Menendez Versus Mickey: A Study Of Heritage Tourism In Florida

by

Monica Rowland

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Co-Major Professor: Raymond O. Arsenault, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor: Gary R. Mormino, Ph.D.
Susan R. Parker, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as: "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and peoples of the past and present. It includes irreplaceable historic, cultural, and natural resources."[1] Heritage tourism is a lucrative industry in the United States. On average, heritage tourists spend $623 per trip compared to $457 for all U.S. travelers.[2] The rise of heritage tourism is inextricably linked with several trends in American society, namely: the historic preservation movement, the desire for a sense of place, and nostalgia. These motivating tendencies often inspire problems of authenticity, commodification, and an unhealthy romanticization of the past.

The present study seeks to analyze the heritage tourism industry in Florida. Chapter one offers a brief look at the history and anthropology of tourism. Chapter two provides an explanation of heritage tourism and the human motivations that drive it, as well as an examination of several U.S. locations where it is practiced.   Chapter three provides a short history of tourism in Florida, an overview of state organizations and

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[1] I prefer the term "heritage tourism" to "cultural heritage tourism" as "cultural tourism" often refers to travel concerned strictly with the visual and performing arts, for example: travel to attend music or art festivals, view a theater performance, or to attend an art museum. While these activities may be considered heritage tourism in some instances often they have nothing to do with the historic character of the place where they are held. National Trust for Historic Preservation, "2005 Cultural Heritage Tourism Fact Sheet," National Trust for Historic Preservation, http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/Dec05_CHT_FactSht.pdf (accessed 3/3/06, 2006).
[2] National Trust for Historic Preservation, *2005 Cultural Heritage Tourism Fact Sheet*, 2.

agencies that promote and practice heritage tourism, and a look at several of Florida's unique heritage tourism locations.

Chapter four is a case study focusing on the heritage tourism industry in St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest city in the United States. St. Augustine presents the best example of heritage tourism in Florida, and offers a perfect setting in which to examine many of the typical problems of heritage tourism. A popular tourist site since the 1800s, St. Augustine followed the lead of Colonial Williamsburg by extensively renovating its historic district in the 1960s. Tourism is the city's only true industry, but the number of tourists that visit annually pales in comparison to non-historical Florida attractions like Disney World. St. Augustine raises unique questions about the neglect of the Hispanic influence in the history of the United States, the American public's fascination with myth and primacy, and the inherent difficulties of maintaining authenticity in any heritage tourism location.

Introduction

Tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs.
-Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers*[1]

Tourism can be a revealing lens through which to examine society. Why, where, and how people travel all have resonance in individual character and national identity. The study of tourism can also provide insight into a society's interpretation of itself. Heritage tourism, in particular, represents an attempt to engage with a collective American history, or to find a sense of place in an increasingly homogenized national landscape. Defined as "travel to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present," heritage tourism promises many benefits but also possesses many dangers. Heritage tourism contributes greatly to the historic preservation movement and provides millions of people with tangible connections to their own history. But through heritage tourism history has become a consumer good, and as such, is frequently molded into its most appealing form before being marketed to a traveling public.

Heritage tourism in Florida is often overlooked as industry professionals, scholars, and tourists focus on the state's myriad theme parks, beautiful beaches, and warm winters. Yet Florida possesses some of the United States' most historic and

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[1] As quoted in: Nuala C. Johnson, "Where Geography and History Meet: Heritage Tourism and the Big House in Ireland," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86, no. 3 (1996): 551.

impressive heritage tourism locations. Consider for a moment that Florida is home to the

nation's oldest city and oldest military fortification. It boasts the nation's first twentieth-

century historic district, its second largest military history museum, and was the

birthplace of Historic Tours of America, one of the country's most successful heritage

tourism companies. As Floridians begin to realize the economic value of their rich

history, numerous state organizations have begun to underwrite programs to support and

promote heritage tourism initiatives, including Visit Florida, the state's tourism

marketing agency, and the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Scores of cities and

towns around the state are trying to tap into the popularity of heritage tourism, hoping to

attract some of the more than 85 million tourists that will visit Florida in 2006.

When one thinks of heritage tourism in Florida (if one thinks of it at all), surely

what comes to mind is St. Augustine, the nation's oldest continuously occupied city. But

St. Augustine, an enchanting city with more than 400 years of history to share, captures

less than five percent of the millions of tourists visiting Florida each year, an astounding

fact considering the growing trend of heritage tourism in America. St. Augustine's

tourism industry seems to lack a common identity and purpose, and tourism officials

struggle to define it as a premier heritage tourism city. They face many obstacles.

Lacking regular preservation funding from the state, city officials constantly search for

money to maintain St. Augustine's unrivaled historic attributes. Tourism professionals

must overcome a lingering American contempt, or at least amnesia, of the area's

Hispanic origins. While attempting to interpret a Hispanic past for a largely Anglo-

American audience St. Augustine's tourism industry constantly struggles to maintain

authenticity, a problem best illustrated by the city's well-known Fountain of Youth Park.

Studying heritage tourism in St. Augustine is illuminating and instructive. It speaks to Americans' fascination with myth and reveals flaws in public historical memory. It raises questions about the lack of a preservation ethic in Florida. But the heritage tourism industry in St. Augustine also reveals the city's incredible ability to endure siege, whether it be from English war ships, a mega-theme park, or the "black legend."

This thesis seeks to analyze heritage tourism as it is practiced in Florida, and in particular, St. Augustine. Before any discussion of heritage tourism can begin, one must first examine the multiple meanings of tourism. When and where did the word originate, and what, exactly, does it mean? How have these meanings changed over time? What is the history of tourism? And what are its motivational underpinnings, especially in American society? Chapter One will address these questions.

Chapter Two will provide an explanation of heritage tourism and explore the motivations that drive it. The rise in heritage tourism is often linked to the historic preservation movement, and is frequently related to American nostalgia and desire for a sense of place. A look at some well-known heritage tourism locations will round out the chapter and provide tangible examples of its promises and problems.

Chapter Three examines the practice of heritage tourism in Florida. A brief history of Florida tourism will be followed by an overview of the agencies and organizations that guide heritage tourism in the state. By exploring some of Florida's unique heritage tourism locations, including Miami, Key West, Pensacola, and Volusia County, we can begin to understand the diversity and challenges of the industry.

Chapter Four delves into Florida's most well-known heritage tourism location: St. Augustine. The chapter includes a study of the city's long history of tourism, a look at the motivations that prompt tourists to visit St. Augustine and an examination of what keeps them away. The city's struggles with historic preservation, authenticity, and the black legend will also be analyzed.

By all accounts it appears that heritage tourism is here to stay. It offers great promise as well as pitfalls to those that engage in its practice. By exploring the problems and profits that heritage tourism has generated in St. Augustine and the rest of Florida we can learn not just about the state's past, but also its future.

Chapter One: An Overview of Tourism

The etymology of the word tour--derived from the Latin "tornare"-to turn- or round off--implies a circular journey, one that begins and ends in the same place. So tourism, then, could be defined as the action of taking a circular journey; a tourist, by implication, is one who undertakes such a journey. There is some disagreement as to when the word tourist first appeared in print. Some scholars argue that the English priest and writer Samuel Pegge first used it in 1800; others contend that it was coined by the French novelist Stendhal in 1838. The first dictionary definition of tourists appeared in 1876. It defined them as "persons who travel out of curiosity and idleness…for pleasure of travel…for being able to tell that they traveled."[2]

Defining contemporary tourism is complicated. Neither scholars that study tourism nor members of the tourism industry agree upon a modern definition. This may stem from the different purposes of the two parties. For those within the tourism "industry," there is a need for a statistical, practical definition of tourism for the purposes of measurement and analysis. For example, the World Tourism Organization defines tourism as "the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes." The Travel Industry Association of America defines tourism as "all round-

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[2] Zbigniew Mieczkowski, *World Trends in Tourism and Recreation* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990), 20; William F. Theobald, ed., *Global Tourism* (Boston: Elsevier, 2005), 9-10.

trips with a one-way route mileage of 100 miles or more and all trips involving one or more nights away from home, regardless of distance."[3]

