magazine published a first-hand account in August of 1958 written by an American who, like Julia and Paul Child ten years earlier, decided to ship his private passenger car to Europe and drive it upon arrival. With his wife and young son along for the ride, Charles Mohler first drove cross-country from Los Angeles to New York in the family car and, upon arriving in New York, boarded the *SS Ryndman* to complete the second leg of their trip car secured in the ship's cargo hold. The cost of shipping the car overseas was $350 round trip but the certainty that the car would be immediately available upon making port was priceless in Mohler's eyes; Mohler feared that the demand for cars by "the great number of tourists going to Europe" would stress supply and that, if shipped separately, the car might not be waiting for him upon arrival if transported by freight. With the assistance of the Automobile Club of Southern California (an AAA offshoot), he arranged for staterooms on the ship and a space for the car in the cargo hold.[23] As the 1950 ERP report on tourism noted,

> the Transatlantic Passenger Conference agreed late in 1949 to reduce further the round-trip rates for automobiles. These rates are still considerably above prewar. Since steamship lines carried only about 3,000 automobiles in 1949 compared with capacity for 13,000, the outlook for further reductions is hopeful. The American Automobile Association is taking the lead in sponsoring rate reductions. More cars taken to Europe by Americans will increase dollar expenditures in rural areas and relieve the concentration of travelers in large cities."[24]

[23] Charles Mohler, "We Took Our Car to Europe," *Westways*, August 1958.
[24] "Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program," 12.





Figures 3.2 and 3.3: At left, a photograph of Charles Mohlers' automobile being loaded onto the *SS Ryndam* in New York (as captured by the author). At right, cars moved out onto the deck of the SS Ryndam during the crossing of the English Channel in preparation for unloading in Le Havre, France. Charles Mohler, "We Took Our Car to Europe," *Westways*, August 1958.

The rapid spread and growth of multi-national car rental agencies also shaped the contours of American tourism in Western Europe. In 1958, a decade after the start of the Marshall Plan, National Rental Car System Inc. completed "one of the largest foreign expansion programs ever accomplished by a car rental organization." According to National's president Charles Hillard, the company had 94 stations maintained in 15 different countries in Europe—"virtually every country in free Europe". The expansion brought National's total operation to 600 stations in 29 countries around the world and represented "a 50 percent increase within a year." "Hillard says there is a vastly increasing number of tourists from [the United States] who find

that rental cars are the most economical way to see Europe."[25] In 1959 the global expansion of car rental agencies continued to yield huge growth, with National's executive vice-president Walter J. Phillips reporting "that his company's foreign bookings indicated a rise of 50 percent this year above 1958 bookings."[26] Along with National Car Rental System, advanced bookings for rental cars in the three major European markets of Germany, France and England overseen by Hertz American International, Ltd. had increased by 50 percent in March of 1959 alone.[27] Hertz was present in thirty-one countries and 313 cities in addition to its operations in the United States. The car rental industry's basic model as it exists in the present day evolved during this period; for example, tourists could "pick up a car in one European country and leave it in another without paying for the return of the vehicle to its home base." Car rental agencies believe their service was popular due to the "go-as-you-please" nature of automotive travel and the "economy of the operation" that allowed groups to travel together and "share the cost"; with no additional costs for extra passengers, "such travel is often cheaper than that by bus or train."[28] News reports in the United States credited the record expansion of overseas car rental interests to the ever-growing influx of American tourists to foreign countries, a trend which "show[ed] no signs of ebbing. In fact, this trend is expecting to increase considerable this year as more jet planes go

[25] "The Tribune Traveler's Guide: Briefs From the Travel World," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 5, 1958.
[26] Alexander R. Hammer, "Business Is Booming Overseas For U. S. Auto Rental Concerns: U.S. Car Rentals Rising," *New York Times*, March 15, 1959.
[27] "Business in Booming." "Avis Rent-A-Car System is represented in twenty-nine foreign countries and 231 foreign cities, while National Car Rental operates in more than fifty countries." "Domestic car rental concerns in recent years have been expanding their operation all over the globe. Trade sources estimate that the American car rental companies this year will derive from 5 to 15 percent of their total revenues from their overseas operations. National Car Rental expects its total revenues this year to exceed $50,000,000 and Hertz anticipates sales of over $90,000,000 for 1958."
[28] "Business in Booming."

into service."[29] The simultaneous expansion of car rental agencies and advancements in aviation technology, contributed to the growing accessibility and democratization of American travel to Western Europe in the post-war era.

European car manufacturers were also involved in facilitating and capitalizing on the growing trend of American autotourism in Western Europe through the promotion of overseas delivery plans that allowed American tourists in Western Europe to lease, purchase and import back to the United States, or purchase and sell back new car models. Car manufacturers offered an all-inclusive leasing plan which, if one were to be abroad long enough, would prove more economical in the face of the daily fees and mileage surcharges associated with renting an automobile. Through the purchase repurchase plan, an American tourist in Western Europe could buy a car and then sell it back to the manufacturer or authorized agent upon the conclusion of the trip; this option was economically advantageous the longer the time spent abroad. The American in Europe could also arrange for the outright purchase of a new European car model which, paired with an importation tax subsidy back to the United States, collapsed all of the above charges into a new car that could be driven during a sojourn in Western Europe and the delivery of said car back to the U.S. for long-term personal usage. As Charles Mohler explained, "wait until you are in the country which sells the automobile you want, then buy it direct, therefore avoiding a good portion of the import tax in the U.S. by applying your $500 tax free allowance against the car's purchase price…two people equals $1000 allowance." In 1957, *The Washington Post* noted that the leasing option allowed Americans to "buy new cars, use them for touring, then resell them overseas for prices surprisingly close to those they paid."[30] Although it is

[29] Ibid.
[30] "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto." Hubbard, the author, was a representative of the American Automobile Association.

impossible to quantify how many Americans chose the buy-then-drive approach to travel in Western Europe, this method of securing a car occupied a specific moment in post-war American-European economic relations.

Over the course of 1959, Renault, a French automobile manufacturer, ran advertisements in *Westways* detailing the benefits of purchasing a new car while traveling in Europe and then bringing it back to the United States. The advertisements managed to distill both the economical (cost effective) and experiential (efficiency of movement) boons of touring Europe by car through a simple proposition: "Spend less, see more: drive your own RENAULT in Europe." Informing prospective tourists (and customers) that, "you see more of Europe when you have the freedom of your own car" the advertisement described Renault's "overseas delivery plan" as "easy" and "economical": "Order your Renault in the States. When you arrive abroad all details—registration, plates, license, insurance—are taken care of. Later, you bring your Renault home for less than if bought here." Tourists could "choose the famous 4-door Dauphine or one of the 7 other popular models," all of which feature "terrific economy, up to 40-mpg, wonderful roadability (sic), [and] lots of luggage space" as well as "service and parts assured by Europe's largest, most reliable dealer network."[31]

The American Automobile Association provided numerous domestic-based services to assist prospective American autotourists in coordinating a trip to Western Europe. The Travel Bureau of the American Automobile Association offered an extensive array of services such as "furnish[ing] all necessary papers for touring Europe by car," inspecting lodgings, restaurants, and attractions in various European countries, manning branches on the ground Western Europe,

[31] "Spend less, see more: drive your own RENAULT in Europe," Advertisement, *Westways,* March 1959 and April 1959. Citroen also capitalized on the new market by advertising in *Westways*. For example, see "Citroen: A Car is a Must in Europe! Citroen's," Advertisement, *Westways,* February 1958; April 1959; May 1959.

and putting motorists in touch with "affiliated automobile clubs in Europe" for "help and advice."[32] Responding to the "boom in motoring abroad," in 1956 AAA also expanded inspection services and dispatched field reporters—all of whom possessed "extensive experience covering highways and byways in the United States, Canada and Mexico"—on "preliminary survey" expeditions in the countries of France, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Denmark. The American Automobile Association would use "American standards" as a comparative basis for rating facilities and "also report out-of-way, off-beat places which visitors ought to see."[33] In addition to arranging for the shipment of American cars abroad and processed the international drivers licenses and various permits required for driving in foreign countries,[34] the American Automobile Association sponsored various specialty tours by automobile.[35] Other companies were taking advantage of this burgeoning industry. For instance, in 1957 Travel Services Inc. (based in Berkeley, California) published a pamphlet promoting a chauffeured "grand tour of Europe by private car."[36]

The evolution of specialized commercial services geared toward facilitating American autotourism in Western Europe emerged from and through the confluence of state led policies and private enterprise; while programs to reconstruct and expand automotive and tourism infrastructure emerged in tandem from the top down, car manufacturers, car rental agencies and organizations like the AAA capitalized on demand created by a newly emerging American

---

[32] Lucille Popenoe, "Europe by Car," *Westways*, June 1950.
[33] "AAA Expanding Inspection To Cover Much of Europe."
[34] See "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto."
[35] The American Automobile Association published numerous advertisements in Westways magazine promoting car-related tourism furnished through the organization. See for example, "Motor thru Europe via a AAA Motorcade," *Westways*, April 1961 and "The tour of Tours to Europe," *Westways*, March 1952.
[36] "Stop Tours Present Grand Tour of Europe by Private Car" (Berkeley: Pamphlet Division of Travel Service Inc., Spring 1957).

market of drivers comprised of ever-increasing number of American tourists willing and able to explore Western Europe. And, as Frank Schipper argues, the presence of American tourists also created a subtle but powerful bottom up pressure to expand and improve automotive and tourism infrastructure through "the perceived need to yield to the wishes of the American tourist contributed to the establishment and improvement of road-related services."[37] The cooperative efforts by governmental and private industries to promote autotourism are most aptly illustrated by the eventual presence of car rental agencies at major stations in major shipping ports and along the French National Railroads. By 1957, American tourists were able to pick up pre-arranged rental cars at major French ports (Le Havre, Brest, Cherbourg, or Marseilles) upon arrival by ship and French National Railroads began a service whereby motorists could travel by rail from Boulogne to Lyon and have their private passenger cars loaded for transport on the same train. The overnight "*train mixte*" service allowed motorists to catch up on sleep and avoid the congestion of major cities like Paris while traveling on a "special double-decker train" equipped with cargo space for the car and sleeping accommodations for the driver-cum-passenger. By 1961, tourists could arrange to pick up a rental car at railroad stations throughout France[38] and, the "*train mixte*" service expanded operation to several more lines; motorists could take advantage of the service "between Paris and Biarritz, Avignon and Milan, and between Avignon and Bern, Zurich, Liege, Dusseldorf and Amsterdam."[39]

---

[37] Frank Schipper, 223.
[38] "Tourist Tips: Going to France? Why Walk?," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1961.
[39] "Through France by Train with Car" (International News Photos), *New York Times*, June 23, 1957; "Through France by Rail—With Automobile," *New York Times*, August 27, 1961.

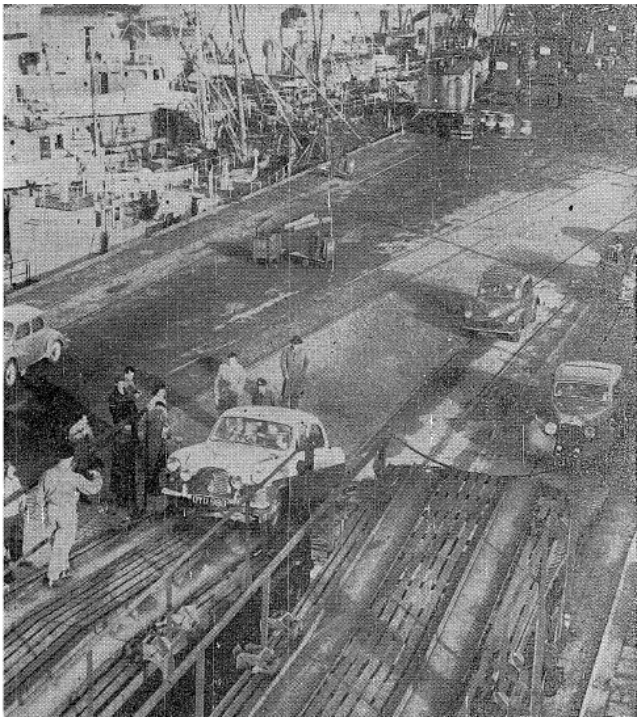


Figure 3.4 The *train-mixte* service offered by the French railroad. The accompanying caption reads, "Drive-It-Yourself: Ferry from Dover brings cars to Boulogne docks, where motorists maneuver their vehicles up the ramps." Note that in this early, semi-informal instantiation motorists themselves were charged with driving their own private passenger cars onto the cargo trains. "Through France by Train with Car (International News Photos)", *New York Times*, June 23, 1957.

Seeing the "Real" France—By Car

Regardless of how American tourists secured a car for their travels through Western Europe, the goal was to get around. Charles Mohler's desire to see Western Europe by car was based upon the self-described belief that the autonomy of movement it provided was indispensable to the family's overall enjoyment of their 1958 trip abroad: "When my wife and I began planning a trip to Europe, we had several ideas gained from our former trips. The first of these was the conviction that having your own car in Europe is a convenience and a pleasure that, together, add up to a necessity. Traveling by automobile opens up a country in a way no other means of transportation can match."[40] Presented with nearly 4,000,000 square miles and a "lifetime of travel to cram into too brief a time," the automobile allowed American tourists to literally and figuratively cover a lot of ground by touring through and to major Western European destination points—the number of which seemed to surpass attempts at quantification.

[40] Charles Mohler, "We Took Our Car to Europe."

Masters of their own touristic futures, autotourists in Western Europe got to choose from the best of both worlds: old and new. Rather than "by-pass[ing] cities for the countryside, monuments for mountains" or "miss[ing] crowds to meet people," the American autotourist was able to "Chart the course you wish to follow and linger as long as you like. No one to say where you're going, or when. A car can't shorten long distances or lengthen the little time you have to spend, but it can and does lead to a carefree, comfortable way to travel."[41]

The same year Charles Mohler drove Western Europe, Harry Lerner's 1958 "European Car and Travel Guide" positioned autotourism very similarly: "with a car you can make the most of your European trip; you'll be able to go where you please, when you please, and do things you haven't had the opportunity to do before. Be among those who, upon their return home, can honestly say, "I've been to Europe and I really got around." The automobile was a means to "really see the heart and soul of Europe (which most tourists miss) as well as the overpublicized run-of-the-mill tourist 'highlights.'" The authenticity of tourism experience underwrote the logic of his entire guide: "You'll have the opportunity to really meet the Europeans and they'll have the same chance to meet you as an individual, and not as part of the mass onrush of tourists coming each year to Europe."[42]

Itemizing the numerous reasons why touring Europe by car was the superior method of travel, Lerner's version of seeing Europe was the perfect mixture of autonomy, efficiency and affordability. Autotourists traveled at their own pace on their own itinerary unburdened by arrival and departure timetables or ticketing complications; common hassles of transporting luggage (e.g. porters) are avoided by transporting baggage along with passengers in the car;

---

[41] Geroge Cotliar, "The Right Road…See it All—By Auto," *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 1960.
[42] Harry Lerner, *European Car and Travel Guide: A Guide for Tourists Who Want to Enjoy Europe by Car* (Minneapolis, MN: T.S. Denison and Co, 1958), 4, 6.

money is saved on taxi fares; tourists traveling by car are able to expand their radius of overnight accommodations and are thus less likely to encounter problems while searching for hotel vacancies; visiting out-of-the-way countryside locations where "living costs are much lower" provided the opportunity "stay at cheaper, and often superior" inns and hotels. Along with describing the numerous benefits of "seeing Europe by car," Lerner hoped his guide would "serve as a store of valuable information to the many American tourists motoring through Europe each year, and as a useful guide for those tourists planning to buy a European auto." He provided a detailed accounting of essential information for drivers (routes, border crossing information, gasoline availability, price ranges) and a breakdown of information on itinerary planning and suggestions for 18 different European countries. Lerner believed travel by car was not only the "cheapest way to see Europe" but "as convenient and advantageous as traveling by car in the United States" because of "excellent roads" and a "sufficient supply" of gasoline. In addition to the easing of complications associated with traditional modes of travel, autotourists could "go where the trains and buses do not go" and stop to explore off-the-beaten path as desired: "[Travel by car] offers the greatest possible freedom and shows you a side of Europe impossible to discover in any other way. You set your own pace, go where you please, stop to chat with genial residents, pause to enjoy especially lovely views. You pack and leave when you like, never have to worry about luggage transfer in terminals, and can forget schedules."[43] As Lerner authoritatively informed readers in 1958, "However you look at it, when considering the facts,

[43] *AAA Travel Guide to Europe: 1969*. (New York: AAA (American Automobile Association) World Wide Travel, Inc, 1969) xvi. Also see, e.g., Donald Richards Hart, "Europe in your Car: A Planned Trip within Your Budget (Greenlawn, New York: Harian Publications, 1953). For more on travel guides in the European context, see Rudy Koshar, "'What Ought to Be Seen': Tourists' Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (July 1998): 323-340.

you'll agree that there is no substitute for auto transportation in Europe. On this single point all travel experts and experienced laymen travelers agree."[44]

France was one of the most popular destinations for American tourists and they "flocked to France in numbers far in excess of pre-war levels."[45] By the mid 1950s, private passenger cars driven by Americans rolled along the sprawling highways and tight roads and through the tiny hamlets and metropolitan cities of France on itineraries of their own making. For the post-war American autotourist, motoring in France (like the rest of Europe) was an attractive option because it wedded an economical mode of travel with a sense of experiential authenticity that travelling at the pace of mass transit could not deliver. In 1957, Walter W. Hubbard of the American Automobile Association deemed autotourism in France as the newest craze with the headline "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto."[46] With over 200,000 square miles to enjoy and "swanky coastal resorts on two sides of the country, a Spanish-speaking nation to the south and English-speaking nation to the north," the Hubbard described France as a tourist destination offering "virtually the same variety that we have in the United States." The report went on to state that "with all due respect to Europe's fine railways, Americans are leaning more and more to the idea that the best way to see Western Europe is by automobile." Autotourism facilitated individualized exploration beyond major destination cities and points of interests where Americans could experience the "delight of discovering small villages, of staying in out-of-the-way places where people you meet are not bored by a rush of tourists," experiences that created "the lasting memories of any trip."[47]

---

[44] Harry Lerner, 6.
[45] Brian McKenzie, "Creating a Tourists' Paradise," 50.
[46] "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto." The article informed readers about France's bucolic beauty, storied history, and cosmopolitan sophistication.
[47] "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto."

According to Harry Lerner's 1958 guide, France was home to the most extensive road system in the world; it was also the world's leading asphalt manufacturer: "In France, roads take you everywhere. In total length, there are about 436,000 of them, which means that to each square mile of France there is an average of two miles of road length, a figure not exceeded by any other country."[48] The extensive network of major highways (*Routes Nationales*), described by Lerner as "surprisingly good," allowed for fast travel to major destination points while secondary roads siphoned motorists to less frequented towns and villages where American tourists could take a more *laissez-faire* approach to sampling French customs and lifestyles. By venturing off the main highways, American motorists could "stay[] at inexpensive inns or *logis*, eating fabulous meals for much less than city prices" while "those who speed down the main highway miss much of the variety and most beautiful scenery in France." With an area of 212, 659 square miles and a population of 43,000,000 in 1958, Lerner described France as the "toughest country in the world to even suggest an itinerary for" because of it's size, which he noted was almost as large as Texas but "a lot more interesting" and the sheer magnitude of what a single region, let alone the whole country, had on offer for tourists: "It could take you weeks and weeks just to acquaint yourself with one section of the country. Normandy alone, for instance, can be the subject of an itinerary worthy of more time than you'd care to spend in all of France."[49] By allowing motorists to pick their own adventure and travel to destinations off the beaten path in the face of such sheer quantity and quality, motoring through France was depicted in the United States as more than an expedient or affordable mode of travel. While traveling by automobile allowed tourists to sample the sheer variety on offer, an autotour was, just as

[48] Harry Lerner, 83-87.
[49] Ibid., 85.

importantly, believed to be the best way to encounter the real, authentic "heart" of the country and its people.[50]

Lydia Lane, Beauty Editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, decided to "rent[] a little French car and [] motor leisurely" through the French countryside to Switzerland in 1957. Explaining how "[t]he rhythm in capitals is so similar, with the fashionable clothes, exclusive restaurants and late hours, [] one has to leave the cities to get the feel of a country,"[51] Lane, the newspaper's source for all things sophisticated, cosmopolitan, and glamorous, expanded her horizons beyond a mere trip to the French capital; Lane motored instead to Fontainebleau, Burgundy and the French Alps with notable descriptions of stops in Sens, Grenoble and Aix-Les-Bains along the way. Upon arriving in Fontainebleau on a Monday, Lane was pleased to be able to "feel the charm of it unspoiled by swarming tourists" and found the "Renaissance-era palace worth a visit even if you are allergic to sightseeing, for it is so completely furnished that it vividly reconstructs the splendor and the decadence of Louis XV, and the personality of Napoleon." In Burgundy, Lane encountered "vibrant green" hills and fields, French women working the fields using primitive methods and wearing "heavy black stockings, blue aprons and sunbonnets," and small, picturesque towns sporting "stone walls of medieval fortifications, narrow cobbled streets and remains of Roman occupation."

