

The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America." *The Annals of Iowa* 48 (1986), 342-344.
Available at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/annals-of-iowa/vol48/iss5/21>

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One area that Weiner fails to explore fully is the possibility that the restructuring of the American economy after the war and the growth of service and white-collar work have pulled women into the work force well ahead of any true large-scale change in either women's perceptions of their most valued roles or society's willingness to enact policies that see paid work for both men and women as within exactly the same range of normal experience.

Both Campbell and Weiner have written valuable books. Both rely on a wide range of primary and secondary sources. In fact, both rely heavily on one common source: federal government statistics and publications, especially those generated by the U.S. Women's Bureau and the Bureau of the Census. But Campbell more effectively uses her evidence and has produced a better study, one likely to become a standard source for students of women's experience during World War II. A synthesis of the history of working women over two centuries of American history, is, of course, a more complicated assignment. But Weiner's study deserves challenge.

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JUDITH SEALANDER

The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America, by John A. Jakle. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. xiv, 382 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

Tourism, John A. Jakle maintains, is not a frivolous topic. It is the means whereby modern people assess themselves and their world. Accessible mostly to the elite at the beginning of the century, tourism has become a nearly universal experience, transforming the landscape of the United States and Canada, and in the process transforming people's lives. If tourism has lost much of its sense of adventure, it has become such a common coin that it cannot be ignored.

Jakle, a professor of geography at the University of Illinois, makes a convincing argument that tourism is "an activity necessary to people's sense of identity in a complicated and potentially confusing modern world." In travel people see the world first hand and see it in a context of pleasure, "a mix that renders touristic insights trustworthy" (22). Away from their daily routines, tourists make contact with an increasingly complex society, and in some sense make peace with it and themselves. It matters not that the attractions they see may have been contrived. Packaging condenses the essence of a locale for tourists so that they may consume it more readily. While some find an element of adventure in trying to get behind the packaging, most are content with what has been so conveniently provided.

The methods of travel changed dramatically in the twentieth century. When travel was mostly by train, getting there might be half the fun, but it was not necessarily an end in itself. The coming of the automobile transformed American leisure. It made tourism available to the masses and made the journey the object of vacation. Before World War I, when most roads were unpaved, the automobile provided a means of getting close to nature, the first great lure for tourists. They stopped wherever they pleased—to look, to picnic, or to camp—and reveled in a sense of freedom unknown to those who traveled by train. Speed was not too important, although the number of miles traveled in a day early became a matter of boast. As both automobiles and roads improved, however, speed became more important, and nature more inaccessible. Riding in enclosed cars along ribbons of concrete, bounded on either side by institutions constructed solely to fill the needs of people and machines, travelers were isolated from nature. The more they traveled, the less they saw. Travel by bus and air made firsthand acquaintance with nature even more difficult.

The search for region was a means of helping tourists organize the diversity of their experiences. While the West was the most distinctive region in the country and perhaps the most appealing to tourists in an exotic kind of way, the Midwest had a wholesome, hometown image that tourists appreciated even if they found the flat landscape dull. The small towns of the prairie looked pretty much alike with their wooden houses, grain elevators, red brick schoolhouses and churches, but the friendliness of the people set the region apart. Jakle quotes John Steinbeck: "I had forgotten how rich and beautiful is the countryside. . . . It seemed to me that the earth was generous and outgoing here in the heartland, and perhaps the people took a cue from it" (213).

Increasingly, both the city and history became attractions for the tourist in the twentieth century. Most appealing were cities with impressive skylines, unusual streets, or easily defined districts to make them legible and memorable. Midwestern cities like Chicago and Kansas City promoted tourism by touting not only what they already were but the promise of what they would become. In forward-looking America, the future was more important than the past.

The tourist in search of history found it prepackaged and contrived. In the cities, antiquity was sometimes hard to find. The neglected and nearly abandoned parts of a city might present a historical face, but in the more vibrant areas, markers had to suffice. Even in historical restorations like Williamsburg, Virginia, history was contrived, and certainly this was the case in Henry Ford's Greenfield Village in Michigan. To some extent shrines were contrived as well. At Mount Vernon, for example, lines of tourists and hackneyed description

combined to destroy the historical ambience of George Washington's home. Charleston and New Orleans, for years bypassed by prosperity, presented the most genuine historical face, while Santa Fe in its nearly unanimous adoption of adobe, became by the mid-1920s "what it should have been: a place that would be what it never was" (299).

Jakle writes that North Americans, for the most part uneducated in geography, were ripe for the contrivances of packaged tourism and content with the stereotypes propagated in the popular culture. In the early part of the century the responsible and diligent tourist mixed pleasure and learning to grow and mature. "The irresponsible tourist did not grow, but only pleased, often learning little and keeping prejudices firmly intact. . . . [T]he coming of the automobile, with mass tourism following in its wake, obscured the values of responsible travel" (306).

This book is rich in detail, and in that richness, even more than in its theme, lies its value. Jakle has an eye for the apt quotation. His mastery of the literature of travel is awesome, as the 23-page bibliography attests. *The Tourist* is a pleasure to read. It tells us what we have lost as well as what we have gained in our quest for speed and autonomy in the automobile age.

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Oral Roberts: An American Life, by David Edwin Harrell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. xiv, 622 pp. Illustrations, bibliographical essay, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Since the end of World War II Oral Roberts has been campaigning among the American people. Americans, including Iowans, have responded to his campaigns with commitments that are as common as, and often much deeper than, the commitments inspired by the political campaigns of the same period. Yet scholars have not considered his life and work a suitable subject for scholarly scrutiny. Professor Harrell has now corrected that situation with this fine biography and institutional study.

The book is nicely balanced between chronological narrative and thematic structure. Part one (1918-1947) treats the obscure early years, when Roberts sensed that he was healed from a mild case of stuttering and an apparently severe case of tuberculosis and subsequently began his career as an evangelist and pastor in the Pentecostal Holiness church. In part two (1947-1960) Roberts launches his independent healing ministry with a series of tent revivals across the coun-

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