While those in the tourism industry require a practical definition, scholars in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, geography and cultural studies are more interested in the social and cultural aspects of tourism. Their definitions almost invariably include words like leisure and culture, and many expand these with discussions of consumption and commodification. For the purposes of this study, I will define a tourist as one who travels to experience unfamiliar surroundings, usually for pleasure.[4]

Early Tourism

Humans have always traveled. In early times travel was usually motivated by some form of economic or moral imperative: trading, re-settlement, grazing, warfare, religion. Greeks, for instance, traveled extensively to visit sacred sites. The first "tourist" may have been the Greek historian Herodotus, in the fifth century B.C., who traveled purely for the sake of learning about other places and the people who lived there. But the first practitioners of true mass tourism were the Romans. Citizens eager to escape the heat and unpleasantness of metropolitan Rome created a tourism "industry" that reached

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[3] World Tourism Organization, "Tourism: General Definition," available from: http://www.world-tourism.org/aboutwto/eng/menu.html; Internet; accessed 3/11/2006; David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, eds., *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), 15.
[4] Wrobel and Long, *Seeing and Being Seen*, 16.

its peak in the second century B.C., complete with tour guides, scheduled travel connections, museums, and travel offices.[5]

The years following the fall of the Roman Empire saw a sharp decline in tourism. The roads, communication systems, inns, and other infrastructure that supported tourism disappeared, and a newly ascendant Christian ideology criticizing the excesses of Roman recreation meant that travel for pleasure was now considered sinful. However, travel for the purpose of visiting holy sites was acceptable, and by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, pilgrimage had become a mass phenomenon. By the beginning of the Renaissance, these pilgrims had added cultural and pleasure excursions to their itineraries, becoming true tourists, while at the same time creating demand for a new genre of writing: the travel book.[6]

It was not until the Enlightenment, however, that the foundations of modern tourism were truly laid. New philosophical, cultural, and socio-economic patterns created a change in thought and approach towards nature, travel, and recreation. Nature was no longer viewed as savage and dangerous, a thing to be tamed. Instead it was becoming a thing of beauty to be discovered and celebrated. By the end of the eighteenth century European tourists, inspired by romantic writers and landscape painters, and seeking sublime experiences in nature, had become commonplace. During this same time the "Grand Tour" became fashionable for the young sons of England's wealthy elite as a culmination of their classical education.[7]

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[5] Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 8-9; Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 46-47.

[6] Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 43-53; Feifer, *Tourism in History*, 25-62.

[7] John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity: 1880-*

While the philosophical and cultural changes of the Enlightenment were pivotal in the development of modern tourism, the economic and political changes created by the Industrial Revolution were even more influential. The resultant accumulation of capital and, most importantly, the development of transportation networks led to the rise of tourism as we know it today.[8]

Tourism in the United States

It is necessary to explore the early history of tourism in the United States separately from that of the European experience. Although tourism in Europe was common by the eighteenth century, Americans did not really begin to tour until the 1820s and 1830s. During the Revolutionary and Early National periods Americans were engrossed in the work of developing their new nation: clearing wilderness, fighting Indians, developing towns, gaining independence. Domestic travel in the U.S. was a rare activity limited to an elite segment of the population and lacking a reliable economic infrastructure. Few citizens had the time, money, or inclination to travel in the United States before the 1820s. Several factors caused this to change.[9]

First and foremost, a transportation revolution started in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Steamboats began to ply the Hudson River in 1807; the opening of

1940 (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 11; Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 53-56; Feifer, *Tourism in History,* 63-93; Metropolitan Museum of Art, "The Grand Tour," available from http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grtr/hd_grtr.htm; Internet; accessed 13 March 2006.

[8] Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 58; Sears, *Sacred Places*, 3; Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), xiv; Shaffer, *See America First*, 3-4.

[9] Sears, *Sacred Places*, 3; Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 22-23.; Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press,1999), 16-18; Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 63-65; Shaffer, *See America First*, 11-12.

the Erie Canal in 1825 facilitated travel across upstate New York; and, most importantly, construction of railroads accelerated in the 1830s and 1840s. Revolutions in transportation created the infrastructure needed for tourism. These technological advances not only allowed for easier travel, but also spurred the development of industrial and commercial centers. These developments, in turn, greatly expanded the capitalist market and, most importantly for tourism, the American middle classes. [10]

A second contributing factor in the development of American tourism was the growing influence of romanticism. Celebrating the beauty of nature, artists like Thomas Cole of the Hudson River School painted stunning views of the Hudson River Valley and the White Mountains. Writers like Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Fennimore Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant described the dramatic scenery of the Northeast through poetry and fiction. These depictions inspired many Americans to travel, not only to see the beautiful landscapes that were described, but also to participate in the creation of a national identity. [11]

Americans had long tied their sense of identity to the land that they settled. So when Americans in the early nineteenth century sought to develop a distinct national culture and identity it was only natural for them to look to the American landscape to distinguish their new nation. Tourism, in turn, provided the means by which Americans could engage with the very thing that gave them their new identity.[12]

The combination of a rapidly developing transportation system, a growing middle class with the time and money to travel, and a desire to partake in the creation of a

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[10] Sears, *Sacred Places*, 3-5; Shaffer, *See America First*, 13.
[11] Shaffer, *See America First*, 13.
[12] Ibid.

national identity contributed to the growth of the early American tourism industry. Such tourists visited health and recreational resorts like Saratoga, Ballston Springs, and Albany, New York, and Cape May, New Jersey. They also traveled to what were becoming the "sacred" places of America: Niagara Falls, the White Mountains, and other sites where visitors participated in a sort of American "pilgrimage" promising spiritual and physical renewal. Another equally important motivator for early American tourism was the desire for tourists to be viewed as part of an elite stratum with the means to travel-- tourism as a form of conspicuous consumption.[13]

Following the conclusion of the Civil War, the modern nation-state was firmly set in place and a new kind of nationalism began in the United States. As described by Marguerite Shaffer in *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940*, America's nascent tourism industry began vigorously promoting travel as a "ritual of American citizenship" in the late nineteenth century. Tourism became almost a patriotic duty, as evidenced by the popular "See America First" campaign that swept the nation in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Railways and tour operators tapped Americans' sense of civic duty when they implored them to "See Europe if you will, but see America first." The message was that citizens would become better Americans by spending their tourist dollars at home rather than abroad.[14]

By waging such a potent campaign geared towards domestic travel, the early U.S. tourism industry essentially created a "canon" of must-see American sites, many of them focusing on the grandeur of the American West, places like the Grand Canyon and

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[13] Aron, *Working at Play*, 17-21; Sears, *Sacred Places*, 4-6; Brown, *Inventing New England*, 23-25; Shaffer, *See America First*, 15.
[14] Shaffer, *See America First*, 4-36.

Yellowstone National Park. Carefully marketed to convey certain meanings and reinforce particular national myths, these sites promoted the idea that the American West represented the "true" America. As Shaffer notes, the concept of 'See America First' suggested that

> the true America could be seen in western scenery, where
> the promise of nature, representing both divine sanction of
> an American empire and the wealth of natural resources
> supporting the progress of that empire, offered an inspiring
> alternative to the decaying civilization of the Old World. [15]

In short, the West represented the power and potential of a great nation, and to be good Americans citizens needed to spend their money to see it.

The economic prosperity and political stability of the early twentieth century proved beneficial to tourism. Not even the U.S. entry into the Great War in 1917 could stem the growth of the American tourist industry, as citizens chose to express patriotism and loyalty by embracing their national landscape and landmarks. The 1920s saw the beginnings of paid vacations in the United States as well as a rise in the popularity and affordability of the automobile, advances that allowed increasing numbers of people to travel. Those Americans that could afford to travel during the Depression and World War II did so, eager to escape the bleak realities of the time. The phenomenal economic boom that followed World War II allowed even more American citizens the luxury of travel, and by 1950 two of every three families took an annual vacation. The age of modern tourism had begun.[16]

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[15] Ibid., 34.
[16] Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 68-69; Shaffer, *See America First*, 100; Aron, *Working at Play*, 204-205, 248-249; Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 77.