Lane's experience of motoring through France managed to strike just the right balance between cultural sophistication and pastoral simplicity redolent in nearly every depiction of

---

[50] "Auto Tour Best Way to See Heart of France," *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1956. Other noteworthy examples of news coverage regarding touring tips include Fred Hift, "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Some Tips on Seeing Europe by Automobile," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 27, 1952; and Paul J. C. Friedlander, "A Tourist Abroad: Motoring: Trip From Paris Through Switzerland to Venice Turns Out to be Ideal Way to See the Scenery and the People," *New York Times*, July 20, 1952.

[51] Lydia Lane, "Lydia Lane Describes Visit to France," *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1957.

driving in France published in American newspapers in the 1950s;[52] this balance mirrored the dominant imagery found in French tourism campaigns in the United States during the same period. Driving through France allowed Lane to encounter (and recount to her readers) the continuum of France depicted in promotional materials which, as Brian McKenzie has demonstrated, "presented a version of Frenchness that was both conservative and titillating" by melding imagery of the bucolic countryside with representations of the cosmopolitan elegance of major cities like Paris. As a result, France was presented as a destination that "offered opportunities for gratification unavailable anyplace else" and an encounter with French culture "offered the possibility for middleclass tourists to become sophisticated and glamorous."[53] And, as Christopher Endy argues, Marshall Plan officials viewed the cultivation of a "nouvelle clientele" from the American middle class as "the future" of tourism to post-war Europe—a future that would "belong[] to consumers who would prefer to do without the class-tinged rituals of interacting extensively with hotel porters and valets."[54] Despite "always leav[ing] Paris with a wish to return," Lane found her most memorable experience of France in Aix-Les-Bains while enjoying "gourmet" food and wine on the side of a deserted mountain:

> We felt the need to exercise and drove up a mountain near our hotel until we found a deserted spot. On the way we passed a farmer with an ox-drawn plow, his wife washing clothes on a rock at a stream….After about an hour's climb we found a view spot for our picnic lunch—a bottle of Beau Jolais, a red wine of the region which does not travel well but has to be drunk here to enjoy its full flavor and true bouquet, sandwiches of French

---

[52] See, for example, "How to See the Real France," *Westways*, October 1957

[53] Brian McKenzie, "Creating a Tourist Paradise," 48. According to McKenzie, "Economic imperatives compelled the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA, the administrative body of the Marshall Plan) and the French government (specifically the Commissariat Général du Plan) to develop programs to increase the number of American tourists in France, especially the "nouvelle clientele"–middle-income Americans," 37.

[54] Endy, 87. Harry Lerner pointed out that automotive travel minimizes the "baggage" of these person-to-person services because "by having your luggage in your car or on a luggage rack on top, you eliminate both porters and struggling with it yourself," 6.

> rolls scooped out and filled with delicious native cheese and freshly picked cherries. A cuckoo in a nearby tree serenaded us and we felt no gourmet dish ever tasted better.

If the future of tourism was to be found in American travelers happy to do without the "class-tinged rituals" of service industries and "the extent to which a French vacation could be a part of a middle-class American consumer enterprise," then who better to 'go without' and 'get the most' than the *Los Angeles Times'* beauty editor?[55]

While the French tourism industry's heavy investment in labor-intensive, individualized service ran the risk of alienating potential, class-conscious Americans and French promotional campaigns carefully negotiated the acquisition of "cultural capital and social prestige" for an American middle-class of potential consumers, the automobile offered its own, native-bred and middle-of-the-road solution to these top-down concerns.[56] But as more and more Americans travelled through France by car, the complexities of their arrival would set the stage for a contemporaneous consideration in the United States about the impact of American autotourism in France and the Americanization of the country more broadly.

Motel-Hell and Carmaggedon: Autotourism and the 'Americanization' of France

On January 8th, 1956 the *New York Times* signaled the birth of a new era of autotourism in France with a report about the construction of roadside accommodations six miles from Paris, off Route 7, near the Louveciennes township. Undertaken by the *Motels de France* and financed by "two American motel-operators", France's "first motel" was, according to the architect, M. Jean Chavaneau, "being designed and built primarily for American tourists-on-wheels already familiar with the motel system." Described as the "first of a nation-wide chain," the Louveciennes motel was under development in response to "the same conditions that led to the

[55] "Lydia Lane Describes Visit to France."
[56] Brian McKenzie, "Creating a Tourist Paradise," 38. As McKenzie writes, the middle-class demographic of American tourists "were consumer-pilgrims seeking not blessings but the bestowal of social and cultural capital," 18.

auto camps' rapid rise in the United States before the war—increasingly congested city traffic and rocketing hotel prices." By mid-spring of 1956, "American tourists driving into Paris will spot a familiar sight on the city's outskirts—an all-night neon sign burning above two rows of trim white bungalows set in a park of oak and ash trees sloping down to the Seine." Designed with "ample parking" to accommodate "seventy cars and…roughly 150 guests," the thirty housing units will be "partitioned into individual apartments consisting of a bedroom, bathroom and sun deck in each case. All the bungalows will be centrally oil-heated, the bathrooms equipped with showers, and every bedroom will have twin beds."[57]

According to the *New York Times* report, the developers believed the "chief attraction" of the Loveciennes site was its proximity to Paris, which enabled "motorized tourists to visit Paris at a reasonable price with a minimum of bother." Leaving their cars behind at the on-site parking lot, visitors could travel to the city "by bus or train in under thirty minutes," engage in "all the sight-seeing he wants at leisure" and return to the motel "without once getting trapped in the time-wasting Paris traffic jams." Open throughout the year to accommodate off-season travelers, at 2,100 Francs ($6) per night—a price described as "sweetly reasonable" given "present-day European standards"— the promoters had plans to construct three more motels along route 7, one outside of Avallon in Burgundy, one "outside the entrance" of Avingnon in Provence, and two more in the Paris region near Orly airport and just outside of the capital, respectively.

While the main investors were identified as American motel-operators looking to capitalize on the growing trend of motor tourism in France, the businessmen were granted leave

[57] Paul Henissart, "The Motel Comes to Paris, France: The First of Many Will Be Ready By Next May," *New York Times*, January 8, 1956. The motel's planned location was situated in "an extensive wooded tract between the road and the riverbank on the site of a once-popular suburban restaurant, the Pomme d'Api." The two American investor-operators were André Schneimann and Salomon Dobin.

to operate within the country and French officials were active participants in a relationship of mutual economic benefit from the arrival American tourists who embraced American road-travel paradigms abroad. Perhaps most importantly, the construction of the motel at the Louvecinennes site demonstrates an active process of adaption to meet local circumstances and, more broadly, the complexity of Americanization; an earlier proposal to "situate the motel in another suburban locality, Rueil-Malmaison, had to be given up when available lots of ground there proved too small for the purpose."[58] Even more significantly, lack of clarity over what would or should be termed a "motel" further complicates its position as a hallmark of Americanization and the exportation of American style goods and practices.

In his assessment of recent scholarship on the topic of "Americanization," Richard Kuisel calls for a microhistorical approach and a focus on the particularities of exporting specific products and/or practices as opposed to totalizing approaches about "the transfer of *a* culture [emphasis mine]." He offers up a few examples to concretize this method ("Disneyland Paris, not "American culture"; Nike, not "American style"; McDonald's, not "American food"; American tourists, not "Americans," and calls for scholars to "avoid[] extreme positions and [] offer[] an answer to what is "American" about the phenomenon."[59] The construction of the "first motel" in France at the Loveciennes site offers, as Kuisel calls for, the microhistorical interrogation of a particularly American export (the motel) without conflating its arrival with the importation and/or adoption of, for example, the more ephemeral concept of "American road culture." Addressing the question about what was specifically American about this development, however, leads to just as many questions as answers. A major conceptual difficulty arises from, firstly, the need to define a motel and pinpoint what specifically differentiates a motel from a hotel during

[58] Ibid.
[59] Kuisel, "Commentary: Americanization for Historians," 510-511.

this time period and, secondly, to what extent American news outlets abided by this definition to designate overnight facilities as an American-style motel rather than a hotel (American-style or otherwise).

While the construction of an American-style motel outside of Paris was novel, in the post-war years France engaged in a massive program to rebuild the French tourism industry under both the Marshall Plan and the Monnet Plan: "Hotels missed by shells and bombs were damaged by German and Allied occupations."[60] Despite efforts to ameliorate conditions, the French hotel industry was constantly under pressure to meet demand given the post-war influx of tourist. Operating on a labor-intensive model that stressed individualized service through on-site restaurants and on-call staff to personally assist guests over material comforts like en suite toilets and modern furnishings.[61] Under the banner of cultural exchange overseen by the ECA's Technical Assistance program, a contingent of hotel operators and restauranteurs led by Lucien Serre travelled to the United States in 1950. Seeking ways to modernize the French hotel system and attract American tourists, the delegation assessed travel accommodations in the United States and provided recommendations to the French hotel and tourism industries upon their return. The Serre delegation to the United States illustrates a process of evaluation and adaptation whereby the French tourism industry was invested in modernizing and developing accommodations for American travelers by integrating familiar amenities without compromising the character of the pre-existing French hotel model: Serre's delegation returned to France with a

[60] Brian McKenzie, "Creating a Tourist Paradise," 39.
[61] On the evolving character and practices of postwar French hotels, see Christopher Endy's chapter "Making France Safe for Middle-Class Americans," in *Cold War Holidays*, 81-99. In his 1958 travel guide, Harry Lerner warned American travelers about what to expect in terms of French overnight accommodations: "Unless you stay at the best hotels, that is, those reserved especially for tourists, you'll find French hotels dull, and terribly (not interestingly) old-fashioned. There's nothing romantic about old-fashioned hotels with furniture your grandmother used to have. We might say this in Germany or Austria, but not in France," 85.

list of recommendations for adoption in France that would "preserve the character of French hotels while at the same time Americanizing them enough to provide the conveniences that Americans seemed to take for granted (the report included blueprints for an American-style bathroom)."

While Serre was invested in preserving the character of French hotels in the self-professed belief that "the foreign traveler to European hotels expects something different and new, and that European hotels would lose some of their atmosphere should they try to copy completely the American hotel practices," McKenzie argues that there was some suggestion the French tourism industry was interested in the possibility of transplanting the American-style motel to French soil. According to McKenzie, the American-style motel received much attention from the delegation because Serre recognized that the "relationship between Americans and their cars were unique": "One can say that Americans practically live in their cars and love to have them in the course of their travels."[62] Along with recognizing this particularly American relationship, Serre believed that the development of services for transporting automobiles overseas would also increase the number of American tourists visiting France. Charles Mohler adamantly agreed with Serre's assessment on both counts and took this attachment one step further; the decision to ship his car to Europe in 1958 was eased by his "certain[ty] [that] our car wanted to go along."[63] Not only inseparable from his automobile, the car took on human traits and became a member of the family. Serre's view was also echoed in the 1950 ERP report on tourism, which suggested that tourism industries in Western European countries look to develop

[62] Lucien Serre, quoted in Brian McKenzie, 39, 40. Also see Endy p. 85-94 for more information on the delegations.
[63] Charles Mohler, "We Took Our Car to Europe."

road and road-side infrastructure to not only capitalize on the growing trend of autotourism but alleviate the congestion of popular destination spots during the peak tourist seasons:

> Motor facilities must be further improved to widen the distribution of tourism. This will relieve congestion in the larger cities and resorts during the summer peak. The construction of accommodations adapted from the popular and profitable American motor courts development, would assist this objective.[64]

Writing for the *New York Times*, in 1955 Michael Hoffman echoed this concern and warned prospective American tourists that, "Until there is considerably more investment in hotels, motels or other kinds of sleeping accommodations it is risky to tour Western Europe during the summer on the assumption that one can stop at the next interesting town."[65]

While the 1950 Serre designation was interested in compromising between the minimal adoption of some amenities present in the American hotel industry and the preservation of the appearance and practices of pre-existing French models, American news reports appeared to either overlook or completely ignore the nuance involved in cultural transfer (American or otherwise) best represented by Serre's view. Instead, the presence of any customs or amenities believed to be based upon American hotel models seemed to transform the French hotel (hotels located along roadways etc.) into, on one end, an American-style hotel and, on the other, an American-style motel. The "arrival" of an American-style motel outside of Paris raises the issue of the character and extent of American influence on the evolution of both Western European mobility patterns as well as tourism infrastructure during the post-war period. Although mass tourism did not greatly change the cultural and social paradigms of France, post-war

---

[64] "Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program," 25. France's tourism industry—particularly the hotels—worked continuously to accommodate the postwar influx of tourists during this period. See John E. Booth, "The Whole of France Welcomes the Tourist: Government-Sponsored Improvement of Hotels is Opening Rural Areas to the Vacationist," *New York Times*, February 19, 1950.

[65] Michael H. Hoffman, "Tourism Now Europe's Best Dollar Earner."

"[r]econstruction Americanized the physical features of the tourism industry."[66]

In his discussion of the French tourism industry, Christopher Endy explicitly associates the pre-war motel in the United States with affordability and simplicity: "Less expensive than hotels, motels cut costs by doing away with stately lobbies and dinning rooms and by reducing the amount of personal service and attention devoted to guests." According to Endy, after World War II, motels were still less expensive than hotels in the United States but began to place a greater emphasis on "offer[ing] increasing levels of material niceties" and "physical comfort" with amenities such as en suite showers, bathtubs, and hot water." Despite the increase in material creature comforts, motels in the United States to this day lack labor-intensive amenities such as room- and valet- service. In contrast, "stately hotels increasingly became the property of emerging chains like Hilton Hotels, which used economies of scale and innovative time-motion studies to help raise material standards while offering rates that, although expensive, attracted some middle class clients."[67] Endy's characterization misses perhaps the most definitive component of motels in the United States; the distinguishing feature that differentiate a motel from a hotel is that it is designed for motorists, is usually located adjacent to or nearby roads and highways, offers a parking area for automobiles, and typically embraces a more informal, family-oriented approach. Thus, in addition to affordability and the streamlining of personal, service-oriented amenities, the American-style motel is wedded to automobility and automotive travel (touristic or otherwise) in a way that hotels, be they American or European, simply are not.[68] It

[66] Brian McKenzie, "Creating a Tourist Paradise," 50.
[67] Christopher Endy, 85-86. As Endy argues, "for middle class Americans, who generally had less desire to see and be seen in high-society circles, the increased anonymity of motels could represent an advantage rather than a drawback," 85.
[68] For the definitive history of the 20th century evolution of motor courts and motels in the United States, see Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel,*

is this fundamental factor that may account for the tendency of American news outlets to label the construction in France of overnight lodging along or near roads as motels.

The *Chicago Daily Tr*ibune reported that motels were "unknown in France" in 1955.[69] Nonetheless, the *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1956 that the American-style motel was becoming "increasingly popular on Europe tourist routes" and, citing Richard Mazzarrini, vice-president for Trans World Airlines, reported that "about 35 motels have been built on principal tourist routes, with more to come." Described as "usually built in American style," some motels were equipped with "TV sets, sun decks, [and] patios" as well as dedicated garage spaces "since many Americans can now rent cars to tour Europe"[70] [Perhaps a boom in motel construction?] William Hubbard, speaking on behalf of the American Automobile Association, informed readers of The *Washington Post* in 1957 that, "France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Germany and Portugal all have moderate-priced hotels and the equivalent of our motor courts.[71] His use of the word "equivalent" suggests the difficulty of definitely labeling road-side overnight accommodations in France as motels. The discrepancy of accounts in American media about the presence of American-style motels raises a multitude of questions having to do with appearance and terminology. The possible reticence on the part of French (and other European) hotel operators to embrace this designation may be indicative of resistance to processes of Americanization at the level of language. Frank Schipper, citing tourism statistics provided by

---

1910–1945 (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1979), particularly the chapter "Early Motels, 1925-1945," 130-173.

[69] "The Tribune Traveler's Guide: French Guide Book Rates Restaurants," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 24, 1955.

[70] "Travel: American Motel Idea Increasingly Popular on Europe Tourist Routes," *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1956.

[71] "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto."

the OEEC, notes that "by 1959 only Austria claimed to have motels."[72] More importantly, however, rhetoric surrounding the motels perceived "arrival" in France was met with much resistance in American news outlets.

While elite and scholarly criticisms of Americanization, particularly in the context of tourism, focus on its homogenizing effects and often emphasize official or popular resistance, individuals in recipient countries often enjoy its boons. The architect of the Louveciennes site, M. Chavaneau, embraced the import of the American-style motel and believed the particular nature of the facility would soon catch on with European travelers:

> Once the motel movement is launched, M. Chavaneau feels that British and Belgian holidaygoers, who already have a nodding acquaintance with the term, will quickly become enthusiastic supporters of the idea. French motorists, he thinks, will take a little longer to adjust to the notion of breaking their journey at a roadside camp in preference to a hotel whose every convenience and shortcoming is carefully tabulated in the Guide Michelin.[73]

Instead, it was the *New York Times* that exhibited a sense of touristic nostalgia in the face of Americanization when describing the possibility of France's adoption of the American-style motel: "Motels, if they turn out to be as popular as its promoters expect, will deal a terrific blow to the Gallic tradition of leisurely travel punctuated by Rabelaisian meals amid catch-as-catch-can facilities. Gone the savory, soul-stirring dinner paid for at the evening's end by the drafty bedroom at the head of an ill-lit corridor reached by a corkscrew staircase."[74] The *Afro-American*'s coverage in 1954 took much the same tenor, writing that "As if chewing gum, cokes and American cigarettes were not enough is [sic] the way of importation from the USA….soon,

---

[72] Frank Schipper, footnote 84, 228. Schipper also argues that although "the motel had developed into an important branch of the tourist industry in the United States and could be built for a fraction of the cost of a conventional hotel," in 1950 the OEEC found that "the motel did not fit the European context because the distances travelled by car were not sufficiently large to make it a success" 222.
[73] "Motel Comes to Paris, France."
[74] Ibid.

between Paris and the Riviera, you will be invited by a neon sign saying, "Stop at Joe's Place," or "Dew Drop Inn—two kilometers ahead!"[75]

If the introduction of the American-style motel in France was received with reticence by the *New York Times*, the evolution of American-style mobility patterns amongst the French population was positioned by the newspaper in much the same manner. By 1961, the newspaper was bemoaning the rapid adoption of the automobile in France as "creating problems that threaten the romance itself":

> France's love affair with the automobile is altering the country not slowly, but swiftly, even brutally. There are cars everywhere in France now, even in isolated villages, and there are shiny new gas stations every few hundred yards dispensing the most expensive gas in Europe-about 85 cents a gallon. Even this does not slow down the sale and driving of cars. There are dozens of new motels in vacation areas, some with swimming pools, and next to them, most likely, a camping ground where tent space can be rented by vacationers who could afford to buy a car on the installment plan but can't afford to hire a bedroom in a hotel, motel or whatever, with swimming pool or without.[76]

A cause for consternation according to the *New York Times*, the Frenchman's "love affair" with the automobile was congesting roads and contributing to the presence of "dozens "of motels peppering the landscape. As if the impact of the rapid expansion of a domestic culture of automobility in France on both travel and lodging patterns wasn't enough, the birth of the French motorist was also "changing the eating habits of the nation, and apparently [] slowly strangling medium-priced restaurants everywhere."[77] With "luxury inns [] being opened, often in beautiful but isolated settings, in old chateaux or manors" for "well-heeled" patrons in response to the

---

[75] Ollie Stewart, "Report From Paris," *Afro-American*, March 27, 1954; Chirstopher Endy, 131. While Endy points out that "African Americans accounted for only 1 percent of U.S. air travel across the Atlantic in the mid-1960s," he does commit a small portion on African American travelers to France, 130-131, 194-195.

[76] Robert Daley, "Liberte, Egalite, Parkwe!: The Frenchman's Love Affair with the Car is Changing the Face of France & Creating Problems that Threaten the Romance Itself," *New York Times*, August 27, 1961.

[77] Ibid.

growing mobility of French citizens, the average Frenchman, "barely able to meet payments on their cars", was "learning not to stop at restaurants at all" and settle for roadside a picnic instead.