Modern tourism is distinguishable from the tourism of the past by several features, the most important being the means of transportation used. No longer constrained by the limits of pre-industrial travel, modern tourists can move about the world in greater comfort and with greater speed than in the past. In addition, modern tourism is characterized by its availability and popularity with almost all segments of an economically developed society, a result of the increases in discretionary income and time afforded by the industrial revolution.[17] This "democratization" of tourism fostered a great deal of interest in the study of tourism during the last few decades of the 20th century, both by practitioners in the tourism industry and by professional scholars. In particular, the anthropology of tourism has garnered a great deal of attention.

The Anthropology of Tourism

Prior to the 1970s, anthropologists paid little attention to the study of tourism. In fact, studying tourism was often seen as a frivolous and not wholly legitimate academic endeavor. Dennison Nash, commenting on the dearth of anthropological study of tourism in 1981, argued that tourism was an obvious and natural focus for anthropologists. Amanda Stronza echoed this argument recently in an essay detailing the factors that make tourism relevant to anthropology: its ubiquity across human societies, its economic impact across the globe, and its natural tendency to inspire face-to-face encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds.[18]

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[17] Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 72-73.
[18] Dennison Nash, *Anthropology of Tourism* (Tarrytown, NY: Pergamon, 1996), 461; Amanda Stronza, "Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Ground for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001): 261-283, [journal online] available from:

The anthropological study of tourism has focused on two areas of interest: the

impact of tourism and the origins/motivations of tourism. The first area generally deals

with contacts between cultures and societal changes brought about by tourism. For the

purposes of this study, the origins, and particularly, motivations, of tourism hold more

importance.[19]

Tourism is often viewed as a search for the "sacred," an attempt by humans to add

meaning or purpose to their lives. An act of inquiry and consumption, tourism is a

quintessentially modern activity. Tourists visit a particular place because of the

expectation that it will bring enjoyment, usually through some characteristic that

differentiates it from the visitor's normal surroundings. Tourists daydream about their

holiday; they look forward to it as a chance to re-energize, to be an adventurous

individual, to seek romance, entertainment, or knowledge. [20]

Dean MacCannell's seminal study, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure*

Class, proposes that in modern society tourism can act as a unifying influence, serving to

unite people in an effort to define collectively the events, symbols, and places deemed

meaningful and important and, therefore, especially worthy of seeing. Encountering

these symbols and sharing that experience with others affirms and reinforces what people

think they know about the world. MacCannell argues that tourists are searching for

authentic experiences that will reconnect them with "the pristine, the primitive, the

http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com.proxy.usf.edu/hww/results/results_single_fulltext.jhtml:js... ;Internet;
accessed 14 March 2006.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Nelson Graburn, "Tourism: The Sacred Journey" in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, ed.
Valene L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 22; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze:
Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 10; Schwartz, *Pleasure
Island*, xvii; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken
Books, Inc., 1972), 15.

natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity."[21] This desire is arguably one of

the primary reasons behind the rising popularity of heritage tourism.

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[21] Stronza, "Forging New Ground," 265; MaCannell quote 265; MacCannell, *The Tourist,* 13-15.

Chapter Two: An Overview of Heritage Tourism

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as "travel to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and peoples of the past and present. It includes irreplaceable historic, cultural, and natural resources."[22] Tourism researchers at the University of Florida define a heritage tourist as one whose "primary purpose or motivation to visit the study area is to visit the historical areas, museums, and historic architecture or heritage/cultural attractions."[23]

A 2003 study on Historic/Cultural Travelers conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and *Smithsonian* magazine showed that 81 percent of U.S. adults who traveled in 2002 were considered cultural heritage travelers. A more narrowly focused study by the TIA showed that in 2003 a majority (58 percent) of U.S. adult travelers included an historic activity or event in their vacation. In 2004, visiting a historic place, site, or museum ranked seventh in the list of most popular activities by U.S. travelers, behind shopping, attending a social event, outdoor activities, city

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[22] I prefer the term "heritage tourism" to "cultural heritage tourism" as "cultural tourism" often refers to travel concerned strictly with the visual and performing arts, for example: travel to attend music or art festivals, view a theater performance, or to attend an art museum. While these activities may be considered heritage tourism in some instances, often they have nothing to do with the historic character of the place where they are held. National Trust for Historic Preservation, "2005 Cultural Heritage Tourism Fact Sheet," available from: http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/Dec05_CHT_FactSht.pdf; Internet; accessed 3 March 2006.

[23] John Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. Johns County Florida* (Gainesville: Center for Tourism Research and Development, University of Florida, 2002), 12, available from: http://www.visitoldcity.com/members/research/files/1118131328.pdf#; accessed 8 October 2004.

sightseeing, rural sightseeing, and beach activities. Notably, visiting historic sites tends to rank *above* visiting a theme or amusement park.[24]

Heritage tourism can be very lucrative. A 2003 press release from TIA announced that tourists who consider themselves "historic travelers" (those basing their trips solely on historic sites, or visiting some historic sites when traveling) spend more money and stay on vacation longer than the average tourist. Heritage tourists tend to be older than the average traveler.[25] Retired in many cases, they are more likely to have a graduate degree, to have a higher annual income, to participate in more activities, and are more likely to stay in hotels, motels, or B&Bs while traveling. On average, cultural heritage tourists spend $623 per trip compared to $457 for all U.S. travelers, excluding the cost of transportation. These characteristics point to significant differences between the nature of heritage tourism and more general tourism.[26]

Heritage tourism often has a deeper meaning than just visiting a place to learn the specifics of that site's past. Inherent in the idea of heritage tourism is a *connection*

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[24] It should be noted that shopping, city sightseeing, and rural sightseeing also fall under the umbrella of heritage tourism, as heritage settings not only attract tourists seeking to learn about the past but also provide historic ambience to an environment that can then be used for entertainment, relaxation, and shopping. Also, city and rural sightseeing certainly draw upon local heritage to provide an enjoyable experience to tourists. National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Cultural Heritage Tourism: Research," available from: http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/resources/research.htm; Internet; accessed 14 March 2006; Travel Industry Association of America, "Travelers' Desire to Experience History and Culture Stronger than Ever," available from: http://www.tia.org/dev2/Press/pressrec.asp?Item=284; Internet; accessed 14 November 2004; Travel Industry Association of America, "Domestic Trip Activity Participation by U.S. Travelers, 2004," available from: http://www.tia.org/resources/images/charts/domestic_tip_activity_2004.gif; Internet; accessed 21 February 2006; Gordon Waitt, "Consuming Heritage: Perceived Historical Authenticity," *Annals of Tourism Research* 27, no. 4 (2000): 836.

[25] Participation in heritage activities peaks between the ages of 45 and 65Kathleen Brown, "Tourism Trends for the 1990s," *LORD Cultural Resources and Planning Management*; available from: http://www.lord.ca/publications/articles/tourism_trends_1990.html; Internet; accessed 6 October 2005.

[26] Travel Industry Association of America, "Travelers' Desire"; National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Cultural Heritage Visitor Profile," available from: http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/resources/visitorProfile.htm; Internet; accessed 14 March 2006; Confer and others, 8; National Trust for Historic Preservation, "2005 Cultural Heritage Tourism Fact Sheet," 2.

between the past and the present. Perhaps more importantly, heritage places tend to be

defined by their relationship with people, events, and activities. Heritage tourism calls

into question ideas about cultures, societies, and economies, and asks tourists to consider

notions of history and identity.[27]

The rise of heritage tourism is inextricably linked with several trends in American

society, namely: the historic preservation movement, the desire for a sense of place, and

nostalgia for a more innocent time. These motivating tendencies often inspire problems

of commodification, inauthenticity, and an unhealthy romanticization of the past.

Motivations behind Heritage Tourism

Motivations behind the rise of heritage tourism in the United States fall into two

camps: what motivates the stewards of heritage sites, and what motivates the heritage

tourist. We will first explore the motivations that promoted the creation of heritage sites,

and then determine why tourists choose to visit those sites.

The choice of heritage tourism as an avenue for a particular town or site is

typically tied to the desire for historic preservation and economic sustainability. Tourism

appears to be a "clean" industry (a debatable idea that we do not have room to explore

here) that can diversify local economies. Heritage tourism has the added value of

preserving a community's unique character, and historic preservation and heritage

tourism have been influencing each other for decades.[28]

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[27] Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. Johns County Florida*, 7.
[28] National Trust for Historic Preservation, "2005 Cultural Heritage Tourism Fact Sheet," 2; Peter H. Brink, "Heritage Tourism in the U.S.A: Grassroots Efforts to Combine Preservation and Tourism," *APT Bulletin* 29, no. 3/4 (1998), [journal online] available from "JStor Journal Storage": http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0848-

The Historic Preservation Movement and the National Trust

Before the 1880s there was a general lack of concern for the preservation of American historic buildings or sites (with a few notable exceptions like the preservation of Mount Vernon and the Hermitage in the 1850s.) The notion of progress was so deeply entrenched in early American society that little consideration was given to protecting or saving places that had surpassed their point of usefulness. This began to change in the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction, when several diverse groups began to decry the destruction of the nation's built heritage. Patrician families in New England; descendants of the antebellum planter class of the Old South; and wealthy industrialists all began to agitate for the preservation of disappearing landmarks and life-ways. The 1906 Antiquities Act, which gave the president of the United States the authority to set aside public lands as national monuments, penalize the destruction of ruins, and grant permits for educational field research, was one of the first legislative successes of the nascent preservation movement.[29]

The true watershed in preservation activities was the decade after World War I when Americans turned to the past as an antidote to the frightening vision of the future they had witnessed in the European trenches. A growing conservation movement had already seen the establishment of the National Park System in 1916, and by the mid-1920s historic house museums dotted the United States, dedicated to educating tourists

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8525%281998%2929%3A3%2F4%3C59%3AHTITUG%3E2.0.CO%3B2-X; Internet; accessed 12 March 06.

[29] Michael Wallace, "Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation" in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 166-171; Charles B. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1-8.

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and inspiring patriotism. An increasing body of professionals committed to preservation,

coupled with a handful of multi-millionaire industrialists intent on preserving vestiges of

the past (that they were, ironically, partially responsible for destroying), led to a full-

blown, recognizable, historic preservation movement by the 1930s. The federal

government even became involved through such New Deal programs as the Works

Progress Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and in 1935, the Historic Sites

Act, which authorized the Department of the Interior to acquire, preserve, and operate

historic sites in the U.S. The most notable of this period's preservation efforts, Colonial

Williamsburg, will be discussed later in this chapter.[30]

The preservation movement gained serious financial backing and a centralized

guiding entity with the foundation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949.

The work of the Trust led to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in

1966, which allowed for the creation of the National Register of Historic Places. The

Trust went on to create the Main Street program in the 1970s in an effort to revitalize

decaying commercial business districts, and then struggled throughout the Reagan

administration years to maintain federal funding.[31]

In 1990, the National Trust created an initiative devoted specifically to

promoting and supporting heritage tourism programs across the U.S. Working with 16

pilot areas in four states-- Indiana, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin-- the Trust

identified five guiding principles for the development of cultural heritage tourism. These

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[30] Wallace, "Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation," 166-173; Brink, "Heritage Tourism in the U.S.A," 59; National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Preservation Timeline," available from: http://www.nationaltrust.org/about_the_trust/timeline/INDEX.HTM; Internet; accessed 15 March 2006; Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age,* 1-8.
[31] Richard Francaviglia, "Selling Heritage Landscapes" in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, eds. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 44-45; National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Preservation Timeline."

were later published, in cooperation with American Express, in *Getting Started: How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism.*[32] By the year 2000 the National Trust could identify cultural heritage tourism programs in more than half of U.S. states, most established within the preceding five years. The Trust continues to operate a Heritage Tourism Program that offers consulting advice to communities considering heritage tourism.[33]

Tourist Motivations

Just because a building is preserved and opened to tourists does not necessarily mean that the public will visit. There must also be a driving force, or set of forces, inspiring tourists to visit a historic site instead of going to the beach, a theme park, or some other attraction. What is it then, that motivates people to visit heritage tourism destinations? The most obvious answer is historical education. But scholars and industry professionals generally agree that few heritage tourists are motivated by a simple desire to enhance their knowledge of American history. Equally important, they insist, is a growing need for a sense of place in an increasingly globalized, homogenous, and commercialized society. In part, this quest rests on nostalgia for a simpler, more romantic past (the legitimacy of that nostalgia will be considered in the next section).

Against a tide of rapid globalization, modern American tourists are longing for rich, fulfilling experiences that resonate with them as human beings and as Americans.

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[32] The five principles are: 1.Focus on authenticity and quality. 2. Preserve and protect resources 3. Make sites come alive. 4. Find the fit between your community and tourism. 5. Collaborate, Brink, "Heritage Tourism in the U.S.A," 60.

[33] National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Why are Cultural Heritage Programs Successful?" available from: http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/whysuccess.html; Internet; accessed 15 March 2006; National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Nationwide, Heritage Tourism is Booming," available from: http://www.nationaltrust.org/news/docs/20001219_heritage_tourism.html; Internet; accessed 15 March 2006.

They are searching for a "sense of place." The phrase was used by Regionalist writers in

the South during the 1960s and gained popularity among geographers in the 1970s, likely

in connection with the rise of environmental and historic preservation efforts during that

time. But the idea of place is as old as humanity. Place is integral to a well-balanced

society; it is the foundation of community; it binds groups of people together and

connects them with their culture. Yet places in America are falling victim to the sameness

of development. Hence, modern experiences become increasingly shallow, lacking a

sense of originality and place. Daniel Kemmis, in his book *Community and the Politics*

of Place, likens this placeless-ness to the modern fast food culture: "public life as we all

too often experience it now is very much like a Big Mac-it can be replicated, in exactly

the same form, anywhere."[34]

The World Tourism Organization argues that consumers' refusal to be treated as a

homogenous mass has spurred the growth of niche tourism markets like heritage tourism.

They view it as just one expression of modern preferences for unique, quality

experiences.[35] Tourists today are searching for knowledge, meaning, and a connection

with the stories of American and human society, a connection to themselves. Writer

Garrison Keillor describes this search beautifully:

> Travelers don't want to waste time in the freeway-strip
> mall-franchise-warehouse-outlet-low rise-taco stand-burger
> stand landscape of America that we all know and don't see
> as it spreads. They want to see magnificent things in

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[34] Herb Hiller, "Tourism and Florida's Emerging Downtowns and Small Towns: A Guide to New Tourism Partnerships and Enhancing New Product Development and Marketing," (Delray Beach, Florida: Visit Florida, October 13-16, 2005); Daniel Kemmis, *Community and the Politics of Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 7.

[35] Waitt, "Consuming Heritage," 838.

America…they want to see where the music comes from, where the books come from…That's the job of the tourism industry. It's like any host with a friend coming to town. You pick them up at the airport and bring them into town by the scenic route. You try to avoid the linseed oil plant and the salvage yard and you try to show them what they came here for. They came here for America. [36]

When tourists visit a heritage site, they are often seeking things that are different from where they came from, things that are unique—those things that provide a sense of place. But they are often also looking to gaze upon remnants of a past that they believe was somehow easier than today.

Michael Kammen, a scholar of the historical imagination, believes that nostalgia is responsible for the popular appeal of the heritage industry. He contends that Americans have been longing for the "golden days" of their past since the turmoil of the late 1960s.[37] Facing uncertainty in the economic world, and surrounded by suburban sprawl at home, a tourist can visit a historic town and experience a "familiarity linked to an idealized past."[38] Other scholars agree that heritage tourism is often a form of escapism. As David Lowenthal says "If the past is a foreign country, nostalgia has made it the foreign country with the healthiest tourist trade of all."[39] But therein lies danger. If nostalgia is the motivating factor behind heritage tourism then there is always the chance that the market will shape itself to satisfy that nostalgia, perhaps at the expense of authenticity.

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[36] Garrison Keillor, "In Search of the Real America: Tourists Venture Out in Search of Uniqueness Not Sameness," *STPP Progress,* 1996, 3-4.
[37] Michael Kammen, *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 219.
[38] Aylin Orbasli, *Tourists in Historic Towns: Urban Conservation and Heritage Management* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2000), 9.
[39] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 4.