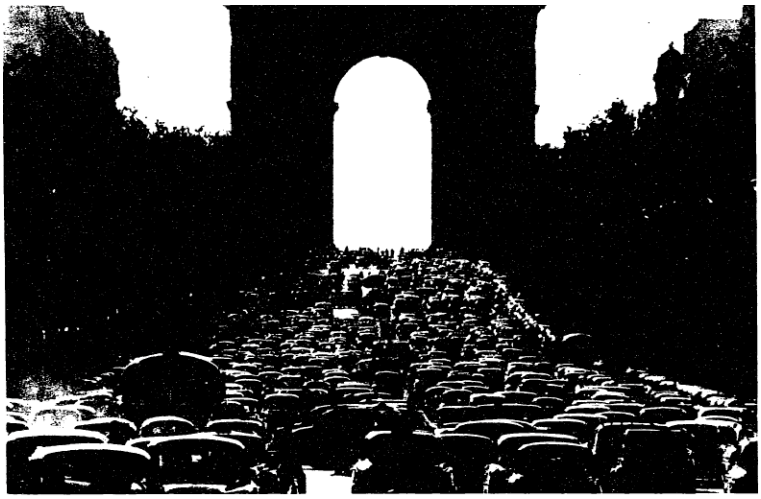


Figure 3.5: This photograph of cars packing the Champs-Elysées appeared in the New York Times on August 7th, 1961 as evidence of the growing culture of automobility in France and its negative impact upon everyday life and the touristic experience. The accompanying caption invokes this transformation: "Not-So-Elysian: A slow-moving tide on wheels jams the once-open Champs-Elysées. Main Streets all over France are similarly choked as the census of cars tops 5 million." Robert Daley, "Liberte, Egalite, Parkwe!: The Frenchman's Love Affair with the Car is Changing the Face of France & Creating Problems that Threaten the Romance Itself," *New York Times*, August 27, 1961.

While in 1961 the *New York Times* had hefted the banner of the middle-class Frenchman, by the mid-1950s the American autotourist had "arrived" in France but in the United States this arrival was already being depicted as costly: "Most travelers will want to see Paris, and they can do so inexpensively. Sure, you can ride to the top of [the] Eiffel Tower and buy a meal, but it's more fun to eat at a cozy café in Montmarte or just off the Champs Elysee, and a lot lighter on your purse." Although a major advantage of travel by car was that one could "go where you want, when you want to," the trend toward autotourism was as much about economy as

autonomy: "You don't try to 'keep up with the Jonses' at home," so don't try to keep up with the Rothchilds while in Europe."[78]

The 1950 ERP report on tourism identified the development of automotive infrastructure as a way to attract American tourists and relieve congestion at major tourist destination points. Along with relieving congestion, the development of intra and international highways would funnel tourists throughout participating ERP countries and help 'spread the wealth' of American tourist dollars spent in Western Europe. The ERP approved goal of building major transportation networks to spread out the movement of tourists, and thus tourist dollars, however, had unexpected consequences. While the cost of an American visit to France continued to rise, the growing mobility of tourists, American or otherwise, was, at least in the *New York Times* ' opinion, a cause for concern:

> Major roads are frantically being widened and repaved and whenever possible are made to skirt villages, rather than wind through crowded, narrow, cobblestoned (but cool and pleasant for all of that) village main streets as they used to. One is making 60 miles an hour (instead of 10 m.p.h. through the village, as before) and one notes the exit road leading to the village and the pathetic group of signs begging the motorist to interrupt his journey to tarry there…But the motorist is traveling too fast and doesn't even consider it. There are dozens of villages like this in France. They have stood astride the main road for a thousand or more years, humming with the traffic of the empire. Now they are as quiet and empty as ghost towns. What will happen to them? Probably they will atrophy and die. The people will move away, the roofs will fall in, moss will cover everything and the paint will flake off the sign begging the motorist of 1961 to: VISIT OUR VILLAGE.

Depicted as a vicious cycle, American news outlets depicted the increase of tourist mobility along major routes in France as contributing to the rise of localized tourist costs to make up for revenue that, in bygone days, would have pumped money into smaller communities over the course of a day or two rather than mere hours. Offsetting the loss of revenue only increased the rate at which tourists travelled and then caused struggling businesses to continue to raise prices.

[78] "Today's Trend Is to Tour France by Auto."

Rhetoric about the rising cost of tourism to France was, of course, the outgrowth of much more complex circumstances than the speed at which autotourists traveled, but fears that the "authenticity" of the tourism experience itself was being increasingly compromised by the phenomenon of French automobility. The rhetoric surrounding the changing appearance of the French tourism industry and automobility patterns more broadly suggests that a debate over Americanization and American cultural transference were not the sole purview of "recipient" countries like France.[79] Thus, while scholarship on the Americanization of post-war Western Europe in the context of tourism studies has focused on how countries like France navigated the expanding cultural influence of the United States, historicizing the ways in which the "costs" of this influence were depicted in American news outlets suggests that the perceived impact of Americanization and globalization was open to a multitude of interpretations in the United States, as well.

In vivid and self-deprecating language, Arnold Johnson detailed his loss and eventual reclamation of masculinity while driving abroad through Western Europe with his family in the spring of 1963:

> In Paris one day last spring, I timidly steered a Peugeot 403 station wagon down the Rue de la Paix—gripping the wheel and cravenly allowing taxis to zoom in front of me. All the while, I was being bombarded with advice from my wife and two children on how to douse the accidentally-turned-on driving lights. Finally, completely humiliated, I had to stop and ask a policeman. Seven weeks later, I returned to Paris a changed man. I drove nonchalantly with one hand and bluffed taxi drivers at their own game. From time to time I was able to enjoy my membership in the International Girls Watchers Society.[80]

If the car was a means for American autotourists to travel through foreign landscapes efficiently and affordably—and its windshield a lens for encountering and viewing these spaces—Arnold

---

[79] On the development of, and debates about, mass tourism in France, see Ellen Furlough, "Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France, 1930s-1970s," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 2 (April) 1998: 247-286.
[80] Arnold Johnson, "'How was it—Driving in Europe?'" *Westways*, September 1963.

Johnson's hard-earned comfort behind the wheel became an opportunity to consume and sexualize the bodies of foreign women. After motoring for 7,000 kilometers (4,200 miles) through France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Belgium and England, Johnson finally felt "at home" behind the wheel despite being far away from home. A spectator of the modern Parisian cultural tableau as seen through his rental car's windshield, Johnson embraced the role of the *flâneur* by actively observing and participating in mass culture through an historically specific experiential mode of tourism by car. While critics view Americanization (and its close relative, globalization) as a homogenizing phenomenon and position modern, mass tourism as manufactured and staged for the tourist's consumption, Johnson account of driving in Paris illustrates the extreme complexity of both processes. As John Urry and Scott Lasch argue, "What is consumed in tourism are visual signs and sometimes simulacrum; and this is what is consumed when we are supposedly not acting as tourists at all."[81] Unconsciously acknowledging the production of "themed" spaces and visual spectacle,[82] Johnson recounted his two children's impressions of their time driving in Europe: "'This has been fun, hasn't it, Dad?' my fourteen year old boy, Bruce, said as we rolled back into Paris. 'Just like driving down to Disneyland every day,' added my ten-year old daughter, Christine."[83]

[81] John Urry and Scott Lasch, *Economies of Sign and Space* (London: Sage, 1994), 272. Also see John Urry, *The Tourist's Gaze* (London: Sage, 1990).
[82] For more on this concept, see Scott Lukas, ed., *The Themed Space: Locating Culture, Nation and Self* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).
[83] Arnold Johnson, "'How was it—Driving in Europe?'"

CHAPTER FOUR
'Paving' the Road to Statehood: Alaskan Tourism and the Alaska Highway, 1942-1963

On the first of September 1947, Iris Woolcock set out from her farm in Putney, Virginia in a "very cute" grey jeep hauling a 27-foot trailer and headed west on the first leg of an eventual solo trip to Fairbanks, Alaska Territory via the Alaska Highway. After hearing word-of-mouth reports on the road and the weather conditions from travelers in Montana returning from the highway, who suggested the trailer would not make it, Woolcock detoured to Wakarusa, Indiana and acquired a new 33-foot Liberty Trailer and a cat, 'Sweetie,' and waited until "the good winter road would still be at its best" in late January or early February. Experiencing countless breakdowns and automotive complications minimized by her sheer automotive know-how and the generosity of helping hands, along the way she also acquired at least one marriage proposal, a dog, Peater, and numerous second-glances while traveling along the Alaska Highway:

> When I rolled up to the Customs Office at Tok Junction [Alaska] a couple of tourist boys on their way south were just coming out. One of them held his hand above his eyes to scan the length of my outfit and then said gleefully to his partner, "Now I can go home happy—I've seen everything!" then the usual flood of questions as to how I ever got up the highway with such an outfit, and the dumb-founded surprise at finding I was doing it alone.[1]

Rather than the "desolate and lonely place" envisioned by her friends and family, Woolcock described the highway as "the friendliest road in the world." While eating dinner in Burwash, Ontario, for example, she ran into a truck driver who "had passed [her] so many times on the highway it was like meeting an old friend."[2] In Fort Nelson, British Columbia, Woolcock interacted with a small contingent of government surveyors working to take stock of the "many plots which had been leased along the roadside for gas stations, cabin courts and lunch rooms"

---

[1] Iris Woolcock, *The Road North: A Woman's Adventure Driving the Alaska Highway 1947-1948* (Anchorage, AK: Greatland Graphics, 1990), 91.
[2] Ibid., 87, 84.

along the highway and feared that "[i]t will not be long before one will find a hamburger or gas pump around every corner."[3] Woolcock characterized the Alaska Highway as a road that leaves "[no] soul just lukewarm in his opinion….They either hate it or are wild about it."[4]

Iris Woolcock in 1948 at the Mile 0 Marker of the Alaska Highway in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. Iris Woolcock, *The Road North: A Woman's Adventure Driving the Alaska Highway 1947-1948* (Anchorage, AK: Greatland Graphics, 1990).

An "artist, photographer, realtor and adventuress" known for "[sporting] glamorous wide-brimmed hats, [wearing] lots of makeup and dr[iving] a bright red Ford convertable [sic] until her death," Iris Woolcock explained the origins of her journey thusly:

> I told my friend Charlie that I thought it would be interesting to use the trailer to gather picture and story material from Key West [Florida] to Alaska. I told him I was thinking of a photo assignment to Liberia first and then prepare for an Alaskan adventure the following spring. 'To hell with Liberia', said Charlie. 'Alaska is much more vital interest to us all right now. Go there first—this summer.'[5]

Charlie's insistence on Alaska's "vital interest" captured the perception of the territory as an imperative geopolitical outpost during World War II and the brief interim leading up to the Cold War. In directing Iris to "Go there first," his language was also strangely reminiscent of the

[3] Iris Woolcock, 70-72.
[4] Ibid., 54-55.
[5] Ibid., 23, 21. Introductory comments describing Iris Woolcock by Peggy Isphording, 4. Iris Woolcock's diary documenting her journey was posthumously compiled into *The Road North: A Woman's Adventure Driving the Alaska Highway 1947-1948*.

pervasive "See America First" campaign that promoted domestic travel and tourism to natural spaces within the United States during the early 20th Century. Linking, as Marguerite Shaffer and Susan Schrepfer have shown, the act of tourism with concepts of national identity, American patriotism, and a culture of consumption, Charlie understood Iris' trip up the Alaska Highway to the nation's "Last Frontier" not simply an act of tourism, but of vital Cold War patriotism.[6]

Charlie's way of imagining Alaska's 'vital interest' was historically contingent upon the territory's role as an outpost in both World War II and the Cold War, but it mirrored over a century of rhetoric positioning the Alaska territory as a frontier region of the United States.[7] Since John Muir's famous expedition to the territory in 1879, concomitant writings have depicted Alaska for popular audiences through travelogues, promotional materials, guidebooks, narrative fiction and news publications as an unusual, untouched and unique landscape alongside a lengthy history of industrial extraction, commercial development, and western colonization. With the 1893 publication of Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", which positioned the American West as a formative but intrinsically transitory shaper of national and cultural identity, the frontier has dwelt as a material and symbolic space that is at once both untamed and tamable, a space where gain is paired with loss and the possibility for human development and infringement is simultaneously desirable and an aberration.[8] To imagine a space like Alaska as frontier is to imbue it with a range of socio-

---

[6] Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001). For a study of nature tourism in relation to Cold War anxieties about national security and defense, see Susan Schrepfer *Nature's Altars: Mountains, Gender, and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence, Kansas : University Press of Kansas, 2005).

[7] See Susan Kollin *Nature's State: Imaging Alaska as the Last Frontier* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[8] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, ed. Harold P. Simonson (1893, New York: Ungar, 1963). For more on frontier alteriority see Bruce Braun, *The*

cultural and economic values and interests that are historically constructed. Nature, like other constructs of the human imagination, is a concept that "contains, though often unnoticed, an extra-ordinary amount of human history" and is imbued with and shaped by (often competing) interests and values at play at any given historical moment.[9] In Alaska, as in other frontier spaces, a fantasy of preservation and conservation of the natural world has existed side by side with the promise of modern economic opportunism through the exploitation of these natural, raw resources.[10]

A broad consensus in the field of tourism studies has positioned tourism as an inherently consumptive process that, among other things, requires the commodification of nature and the natural world; when tourists and the tourism industry come into contact with nature, the natural world becomes destination and it is the commodification of this encounter that tourism industries in frontier spaces like Alaska capitalize upon. Reporting on behalf of the *Los Angeles Times* and, apparently, the Alaskan tourism industry, in 1956 Lynn Rogers catalogued the "real treasures" of the territory's 586,000 square miles: "Eskimos, schools of whale, walrus, polar bear, Indian's gold dredges, sourdoughs, modern cities, great airfields, frontier towns, thousands of islands,

---

Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 2002). William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* ed. W. Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 69-90.

[9] Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), 66. Also see Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[10] Five main, recurring themes dominate advertising literature and promotional materials produced about Alaska between 1895-2005: Alaska is unusual, untouched, and unique, possesses a history of gold mining, and is a place of pioneer nostalgia. Lee K Cerveny, *Nature and Tourists in the Last Frontier: Local Encounters with Global Tourism in Coastal Alaska*. (New York: Cognizant Communication Corp. 2008), 59. Also see Lee J. Cuba, *Identity and Community on the Alaskan Frontier* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), particularly "Chapter 1: Emergence of a National Idiom" and "Chapter 4: Marketing of Alaska," 4-21 and 118-149.

mountain peaks, creeping glaciers, superb hunting and fishing—everything the tourist craves."[11] Promising the best of both worlds, Rogers positioned Alaska as a unique, unusual and unrivaled frontier space waiting to service the tourist's cravings. If the motif of Alaska as frontier has shaped national understandings of the state, it has also informed the tightrope walk that tourism industries in frontier spaces like Alaska must negotiate; the late 20th and early 21st century popularity of ecotourism is a global historical phenomenon that imagines, and positions for customers, tourism and the tourism industry in places like Alaska as processes which preserve, but also harness for economic benefit, these wilderness repositories.[12]

The Alaska Territory has been the destination for explorers and travellers alike since its "discovery" by Western powers, but scholars have placed the beginnings of tourism there during the early 1880s—less than two decades after the territory transferred to American hands. Nonetheless, early on the territory presented a particular set of challenges that impeded the development of tourism and tourism infrastructure; the history of tourism to the Alaska territory like elsewhere in the United States evolved alongside technologies of transport, but Alaska's sheer size and geographical isolation exacerbated the ways in which transportation methods shaped tourism and the tourist experience.[13] Steamships and, later, railroads defined the early

---

[11] Lynn Rogers, "Alaska Has Raw Frontiers, Sparkling, Modern Cities: North-South Route Followed in Alaska," *Los Angeles Times*, August 12th, 1956.

[12] See, e.g., Roderick Nash, *Tourism, Parks and the Wilderness Idea in the History of Alaska* (Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission/Alaska Historical Society, 1981). Roxanne Willis does a nice job articulating the shift from frontier to wilderness in *Alaska's Place in the West: From the Last Frontier to the Last Great Wilderness (*Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010). For more on the development ethic in frontier zones see, Richard Butler, "The Development of Tourism in Frontier Regions: Issues and Approaches," in *Tourism in Frontier Areas* ed. Shaul Krakover and Yehuda Gradus (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002).

[13] Frank Norris has argued that early tourism was a largely informal affair and, while lack of transportation kept tourists and their money coastally localized, the accommodations in frontier towns left much to be desired in terms of meeting basic tourist standards and often made staying on the ship more appealing than on land: "The frontier aspect of the ports, while a source of

history of tourism to and in the territory at the turn of the 20th century. Tourism was by and large an informal industry up into the first quarter of the 20th century and the extent of the industry itself was "insufficient to awaken most Alaskans to the economic benefits of the industry" up through the first decade of the 20th century. There is, however, ample evidence of early efforts to promote the territory as a vacation destination including advertising ephemera and travel booklets produced by railroad and steamship companies.[14] Advertising materials and marketing campaigns aimed at promoting tourism to Alaska are part of a long, rich history of selling not only travel to the territory, but the territory more broadly. Wilson has shown that companies like The Alaska Railroad viewed tourism as a vehicle for territorial boosterism despite the economic reality associated with the decidedly humble outcomes reflected by tourism figures.[15] While there was consistent growth in tourism to the Alaska territory throughout the first half of the 20th century, Frank Norris argues that the industry was "economically insignificant" up through the first decade of the 20th century but, following concerted efforts to promote travel to the territory, expand routes, and improve upon accommodations, tourism "by the late 1930s…was clearly important to the territorial economy"; by World War II it was "a significant industry, touching the lives of many residents," who felt the economic effects of the tourist trade.[16] The United

---

curiosity, was too primitive for the standards demanded by the tourist trade." Frank Norris, "Showing Off Alaska: The Northern Tourist Trade, 1878-1941," *Alaska History* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 1-18, 3. Also see Ted C. Hinckley, "The Inside Passage: A Popular Gilded Age Tour," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 56 (April 1965): 69-71.

[14] See, e.g., Stephen Haycox, "Tourism in Alaska's Past" *Alaska Historical Society* (June 27, 2014), accessed July 25, 2015, http://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/discover-alaska/glimpses-of-the-past/tourism-in-alaskas-past/

[15] William H. Wilson, "Ahead of the Times: The Alaska Railroad and Tourism, 1924-1941," *Alaska Journal* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1977): 18-24; Also see Alfred Runte, "Promoting Exotic Alaska: A Nostalgic Look at the Golden Age of Railroad Advertising," *Alaska Journal* 15, no. 4 (1985): 58-61.

[16] Frank Norris, 6, 3, 13, 1. William Wilson disputes this and contends tourism remained a fledgling, economically insignificant industry throughout the first half of the 20th century despite

States entry into World War II caused a temporary end to the burgeoning tourism trade in Alaska due to the imposition of restrictions which prohibited casual travel to the territory. Despite the interruption of World War II, postwar territorial boosters similarly envisioned tourism as a central component for northern development and settlement.

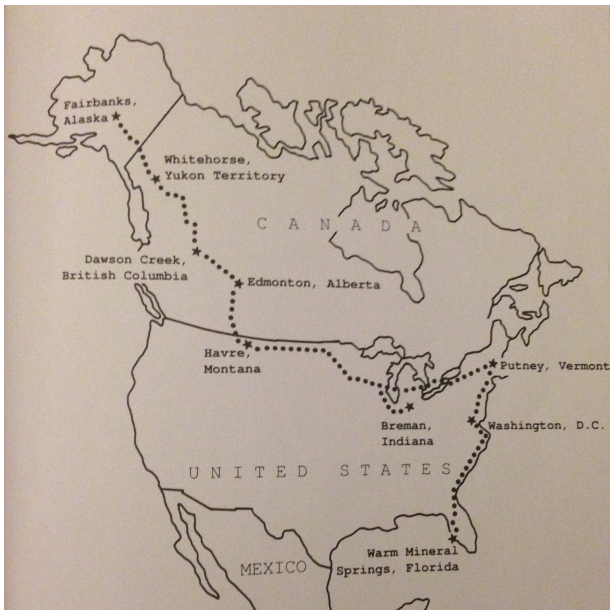
Travel to Alaska for the sake of pleasure possesses an historical trajectory which, at times, belies the economic powerhouse the tourism sector has become in the last thirty years. Like the cycles of boom and bust that has come to define Alaska's economic reliance on undiversified, resource-based industries, tourism to the region beginning in the last two decades of the 19th century has been historically characterized by ebbs and flows. Subject to a longer adolescence and stronger growing pains for myriad reasons related to its geographic isolation, the development of a tourist consumer base and tourism infrastructure in the Alaska territory was delayed until the end of World War II. In something of a dark horse finish, today Alaska's tourism industry is "the second-largest private sector employer, and accounts for one in eight Alaskan jobs."[17] This chapter begins with a brief overview of early tourism to the territory in order to address the transformations which occurred during the post war period. Offering evidence of the industry's growing import suggested but often not elaborated upon in other scholarship, I also explore the ways in which autotourism as a method of travel shaped the development of the tourism industry. The next portion travels back in time to examine the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942, placing the highway in the context of broader war and postwar transformations in the territory and plans for northern development. Historicizing the

---

extensive attempts to advertise travel to the territory. Given the prohibitive costs of time, effort, and expense, Wilson has argued that "[e]ven during the booming twenties not many people could arrange a vacation" to the territory, 21.

[17] Alaska Tourism Statistics, Research Development Council of Alaska, accessed June 8, 2015, http://www.akrdc.org/issues/tourism/overview.html

highways shift in purpose over time, I argue that the highway's lack of concrete post-war economic effects led to the rhetorical reimagining and repurposing of the highway into a mecca of tourist access. The chapter then considers driving and camping along the Alaska Highway during the postwar era and argues that the over-taxed Alaskan tourism industry viewed autotourism and camping as a mode of vacationing which, by virtue of requiring less investment capital and overhead expense, ameliorated the economic and infrastructural "costs" of doing touristic business. I end with a consideration of the combinatorial impact of the highway and autotourism upon the postwar tourism industry and the subsequent political impact of autotourism upon the territory's admission into the Union as the 49th state.



Map of route followed by Iris Woolcock on the Alaska Highway. Iris Woolcock, *The Road North: A Woman's Adventure Driving the Alaska Highway 1947-1948* (Anchorage, AK: Greatland Graphics, 1990).

Selling (a Trip to) the 'Last Frontier': Postwar Tourism in Alaska

In the decade after World War II Alaska was on the receiving end of an unprecedented tourist boom. Wartime emergency had crystallized the territory's geopolitical importance and brought the territory into public consciousness. The midcentury advent of commercial air transportation and the opening of the Alaska Highway to tourist traffic in the late 1940s

transformed the territory's tourism industry as well as the touristic experience. During the postwar era, Alaska's tourism sector shifted from an informal, cottage industry characterized by local efforts to create tourist attractions and provide necessary tourist-related services into big business. Transportation infrastructure laid and expanded upon during wartime buildup carried tourists inland from the ports and villages on the coast where cruise lines discharged passengers. The extension of road and rail and air corridors transported vacationers to areas once out of reach and spread the wealth of tourism-related revenue to far off locales and communities. Territorial representatives made the development of tourism a policy priority as a growing consensus on the profitability of tourism-related services emerged at the local level. Companies and entrepreneurs began offering standardized tourist accommodations and amenities as well as integrated package tours to hunting grounds, remote villages and ecological destination points. Tensions between the commodification of native communities and cultural activities and the possibility for economic gain through claiming a stake in Alaska's tourism industry were exacerbated. [18] Vacationers were transported to Katmai National Park, the Aleutian Islands, or the Pribilof Islands and all-expense package Arctic Tours from Fairbanks to destinations 'Above the Arctic Circle' like Point Barrow, Nome, Kotzebue and Fort Yukon where tourists could gawk at both Eskimos and the Midnight Sun. Catering to every tourist taste imaginable, on the other end of the spectrum "modern cities" like Anchorage "excellent hotels, plush nightclubs, department stores, paved streets, parking meters and neon signs"; in Fairbanks tourists could partake in midnight golfing

[18] Lee Ceverny documents the fraught relationship between tourism as an imperial, colonial and exploitative practice alongside the economic possibilities for indigenous communities. Lee K Cerveny, *Nature and Tourists in the Last Frontier: Local Encounters with Global Tourism in Coastal Alaska* (New York: Cognizant Communication Corp. 2008), Also see Mark Nuttall, "Packaging the Wild: Tourism Development in Alaska," in *Tourists and Tourism: Identifying with People and Places* eds. Simone Abram, Jacqueline Waldren and Donald Macleod (New York: Berg, 1997), 223-228.

"on the world's northernmost golf and country club," play a game of midnight baseball, or watch stock-car racing during the summer months.[19] In the confluence of rapid and sustained postwar transformation, the development of a modern tourism industry in America's 'last frontier' arguably starts here.

For nearly a century the Alaska Territory, commonly referred to as "Seward's Ice Box," remained perched at the conceptual periphery of American life; nonetheless, for as long as Americans have been visiting America's "Last Frontier" they have been promoting, either implicitly or explicitly, travel to the territory. The canon of writing about Alaska is inhabited by the likes of John Muir, Robert Service, Robert Marshal, and Jack London[20], but in 1955 William Hubbard, a representative of the American Automobile Association, situated the history of imagining, depicting, and writing about Alaska into the context of 20th century new media: "Robert W. Service and Jack London may not have left the literary impression upon the present generations that several previous generations felt about Alaska and the spell of the Yukon, but the technicolor movies, National Geographic, and old "sourdough" films on modern television screens haven't permitted us to forget that part of North America. If you've a yen for frontiers and far off places, and don't mind a certain amount of personal discomfort in travel, Alaska is

[19] John P. Thomson, "Alaska Gets Ready for the Summer: Flying Costs By Automobile Old and New Capital Arctic Tours," *New York Times*, June 17, 1955; Richard E. Mooney, "Tourist Frontier: Alaska Offers Its Sight-Seers the Last Of Nation's Great Open Spaces," *New York Times*, November 30, 1958.

[20] For more on early travel and nature writers and the dual construction of Alaska as ready for, and immune to, industrial and economic exploitation (including tourism) see Susan Kollin, "The Wild, Wild North: Nature Writing, Nationalist Ecologies, and Alaska," *American Literary History* 12, no. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 2000): 41-78.

your meat. "[21] Refracting the frontier through popular culture, Hubbard joined a growing cohort of postwar narratives that imagined and represented the 'lure' of tourism to the Alaska Territory.

In mid-1953, the American Automobile Association reported that "[t]ravel to Alaska is rising at a more rapid rate than to almost all other areas" in the United States and anticipated 100,000 people—"double 1952's figure"—would head to the far north by land, sea and air on a trip to America's "potent" 'last frontier.'[22] In 1956, the New York Times announced that the Alaska Visitors' Association was preparing for a "bumper crop" of American travelers predicted to infuse $12,000,000 into the territory.[23] As the territory attracted record numbers of yearly visitors "bringing more and more welcome dollars into the territory,"[24] territorial representatives, local civic organizations, travel agencies, and chambers of commerce representing the interests of businessmen and developers also looked to capitalize upon and expand the postwar tourism market. In the 1940s a contingent of territorial representatives and policy-makers led by Governor Ernest Gruening worked to position tourism to the territory as part of a larger postwar strategy for northern development and achieving statehood. Territorial boosters envisioned a thriving future thanks to, as Norris suggests, the advantages offered by "commercial air travel to and from the territory, a highway link to the outside world, and governmental support through the Alaska Board of Development." With creation of the Alaska Development Board in 1945, the postwar territorial administration officially acknowledges tourism's economic importance as not simply a means to promote broader settlement and investment opportunities to the territory but a

---

[21] Walter W. Hubbard, "Pioneering Adventure? Why Not Try Alaska?," *The Washington Post*, July 3, 1955.
[22] Len Barnes, "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Alaska a Potent Travel Lure as a 'Last Frontier,'" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 17, 1953.
[23] John P. Thomson, "Alaska Gets Ready for the Summer."
[24] "Tourist Business Passes Gold Mining in Alaska," Special to *The New York Times* ,January 2, 1957.

potent, lucrative end in and of itself. The establishment of the Alaska Visitors' Association in 1950 was, according to Dunning, part of a larger attempt to counter anti-tourism sentiment among inhabitants and cultivate a welcoming atmosphere. Enthusiastically given a platform in American news outlets, territorial boosters imagined the development of the tourism industry, like the construction of the Alaska Highway before it, as a key component for northern development. Cliff Cernick, correspondent for the *New York Times* based in Anchorage, reassured readers that despite the fact that "[n]ot many years ago, Alaskans considered tourists as nothing else than problems" because of "shortages of housing, supplies and transportation facilities," "[d]iminishing returns from Alaska's construction, fishing and gold mining have given impetus to plans for the development of the tourist industry."[25]

While the territory's ecology and heritage have defined historical and contemporary travel and tourism to Alaska, attempts were made during the postwar era to partially refashion the image of this "last of [the] nation's great open spaces." In 1947, Richard Neuberger described Alaska as "Our Urbane, Civilized Frontier" and in 1953 Len Barnes, writing for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, described the 'lure' thusly: "[i]n spite of civilization, it is unmistakably Alaska. Rugged, snowcapped mountains are visible in the background. Parkas and mukluks are worn, along with military uniforms. Log cabins stand beside modern buildings. Whiskers or some other item worn by a passer-by bespeak a rugged individualism possessed by most Alaskans."[26] Postwar rhetoric about travel to Alaska called attention to modern cities, the rapid

[25] Frank Norris, 13; Mike Dunning, "Tourism in Ketchikan and Southeast Alaska," *Alaska History* 15 (2000): 31-43, 33; Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons: Glorious Scenery, Fishing and Hunting Await This Summer's Tourists," *New York Times*, May 15, 1955.
[26] Richard E. Mooney, "Tourist Frontier;" Richard Neuberger, "Our Urbane, Civilized Frontier: Alaska has Put the Pioneer Era Behind," *New York Times* July 13, 1947; Len Barnes, "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Alaska a Potent Travel Lure as a 'Last Frontier.'" Barnes described Anchorage as "lined with shops and stores, and lots of bars. There's a $3,000,000 theater,

pace of postwar development, and the expansion of infrastructure capable of meeting tourist expectations. Wedding the particular ecological draw of a vacation to Alaska with the (often dubious) promise of standard comforts and amenities, Cliff Cernick informed readers, "Travelers now can be accommodated in more than a dozen new motels, lodges and hotels constructed within the territory in the past three years….Alaska now has clean, modern accommodations which afford all the comforts of stateside travel along with the scenic and other delights peculiar to the Far North."[27]

Amidst a growing postwar consensus about the economic prospects of tourism and the 'lure' of the far north, local governments, communities and visionary residents proposed initiatives to manage and increase tourist-related visitation alongside the private sector (eg. cruise lines) seeking to grow and profit from coordinating and promoting American interest in tourism to the territory. As Lee Ceverny and Mike Dunning document, Charles "Chuck" West was a leading figure in the post-war development of Alaska's tourism industry and the promotion of travel to the territory: "A fledgling tourism industry developed with aid from a visionary entrepreneur, Chuck West, who integrated a network of tour boats, railways, and buses with existing hotels and lodges to market Alaska's first comprehensive tour packages." West set up air transportation to remote areas, established tours into the interior along pre-existing highway and railroad infrastructure, invested in the building and rehabilitation of roadhouses, inns, motels and restaurants, worked with local communities to develop tourist attractions and activities. As the "Father of Alaska Tourism," West "was the first to effectively establish and market tours to Alaska and worked tirelessly to institutionalize tourism" and became the "de facto ambassador of

---

modern apartment and government buildings, and fine hotels" with paved streets roamed by "taxis and buses" rather than "dog teams."

[27] Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons."

Alaska and helped the fledgling industry of Alaska to solidify—eventually attracting the interest of multinational corporations."[28] In addition to entrepreneurial undertakings like the establishment of his Westours Company, West actively participated in the Alaska Visitor's Association (founded in 1951), an organization that worked to coordinate and promote travel to the region.

Proponents of tourism found a ready source of publicity in midcentury American news outlets that promoted travel to the territory and promised readers that "'[t]he lure of Alaska' is more than a phrase you will learn on your first trip to that great land."[29]. They emphasized the pristine beauty of this "last frontier" and the unparalleled recreational and outdoor activities on offer in the untouched landscape: "Alaska is displacing the "Wild West" in the American travel imagination. Many look on it as "our last travel frontier." People think that here they can relive our gold rush days, that Alaska is still untouched and untenanted by many people. And mainly they are right."[30] Cliff Cernick catalogued various local undertakings designed to improve upon and further develop tourist-related services throughout the territory with "a series of courses on playing host to tourists [] held in Juneau, Fairbanks and Anchorage…crowded with members of chambers of commerce, operators of travel bureaus, businessmen and other interested citizens" during early spring of 1955. Emphasizing "concrete action" taken to ensure tourists "want to return," Cernick described efforts to attract visitors: "In Anchorage, for example, townspeople and members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce have volunteered their efforts to erect a $20,000 tourist information center built in the form of an authentic sourdough cabin. Similar

[28] Lee Ceverny, 63, 3; Dunning, 34. Charles B. "Chuck" West provides an autobiographical account in Charles B. West, *Mr. Alaska: The Chuck West Story: Forty Years of Alaska Tourism, 1945-1985* (Seattle, Wash.: Weslee Pub., 1985).
[29] "Visit to Alaska an American Adventure," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27th, 1958.
[30] Len Barnes, "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Alaska a Potent Travel Lure as a 'Last Frontier'"

centers already are in existence of planned in other major Alaska communities."[31]

This faith in tourism and tourism-related industries was not misplaced. Where Governor Gruening had once forecasted that tourism-related revenue would surpass the $50 million salmon industry and by 1955, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that tourism-related revenue surpassed fur trapping to become the third largest industry in Alaska:

> A little exploited summer vacation delight is beginning to come into its own. Alaska—America's last frontier—is enjoying a fresh boom. Fur trapping and panning for gold are giving way to a new industry—tourism. Natives are disinterested in digging into the earth and instead are showing visitors dazzling colors in vast skies and rich forests. Fur trappers have been pushed into fourth place and tourism now ranks third in the territory's economy. Old timers, watching the steadily increasing influx of visitors, confidently predict that gold mining will soon have to take a back seat as an industry.

Acting as ambassador for the Alaska Visitors Association, Frank H. Whaley, a bush pilot turned senator in the territorial legislature, toured the United States and "confidently predict[ed] that tourism will soon become the number one industry as the popularity of Alaska as a vacation land continues to grow."[32] In January of 1957, the *New York Times* reported that tourism was soon expected to surpass gold mining, "once the chief source of income for Alaska." Unlike Mining, which, according to the US Bureau of Mines, anticipated its 1956 figures to about equal those of 1955 at $8,725,290, "more than $12,000,000 was spent by tourists in Alaska in 1956." Publicizing tourism to the territory by pointing to the national popularity of such travel, the paper pointed to the fact that travel by air increased by 21 percent between 1955 and 1956 and travel by car increased by 18 percent over the same period. [33]

---

[31] Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons."
[32] Mike Dunning, 33; William Yates (Travel Editor), "There's a New Rush on Alaska--Summer Tourists: Fur Trapping and Panning for Gold Taking Back Seat," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 24, 1955. In 1961 the *Los Angeles Times* was reporting that tourism was still the 3rd largest industry in Alaska. See Jerry Hulse, "Travel: Tourist Dollars Fill U.S. Coffers," *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1961.
[33] Travel Figures as provided by the Alaska Visitors' Association in "Tourist Business Passes Gold Mining in Alaska," Special to The *New York Times*, January 2, 1957.

Where tourists to the Alaska territory at the turn of the century were hostages to the steamship lines, the expansion of railroad and riverboat routes partially liberated travelers and their money from these confines during the first half of the 20th century; the onset of commercial airline services in the post-world war II era greatly expanded the tourism market by facilitating the rapid and dispersed movement of people to destinations like Alaska once geographically out of reach. The simultaneous dawn of automotive travel to the territory via the Alaska Highway offered tourists an alternative to the increasingly standardized model of mass-tourism that other technological advancements entailed. The expansion of air routes to far off locales beginning in the late 1940s brought "many formerly inaccessible spots within reach of the person with a limited holiday," companies were offering "several all-expense plane tours to hunting grounds and remote villages," and cruise lines struggled to provide "more ships [] needed to carry the many travelers who are waiting to make the Alaska cruise" despite expansions of their fleets. By the mid-1950s five airlines provided commercial service the territory; feeder flights and bush planes carried tourists from Fairbanks and Anchorage to destination spots like Barrow, Nome, and Kotzebue accessible only by air.[34]

The expansion of motor vehicle traffic and routes serving the motoring public led to continuous efforts to improve the road and provide roadside services: "Now wooden fills over quaking muskeg have been replaced with steel and concrete. New bridges are constantly being built. Filling stations and hostelries plentifully dot the route. Highways patrols prowl constantly." Prior to the lifting of restrictions, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that there were only "27 Inns, Stores, Gas Stations on Alaska Highway." Whereas the "[f]irst travelers found a highway

[34] Dana Rice, "The Field of Travel: Many Vacationists Look Toward Alaska As New Routes Open to Serve Them," *New York Times*, May 30, 1948. William Yates "There's a New Rush on Alaska," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 24, 1955. Also see John P. Thomson, "Alaska Gets Ready for the Summer."

unbelievably primitive" and facilities peppered few and far between," Over the course of the following decade countless service stations, grocery stores, and overnight lodgings ran the length of the highway: "Since those early days…many business enterprises have sprung up along the highway to cater to the traveling public. Inns, gas stations and garages are now scattered along the entire 1520 miles."[35] By 1954, traffic had increased "to the point that a stranded motorist can be sure of soon getting a helping hand or a lift to the nearest garage," but the Alaska Highway remained a "a box of surprises."[36]

The construction of junctions, off-shoots, and connecting routes linking up places previously inaccessible by car "allow[ed] visitors to go farther and see more of the magnificent landscape." By 1958, for instance, the Richardson Highway was extended all the way to Mount McKinley—an area previously only accessible by train.[37] Prior to the extension, tourists had to arrange to transport their automobile by rail from Fairbanks or Anchorage. In 1949, tourist J.B. Folk explained that he chose to sell his automobile in Anchorage in order to return via air to Seattle and then on to New York. By 1957, tourists who wished to drive north without committing to a round trip could book return passage by air or sea and arrange to have their automobiles shipped to Seattle, Washington in the Pacific North West. Beyond roadside infrastructure along the highway itself, the free-flow of vacationing motorists heading north

---

[35] "'Alcan' Route Keeping Busy," *The Washington Post*, September 7, 1952; "27 Inns, Stores, Gas Stations on Alaska Highway," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 13, 1947; and Robert Knox, "Tourist Autos Use Route of Sourdoughs," *The Washington Post*, August 5, 1956.
[36] James H. McCormick, "Easier Motoring North to Alaska," *New York Times*, August 8, 1954. Also see the last of a series of three articles describing a motor trip from Fairbanks to Anchorage along the Alaska Highway: George Barr McCutcheon, "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Alaska Works on Improving Its Highways," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 24, 1952.
[37] Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons"; On the extension of the Richardson Highway to Mount McKinley, see "Visit to Alaska an American Adventure," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 1958; For information on railroad arrangements, see John P. Thomson, "Alaska Gets Ready for the Summer."

along its route fueled the development of tourism infrastructure catering to those wishing to explore the territory by automobile. Before the war some enterprising Alaskans "augmented and modernized their taxi fleets and some purchased large touring cars to carry people to [] attractions" but "group tours were the rule" and "the rental car industry had not yet developed and virtually no tourists brought their own vehicles."[38] Car rental (also known as "drive-yourself" facilities) agencies were introduced in Fairbanks and Anchorage in 1955.[39]

Four years after Alaska's entry into the Union in 1959, a statewide ferry system was in operation to serve the motoring public; beyond a pragmatic commercial and private travel between communities, the proposal for the ferry system looked to facilitate the movement of tourists throughout the territory. In the first year the ferry all expectations and with "ferry traffic surpass[ing] the projected fourth year traffic levels." Championed by Governor Bill Egan, who believed improvements to intra-state transportation networks would draw investors and tourists, Egan lobbied for the construction of more roads and the $23 million ferry proposal as among "the most important proposals ever to come before the voters of Alaska." As Eric Wohlforth writes, "[Egan] contended that 'the real foundation for tourism and other kinds of economic development in this modern age is an integrated highway system'" and that "Alaska would immediately see a great increase in the number of visitors" by providing a "missing link" in Alaska's transportation and tourism infrastructure. Governor Egan took the "unusual" step to give a special address to the legislature "in which he emphasized the importance of the ferry

---

[38] Frank Norris, 9.