Problems of Heritage Tourism

Commodification, romanticization, and questions of authenticity are the most commonly cited pitfalls of heritage tourism. Critics tend to argue that heritage tourism sites are not authentic representations of the past, but are instead a romanticized version provided for consumption by the tourist.[40] As early as 1961 Daniel Boorstin was arguing that Americans cannot experience "reality" directly, but thrive on "pseudo-events," tourism being the prime example.[41] To Boorstin and others heritage tourism is a form of "bogus history," glorifying pleasant memories while submerging atrocities, and placing a price tag on the entire staged experience.

Critics argue that the sanitized history of many heritage tourism sites is presented as such to reinforce the legitimacy of modern circumstances, either social or political. Through a selective presentation of evidence--simplifying historical complexities, reinforcing stereotypes, etc.-- heritage tourism sites often end up sanctioning a glorified version of our national history. Take, for example, the Statue of Liberty. The statue, and in particular, the Emma Lazarus poem inscribed upon it, have a tendency to portray American immigration as a quest for freedom, and tend to obscure the complexity of the immigrant experience in the U.S.[42]

Restored towns are also subject to this danger. A good example is the California Ghost Town of Bodie, now operated as a state park. Here visitors can experience an "authentic" Old West town, and get a taste of the life that their "brave" and "rugged"

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[40] Orbasli, *Tourists in Historic Towns*, 4.
[41] MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 103; Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 7.
[42] Martha K. Norkumas, *The Politics of Public Memory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 6.

pioneer ancestors lived.   Of course, the few remaining buildings in town-- single-family

homes with hardly any hotels or rooming houses-- and the absence of hardened miners

and their impoverished families, present Bodie's history as one of "middle class

domesticity" rather than the desperate struggle for survival that it more likely was.[43]

The selective presentation of history at Bodie reinforces popularly held ideas

about the mythic west and American's virtuous pioneer forbearers. One can understand

such nostalgia. Yet, this historical naiveté is ironic coming from people with a deep

appreciation for the past. Dean MacCannell comments on tourists' preoccupation with

"authentic" experiences:

> The rhetoric of tourism is full of manifestations of the
> importance of the authenticity of the relationship between
> tourists and what they see: this is a *typical* native house;
> this is the *actual* pen used to sign the law; this is the
> *original* manuscript… [44]

Perhaps these tourists do not realize they are not learning the whole truth at many

heritage tourism sites. Michael Kammen notes that one of the biggest threats created by

the pervasiveness of heritage in American society is that it engenders an illusion that

"historical knowledge and understanding are alive and well in the United States."[45] In

reality, however, there is the danger that, through heritage tourism, history will become

(or has already become) a consumer good that can be recreated, marketed, and sold to the

consumer.[46]

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[43] Dydia DeLyser, "Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 89, no. 4 (1999): 602-632.

[44] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 14.

[45] Kammen, *In the Past Lane*, 220.

[46] Orbasli, *Tourists in Historic Towns*, 2.

Heritage Tourism Locations

Thousands of heritage tourism sites exist in the United States. They include historic houses, living-history museums, battlefields, and monuments. They exist in such diverse places as Ellis Island, Gettysburg, and the California missions. For the purposes of this study I have chosen to focus on New England, Colonial Williamsburg, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. These three sites will provide interesting points of comparison for a detailed analysis of St. Augustine, Florida, in Chapter Three.

New England

In *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century*, Dona Brown carefully documents one of the earliest and best examples of heritage tourism in the United States. Brown shows how late nineteenth-century tourists seeking "an escape from modern urban industrial life" via "an imagined world of pastoral beauty, rural independence, virtuous simplicity, and religious and ethnic homogeneity" prompted a sentimental interpretation of New England. This new conceptualization of the region, expressed through historical literature, novels, short stories, and landscape and architectural reforms, actually *created* a mythic New England on which the tourist industry quickly learned to capitalize. New Englanders could now market their decaying towns and buildings as quaint and romantic vestiges of a simpler time, an antidote to the modern industrial world, that, ironically, New Englanders had been praised for creating just a few decades before. And where those romantic vestiges of a rustic colonial past

did not exist, local promoters created them, as in the case of Nantucket, a decaying

whaling town that successfully recast itself as a quaint seaside village.[47]

Colonial Williamsburg

Perhaps the best known of all heritage tourism locations is Colonial

Williamsburg. Conceived during the height of the historic-preservation movement of the

1920s, Williamsburg was a physical manifestation of Americanism, a restoration not only

of buildings, but also of the traditional lifestyles and values that the restoration's backers

felt truly represented America.

Williamsburg served as the capital of the Virginia colony from 1699 until 1780,

making it the most influential town in Virginia during that time. Site of the College of

William and Mary, the town was at one time home to such influential men as George

Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. It was a complex community, with

inhabitants from every level of society, from the royal governor to slaves. When the

capital was moved to Richmond in 1780, Williamsburg entered a 146-year period of

relative obscurity. Many of the original colonial buildings remained standing but fell into

disrepair. The once-vibrant town became a Virginia backwater until a rector and William

and Mary College professor named W.A.R. Goodwin dedicated himself to the restoration

of the town he considered to be the "Cradle of the Republic." Goodwin viewed the

restoration of Williamsburg as an opportunity to inculcate Americans with an

appreciation of their common background and a shared national purpose.[48]

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[47] Brown, *Inventing New England*, 9, 105-134.
[48] Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002),
1-9.; Warren Leon and Margaret Piatt, "Living History Museums" in *History Museums in the United*

Williamsburg presented a realistic location in which to display colonial life and architecture precisely *because* it had become a backwater. Cities like Boston and Philadelphia had matured too far beyond their colonial roots to return them to a pre-industrial appearance. But even in Williamsburg an undertaking as large as the restoration of an entire town required enormous financial backing, and in 1926 Goodwin was able to convince John D. Rockefeller Jr. to support the project. The artistic and aesthetic possibilities of Williamsburg, combined with the chance to refurbish a positive family legacy, appealed to the Standard Oil titan, and over the next 10 years he contributed more than 79 million dollars to the restoration. Over 700 structures that postdated 1790 were demolished, and the railroad was re-routed to restore the town to its eighteenth-century appearance. Costumed guides appeared in 1932, followed soon after by enormously popular craft demonstrations.[49]

During a time of social uncertainty and economic upheaval in the United States the restoration of Williamsburg stood as a shrine to the cultural values of colonial America. Williamsburg celebrated democracy and a republican government through representation of the "great white men" of the eighteenth century. Over the next thirty years more than thirteen million people would partake of Williamsburg's portrayal of early America. But a rise in popularity of social history during the 1960s forced Williamsburg to confront the unseemly aspects of colonial America that it had long been downplaying. The old focus on patriotism, individualism, and laudatory history gave way to a more encompassing interpretation that incorporated blacks (both slave and free),

States: A Critical Assessment, eds. Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 66.
[49] Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 9; Leon and Piatt, "Living History Museums," 66-67.

women, and workers. This new bottom-up interpretation of American history was not always popular with visitors. Tourists coming to visit what they imagined to be an idyllic colonial town did not necessarily want to be confronted with the atrocities of slavery and the unpleasantness of labor and social relations of early America. Colonial Williamsburg and other living history museums remained steadfast in their commitment to education and authenticity, but the cross pressure of the commercial market required them to please and entertain their guests enough to inspire them to return. [50]

Though Colonial Williamsburg remains Virginia's single most popular tourist attraction, its attendance rates have fallen steadily since the early 1990s. Down from a late 1980s peak of 1.2 million visitors a year, annual paid attendance fell to 710,457 in 2005. Efforts to boost attendance have included new marketing campaigns and the addition of innovative attractions and educational programs, to little effect. In recent years officials at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation have had to dip into their substantial endowment to offset budget deficits. Tourism officials in Virginia hope that the upcoming 400th anniversary celebration of the Jamestown settlement in 2007 will help draw attention back to Colonial Williamsburg.[51]

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[50] Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 9-15, 136; Marguerite S. Shaffer, "Book Review: Selling the Past/Co-Opting History: Colonial Williamsburg as Republican Disneyland," *American Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (1998), [journal online] available from: http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.usf.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v050/50.4br_handler.html.