[39] J.B Folk, "6,200 Miles by Car to Alaska: Drive From East Coast Via Famous Highway Takes Two Weeks," *New York Times*, August 7, 1949. On shipping arrangements: "Alaska Tour Offers Set Mark" *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1957. In 1958, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that tourists could arrange to ship their automobile to Vancouver, B.C. and then travel by rail to Skagway, AK and on to Vancouver by steamship where they would reunite with their automobile. "Visit to Alaska an American Adventure," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 1958. On car rental agencies, see Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons."

system as "key to tourism's growth" and the greatest possible "spur to travel to and within Alaska." The construction of the state ferry system was not simply the new state's "first big fiscal venture," it was a project which Egan touted as "demonstrat[ing] vision and far-sighted confidence in our state" and indicative of a "new era…being brought home to Alaska."[40]

While the Jet Age ushered in commercial air transportation, tourist traffic ushered up the Alaska Highway fueled the expansion and improvement of a highway system built as a wartime supply route. In 1955 airlines accounted for approximately fifty percent of travelers.[41] In a significant shift from historical trends throughout the first half of the 20th century, cruise ships only accounted for thirty percent of visitor traffic; twenty percent of visitors to Alaska arrived by car via the Alaska Highway during 1955. Thus, while commercial air travel had surpassed the long-standing tradition of embarking on cruises up to the territory, the automobile was a postwar technology of transport that helped rescript the historical trajectory of Alaska's tourism industry. In order to understand the ways in which the Alaska Highway and autotourism north helped shaped the development of Alaska's modern tourism industry in significant, quantifiable and qualifiable ways, we must travel back in time to the highway's wartime construction and the ways in which this defense route became a tourist pathway to the nation's northern frontier.

The Alaska Highway: "Strange New Patterns in Steel [] Against the Cold Northern Sky"[42]

---

[40] Governor Egan, quoted in Eric Wohlforth, "Alaska's First Big Fiscal Venture: The Financing of the State Ferry System," *Alaska History* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 46-55, 51, 53. For a contemporaneous account, see "Alaska Approves a Ferry System: $18,000,000 Voted for 3 Craft—State Is Hopeful of Swelling Tourism," Special to *The New York Times*, March 26, 1961.

[41] "There's a New Rush on Alaska."

[42] *Alaska Highway: Construction of the 1,500 Miles of the Alaskan Highway,* (Film) Department of Defense, 1944 Official Film, War Department, 1944 Army Service Forces. Produced by the Signal Corps in Collaboration with the Northwest Service Command National Archives and Records Administration, accessed June 10, 2015, https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.23086

The Alaska Highway stretches more than 1,500 miles from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Fairbanks, Alaska.[43] Construction of the Alaska Highway (also known as the Alcan Highway) began in the spring of 1942 following the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, which exposed the vulnerability of the United States' west coast and the Alaska Territory. Reflecting a long history of imagining 'Seward's Ice Box' as a repository of economic possibility, intermittent proposals for an overland transportation corridor linking the continental United States with its northernmost territory date back to the early 20th century.[44] The attack on Pearl Harbor, however, proved the necessary catalyst for overcoming decades of protracted negotiations between the United States and Canadian governments under the egis of mutually beneficial military defense.[45]

Prior to official American involvement in World War II, the territory served as a base of operations for supplying the Soviet Union under Lend-Lease and as a bulwark for defending against possible Japanese aggression; upon America's entry into World War II in the wake of

---

[43] The Canadian terminus of the highway is Dawson Creek, British Columbia; the American at Fairbanks, Alaska. Canada received control of its 1,220 mile portion in 1946. For a comprehensive history of the highway's construction see Kenneth S. Coates, *North to Alaska! Fifty Years on the World's Most Remarkable Highway* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991) and David A. Remley, *Crooked Road: The Story of the Alaska Highway* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976).

[44] For background on proposals see Jon Krakauer, "Ice, Mosquitoes and Muskeg--Building the Road to Alaska," *Smithsonian* 23, no. 4 (July 1992): 102-112 and Pierce, J. Kingston, "The Biggest and Hardest Job Since the Panama Canal," *American History* 35, no. 6 (February 2001): 52-59. On the history of road construction within the Alaska Territory during the first half of the 20th century, including securing federal funding for construction and maintenance, see Claus-M. Naske, "Alaska and the Federal-Aid Highway Acts," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 133-138 and Claus-M. Naske, "Paving Alaska's Trails: The Work of the Alaska Road Commission" (Lanham, MD: Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History, No. 152, 1986).

[45] See Claus-M. Naske and Herman E. Slotnick, *Alaska: A History of the 49th State*. (Norman, OK.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) for a comprehensive history of Alaska. For a general introduction, see Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003).

Pearl Harbor, its geographic isolation became a matter of urgent concern. Along with the U.S. government, everyday Americans were made aware of the strategic importance of the Alaska Territory:

> [M]illions of us have suddenly realized that our Pacific frontier is, to all intents and purposes, an island—and a highly vulnerable island at that….We have realized, too, that Alaska is our first line of defense and our first line of offense. It lies athwart any Japanese invasion of this continent, and at the same time it is the route by which American troops, bombers and warships may strike back at Japan.[46]

In 1944, the U.S. War Department produced a film documenting the construction of the Alaska Highway which described a vulnerable, overlooked territory hurled to the forefront of the nation's consciousness through an act of Japanese aggression:

> When the japs [sic] bombed Pearl Harbor, they upset our thinking about a great many things, including Alaska. Most people if they thought of Alaska at all thought of it as a cold rugged wasteland, of little value except for its gold, fur and fisheries. Now suddenly it seemed to have considerable additional value, both to us and to the Japanese. And its strategic positioning was not comforting.[47]

In the spring of 1942, an integrated workforce[48] of 16,000 soldiers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and civilian contractors managed by the U.S. Public Roads Administration descended upon the Alaska Territory to begin construction of the highway. As Pierce Kingston writes,

> The land on which the new highway was being constructed stubbornly resisted taming. Most of it was covered for as far as the eye could see by dense spruce forest or boggy patches of vegetation called muskeg. The earth was so swampy in places that road builders could make progress only by laboriously felling trees and laying them down, side by side, to form a "corduroy road," a surface that would shift and buckle as the ground dried. Worse yet, the men had to build over permafrost

[46] Richard Neuberger, "America's Burma Road," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1942.
[47] 1944 Film.
[48] Racial Integration stemmed from the need for manpower that overwhelmed fears of racial tensions and the racist belief that African-Americans were ill-suited for life in cold climates. On the contributions of African-American soldiers, see John Virtue, *The Black Soldiers Who Built the Alaska Highway: A History of Four U.S. Army Regiments in the North, 1942-1943* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2013) and William E. Griggs, *The World War II Black Regiment That Built the Alaska Military Highway: A Photographic History* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2002).

(permanently frozen ground) that required corduroying, then dumping truckloads of earth and gravel on top of that to provide a usable road surface.[49]

Lauded by the War Department as "one of the wonders of the modern world" due to its length, the challenges posed by unforgiving terrain and climate, and the "remarkably short time of [its] construction," at a total cost of 131 million, it was also the most expensive World War II construction project.[50] The Alaska Highway was dedicated on November 20th, 1942—an astounding eight months after the project's initiation. Over the course of the following years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and civilian contractors would continue work to transform the highway into a permanent, all-weather road.

Construction of the Alaska Highway was one piece of a mid-century moment when Alaska was transformed economically, politically, and demographically by massive and sustained "wartime booms" in federal defense spending during World War Two and the Cold War. Alaska's population increased from 100,000 to approximately 225,000 during the years between the end of World War II and statehood in 1959. A major construction boom occurred between 1940 and 1950 in an attempt to meet the demand for housing and community infrastructure kicked off by the arrival of thousands of soldiers and civilian contractors. Naske and Slotnick have argued that the protracted Cold War military build-up "rescued Alaska from economic depression and obscurity."[51] Laurel Hummel's study of the role of the military in Alaska "as an agent of geographical change" has similarly shown how federal aid associated with the "enormous military undertakings in Alaska during the Cold War ensured Alaska's future

---

[49] Pierce Kingston, 56. For more on the cultural and economic impact of this massive influx of soldiers and civilian workers, see K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison, *The Alaska Highway in World War II: the U.S. Army of Occupation in Canada's Northwest* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

[50] 1944 Film.

[51] Claus-M. Naske and Herman E. Slotnick *Alaska: A History of the 49th State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 131. Of particular interest is their chapter on defense buildup during WWII and the Cold War.

and set the stage for statehood."[52]

The Alaska Highway was part of a larger military defense buildup in that transformed the territory's social and natural ecology, fueled tensions between indigenous communities and non-native inhabitants, reflected ongoing debates about public good and private enterprise in relation to issues of development, conservation, and preservation.[53] Nonetheless, popular, and to a certain extent scholarly, perceptions of the highway evince a simplistic tendency of conflating its construction with a triumphalist narrative of modernity and development. As Griffith H. Williams asserted in 1985, "the road hastened civilian settlement in the interior lands and provided a valuable transportation and communication link to the outside world."[54] The road's construction was imbued with future possibility beyond immediate defense concerns. The War Department's 1944 informational film described the official opening of the Peace River Bridge in August of 1943 as "ample evidence of the new day dawning in the north" and the highway itself as a "road through the brooding wilderness…the wedge which has pried open that last great

[52] Laurel J. Hummel, "The U.S. Military as Geographical Agent: The Case of Cold War Alaska," *Geographical Review* 95, no. 1 (January 2005): 47-72, 47. As Hummel contends, "Foremost, and ironically, the national defense industry gave the territory the population base and economy that convinced many lawmakers that Alaska was capable of sustaining itself in the future without federal "life-support" subsidies," 58.

[53] The associated "costs" of these mid-century transformations upon indigenous communities and the natural ecology have been documented extensively. Kenneth Coates and W.R. Morrison address the effects in K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison, *The Alaska Highway in World War II.*

[54] Griffith H. Williams, "Alaska's Connection: The Alcan Highway," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (April 1985): 61-68, 61. For localized studies of the economic, social, and cultural impact of World War II defense spending and the influx of military personnel and civilian contractors in Anchorage, Alaska, see Terrence Cole, "Boom Town: Anchorage and the Second World War" in *The Pacific Northwest in World War II*, ed. Carlos A. Schwantes (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1986), 75-85 and Stephen Haycox, "Mining the Federal Government: The War and the All-American City," in *Alaska at War, 1941-1945: The Forgotten War Remembered*, ed. Fern Chandonnet (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2008).

frontier of America, the key which has unlocked the treasure chest of Alaska and the Canadian northwest."[55]

Situating the construction of the Alaska Highway in relation to other development projects during the 20th century, Roxanne Willis contends that the highway's wartime construction was a "passing background to a different type of drama—the ongoing attempts by the United States to settle and develop the Alaskan landscape" and policy-makers, highway proponents, and territorial boosters imagined the highway as "the magic bullet to solve the perceived problem of underdevelopment in the north."[56] According to Mansel Blackford, wartime spending and statehood strengthened the territory's links to the continental United States, but the billions of federal defense dollars pumped into Alaska peaked in the mid-1950s and "sustained economic growth was…elusive." While neither the flailing salmon industry "nor [] mining, fur trapping, or farming offer[ed] much hope for economic growth" and tourism and oil were in the infant stages, future economic development was always already envisioned in the "promise of expansion."[57] While this 'road to nowhere' failed to deliver the economic impact proponents envisioned, the highway's construction was part of a longer history of northern development schemes in the 20th century which attempted, often unsuccessfully, to boost the economic and political importance of the territory. The booster rhetoric that framed narratives of tourist travel up the Alaska highway emerged from and in relation to the perception that, beyond

---

[55] 1944 Film.

[56] Roxanne Willis, 71. In addition to the highway, Willis examines four other case studies: the introduction of reindeer herding, the push to develop agriculture in the Matanuska Valley during the 1930s, arguments about the proposal to build the Rampart Dam, and pushback from environmentalists in response to the construction of the Trans-Atlantic Pipeline. Also see Richard Butler's discussion of tourism and frontier development in Richard Butler, "The Development of Tourism in Frontier Regions: Issues and Approaches."

[57] Mansel G. Blackford, *Pathways to the Present: U.S. Development and Its Consequences in the Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 100-105. Mansel refers to Alaska's tourism industry as "in its infancy" during the 1960s, 105.

a wartime communications project, the highway's construction would help fuel future development and settlement of the territory: "Highway proponents believed that better transportation could turn Alaska into the next seemingly successful chapter in the settlement of the American West."[58]

Both the construction of the highway and the development of the tourism industry were positioned as projects that would cement Alaska's place—if not geographically then conceptually—within the nation as not simply a wild space but a frontier landscape flush with possibility. When the economic boon many perceived as latent within the construction of the highway failed to materialize, tourism along the road became a new imaginative locus of northern development. As Roxanne Willis notes, seldom has scholarship on the highway "looked beyond the immediate wartime context to put the highway into a longer view."[59] By the late 1940s, the wartime defense road would open to tourist traffic and transform the nature of tourism in the territory: "Other wild corners of the globe held a powerful grip on our imaginations, too, but Alaska had one distinct advantage: there was a road to it. Or at least they called it a road."[60] In order to understand the ways in which the Alaska Highway took on this mantle in the years after its wartime utility had waned, we must turn to the rhetoric that framed the advent of autotourism to Alaska and the ways in which this 'so-called' road was repurposed and given new meaning. As the U.S. military's construction of the highway's route re-engineered the old trails carved during the Klondike Gold Rush and proponents of the Alaska Highway re-scripted the military route into an autotouristic corridor after the war, the Alaska Highway can be understood

---

[58] Roxanne Willis, 93. Willis contends that proponents believed that if the highway were to "open a path…settlers (and their money) would begin to flow north, just as they had once flowed west," 74.
[59] Ibid., 71. A notable exception is K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison. *The Alaska Highway in World War II: the U.S. Army of Occupation in Canada's Northwest.*
[60] Jon Krakauer, 102.

as what architectural critic Reynor Banham has termed a "transportational palimpsest" in his work on the Los Angeles freeway system. Inscribed and re-inscribed on the physical and imaginative landscape of the Alaska Territory, the transition from old Sourdough trails to wartime supply route to autotouristic pleasure corridor unfolded as a series of new iterations and practices which, reflective of contemporary needs, evolved over old ones.[61]

In the summer of 1948, for the first time in the lengthy highway's short history, restrictions were eased on civilian traffic and the road was made open to "unrestricted tourist traffic" and pleasure drivers "answering the lure of the north."[62] The highway, built as a wartime defense mechanism, became reimagined as a mecca of access; in 1956 the *New York Times* announced, "Alaska Highway A Tourist Route: World War II Defense Road Now Is Used by Autos, Trucks, Buses." The highway was positioned as a corridor capable of shuttling autotourists up to the farthest recesses of US territory and paving the way for the expansion and rapid development of tourism infrastructure: "[T]his [1948] summer there will be the transportation facilities to bring in the visitors. More ships and planes will be in service than ever before; new streamlined passenger equipment will be running on the Alaska Railroad; several new hotels and resorts will be open for business, and the Alaska Highway will be open for unrestricted tourist traffic."[63] In 1949 William A. Wallace founded *The Milepost,* a serial travel

---

[61] See Reynor Banham, "The Transportation Palimpsest," in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). For an example of contemporaneous rhetoric positioning the highway as palimpsest see Robert Knox "Tourist Autos Use Route of Sourdoughs" *The Washington Post*, August 5, 1956.

[62] George Sundborg, "Big Year For Alaska: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Gold Rush Expected to Bring Rush of Tourists," *New York Times*, May 2, 1948: Also see "You Can Drive to Alaska Without Red Tape in '48" *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1948; Dana Rice, "The Field of Travel: Many Vacationists Look Toward Alaska As New Routes Open to Serve Them" and Richard L. Neuberger. "Road to the North"

[63] "Alaska Highway A Tourist Route: World War II Defense Road Now Is Used by Autos, Trucks, Buses," *New York Times*, June 3, 1956; "Big Year For Alaska."

guide to assist motorists and promote travel to the territory that is still in publication. Providing trip-planning information about points of interest, service stations, rest stops and accommodations, this self-styled "bible of north country travel" was named after the mile markers that dotted the Alaska Highway.[64]

Narratives surrounding the opening up the Alaska Highway to civilian traffic paralleled the rhetoric of northern development found in descriptions of building the highway as well as the growth of the tourism industry. Travel writers and newspaper reports during the post-World War II period engaged in booster rhetoric that pinned the post-war economic promise of the Alaska Highway on the tourists and tourist dollars that would flow northward up this 'crooked road.' The *New York Times* predicted that while the "Klondike gold rush brought the beginnings of civilization to Alaska," the 1948 "golden" 50th anniversary of the Klondike gold rush would yield a "rush of tourists" to the territory; while the newspaper predicted that thousands would travel by air to Alaska that summer alone, the paper went on to note that "by far the largest number of visitors to Alaska this year are expected to arrive over the Alaska Highway," a development that was a result of a sea change in Canadian policies with regard to the Alaska Highway.[65] When the *Los Angeles Times* ran the headline "Alaska Highway Tames Wilderness" in July of 1956, the paper's automobile and outdoor editor, Lynn Rogers, was not simply reminding readers of the

---

[64] "About The MilePost," *The Milepost*, accessed July 30, 2015, http://www.themilepost.com/publisher_information/about_the_milepost. Similar period informational materials were available for purchase through various private and public organizations (automobile associations, the Canadian Government Travel Bureau etc.). See, for examples, "The Tribune Traveler's Guide: Canada Looks for Record on Alcan Highway," *Chicago Daily Tribune* , July 13, 1952 and J.B Folk, "6,200 Miles by Car to Alaska"

[65] George Sundborg, "Big Year For Alaska: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Gold Rush Expected to Bring Rush of Tourists," *New York Times*, May 2, 1948. Also see, "You Can Drive to Alaska Without Red Tape in '48," *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1948; Dana Rice, "The Field of Travel: Many Vacationists Look Toward Alaska As New Routes Open to Serve Them" and Richard L. Neuberger. "Road to the North."

wartime engineering feat of the rapid construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942; Rogers was also referring to the ever-increasing number of American tourists using the highway and their automobiles to penetrate the rugged and geographically remote Alaska Territory: "Each summer thousands of motorists from all over the United States answer the call of the open road and take off to Alaska via…a remarkable road that was scraped out of the wilderness by U.S. Army Engineers."[66]

As early as May of 1948 some news outlets even went so far as to deploy reporters out into the field to take stock of conditions and accommodations along the route in order to remedy the lack of information about "what the American traveler will encounter along the gravel highway" by cataloguing "facilities for camping out along the highway…the availability of lodges, hotels, restaurants, garages, and filling stations." Announcing in May of 1948 that "anyone may strike out over the [Alaska Highway] at will" provided they took adequate precautionary measures, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* promised a "series of stories" based on material furnished by a reporter and a photographer the paper had sent along the route. Seeking to Joining the earlier ranks of advertisers, literary romantics, and visionary inhabitants who imagined, depicted and promoted Alaska for popular audiences, postwar travel accounts published in major news outlets like the *Tribune* promised to "tell of the things they saw that other Americans will want to see."[67]

In 1951, when the Alaska Development Board released its "annual compilation of highway figures", the *Los Angeles Times* reported that "for the first time in history, more people

---

[66] Lynn Rogers, "Alaska Highway Tames Wilderness: Timesmen Travel Alaska Highway," *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1956; Also see, e.g., Lynn Rogers, "Western Alaska Visited on Tour: Kotzebue, Nome Seen in Alaska," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5th, 1956.
[67] Joseph Hearst, "Tribune to Take You on Trip over Alcan Highway," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 23, 1948. For another early example, see Gregory Hawkins, "Report on a Drive Over the Alaska Highway," *New York Times*, August 8, 1948.

traveled to Alaska by automobile in 1950 than by boat" with 22,507 entering by car and 17,430 arriving by sea. Despite an enduring history of travel to the Alaska Territory along water-routes like the Inland Passage, the paradigm had, for the moment at least, shifted.[68] In 1952, AAA reported a national increase of 25% in requests for motor tour information over 1951—a figure seen as "presaging a banner highway travel year"; meanwhile, requests for information about Alaska tours had jumped an astonishing 131% compared to 1951 figures (an increase beaten only by the pacific northwest with 135%).[69] The Canadian government, according to the *Washington Post*, similarly reported that 1952 the amount of traffic travelling along the Alaska Highway was at least double the 1951 figure.[70] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* provided the raw numbers to better put the percentage increase into perspective:

> During the first four months of 1952, 5,885 automobiles carrying a total of nearly 15,000 persons traveled [the Alaska Highway], and all indications point to the busiest year in its ten-year history. The total traffic on the highway last year was 23,406 automobiles, with 43,238 persons carried. If the present gain continues during the summer months, it is expected that more than 50,000 vehicles will use the Alaska Highway during 1952.[71]

In August of 1954, the *New York Times* assured prospective autotourists that "traffic on the highway has increased to the point that a stranded motorist can be sure of soon getting a helping hand or a lift to the nearest garage."[72] In 1957, the New York Times gave a figure of "5,000

---

[68] "Alaska Highway Comes Into Own," *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 1951. Also see, e.g., "Travel Notes: Tourist Traffic Grows on Alaska Highway," *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1950.
[69] The report broke down requests placed through AAA according to major geographical regions: Alaska (131%), Canada (108%) and the Northwest (135%) were identified as the "big jumps" with, for comparison, a 6% increase in the north central states. "More Drivers Asking for Tour Information," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 29, 1952 and "A.A.A. Reports 25% Increase in Car Travel," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* Jun 15, 1952.
[70] "'Alcan' Route Keeping Busy" and "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Canada Looks for Record on Alcan Highway *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 13, 1952.
[71] Ibid. In 1954 the *New York Times* placed the figure of overall vehicle traffic along the Alaska Highway at 25,423. C.H. Frederickson, "By Car to Alaska: Camping Facilities Are Now Available The Length of the Famous Highway," *New York Times*, July 17, 1955.
[72] James H. McCormick, "Easier Motoring North to Alaska," *New York Times*, August 8, 1954. With roads in "peak post-war condition," McCormick wrote that the "Canadian customs at the

private passenger cars" traveling along the Alaska Highway.[73] Although air travel was (and continues to be) the preferred method of travel to and within Alaska and the rugged, demanding road long proffered few comforts, "the road attracted a surprising number of tourists in its first year—19,000 to be exact. By 1950, the number rose to almost 50,000, and it increased steadily thereafter, reaching about 350,000 travelers annually in recent times."[74] The fate of the highway, however, was less than secure in the early years after the end of World War II.

In April of 1947, William Strand, writing in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, argued that relying solely upon local traffic along the Alaska Highway was insufficient to, firstly, justify the cost of overall construction (borne by the American taxpayer) and, secondly, fund the cost of yearly maintenance (borne by the Canadian government which he estimated at between $3 to $5 million per year). Rather, as the headline indicated, the "Fate of [the] Alcan Highway Hinges on Thru Traffic" with "long haul" commercial and tourist traffic, along with service stations and accommodations necessary to provision them, was necessary to make the maintenance of the highway worthwhile.[75] Strand was not the only one to express concerns about the post-war usefulness of the Alaska Highway; indeed, opponents of the highway in both the United States and Canada, including then U.S. Senator Harry S. Truman, actively voiced doubts about the cost and utility of the venture both during the early stages of the project and after its completion. As Kingston details, Truman led a 1943 U.S. Senate probe into the CANOL project and the "committee determined that the pipeline had been raised in haste, at extraordinary taxpayer

---

Alaska-Canada border reported record traffic so far this summer." One Year later, *The Washington Post* reported that a "record influx of [summer] motorists" were once again expected. Robert Know, "Tourist Autos Use Route of Sourdoughs."

[73] Juel Rodack, "Fifteen Hundred Miles on the Alaska Highway" *New York Times* May 19, 1957.

[74] Willis, 92-93. Lee Ceverny also cites these figures, 63. Most scholars draw upon a standard consensus on first year (1948) figures for individual highway traffic of 18,604 people.

[75] William Strand, "Fate of Alcan Highway Hinges on Thru Traffic: Service Stations Needed to Maintain Travel," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 18, 1947.

expense, and that it failed to provide a local source of oil that would be necessary in the defense of Alaska…. After the war, Truman saw the U.S. government sell off or dismantle CANOL's components. But the highway persisted."[76]

Ironically enough, in early 1948 President Truman delivered an address to congress recommending consideration of Alaskan statehood and the *New York Times* drew a direct association between this political push for statehood and the start of the territory's 1948 tourist season as a destination "toward which many motorists are turning" due to the expansion of tourist routes to the territory:

> President Truman's recent message to Congress asking for statehood for Alaska is of interest to the travel public that is daily becoming better acquainted with the northern territory as the result of the opening of routes to vacation areas. The lure of Alaska as a travel field is steadily widening, and while the President's message far transcends the interests of tourists, its appeal for highways, railroad and ship subsidies is an encouraging note in the travel picture.[77]

Echoing the War Department's assertion that the "The Alaska Highway is much more than a road, much more than brilliant a construction feat,"[78] belief that the road would help transform the US's northernmost territory from "Seward's Icebox" into a contender for statehood characterized the rhetoric of reports on the highway during the postwar years. Like the army of army core engineers and civilian contractors that descended upon the territory during the highway's construction, the *New York Times* predicted that "the opening of the Alaska Highway

---

[76] Pierce Kingston, 54, 56. The CANOL (Canadian Oil) Project was a pipeline and refinery system to supply fuel was constructed simultaneously with the highway. Pierce, among other scholars, claims that "no other World War II construction project was more expensive," 54.
[77] Dana Rice, "The Field of Travel: Many Vacationists Look Toward Alaska As New Routes Open to Serve Them."
[78] 1944 Film.

to motorists this year will attract an army of adventuring sightseers eager to try out the new route."[79]

While autotourism up the Alaska Highway during the postwar period influenced the developmental trajectory of the territory's modern tourism industry in concrete ways, it also refashioned the purpose of the highway itself. Rhetoric about the transformative role of motorists heading north emerged in concert with a development ethic wedded to the territory's economic and political future. The highway's perceived role in "help[ing] [the United States] crush the Japanese" was reimagined after the war as a means for ushering in a crush of tourists to the territory.[80] In 1948 *Chicago Daily Tribune* prognosticated that the opening of the Alaska Highway had "started thousands of Americans dreaming about a vacation trip over this famed road built during the war""[81] Like the territorial boosters dreaming up schemes for northern development and frontier settlement that has come to define Alaska as a frontier zone, American tourists did not simply dream about a trip up the Alaska Highway—they undertook one and, in so doing, repurposed the highway's and the territory's imaginative frontier. As early as 1952 the *Washington Post* reported that record yearly traffic up the highway was evidence of "[s]till another wilderness is falling before the modern motor vehicle" to the extent that the "tourist is beginning to crowd the wolf and ptarmigan for room."[82]

<u>From Cruise Ships to Cruisin' and Rough Seas to Roughin' It: Driving and Camping Along the Alaska Highway</u>

In 1959, the American Automobile Club "Expect[ed] auto travel will set new peak" due

[79] Dana Rice, "The Field of Travel: Many Vacationists Look Toward Alaska As New Routes Open to Serve Them."
[80] "America's Burma Road."
[81] Joseph Hearst, "Tribune to Take You on Trip over Alcan Highway."
[82] "'Alcan' Route Keeping Busy."

to "increased interest in camping, "drive yourself" tours, and trips to Alaska and Mexico"; as a result, the AAA predicted that Americans will break all records for motor travel in 1959." According the AAA, the "principal factors" informing this "rising interest in motor travel" were the growing trend toward "economy minded [] vacation planning" and camping trips and the fact that "[t]he motoring public has indicated a growing desire to see Alaska by automobile and motor travel to and within Mexico is becoming increasingly popular."[83] Like tourism to the territory more broadly, autotourism up the Alaska Highway and through the territory tapped into interrelated national trends of visiting scenic parks by car and camping as recreational activity. According to Peter Boag, who cites United States Forest Service (USFS) statistics, "in 1943 about 1.1 million people overnighted in its campgrounds nationwide. This figure almost quadrupled by 1950 to 3.9 million. By 1960 it nearly tripled again to 10.9 million and in the year 1964 some 14.2 million people camped in [Unites States Forest Service] campgrounds."[84] Evincing the interrelation between the propensity for visiting national parks and the rise of automotive travel, Boag writes that "whereas in 1916 about an equal number of people entered Yosemite National Park by railroad (14,251) as they did by automobile (14,527), in 1925 autos transported nearly 27,000 visitors to the park, the railroad only about 4,000."

Despite the reality of the highway's ruggedness, many accounts of driving up the highway promised to combine the ease and comfort of modern transportation technologies with

[83] AAA's projection was based on surveys from the organization's 260 affiliated motor clubs "representing every geographical region of the United States." "Expect Auto Travel Will Set New Peak," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1959.

[84] Peter Boag, "Outward Bound: Family, Gender, Environmentalism, and the Postwar Camping Craze, 1945-1970," *Idaho Yesterdays* 50, no. 1 (Spring/Summer2009): 3-15, 5. Boag further contends that recreational camping unintentionally fostered a growing appreciation of the environment—and "thus a willingness to protect and advocate for it"— in a "fairly significant segment of [the American] population," 4.

the fantasy of a pre-modern encounter with a primeval and wild landscape. [85] Evincing this paradox, a 1954 account of driving the Alaska Highway informed readers that the "motorist finds the wilderness as appealing as ever, but less appalling than seven years go." In ""Easier Motoring North to Alaska," James H. McCormick described—without a hint of irony—how "without leaving the highway, [he had] seen bear, wild sheep, moose, foxes and even a belligerent buffalo."[86] In 1956 Lynn Rogers described motoring in Alaska as a study in contrasts with "untamed wilderness and raw frontiers, as well as modern cities with all Stateside comforts." As if that weren't enough of a draw, Rogers described how the contraction of time and space brought on by modern automotive and air technology. Upon arrival back home, Rogers was happy to report that within three hours he was "back at [his] desk, having traveled 13,000 miles by Buick and airplanes in a matter of 13 days." [87]

Accounts of motoring north positioned the man-made highway as the pathway to "the greatest uninhabited solitudes left on the North American Continent [sic]." The highway took tourists "through a land of mystery and enchantment" with "some of the most spectacular scenery in the world" along a road that "crawls upward to the top of the world." Passing through mountain ranges, prairie, tundra and swampland, en route motorists could experience "sightseeing, fishing, hunting and…other attractions" at their leisure. Evincing the role of

---

[85] Various scholars have shown how driving to natural spaces in the United States both shaped and was shaped by encounters with the 'wild' in particular ways. See, e.g., Hal K. Rothman, "Chapter 6: Intraregional Tourism: Automobiles, Roads and National Parks," in *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); and Gabrielle Barnett, "Drive-by Viewing: Visual Consciousness and Forest Preservation in the Automobile Age" *Technology and Culture* 45, no. 1 (January 2004): 30-54.

[86] "Easier Motoring."

[87] Lynn Rogers, "Alaska Has Raw Frontiers, Sparkling, Modern Cities."

pioneer nostalgia in heritage tourism, destinations like Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory allowed motorists to get a sampling of the "flavor of the gold trail and the stampede days of '98"; managing to transform into a "small city," Whitehorse hadn't "los[t] its pioneer flavor and glamour of the days of the 1898 Klondike gold rush." Upon "[r]olling into Whitehorse…the traveler finds himself in a place rich with memories of the gold rush days of 1898 when it was as wild a community as any in the Old West."[88]

J.B. Folk and family stopped in Whitehorse ("the only town of any size") between Dawson Creek and Fairbanks to "look at two dilapidated steamers of the old gold-rush days and a couple of old Royal Mail stage coaches, one on wheels and the other on sled runners. We also visited the cabin of Sam McGee, made famous by Robert W. Service." In Fairbanks, Folk and family "watched gold being mined by dredges" before doubling back to Big Delta and heading south to Valdez along the Richardson Highway, "considered [to be] one of the most beautiful trips in Alaska." Among the "magnificent" scenery encountered during their trip along the Alaska Highway, including "the Elias Range, the Wrangell Mountains and the Chugach Range bordering the Matanuska Valley [which] provide a continuous mountain panorama for hundreds of miles," Folk explained that their visit to a secluded hot spring was "one of the high spots of the journey." Using a language of the road, Folk identified the hot spring's location for readers at mile 496½.[89]

While immediately after the opening of the highway American news outlets touted that anyone could set out along its route and ""except for precautions against ubiquitous mosquitos…the tourist needs no special equipment", the state of the road remained challenging

[88] Richard L. Neuberger, "Road to the North;" "Travel Notes: Tourist Traffic Grows on Alaska Highway," *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1950; C.H. Frederickson, "By Car to Alaska;" Richard L. Neuberger, "Road to the North;" and James H. McCormick. "Easier Motoring North to Alaska."
[89] J.B Folk, "6,200 Miles by Car to Alaska."

in the decades after its construction. In 1954, James H. McCormick reported that "it takes cash, courage and a good set of tools to travel the Alcan highway." In 1955, C.H. Frederickson reported there were "ten or more shops along the highway where major automobile repairs can be made and numerous others which are able to deal with small adjustments" and "No special safety precautions are required by experienced drivers on the highway." He did, however, "recommend carrying two spare tires and a reserve of gas and oil, and taking the precaution to fortify the underside of the gasoline tank against the wear and tear of flying gravel." For those willing to set out along its length, reports recommended bringing camping equipment, plenty of blankets and warm clothing, mosquito netting ("insects are an actual menace"), canned goods and foodstuff with a long-shelf life for the humans and extra oil, gasoline and spare tires and various replacement parts for the car.[90]

Beyond practical, economic motivations that made camping a desirable, affordable method of vacationing for larger middle-class families or the isolation of destinations in the American West that often that required outdoor overnight stays, camping in the mid-20th century was a postwar activity was imbued, like visits to national parks and the act of driving, with specific, historically contingent social and cultural values—defense, rejuvenation, rugged individualism and patriotism. Building on the work of scholars like Adam Rome, who identify the rise of the suburb and suburban living in the United States as a key factor in the emergence of modern environmental awareness, Peter Boag has argued that Americans turned to camping, like tourism, as a balm to modern, suburban life: "In the fifties and sixties white middle-class

[90] Gregory Hawkins, "Easier Motoring"; "By Car to Alaska." Precautionary planning was required "far beyond th[at] of the ordinary automobile trip." Richard L. Neuberger, "Road to the North."

families…scoured the outdoors for that which escaped them in the routine of their daily lives."[91] As Roger White writes, "[d]espite the difficulties, many motorists shunned hotels and relied on their own tents and camping equipment,"[92] and J.B. Folk was one such postwar travelers. Folk, who camped part of the way on a family trip to up the highway, informed readers that, "It was the pioneer in us," wrote J.B. Folk, "that made a 6,200-mile automobile trip from New York to Anchorage, Alaska so appealing." [93]

In 1948 Francis C. Durkin, a "field reporter for the American Automobile Association" who journeyed the length of the Alaska Highway, summed up the draw of camping in the north country by characterizing the journey as "no trip for the hurried vacationist, nor for one on a budget" Alaska's sheer size and lack of development made camping requisite if travelers journeyed too far off the beaten path. Along with higher than average prices on goods due to transportation costs, post-war booms in population, construction, and public and private development also brought rising costs of living. While "economical travel" was still possible, particularly when visitors took into account the "distance involved and [amount of] things seen," and was "Less expensive than travel to many resort areas" during the 1950s, some reports expressed feelings of sticker shock.[94] Providing a point of comparison for the prospective tourist, Cernick reported in 1955 that "Alaska is not the place to come for a "budget vacation" unless one is at home in a sleeping bag and thinks it fun to fish and hunt for food. The average $5 room

[91] Boag, 4.
[92] Roger B. White, "At Home on the Highway," *American Heritage* 37, no.1 (December 1985): 98-100, 98. White provides a history of recreational mobile home and luxury trailer vacationing in the United States with particular attention paid to the social and cultural dimensions of class and status.
[93] J.B Folk, "6,200 Miles by Car to Alaska."
[94] Gregory Hawkins, "Report on a Drive Over the Alaska Highway," *New York Times*, August 8, 1948; Richard E. Mooney, "Tourist Frontier;" and "Alaska Has a New Industry: Tourist Business Passes Trapping to Rank No. 3," *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1955.

in the states will cost at least $10 in Alaska. The average $2 stateside meal has a price tag of $3.50 or more in this region."[95] In 1955, *The New York Times* reported that camping facilities were present along the entire length of the Alaska Highway and advised vacationers to pack a tent, padding for the floor, mosquito netting, and insect repellant in order to take advantage of the "numerous cleared areas for campers along the highway." In the Yukon Territory, campsites came equipped with fireplaces, water, and toilets and were situated nearby service stations and grocery stores where motorists could refuel both their automobiles and their supplies.[96]

The popularity of camping, trailering, and outdoor 'roughing it' didn't simply serve as an effective way in which for tourists to receive the full experience of an encounter with nature, however; it functioned as a palliative to the burdens that unprecedented numbers of tourists placed upon infrastructure—for the tourist as well as the tourism industry. As both Boag and White argue, the appeal of camping was that it required a degree of 'roughing it', lowered vacation costs and promised an immersive experience with nature. Accounts of travel in Alaska in the postwar period suggest, however, that camping could be less rough than the accommodations to be had in Alaska. J.B. Folk was not concerned by "[r]eports of crowded and crude accommodations" because he packed "two pup tents, down-filled sleeping bags and cooking equipment." Cernick warned "non-campers" that overnight accommodations "var[ied] in rates and comfort" but were "in general…not as comfortable as a good motel in the United States." Cernick attempted to persuade the non-campers that a "journey over the Alaska Highway is preferably a camping trip": "The traveller has more leeway thus. He will not, for

[95] Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons." Two years previously, Len Barnes reported "[p]rices of many things are boom time yet" with a "'poor boy' sandwich of egg and a piece of bacon costs $1. Rooms at the Westward hotel, clean and moderate, are $6 single and up. A good dinner is $5 and up." Len Barnes, "The Tribune Travelers' Guide: Alaska a Potent Travel Lure as a 'Last Frontier,'" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 17, 1953.
[96] Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Beckons."

example, have to resist the temptations—which are frequent—to halt by some tumbling stream for the fishing. This is exceptionally good, with such game fish as Arctic grayling lurking hungrily on the watch for flies in every flurry of white water."[97]

If driving, camping and sight-seeing along the man-made highway was perceived by tourists as the means for an achieving an 'authentic,' 'immersive' encounter with the wild, there is also evidence that the tourism industry in Alaska recognized this and actively worked to develop campsites and cultivate the use of camping facilities to ameliorate infrastructural stresses caused by the influx of postwar tourists. Working under the egis of the University of the Alaska and funding provided by the Small Business Administration Management Research Grant Program, in 1960 Vernon R. Kiely and John Meir Hilpert conducted a comprehensive study of the Alaskan tourism industry. Published in 1961, the 1960 study was comprised of data collected through a visitor questionnaire form given to out-bound travelers (car, plane, ship) and field evaluations of visitor facilities undertaken by Kiely and Hilpert. Early and recurrent emphasis was placed upon the importance of campsites and camping facilities as one of the keys to the future of Alaskan tourism. In the "Summary of Conclusions," four main conclusions about the integral role of camping were summarized: firstly, "Campsites and good camping facilities are necessary for increasing the number of highway visitors;" secondly, "The United States is becoming more camper minded and Alaska must meet the demand of the camper visitor;" thirdly, "The State should develop natural recreation areas for campsites and provide camper facilities or make provisions for the attraction of private enterprise to these areas" and, finally, "The importance of campsites is shown by the high percentage that are using present facilities." While the study anticipated an increase of visitors arriving via the Alaska Highway, "the rate of

[97] Ibid.; J.B Folk, "6,200 Miles by Car to Alaska;" C.H. Frederickson, "By Car to Alaska."

increase will be determined by the amount of development Alaska makes in its campsites and camping facilities. Campsites developed in natural recreation areas are a *must* for the State, if it is to increase the number of highway travelers [italics mine]." The study pointed out that the production-line basis and growing affordability of campers ensured the continued presence of a consumer base "for those prepared to welcome owners of these units."[98]

Alaska's postwar tourism industry worked to foster the infrastructure needed to accommodate and please the postwar influx of tourists north but despite rapid development, shortages in tourism infrastructure reflected broader (and more basic) infrastructural and resource stresses upon housing, supplies and transportation facilities tied to Alaska's back to back wartime booms. As the repurposing of the highway itself evinces, according to Blackford "the war brought infrastructure improvements [the construction of the highway, the improvement of harbor facilities, and the construction of air bases], many of which were later put to commercial use;" the 1961 study of the Alaskan tourism industry praised the innovative repurposing of surplus military installations and the refashioning of commercial infrastructure—adaptions ranging from the "inactive mineral industry…adapted with the added attraction of the unusual layout of a mining camp" to ghost towns where industrial collapse and trade decline was reinvented to serve vacationers by "utilizing the charm of the "frontier" approach."[99]

Paired with the relative inexpensiveness and minimal investment needed to develop campsites and camping facilities, the camper demographic would "bring in business until facilities are available for an increase in non-camper visitors." The study went on to note that,

---

[98] Vernon R. Kiely and John Meir Hilpert, *Tourist Industry in Alaska*, Prepared by the University of Alaska under the Small Business Administration Management Research Grant Program. (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska),1961, vi, 19. The survey was conducted from June 15, 1960 to September 15, 1960, 37. The final sample of completed questionnaire cards totaled 4,790, 39.

[99] Mansel Blackford, 101. Kiely and Hilpert, 23-24.

"until Alaska is able to supply adequate lodging and meals at prices within the budgets of average American vacationers, one hope for a material increase in tourist business is for Alaska to welcome the camper and supply his more limited needs."[100] Identified as a "do-it-yourself" vacationer, in something of a disappearing act the recreational camper fittingly solved the problem of his own presence before he became one for the Alaskan tourism industry. Thus, rather than simply an individualized pragmatic adaptation to automotive travel over long-distances or a purely idealistic activity of nature-immersion in response to modern life, camping in the Alaska Territory was intentionally cultivated and nurtured by the tourism industry as a means for alleviating the demands placed on already over-burdened postwar tourism infrastructure in the United States. Camping in Alaska was the product of both bottom-up and top-down attempts to make the most of the tourist's time in the territory with Alaska's natural ecology doing the 'heavy lifting.'