[51] Sonja Barisic, AP, "Virginia: New Program at Colonial Williamsburg," *MSN Travel*; available from: http://travel.msn.com/Guides/article/aspx?cp-documentid=345515; Internet; accessed 17 July 2006; Megan Hoyer, "Tourists Leave Old Williamsburg Out in the Cold," *The Virginian-Pilot*, 21 February 2006; available from: http://home.hamptonroads.com/stories/story.cfm?story=99944&ran=26819; Internet; accessed 17 July 2006.

Santa Fe

The town of Santa Fe, New Mexico offers an interesting point of comparison with St. Augustine, Florida. The celebration of a Hispanic past in both of these places is unusual for an American tourist destination, and raises questions about the motivations of tourists that visit there. In the case of Santa Fe, its foreignness and well preserved historic fabric instilled a quality of individuality and mysticism that town boosters promoted to very lucrative ends.

Once a busy trading town, by 1900 Santa Fe had been bypassed by the railroad and overshadowed by Albuquerque. It was saved from obscurity by a cultural entrepreneur named Edgar L. Hewett. In the early 1900s Hewett, a former college president and amateur archaeologist, worked to make Santa Fe a cultural destination. He founded the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of New Mexico; helped organize the Santa Fe Fiesta, revived the Indian Market, oversaw the establishment of Bandelier National Monument, and implemented an unofficial building code that helped the town retain the physical façade that contributed greatly to its historical ambience. In short, Hewett was responsible for a cultural and historical revival in Santa Fe, creating a mythical reputation that would prove to be very popular, first with a cultural elite and then with a wider swath of Americans.[52]

In contrast to contemporary locations like Colonial Williamsburg and New England that celebrated an Anglo-American colonial heritage, Hewett embraced Santa Fe's Hispanic and Indian past and recognized the city's unique local heritage. He flaunted the nearby cliff dwellings, celebrated the Spanish architecture set against the

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[52] Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 81-88.

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backdrop of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and supported the architectural trend of

Pueblo Revival style. Santa Fe seemed sleepy and peaceful, the Spanish language filled

the streets, and everywhere one looked there were reminders of a different, older world.

Santa Fe boosters worked hard to retain that appeal, striving for the appearance of

authenticity. They re-named Anglo sounding street names such as Telephone Road to the

more "authentic" sounding Camino del Monte Sol, appealing to Americans worried about

modernity and industrialization.[53]

Artists and writers, including Ansel Adams, Willa Cather, and Mary Austin,

came to Santa Fe in droves. The town became a center for the Regionalist movement of

the interwar years. Ironically, Austin worked hard to preserve the "authenticity" of her

adopted community, but inadvertently supported the contrived authenticity that Edgar

Hewett had created years earlier.   Long-time residents barely recognized the town. In

1880 Hispanic Americans owned approximately 65 percent of the land in Santa Fe, but

by 1910 Anglo-Americans owned 65 percent. By 1920 Santa Fe had become a

mainstream tourist destination, its role as a mythical place that time forgot firmly affixed

in the American imagination.[54]

Conclusions

Heritage tourism is a popular and lucrative trend in American society. The

motivations that prompted the rise of heritage tourism are varied. A growing

preservation ethic and nostalgia for a simpler time led to the restoration and recreation of

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[53] Ibid., 89-98.
[54] Ibid., 97-112; Robert L. Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 35.

historic sites across the nation during the twentieth-century. A growing homogenization of the national landscape has left many American's searching for unique experiences that provide them with a sense of place. Through heritage tourism citizens are able to engage with those places and experiences that resonate with their sense of collective American history.

Inherent problems exist in almost all heritage tourism locations. The commodification of history, where the past becomes a product fashioned to fit the image of what the consumer wants, often leads to problems of authenticity and claims of bogus history. The motivations and problems behind heritage tourism can be seen in America's most popular heritage tourism locations--places like Colonial Williamsburg, where the historic preservation movement saw its greatest successes, New England, where the tourism industry was founded upon decaying towns and buildings portrayed as vestiges of a simpler time, and Santa Fe, where civic boosters manipulated the town's authentic Hispanic past to appeal to American's desperately searching for a sense of place.

Chapter Three: Heritage Tourism in Florida

Having explored the concept of heritage tourism--its background, motivations, and problems--we will now look at how heritage tourism is practiced and promoted in Florida, a state that is far better known for its beaches, theme parks, and suburban sprawl than it is for its historic attributes or unique sense of place.

Tourism in Florida is big business--the *biggest* business, in fact. Tourism is Florida's largest industry, employing nearly one million people across the state. In 2005 an estimated 85.8 million visitors came to the land of sunshine, generating $57 billion in taxable dollars. How did Florida become the most popular tourism destination in the United States? Are these tourists all coming to see the theme parks, beaches, and golf courses for which Florida is famous? Or are they also interested in the historic fabric of the state that is home to some of the oldest cities, buildings, and landmarks in the country? By examining the history of tourism in Florida, the state organizations and agencies that promote and practice heritage tourism, and some of Florida's most unique heritage tourism locations we can gain a better understanding of the industry and what it says about Floridians and Americans. [55]

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[55] Visit Florida, "Florida Tourism Fast Facts," (Tallahassee: Visit Florida, 2006); Visit Florida, *2004 Florida Visitor Study* (Tallahassee: Visit Florida, 2005); Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study*; State of Florida.com, "Florida Quick Facts," available from: http://www.stateofflorida.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=95#27199; Internet; accessed 16 April 2006.

History of Tourism in Florida

Florida was sighted in 1513 by the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon, marking the first official landfall of Europeans on the North American continent. But an arguably more important "discovery" of Florida came in the decades preceding the Civil War, when tourists began to delight in the salubrious climate and stunning scenery of the Eden-like state. Its popularity as a tourist destination grew after the war ended, spurred in part by Union soldiers reminiscing about their time stationed in north Florida. Steamboat companies and small railroad lines capitalized on the growing appeal and began touting the state to vacationers, particularly those suffering from physical ailments. The state's temperate weather and ocean breezes were hailed as the cure for all manner of disease, from consumption to catarrh.[56]

A flood of guidebooks, travel accounts, and newspaper and magazine articles portrayed the state as a peninsula blessed with the perfect climate, the sweetest singing birds, and a ground always covered with flower blossoms. All of this broadened the public's awareness of Florida as a newfound paradise. One observer estimated that 33,000 tourists visited Florida between 1874 and 1875, generating $3,000,000 for the economy. Cruising the state's many waterways by steamboat was exceptionally popular, in particular the Ocklawaha River and the magnificent Silver Springs. Port towns and cities like Jacksonville and Palatka catered to the whims of early tourists. But the

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[56] Paul S. George, "Passage to the New Eden: Tourism in Miami from Flagler through Everest G. Sewell," *Florida Historical Quarterly* LX, no. 4 (April 1981), 440-441.; Gary Mormino, "Trouble in Tourist Heaven: Weeki Wachee Mermaids and Ram-n-Rob Murders Don't Mix," *Forum* (Summer 1994): 11-12.; Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 27; Edward Akin, *Flagler: Rockefeller Partner and Florida Baron* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991).

greatest boon to nineteenth-century Florida tourism was the appearance of the railroad and its Gilded Age passengers.[57]

Recognizing the dearth of rail lines in the state, oil tycoon Henry Flagler and railroad magnate Henry Plant began building extensive transportation networks in the 1880s, sparking a new age in Florida tourism. Both men built magnificent hotels to entice wealthy tourists to the remote cities their railroads visited. Plant's Tampa Bay Hotel, complete with turrets, domes and minarets, opened in 1891, two years after Henry Flagler's grand Hotel Ponce de Leon debuted in St. Augustine. Flagler, in particular, was pivotal in transforming the state from a sleepy backwater to a desirable destination for America's wealthy elite. After realizing that St. Augustine was too cold for Northerners trying to escape brutal winters, Flagler extended his Florida East Coast railroad down the eastern seaboard, building luxurious hotels in Palm Beach, and eventually realizing his dream of an overseas rail-line to Key West. Flagler, perhaps more than any other man before Walt Disney, was instrumental in the development of Florida as a tourist mecca.[58]

Mirroring a national trend, the 1920s brought a democratization of tourism to Florida. Buoyed by the advent of paid vacations, newly affordable automobiles, and an increase in good roads, tourists began visiting Florida by the carloads. State and city boosters promoted a land of eternal sunshine and youth, capitalizing on what scholars have referred to as the "Florida Dream," described by historian Raymond Arsenault as "the centuries-old promise of perpetual warmth, health, comfort, and leisure." Florida

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Henry Flagler and his relationship to St. Augustine will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter three. George, "Passage to the New Eden," 441; Mormino, "Trouble in Tourist Heaven," 12; Michael Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 55-59; Thomas Graham, *Flagler's Magnificent Hotel Ponce De Leon* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1990), 13; Akin, *Flagler: Rockefeller Partner and Florida Baron*, 222.

land sales boomed as "binder boys" and other hucksters played upon northerners' dreams

of owning a piece of Florida paradise.   The state government officially sanctioned the

practice of catering to tourists by abolishing the state income tax in 1924, hoping to

entice visitors to become residents. The selling of Florida was in full swing, and tourists

were the prime customers. In 1925, 2.5 million tourists visited Florida.[59]

By 1926 the boom was over, and Florida plunged into economic depression three

years ahead of the rest of the nation. By 1932 the annual number of visitors to the state

had plummeted to half a million. But not even the Great Depression could keep people

away from the sunshine for long; by 1935 visitation numbers were back up in the range

of two million people.[60]

The true watershed in the history of tourism in Florida was World War Two.