In 1955 C.H. Frederickson and William Hubbard assured prospective vacationers considering a trip up the Alaska Highway that they would not "be solitary" or "be too lonely." Of the 1.96 million visitors to Alaska in 2013, however, only four percent (86,300) came by highway or ferry (51% came by cruise and 45% by air).[101] The highway that the *Washington Post* once referred to as a "lasting monument" to the "genius of the American army engineers who built it in record time" is nowadays decidedly short on both visitors and shares in the global tourism market. Nonetheless, the measure of the highway's impact upon imagining the north in

[100] Vernon Kiely and John Hilpert 17, 10, 16. The report concluded that "the camper must be welcomed and served" because the "best advertising is word of mouth and the best customer is a repeat customer," 17.
[101] C.H. Frederickson, "By Car to Alaska;" Walter W. Hubbard, "Pioneering Adventure? Why Not Try Alaska?" *The Washington Post* July 3, 1955; Alaska Tourism Statistics, Research Development Council of Alaska, accessed June 8, 2015, http://www.akrdc.org/issues/tourism/overview.html

the years leading up to statehood remains materially palpable in the landscape of Alaska's tourism industry. In the decades after the Alaska Highway opened to unrestricted driving, conditions remained rugged and the majority of the road remained unpaved, but the highway played a formative role in creating and expanding a tourist market and consumer base—shaping and furthering the infrastructural contours of the Alaskan tourism industry and promoting the development of America's far north more broadly.

In 1948, a mere two years after the 1946 territorial referendum, the *New York Times* linked Alaskan tourism prospects with the territory's future prospects for statehood: "The Alaska Territory hopes in 1948 to push to victory its campaign to become a state. And this year, for perhaps the first time in its history, the territory is truly prepared to handle its annual crop of tourists and it is looking forward to its greatest travel season."[102] While it would take another decade to materialize, in the final years before statehood American news outlets continued to link the growing interest in travel to Alaska to its transition from territory to 49th state. For example, in the Chicago Daily Tribune William Yates wrote that "Almost half a century has elapsed since travelers could visit a new state….Now eyes and inquiries are directed toward Alaska….[W]ith the eyes of the world focused on this far-flung empire, a really great tourist rush is expected." According to Yates, in the wake of congressional approval of Alaskan statehood, the Alaska Visitors Bureau (Association?) was being inundated with "questions by prospective travelers," federal and territorial government offices were "f[eeling] the rush," chambers of

[102] George Sundborg, "Big Year For Alaska: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Gold Rush Expected to Bring Rush of Tourists," *New York Times*, May 2, 1948. Similar rhetoric in the early post-war years appeared in, e.g., "Alaska Highway Comes Into Own," *Los Angeles Times* Aug 12, 1951; "'Alcan' Route Keeping Busy;" and Walter W. Hubbard, "Travel And Statehood (Letters to the Editor)," *The Washington Post*, December 3, 1950.

commerce were "groaning under the deluge of letters" and residents who "ha[dn't] heard from the folks back home for years" were "find[ing] their mailboxes stuffed full."[103]

While some news outlets across the country drew attention to the advent of statehood as further fuel for the tourism fire, some warned of signs the fire was, like other economic sectors, at risk of being banked by the high costs of admission.[104]. Kiely and Hilpert drew attention to the importance of the tourism industry in the newly minted (and newly-burdened) state which, "with its present lack of agricultural and industrial development," made every "tourist dollar [] of extreme importance to the economy of Alaska." Kiely and Hilpert's 1961 assessments of and recommendations thus sought to ensure "Alaska get[s] its share of th[e] tourist business, and it should be a good-sized share" by "tak[ing] definite steps toward promoting a continuous program for tourist travel to Alaska" and "taking care of the tourist in the best possible manner" upon arrival. Their 1961 study cautioned, however, that the equal status entailed by Alaska's transition from territory to state meant the territory would have to compete in the tourism market on equal footing with other states.[105] Situating the issue of tourism within a century of attempts to develop the far north, the study pointed to the United States Chamber of Commerce, which

---

[103]William Yates, "Alaska, Our Newest State, Expects a Tourist Rush: Big 'Great Land' Boasts Much to Please Visitors, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 7, 1958. Also see, Walter W. Hubbard. "Alaskan Travel Up On Statehood," *The Washington Post*, August 10, 1958; Lawrence E. Davies, "Awaiting a New Gold Rush: Alaska's Tourist Officials Expect Statehood," *New York Times*, July 13, 1958; and Bill Becker, "Alaska—Best Tourist Summer Ever," *New York Times*, September 20, 1959.

[104] The *Wall Street Journal*, among other news outlets, reported that 1959 tourism was down 25 percent and "[t]ourism has been a big disappointment since statehood," Wohlforth, 52. Also see Ray J. Schrick "Alaska's Ordeal: Problems Pile Up Fast For 49th State," *The Wall Street Journal* Mar 16, 1960; and Ray J. Schrick, "Alaska's Economy: It's Hard Hit by Shifts In Defense Emphasis, High Cost of Statehood," *Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 1961.

[105] Kiely and Hilpert, iv, 2-3. In the transition, the report warned that Alaska had lost the intrinsic publicity fostered by its previous territorial stature where "discussions of local Alaskan problems were federal problems to be discussed in Washington where they received national publicity. Today, these problems, discussed in Juneau, are not generally news," 2-3.

"ha[d] this to say about tourism": "Tourist promotion is a key operation in any regional, state, or community development program. Basically, there are three ways in which to bring new money and business into any given area. These are agricultural development, industrial development, and tourist development. Tourism is probably the quickest, least difficult method of the three."[106]

The report pushed for the development of what would, in 1963, become the state-wide ferry system and also called for the paving of the Alaska Highway in order to "aid the flow of tourists into Alaska", but these plans were acknowledged as palliatives, not cures, for the broader structural challenges faced by its admission as the 49th state on January 3rd, 1959: "As, in the spirit of enthusiasm, Statehood was viewed as the solution to all of Alaska's problems, it is believed "paving the highway" is too often being viewed as the solution to problems of the tourist industry." Embracing the lengthy spirit of Alaskan boosterism made manifest in postwar narratives about the Alaska Highway, Kiely and Hilpert turned a perceived negative into an imaginative positive by suggesting that the interim between gravel and pavement

> might be promoted to improve the volume of the tourist industry sales in Alaska. Statehood may have cost the tourist image of a territory, but a motor trip does still include the experience of traversing an unpaved major highway. The man whose hobby is driving will favor a trip to Alaska for this feature. There are others who complain of the tedium of modern freeway driving, the excessive speed, the improvements which spoil the scenery, the sameness of restaurants and facilities. A trip up the Alaska unpaved highway is safer and yet more full of excitement and enjoyment of anticipation.[107]

---

[106] Kiely and Hilpert, iii. Although the study determined that the majority of participants enjoyed their visit, the authors believed improvements should be made to nearly every aspect the existing of tourism infrastructure. The authors also emphasized the need to advertise extensively and work to address the problem of restrictive price structures in order to compete with other foreign and domestic tourism destinations.

[107] The resolution for admission was approved on July 7, 1958. On the long history of the statehood movement see Claus-M. Naske, *49 at Last: The Battle for Alaska Statehood* (Kenmore, WA: Epicenter Press, 2009). Kiely and Hilpert, 29. Both projects required the cooperation of the American and Canadian governments and were not "panaceas for fundamental problems of the tourist industry," "problems [which] must be solved by Alaskans," 29.

The history of mid-century autotourism along the Alaska Highway dwells in this interstitial and latent space of anticipatory excitement. The evolution of postwar tourism and the postwar repurposing of the highway are part of an extensive national saga of dreaming, fashioning, and figuring America's 'Last Frontier' and the search for the key to unlock the 'treasure chest' of northern development in the years before the extent of Alaska's massive oil reserves came to light in the late 1960s. Representative of the unabashed drive for economic gain persisting in simultaneity with a century of romanticizing about Alaska, in 1958 the *New York Times* announced that while "One Well Is Not a Field," with the discovery of oil on the Kenai Peninsula in July of 1957 the "Outlook Is Held Favorable." Informing readers of this new chapter in the history of Alaska three years later, the *New York Times* ran the headline "Alaska Banks on Oil Prospects As Tourism and Building Drop."[108]

[108] Cliff Cernick, "Alaska Soberer on Oil Discovery: Realizes One Well Is Not a Field, but the Outlook Is Held Favorable," *The New York Times*, January 6, 1958; Jenk Jones Jr., "Alaska Banks on Oil Prospects As Tourism and Building Drop," *The New York Times*, January 9, 1961.

CONCLUSION

While the *New York Times*' Bert Pierce described the 1955 World Touring and Automobile Organization conference in Washington D.C. as sure to "give international motor travel a big boost," the conference occurred in the wake of the two most notable midcentury United Nations resolutions on international touring and road traffic: the 1949 United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport held at Geneva, Switzerland and the 1954 United Nations Conference on Customs Formalities for the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles held in New York. Both were aimed at standardizing and simplifying customs formalities pertaining to the importation of personal automobiles used for private touring and travel and included guidelines for the temporary importation of private motor vehicles free of import duties or other related taxes. The 1949 United Nations Geneva Convention on Road Traffic marked a formative moment in intergovernmental efforts to facilitate a burgeoning culture of international road travel for pleasure during the postwar era. Embracing the automobile as a method for accessing and exploring foreign countries, tens of thousands of American motorists were crossing international borders and taking advantage of these recent but nascent intergovernmental treatises ratified by the United Nations designed to ease the international flow of motoring tourists and "facilitate the development of international touring."[1]

[1] United Nations Convention on Road Traffic, Geneva, Switzerland, September 19th, 1949 (Chapter XI Transport and Communications, B. Road Traffic, 1. Convention on Road Traffic Geneva, 19 September 1949) https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsV.aspx?src=treaty&mtdsg_no=xi-b-1&chapter=11&Temp=mtdsg5&lang=en; United Nations Conference on Customs Formalities for the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, New York, USA, June 4th, 1954 (Chapter XI Transport and Communications, 8. Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, New York, 4 June 1954) https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XI-A-8&chapter=11&lang=en#4. For contemporaneous coverage, see Michael Caracappa, "U.N.

Two decades after these UN conferences, David Dodge's 1969 description of Americans as "own[ing] more private automobiles than the rest of the human race lumped together" and the "drivin'est people on earth" used the marker of automobility to differentiate Americans (and thus America) from the rest of the world.[2] In opening remarks summarizing the reasons why Americans were uniquely compelled to drive beyond the purview of their own borders and into foreign countries like Mexico, Dodge drew upon over a century of rhetoric about national identity premised upon American exceptionalism as manifested through the mid 20th century act of driving. In so doing, he crystallized the significance of two decades of international American autotourism as an activity that tells us as much, if not more, about the cultural, social, and political character of the United States as it does about the perceived character of the foreign countries through which autotourists drove and wrote about.

On March 9th, 1952, the *Los Angeles Times* ran a lengthy report on the near-transcendent impression the automobile and the open road had left on the Unites States over the course of the first fifty years of the twentieth century:

> It is impossible to compute what the automobile has done for the nation…. With all our modern advances in means of transportation and communication, the automobile on the open road has not lost any of its importance. Instead, it has continued to increase in importance—as most important of them all. More people, thanks to the motor car, are answering the call of the open road today than at any time in history. And as they feel the spell that the open road lays upon men and women alike, they recognize that the automobile has "made free to man all the far places of recreation, venture and delight."[3]

American autotourism abroad originated in the postwar era of affluence when the American public—and the suburbanized American middle-class, specifically—enjoyed unprecedented

---

Traffic Convention: Easier Motoring Abroad Promised by New Code," *New York Times*, April 6, 1952.

[2] David Dodge, *The Best of Mexico by Car: A Selective Guide to Motor Travel South of the Border* (Toronto, Canada: Collier-Macmillan Publishing, 1968), vii.

[3] Al G. Waddell, "Horeseless Carriages Blazed Trails in West: Auto Played Large Role in Area's Growth," *Los Angeles Times,* March 9, 1952.

gains in standards of living; earning the money needed to acquire durable goods like automobiles, the time to enjoy owning them, the freedom of movement to make doing so worthwhile, and the legitimation of a leisure-consumer-oriented popular and political culture that deified such activities, the American public took to the road—at home and abroad—in unprecedented numbers. Amidst the wax and wane of Cold War tensions, new patterns in international American autotourism evince the historically contingent ways in which driving abroad was the product of a confluence of global circumstances.

The twentieth century created conditions that allowed more Americans than ever before to sit in the driver's seat of their own personal automobiles; in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, however, more and more Americans are actively abdicating this vehicular throne—propelled by congested freeways and roads, elongated commute times, hyper-urbanization, rising gas prices, and increased awareness of carbon footprints and the long-term environmental toll of instant consumer gratification. The jeremiads levied against automobility paradigms continue to gain speed despite the emergence and marketing of automotive technologies like electric and hybrid vehicles designed to abrogate the more readily apparent 'costs' of car ownership and operation. Meanwhile, the global tourism industry has increasingly turned to eco-tourism—once a niche market well into the late 20th century—in order to appeal to wide-spread public sentiment that casts the consequences of mass-tourism—exploitation, commodification, and dwindling finite resources, to name a few—in much the same way as critiques of automotive dependency. Both the rejection of mass-automobility and mass-tourism

paradigms are, of course, only made possible from a subject position of power and access—wanting to seek and take less only made possible and desirable in the context of plenty.[4]

In a 2015 Infiniti television commercial entitled "Driver's Seat," a man sits in the back passenger seat of a 2015 Infiniti Q50 as the freeway setting, visible through the car's windows and cuts showing the top portion of the car from the outside, races by. In contrast, the man is shown reading a newspaper, tapping the window, and emitting a mien of lethargic boredom as the commercial cuts to an empty driver's seat and unmanned steering wheel. Nonchalantly unbuckling his seatbelt, opening the rear passenger door, and stepping out to an implicit death by concrete, the advertisement then cuts to a camera zoom out to reveal that the car and the man within it are, in fact, being carried along as twin passengers atop a big rig car transport carrier. Whereas initially the man seems to be a passenger and the car seems to be the driver, he then walks around to the driver's side door, enters the driver's seat, pushes the ignition button, and reverses down the ramp onto the freeway—speeding by the big rig and taking off down the wide-open freeway. Liberating both himself and the car from the dual captivity of being mere passengers, as the sequence of events unfolds a voice over narration sedately intones, "If you're looking for a car that drives you and takes the wheel right from your very hands, this isn't that car. The first and only car with direct adaptive steering. The 2015 Q50 from Infiniti."[5]

---

[4] For recent critiques of the automobile and automobility paradigms, see Jane Holtz Kay, *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Catherine Lutz and Anne Lutz Fernandez, *Carjacked: The Culture of the Automobile and its Effect on our Lives* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) Zachary Mooradian Furness, *One Less Car: Bicycling and the Politics of Automobility* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010); and Daniel Sperling and Deborah Gordon, *Two Billion Cars: Driving Toward Sustainability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[5] "Driver's Seat," 2015 Advertisement, Infiniti, accessed July 30, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h52fL78E7wY

While the commercial is, of course, only a dramatization performed by professional stunt persons on a closed course, the multi-layered fantasy of escape—from the back seat, from the big rig, and through the act of driving—depicted in the advertisement is a direct response to the advent of self-driving cars and the uncertain future of automobility paradigms housed therein. The most well known representative of this form of automotive technological innovation is Google's Self-Driving Car Project; their prototypes have logged over 1 million autonomous, "self-driven" miles on the streets and freeways of Mountain View, California and Austin, Texas.[6] On April 28th, 2014, Chris Urmson, director of Google's Self-Driving Car Project, reported how "with every passing mile we're growing more optimistic that we're heading toward an achievable goal—a vehicle that operates fully without human intervention." Designing and testing prototypes in the eventual hopes of engineering cars capable of "tak[ing] you where you want to go at the push of a button—no driving required," Google's altruistic goal for its self-driving technology is to "transform mobility by making it easier, safer and more enjoyable to get around."[7]

As the evolution of 21st century mobility paradigms evinces, the casting of midcentury American autotourism abroad as a liberatory activity facilitating autonomous, unmediated, and 'authentic' touristic encounters occupies a specific, historically contingent moment in the long history of automobility in the United States. Although absent in the legion of histories of the automobile in American culture and society, this study has shown how American autotourism abroad was a popular postwar activity that emerged from and within the global Cold War,

---

[6] "About" and "Where," Google Self-Driving Car Project, Accessed July 30, 2015 http://www.google.com/selfdrivingcar/where/ and http://www.google.com/selfdrivingcar/

[7] Chris Urmson, Google Self-Driving Car Project, Official Google Blog, April 28, 2014, Accessed July 30, 2015 http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2014/04/the-latest-chapter-for-self-driving-car.html

reflected American understandings of various parts of the Cold War world, and helped to shape the evolution of the modern tourism industry. In so doing, this study has also evinced the need for a reorientation of scholarship on the topic of American automobility from a purely domestic historical phenomenon into one situated within and premised upon a global historical context of exchange and mutual influence. Driven abroad during the Cold War, American motorists "head[ed] for [the] ends of the earth" in automobiles equipped with "all the comforts [of home]" and exercised a modality of belonging on foreign roads in unprecedented numbers.[8] The shifting nature of 21st century mobility paradigms suggests that this type of temporary automotive mass-migration may not be seen again.

[8] Joseph C. Ingraham, "US Motorists Head for Ends of the Earth," *New York Times,* February 28, 1960. Herbert Mitgang, "All the Comforts: Today's Automobile Proves That at Last There Is Another Place Like Home," *New York Times*, March 9, 1952.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Newspapers and Periodicals
Afro-American
American Magazine
Auto Club News Pictorial
BBC
Chicago Daily Tribune
Chicago Sun-Times
Forbes
Life
Lonely Planet
Los Angeles Times
Milepost
New York Times
New York Times Magazine
Popular Mechanics
Popular Science
Time
Wall Street Journal
Washington Post
Westways

Archives
Archive of the American Automobile Association:
Bill Esherich Donation
Mexico and Central America Seminar Folder, 1963
Unprocessed Collection

Online Databases and Collections
"About The MilePost" *The Milepost*. Accessed July 30, 2015. http://www.themilepost.com/publisher_information/about_the_milepost

Alaska Highway: Construction of the 1,500 Miles of the Alaskan Highway. Official Film. Department of Defense/The War Department. The Signal Corps in Collaboration with the Northwest Service Command. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed June 10, 2015. https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.23086.

Alaska Tourism Statistics: Research Development Council of Alaska. Accessed June 8, 2015. http://www.akrdc.org/issues/tourism/overview.html.

"Driver's Seat." Infiniti. Advertisement. Accessed July 30, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h52fL78E7wY.

"About" and "Where." Google Self-Driving Car Project. Accessed July 30, 2015. http://www.google.com/selfdrivingcar/where/ and http://www.google.com/selfdrivingcar/

"On CIA Disclosures: Foundations, Private Organizations Linked to CIA," *Congressional Quarterly Special Report*, February 24, 1967. Courtesy of The Weisberg Collection. Hood College, Frederick, MD, USA. Accessed July 20, 2014. http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/Weisberg%20Subject%20Index%20Files/C%20Disk/CIA%20Foundations/Item%20041.pdf.

Pearson, Drew. "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," October 20, 1960. American University Archives and Special Collections Library, Digital Research Archive, Drew Pearson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round Collection," Box 16 Folder 16. Accessed July 20, 2014. http://dspace.wrlc.org/doc/bitstream/2041/42533/b16f16-1020zdisplay.pdf#search='mark%20kaminsky'.

United Nations Convention on Road Traffic. Geneva, Switzerland, September 19th, 1949. Chapter XI Transport and Communications. B. Road Traffic 1.Convention on Road Traffic Geneva, 19 September 1949. Accessed July 30, 2015. https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsV.aspx?src=treaty&mtdsg_no=xi-b-1&chapter=11&Temp=mtdsg5&lang=en.

United Nations Conference on Customs Formalities for the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, New York, USA, June 4th, 1954. Chapter XI Transport and Communications. 8. Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, New York, 4 June 1954. Accessed July 30, 2015. https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XI-A-8&chapter=11&lang=en#4

Urmson, Chris. Google Self-Driving Car Project. Official Google Blog. April 28, 2014. Accessed July 30, 2015. http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2014/04/the-latest-chapter-for-self-driving-car.html

Government Publications

Kiely, Vernon R. and John Meir Hilpert. *Tourist Industry in Alaska*. Prepared by the University of Alaska under the Small Business Administration Management Research Grant Program. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska, 1961.