Rationing and wartime restrictions on travel kept away many of the state's traditional

tourists, but this loss was made up for by a new crop of visitors: soldiers in training. As

historian Gary Mormino has commented, Florida's "pork-barrel politics, ample sunshine,

and jungle-like terrain made it especially attractive for military training." Empty resorts

beckoned. Initially hesitant about the prospect, hotel operators soon realized that rooms

occupied by soldiers were better than rooms occupied by no one at all. As visitors to

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[59] Mormino, "Trouble in Tourist Heaven," 12; Mark S. Foster, *Castles in the Sand: The Life and Times of Carl Fisher* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); Raymond Arsenault, "Is there a Florida Dream?" *Forum,* (Summer 1994), 24-25; Herbert L. Hiller, *Highway A1A: Florida at the Edge* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 8; William W. Rogers, "The Paradoxical Twenties," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 292-293.
[60] Ibid., 294-295; William W. Rogers, "The Great Depression," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 319.

Florida are wont to do, many of these young soldiers fell in love with the tropical paradise and hoped to return after the War.[61]

Bolstered by postwar prosperity, Florida and its tourism industry boomed. Rebounding from the war years, Americans were eager to enjoy the fruits of the Florida dream. Between 1940 and 1950 the number of tourists visiting Florida nearly doubled, from 2.8 to nearly 5 million. These postwar visitors typically arrived by automobile, cruising down U.S. 1, and delighting in the many roadside attraction, diners, and motels that sprang up to cater to their needs. The popularity of many of Florida's early theme parks flourished during this time, including Cypress Gardens, Weeki Wachee Springs, and Marine Land. These sites manipulated the beautiful natural surroundings of the state to enchant tourists looking for the Eden they perceived Florida to be. Cities also enjoyed the growing influx of visitors, as Miami, Miami Beach, St. Petersburg, Daytona, Fort Lauderdale and Key West thrived on the tourist trade.[62]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s visitation to Florida climbed steadily. In 1960 over 10 million tourists visited, by 1965 that number jumped to over 16 million. In 1970 it was up to 23 million. Lured by sunshine and the promise of rest and relaxation, tourists flocked to Florida well before a famous animator set his sites on the state. Even so, the opening of Walt Disney World in 1971 would forever change the complexion of the state's tourism industry.[63]

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[61] Gary Mormino, "World War II" in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 323-325.
[62] Mormino, "Trouble in Tourist Heaven", 12; Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 76-95.
[63] Florida Division of Tourism, *Florida Tourist Study* (Tallahassee: Florida Division of Tourism, 1958-1996).

Disney World

No study on tourism in Florida, even one on heritage tourism, could possibly be complete without a discussion of Walt Disney World. As the world's most popular tourist site, it begs to be studied for the insights it can provide into tourist motivations. But for the purposes of this study what is perhaps more interesting than the history *of* Disney World is the presentation of history *at* Disney World.

Blessed with a balmy climate, an accommodating local government, and plenty of cheap land, the sleepy Central Florida town of Orlando was discovered by Disney officials in the early 1960s. With Walt Disney's magic touch, a vast tract of land situated between two major highways (Interstate 4 and the Florida Turnpike) would become the world's greatest tourist attraction. In 1969, prior to the opening of Disney World in Orlando, 3.5 million people visited Central Florida. Within the first year of the Magic Kingdom's opening, that number had skyrocketed to 10 million. In 2000, nearly 43 million tourists visited Walt Disney World. By then the mega-theme park had doomed most of Florida's historic roadside attractions and changed the face of Florida tourism forever.[64]

The Disney Corporation's phenomenal success in Florida serves as an interesting counterpoint in a study on heritage tourism, for several reasons. First, it is ironic that to millions of people Florida and Disney World are almost inseparable concepts. As historian Gary Mormino has pointed out, "Disney World is in Florida, but offers visitors precious little *of* Florida."[65] The landscape in and around the theme park has been

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[64] Richard E. Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 3; Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 102-104.
[65] Ibid., 104.

manipulated almost beyond recognition. Murky brown Florida lakes were turned aqua-

blue to align with Disney's vision. What appear to be healthy trees composed of bark

and leaves are really man-made vinyl replicas. Visiting Disney World is truly the

antithesis of a sense-of- place experience; visitors leave knowing little more about Florida

than they did when they arrived. Rather, it is the epitome of a homogenized,

commercialized, and corporate experience, everything that heritage tourism practitioners

rail against.

The second counterpoint that Disney World offers in a study of heritage tourism

is its flawed presentation of history. Many heritage tourism sites struggle with

authenticity in their presentations of the past. Yet, presumably, most heritage sites are

dedicated to accurate representations of history and strive to maintain authenticity. The

same cannot be said of Walt Disney World, where a nostalgic, romanticized version of

history is unabashedly offered for the enjoyment of tourists. A Disney "imagineer"(as

the designers are called) explained it this way: "What we create is 'Disney Realism,' sort

of Utopian in nature, where we carefully program out all the negative, unwanted elements

and program in the positive elements."[66] Anthropologist Steven Fjellman dubs Disney's

version of history "Distory" and observes that in Distory one need never acknowledge the

ugly episodes in America's past. Instead, the over-riding theme of Distory is that of

progress, and, in the words of historian Michael Wallace, progress is measured at Disney

by the "availability of emancipatory consumer goods."[67]

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[66] Michael Wallace, "Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disney World" in *History Museums in the United States*, eds. Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 161.
[67] Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 59-84; Wallace, "Mickey Mouse History*,"* 165.

Granted, Walt Disney World is a for-profit theme park and should not be held to the same standards as heritage sites that claim to accurately represent history. But, as one scholar notes, when one considers the millions upon millions of tourists that have visited Disney World over the years, "One might fairly say that Walt Disney has taught people more history, in a more memorable way, than they ever learned in school, to say nothing of history museums."[68] Ironically, millions of visitors to Florida imbibe this romantic version of American history annually, perhaps never realizing that the nation's oldest city lies within a few hours drive, or that the state they are visiting brims with historic treasures and stirring sense-of-place experiences.

Florida's Heritage Tourism Organizations and Agencies

The study of heritage tourism in Florida holds fascinating potential. In a state accustomed to manipulating itself to appeal to tourists, a state in which the biggest theme park in the world presents a skewed version of American history to millions of visitors each year, is it possible to generate an interest in heritage sites? Sites that often represent a Florida and America far different from the one many visitors are familiar with? Recent studies show that it is possible.

According to the 2002 report *Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Florida*, heritage tourism generated $3.721 billion in expenditures in the state during the year 2000. A February 2005 survey conducted by Visit Florida, the state's tourism marketing consortium, revealed that 44.4 percent of visitors to Florida in the past year had participated in a history-based activity (described as visiting historical museums or

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[68] Ibid., 158.

memorials, old homes, historic villages, Indian sites, military sites, parks or other places important in history). These tourists may have been visiting one of over 1,500 Florida sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or one of the state's 340 museums, more than half of which are historical. Visitors to historical museums alone garnered 9.7 million visitors in 2000.[69]

Perhaps even more revealing than heritage tourism's economic impact in Florida are the number of marketing campaigns, historic preservation programs, and grant initiatives devoted to improving and promoting heritage tourism in the state. In particular Visit Florida, Florida Main Street, the Florida Division of Historical Resources, and the Florida Humanities Council have initiated programming over the past few decades to generate heritage tourism resources in Florida.