"Tourism in the European Economic Recovery Program." Economic Cooperation Administration Statistics and Reports Division in Collaboration with the Travel Branch, Office of International Trade, Department of Commerce, June 1950.

Articles, Books and Ephemera

AAA Travel Guide to Europe: 1969. New York: AAA World Wide Travel, Inc., 1969.

Child, Julia. *My Life in France*. New York: Anchor Books, 2006.

Dodge, David. *The Best of Mexico by Car: A Selective Guide to Motor Travel South of the Border*. Toronto, Canada: Collier-Macmillan Publishing, 1968.

Lerner, Harry. *European Car and Travel Guide: A Guide for Tourists Who Want to Enjoy Europe by Car.* Minneapolis, MN: T.S. Denison and Co, 1958.

Louis, Victor E. and Jennifer M. Louis. *A Motorist's Guide to the Soviet Union.* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1967.

Mexico by Motor, 1947. Washington D.C.: American Automobile Association, 1947.

Mexico by Motor, 1951. Washington D.C.: American Automobile Association, 1951.

Mexico by Motor, 1956. Washington D.C.: American Automobile Association, 1956.

"Stop Tours Present Grand Tour of Europe by Private Car." Berkeley: Pamphlet Division of Travel Service Inc., Spring 1957.

Packard, Vance. *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: David McCay, 1957.

Woolcock, Iris. *The Road North: A Woman's Adventure Driving the Alaska Highway 1947-1948*. Anchorage, AK: Greatland Graphics, 1990.

Secondary Sources

Ackerman, James R. "American Promotional Road Mapping in the Twentieth Century." *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* 29, no. 3 (2002): 175-191.

Amerian, Stephanie M. "Buying European": The Marshall Plan and American Department Stores." *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 1 (2015): 45-69.

Aron, Cindy. *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Banham, Reynor. "The Transportation Palimpsest." In *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Baranowski, Shelley and Ellen Furlough. *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Barnett, Gabrielle. "Drive-by Viewing: Visual Consciousness and Forest Preservation in the Automobile Age." *Technology and Culture* 45, no. 1 (Jan., 2004): 30-54.

Beckmann, Jörg. "Automobility –A Social Problem and Theoretical Concept." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19 (2001): 593-607.

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Behling, Laura L. "Fisher's Bodies: Automobile Advertisements and the Framing of Modern Female Identity." *Centennial Review* 41, no. 3 (1997): 515-528.

Belasco, Warren James. *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910–1945* Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1979.

Berdahl, Daphne. "'Go, Trabi, Go!': Reflections on a Car and Its Symbolization over Time." *Anthropology and Humanism* 25, no. 2 (June 2008) 1-11.

Berger, Dina. "A Drink Between Friends: Mexican and American Pleasure Seekers in 1940s Mexico City." In *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom, 13-34. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

Berger, Dina and Andrew Grant Wood, eds. *Holiday In Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010.

Berger, Dina. *The Development of Mexico's Tourism Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Betts, Paul. "The Twilight of the Idols: East German Memory and Material Culture." *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 3 (September 2000), 731-765.

Bill, Roger. "Traveller or Tourist? Jack Kerouac and the Commodification of Culture." *Dialectical Anthropology* 34, no. 3 (September 2010): 395-417.

Blackford, Mansel G. *Pathways to the Present: U.S. Development and Its Consequences in the Pacific.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2007.

Bloom, Nicholas Dagen, ed. *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Blunt, Alison and Cheryl McEwan, eds. *Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: Continuum, 2002.

Boag, Peter. "Outward Bound: Family, Gender, Environmentalism, and the Postwar Camping Craze, 1945-1970." *Idaho Yesterdays* 50, no. 1 (Spring/Summer2009): 3-15.

Boardman, Andrea. *Destination Mexico: A Foreign Land a Step Away: U.S. Tourism to Mexico, 1880s-1950s.* Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University, 2001.

Borneman, Walter R. *Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Braun, Bruce. *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 2002.

Brogger, Frederick. "Grinding the Gears of Production and Consumption: Representational versus Nonrepresentational Advertising for Automobiles in the Mid-1920s." *Prospects* 15 (1990): 197-224.

Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.

Bush, Donald J. "Emotive Power." *Design Quarterly* No. 146, Autoeroticism (1989): 21-31.

Butler, Richard. "The Development of Tourism in Frontier Regions: Issues and Approaches." In *Tourism in Frontier Areas*, edited by Shaul Krakover and Yehuda Gradus, 3-19. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002.

Carruthers, Susan L. *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape and Brainwashing.* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009.

Castillo, Greg. *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Cerveny, Lee K. *Nature and Tourists in the Last Frontier: Local Encounters with Global Tourism in Coastal Alaska*. New York: Cognizant Communication Corp. 2008.

Clarke, Deborah. *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth-Century America.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

Coates, Kenneth S. *North to Alaska! Fifty Years on the World's Most Remarkable Highway.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991.

Coates, Kenneth S. and W.R. Morrison. *The Alaska Highway in World War II: the U.S. Army of Occupation in Canada's Northwest.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America.* New York: Random House, 2003.

Cole, Terrence. "Boom Town: Anchorage and the Second World War." In *The Pacific Northwest in World War II*, edited by Carlos A. Schwantes. Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1986.

Cronon, William. “The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.” In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature,* edited by W. Cronon. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Cross, Gary. *All Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Cuba, Lee J. *Identity and Community on the Alaskan Frontier.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

De Grazia, Victoria. *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Dedek, Peter. *Hip to the Trip: A Cultural History of Route 66*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

Desmond, Jane. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Diebold Jr., William. “The Marshall Plan in Retrospect: a Review of Recent Scholarship.” *Journal of International Affairs* 41, no. 2 (1988): 421–435.

Divall, Colin and George Revill. “Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology.” *Transport History* 26, no. 1 (2005): 99–111.

Dulles, Foster Rhea. *Americans Abroad: Two Centuries of European Travel*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1964.

Dunning, Mike. “Tourism in Ketchikan and Southeast Alaska.” *Alaska History* 15 (2000) 31-43.

Endy, Christopher. *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2014.

Franklin, Adrian. “The Tourist Gaze and Beyond: An Interview with John Urry.” *Tourist Studies* 1 (2001): 115-131.

Flink, James. *The Car Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976.

Foster, Mark. *A Nation on Wheels: The Automobile Culture in America Since 1945*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing, 2002.

Furness, Zachary Mooradian. *One Less Car: Bicycling and the Politics of Automobility.* Philadelphia Temple University Press, 2010.

Furlough, Ellen. “Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France, 1930s-1970s.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 2 (April) 1998: 247-286.

Gartman, David. *Auto Opium: A Social History of American Automobile Design* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

Gartman, David. “Three Ages of the Automobile: The Cultural Logics of the Car.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 4-5 (2004): 169-195.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Glants, Musya and Pamela Kachurin. “Culture, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 3-5.

Gmelch, Sharon Bohn, ed. *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*, Long Grove, Ilinois: Waveland Press, 2010.

Gorsuch, Anne E. *All this is your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Gorsuch, Anne E. “‘There's No Place like Home’: Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism.” *Slavic* Review 62, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 760-785.

Gorsuch, Anne E. *Turizm: The Russian And East European Tourist Under Capitalism And Socialism.* New York: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Gould Davies, Nigel. “The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy.” *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 2, April 2003: 193-214.

Grandin, Greg. *Fordlandia: the Rise and Fall of Henry Ford’s Forgotten Jungle City*. New York: Picador, 2010.

Greenwood, Justine. “Driving through History: The Car, the Open Road, and the Making of History Tourism in Australia, 1920–1940.” *Journal of Tourism History* 3, no. 1 (2011), 21-37.

Griffith H. Williams. “Alaska's Connection: The Alcan Highway.” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (April 1985): 61-68.

Griggs, William E. *The World War II Black Regiment That Built the Alaska Military Highway: A Photographic History*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2002.

Gudis, Catherine. *Buyways : Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Landscape*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2004.

Hall, Stuart. "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, 1-17. London: Sage Publications, 1996.

Hamilton, Peter. "The Lada: A Cultural Icon." In *Autopia: Cars and Culture,* edited by Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr. London: Reaktion Books, 2004.

Hansen, Roger. *The Politics of Mexican Development.* Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).

Haycox, Stephen. "Mining the Federal Government: The War and the All-American City." In *Alaska at War, 1941-1945: The Forgotten War Remembered*, edited by Fern Chandonnet Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2008.

Haycox, Stephen. "Tourism in Alaska's Past." *Alaska Historical Society* (June 27, 2014) http://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/discover-alaska/glimpses-of-the-past/tourism-in-alaskas-past/

Heaney, Thomas. "'The Call of the Open Road'": Automobile Travel and Vacations in American Popular Culture, 1935-1960." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2000.

Hinckley, Ted C. "The Inside Passage: A Popular Gilded Age Tour." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 56 (April 1965): 69-71.

Hiott, Andrea. *Thinking Small: The Long Strange Trip of the Volkswagen Beetle.* New York: Ballantine Books, 2012.

Hummel, Laurel J. "The U.S. Military as Geographical Agent: The Case of Cold War Alaska." *Geographical Review* 95, no. 1 (January 2005): 47-72.

Interrante, Joseph. "The Road to Autopia: The Automobile and the Spatial Transformation of America." In *The Automobile and American Culture,* edited by David Lewis and Laurence Goldstein, 89-104. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1983.

James, Wanda. *Driving from Japan: Japanese Cars in America*. North Carolina: McFarland and Co. Publishing, 2007.

Jennings, Jan, ed. *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990.

Jud, G. Donald. "Tourism and Economic Growth in Mexico Since 1960." *Inter-American Economic Affairs* 28, no. 1 (Summer 1974).

Judt, Tony. *Postwar: a History of Europe since 1945*. London: William Heinemann, 2005.

Kackman, Michael. *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage and Cold War Culture*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Kay, Jane Holtz. *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Kingston, Pierce, J. "The Biggest and Hardest Job Since the Panama Canal." *American History* 35, no. 6 (February 2001): 52-59.

Klein, Christina. *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Kollin, Susan. *Nature's State: Imaging Alaska as the Last Frontier*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Kollin, Susan. "The Wild, Wild North: Nature Writing, Nationalist Ecologies, and Alaska." *American Literary History* 12, no. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 2000): 41-78.

Koshar, Rudy. "Cars and Nations: Anglo-German Perspectives on Automobility between the World Wars." *Theory, Culture & Society* 21 (October 2004):121-144.

Koshar, Rudy. "Driving Cultures and the Meaning of Roads: Some Comparative Examples." In *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe,* edited by Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller, 14-34. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008.

Koshar, Rudy. "'What Ought to Be Seen': Tourists' Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe." *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (July 1998): 323-340.

Koenker, Diane P. *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream.* Itacha, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Krakauer, Jon. "Ice, Mosquitoes and Muskeg--Building the Road to Alaska." *Smithsonian* 23, no. 4 (July 1992): 102-112.

Kroen, Sheryl. "Negotiations with the American Way: The Consumer and the Social Contract in Post-war Europe." In *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*, edited by John Brewer and Frank Trentmann, 251-277. New York: Berg, 2006.

Kroes, Rob. *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Kuisel, Richard. "Commentary: Americanization for Historians." *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 509-515.

Kuisel, Richard. *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*. Berkeley: University of

California Press, 1993.

Lears, T.J. Jackson. "From Salvation to Self-Realization." In *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, edited by Richard W. Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

Lofgren, Orvar. *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Louter, David. *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.

Lukas, Scott, ed. *The Themed Space: Locating Culture, Nation and Self* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

Lutz, Catharine and Anne Lutz Fernandez. *Carjacked: The Culture of the Automobile and its Effect on our Lives*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

MacCannell, Dean. "The Commodification of Culture." In *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*, edited by Valene E. Smith and Maryann Brent, 380-390. New York: Cognizant Communications Corp., 2001.

MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Schocken Book, 1989.

MacCannell, Dean. "Tourist Agency." *Tourist Studies* 1 (2001): 23-37.

Marchand, Roland. *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

May, Elaine Tyler. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. New York: Basic Books, 1988.

Marling, Karal Ann. *As Seen on TV: the Culture of Everyday life in the 1950s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

McCarthy, Tom. *Auto Mania: Cars, Consumers and the Environment.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

McCracken, Grant. *Culture and Consumption II: Markets, Meaning, and Brand Management*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

McKenzie, Brian A. "Creating a Tourists' Paradise: The Marshall Plan and France, 1948 to 1952." *French Politics, Culture and Society* 21, no. 1 (2003): 35–54.

McKenzie, Brian A. *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

McEnaney, Laura. *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

McShane, Clay. *Down the Asphalt Path: The American Automobile and the City.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

Merrill, Dennis. *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Mom, Gijs. "Roads without Rails: European Highway-Network Building and the Desire for Long-Range Motorized Mobility." *Technology and Culture* 46, no. 4 (October 2005): 745-772.

Nash, Roderick. *Tourism, Parks and the Wilderness Idea in the History of Alaska*. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission/Alaska Historical Society, 1981.

Naske, Claus-M. "Alaska and the Federal-Aid Highway Acts." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 133-138.

Naske, Claus-M. and Herman E. Slotnick. *Alaska: A History of the 49th State*. Norman, OK.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.

Naske, Claus-M. "Paving Alaska's Trails: The Work of the Alaska Road Commission." Lanham, MD: *Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History*, No. 152, 1986.

Narotzky, Viviana "Our Cars in Havana: Riding the Survivors of the Soviet Union." In *Autopia: Cars and Culture,* edited by Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr. London: Reaktion Books, 2004.

Nolan, Mary Lee and Sidney Nolan. "The Evolution of Tourism in Twentieth-Century Mexico." *Journal of the West* 27 (October 1988): 14-25.

Norris, Frank. "Showing Off Alaska: The Northern Tourist Trade, 1878-1941." *Alaska History* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 1-18.

Nuttall, Mark, "Packaging the Wild: Tourism Development in Alaska." In *Tourists and Tourism: Identifying with People and Places*, edited by Simone Abram, Jacqueline Waldren and Donald Macleod, 223-228 New York: Berg, 1997.

Nye, David. *American Technological Sublime*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

Nye, Joseph. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power.* New York: Basic Books, 1990.

Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.* New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

Oldenziel, Ruth and Karin Zachmann, eds. *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology and European Users*. Cambridge: MA: MIT Press, 2009.

Oles, James. *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1947*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1993.

Pells, Richard H. *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War* II. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Patton, Phil. *Bug: The Strange Mutations Of The World's Most Famous Automobile.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

Rae, John. *The American Automobile Industry*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1984.

Ramsey, Michelle. "Selling Social Status: Woman and Automobile Advertisements from 1910-1920." *Urbana* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 26-38.

Rebec, Nicole. "'Detroit Shows Russia How': The Landing of the 1952 Pobeda." (Graduate Seminar Paper: University of California, Irvine, 2010).

Remley, David A. *Crooked Road: The Story of the Alaska Highway*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1976.

Reynolds, David. "The European Response." *Foreign Affairs* 76 no. 3 (1997): 171–184.

Richmond, Yale. *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain*. Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2004.

Rieger, Brernhard. "From People's Car to New Beetle: The Transatlantic Journeys of the Volkswagen Beetle." *Journal of American History* 97, no. 1 (June 2010): 91-115.

Rome, Adam. *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburbanization and the Rise of American Environmentalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Rose, Mark H. *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1941-1956*. Lawrence, Kansas: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979.

Rosenberg, Emily. "Another Mission to Moscow: Ida Rosenthal and Consumer Dreams." In *Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present*, edited by Choi Chatterjee and Beth Holmgren, 127-138. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Rosenberg, Emily "Consumer Capitalism and the End of the Cold War." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume III,* edited by Odd Arne Westad and Melvyn P. Leffler, 489-512. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Rosenberg, Emily. "Consuming the American Century." In *The Short American Century: A Postmortem*, edited by Andrew J. Bacevich, 38-58. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Rosenberg, Emily. *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Rothman, Hal K. *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West.* Lawrence, K.S.: University of Kansas Press, 1998.

Runte, Alfred. "Promoting Exotic Alaska: A Nostalgic Look at the Golden Age of Railroad Advertising." *Alaska Journal* 15, no. 4 (1985): 58-61.

Sanford, Charles. "'Woman's Place' in American Car Culture." In *The Automobile and American Culture,* edited by David Lewis and Laurence Goldstein, 137-152. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1983.

Saragoza, Alex. "The Selling of Mexico, Tourism and the Stat, 1929-1952." In *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940*, edited by Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein and Eric Zolov, 91-115. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001.

Schipper, Frank. "Changing the Face of Europe: European Road Mobility during the Marshall Plan Years." *The Journal of Transport History*, 28, no. 2 (2007): 211-228.

Schipper, Frank. *Driving Europe: Building Europe on Roads in the Twentieth Century***.** Amsterdam: Aksant Press, 2009.

Schrepfer, Susan. *Nature's Altars: Mountains, Gender, and American Environmentalism.* Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005.

Schwartz*,* Vanessa. *It's So French!: Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Sears, John F. *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Seely, Bruce E. *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

Seely, Bruce E. "Getting the Interstate System Built: Road Engineers and the Implementation of Public Policy, 1955-1985." *Journal of Policy History* 2 (1990): 23-55.

Seely, Bruce E. "'Push' and 'Pull' Factors in Technology Transfer: Moving American-Style Highway Engineering to Europe, 1945–1960." *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society* 2, no. 3 (2004): 229–246.

Seiler, Cotton. *Republic of Drivers.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Seiler, Cotton. "'So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By': African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism." *American Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (December 2006): 1091-1117.

Shaffer, Marguerite S. *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001.

Sheller, Mimi. "Automotive Emotions: Feeling the Car." *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 4/5 (2004), 221-242.

Sibley, Katherine A.S. *Red Spies in America: Stolen Secrets and the Dawn of the Cold War.* Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004.

Siegelbaum, Lewis. *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile.* New York: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Siegelbaum, Lewis, ed. *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Slater, Don. *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

Smith,Valene L., ed. *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

Sperling, Daniel and Deborah Gordon. *Two Billion Cars: Driving Toward Sustainability*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Sutter, Paul S. *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

Tsing, Anna. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, edited with an introduction by Harold P. Simonson. New York: Ungar, 1963.

Urry, John and Scott Lasch. *Economies of Sign and Space*. London: Sage, 1994.

Urry, John and Jonas Larsen. *The Tourist's Gaze* 3.0. 3rd ed. Sage: London, 2011.

Van der Wee, Herman. *Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy, 1945-1980*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Virtue, John. *The Black Soldiers Who Built the Alaska Highway: A History of Four U.S. Army Regiments in the North, 1942-1943*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2013.

Wachs, Martin and Margaret Crawford, eds. *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Wall, Irwin. *The United States and the Making of Post War France, 1945-1954*. Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Walsh, Maggie. "At Home at the Wheel?: The Woman and Her Automobile in the 1950s." The Third Eccles Centre for American Studies Plenary Lecture: British Association of American Studies Annual Conference, 2006.

Walsh, Maggie. "Gendering Mobility: Women, Work and Automobility in the United States." *History* 93, no. 311, (July 2008): 376-395.

Waters, Wendy. "Remapping Identities: Road Construction and Nation Building in Postrevolutionary Mexico." In *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*, edited by Mary Kay Vaughn and Stephen E. Lewis, 221-242. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006.

Wells, Christopher. *Car Country: An Environmental History*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2012.

West, Charles B. *Mr. Alaska: The Chuck West Story: Forty Years of Alaska Tourism, 1945-1985.* Seattle, Wash.: Weslee Pub., 1985.

White, Roger B. "At Home on the Highway," *American Heritage* 37, no.1 (December 1985): 98-100.

Williams, Raymond. *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 1980.

Willis, Roxanne. *Alaska's Place in the West: From the Last Frontier to the Last Great Wilderness.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010.

Wilson, William H. "Ahead of the Times: The Alaska Railroad and Tourism, 1924-1941." *Alaska Journal* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1977): 18-24.

Wohlforth, Eric. "Alaska's First Big Fiscal Venture: The Financing of the State Ferry System." *Alaska History* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 46-55.

Zatlin, Jonathan R. "The Vehicle of Desire: The Trabant, the Wartburg, and the End of the GDR." *German History* 15, no. 3 (1997), 358-380.

Zeitlin, Jonathan and Gary Herrigel, eds., *Americanization and its Limits: Responses to U.S. Technology and Management in Postwar Europe and Japan.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Zolov, Eric. "Discovering a Land "Mysterious and Obvious": The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico" in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940*, eds. Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein and Eric Zolov, 234-272. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001.

Zeubok, Vladislav. "The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Leadership, Elites, and Stability." In *The Fall of Great Powers: Peace, Stability and Legitimacy,* edited by Geir Lundstead. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.