Visit Florida

In 1996 the Florida Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism was dismantled and replaced by the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, a public/private partnership devoted to the promotion of Florida tourism. The corporation adopted the brand name Visit Florida a year later. The first public/private partnership of

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[69] Though many of the sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places are not open to the public they often still contribute to the historic character of an area. University of Florida Levin College of Law, *Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Florida*, (2002), available from: www.law.ufl.edu/cgr/pdf/historic_report.pdf; Internet; accessed 5 November 2005; Jennifer Driscoll, "Culture, History, and Nature-Based Travel among Visitors to Florida: February 2005 Survey" (Tallahassee: Visit Florida, 2005); Florida Association of Museums, "About the Florida Association of Museums," available from: www.flamusuems.org; Internet; accessed17 April 2006.

its kind in state tourism, Visit Florida leverages government funds and corporate

partnerships to promote travel to the state.[70]

The formation of Visit Florida stemmed from a realization that the marketing

strategies used by the Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism were not only

ineffective, but in some cases, damaging. Visitation to Florida was stagnant in the 1990s,

and many industry professionals blamed the Division of Tourism. In the years prior to the

formation of Visit Florida, the division spent just $14.2 million on promotion, an amount

that paled in comparison to similar "vacation" states. Hawaii, for instance spent $30

million on tourism promotion. Even Illinois spent more. The Division's slogans were

vague, and often seemed geared towards *dissuading* tourists from visiting the state.

Florida travel commentator Herb Hiller notes that the Division's "One Florida, Many

Faces" slogan was not only "murky," but implied that "at best, the Florida vacation is a

crowd experience."[71]

One of the most telling aspects of the decreasing visitation in the 1990s was a

look at the people who were *not* coming. A 1994 study of "Florida's Non-Visitors and

Lapsed Visitors" revealed that many recent visitors to Florida felt that the state lacked

diversity in historical, cultural, and natural resources. [72]   Apparently, visitors to Florida

were seeking a sense of place, and Visit Florida took notice. While much of their

promotion still focused on the beach, golf, and theme park tourism that had long

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[70] Visit Florida, "Celebrating Ten Years of Florida Tourism Success" (Tallahassee: Visit Florida, 2006);
Beth Dickey, "A Model Plan: U.S. Tourism Promoters See the Visit Florida Partnership as a Blueprint for a
National Effort," *Florida Trend,* (October 2002), [periodical online] available from:
www.floridatrend.com/issue/default.asp?a=4730&s=&&d=10/1/2002; Internet; accessed 18 April 2006;
Herbert L. Hiller, "Marketing the Real Florida," *Florida Trend,* (March 1996), 42.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 43.

dominated the industry, they also began a series of marketing strategies aimed at exploring those historic and cultural attributes that made the state unique.[73]

In 1999 Visit Florida launched its *Worth the Drive* campaign, featuring driving itineraries designed to lead tourists "off-the-beaten-path and on to discover some of Florida's best-kept secrets" (Visit Florida continue to use the campaign today.) In the wake of 2001's September 11th terrorist attacks, Visit Florida teamed up with American Express to create "Culturally Florida," an enormously successful marketing campaign promoting Florida's cultural and heritage destinations. Kerri Post, Vice President for New Product Development for Visit Florida, commented on the resistance Visit Florida encountered when launching the Culturally Florida campaign: "A lot of people in the industry were skeptical about how it would be received. Initially there was grumbling. But the results opened so many people's eyes." The results, in fact, are impressive. Of the 100,000 households that received a direct mailing related to the campaign, a staggering 59 percent ended up visiting Florida within a year. [74]

Visit Florida launched its newest initiative in 2005. The "Downtowns and Small Towns" campaign features revitalized and vibrant downtowns and small towns throughout the state. With this newest program, Visit Florida pledges to combat "generica with sense of place" by providing a "portal to Florida's rich cultural heritage, multi-cultural, natural and architectural assets." Kerri Post remarked upon Visit Florida's

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[73] Herb Hiller, "Tourism and Florida's Emerging Downtowns and Small Towns," 12.
[74] Visit Florida, "Celebrating Ten Years of Florida Tourism Success"; Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, "Cultural Tourism," available from: http://www.florida-arts.org/resources/culturaltourism.htm; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006; Tom Stieghorst, "Florida's New Marketing Campaign Promotes Lower-Profile Communities," *South Florida Sun Sentinel,* October 23, 2005, [periodical online] available from Lexis Nexis Academic: http://web.lexis-nexis.com.proxy.usf.edu/universe/document?_m=cff5b7d2f4ccc6c8511aa41afcb115ab&_docnum=1&wchp=dGLzVlz-zSkVb&_md5=a13e31e91396d4d3a19f54c667659a86; Hiller, *Highway A1A,* 3; Kerri Post, Interview by author, telephone, 5 May 2006.

motivations: "We are encouraging people to see another side of Florida. Over 94 percent of Florida visitors are repeat visitors. They have a familiarity with Florida, and we don't want them to say, 'been there, done that.' We have to keep Florida fresh, and diligently get that message out that there is a lot more to Florida than people realize. So with cultural heritage tourism, that's what consumers want and we have to expand upon that."[75]

To help promote Florida's heritage sites, a portion of the Visit Florida website (which attracts nearly 10 million visitors a year) is dedicated to detailing the historic and cultural attributes the state has to offer. In addition to the extensive promotion Visit Florida finances for the state's heritage and cultural tourism industries, the organization also provides funding through its grant program to outside organizations for marketing projects that promote cultural heritage tourism efforts in Florida.[76]

State officials seem satisfied with the work of Visit Florida. Official reviews conducted in 1999 and 2003 concluded that Visit Florida "performed well" and recommend that its state funding should be continued. But some heritage tourism managers criticize the state for directing most of its advertising money towards major theme parks. Dr. William (Bill) Adams, the director of St. Augustine's Department of Heritage Tourism, said in 2004: "I think the state does not emphasize St. Augustine or its history. If you look at the state dollars that are spent, their expenditures for tourism

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[75] Ibid.; Visit Florida, "Downtowns and Small Towns," available from: http://www.visitflorida.org/index.cfm?fla=web&webpageid=429&mid=664; Internet; accessed17 April 2006; Post interview.
[76] Visit Florida, "Become a Partner," available from: http://www.visitflorida.org/index.cfm?fla=web&webpageid=129&mid=217; Internet; accessed 23 April 2006; Visit Florida, "History and Culture," available from: http://www.visitflorida.com/experience/history/ Internet; accessed 23 April 2006; Visit Florida, "Grant Programs" (Tallahassee: Visit Florida , 2006).

purposes are directed by the big attractions like Disney World and Universal Studios."[77]

Adams' words may hold some truth. Just 2 percent, or $540,000 of Visit Florida's 2006

budget of $21 million will be spent on the "Downtowns and Small Towns" initiative. [78]

But Kerri Post of Visit Florida disputes claims of critics. She argues:

> That perception is out there, but the absolute opposite is
> reality. Visit Florida's programs really benefit the little
> guy. The major theme parks and CVB's [convention and
> visitors bureaus] have far more money than we do. The
> theme parks, the Miamis, they don't need us. They have
> three or four times the budget that we do. The Orlando
> CVB alone brings in hundreds of millions of dollars a year.
> In the 2004 fiscal year 72 percent of Visit Florida's partners
> were small businesses. From a marketing perspective the
> little guys benefit. The big guys don't really need us, and
> that's the fact of the matter.[79]

Florida Main Street

Established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980, the Main

Street program has proven to be a successful tool for economic and historic preservation

across the United States. Designed to revitalize the historic "main street" commercial

areas of communities, Main Street programs help to recruit new businesses, rehabilitate

buildings, improve economic management, and increase the potential for enjoyment of

traditional downtowns. Main Street promotes heritage tourism by preserving historic

properties and making them appealing and enjoyable to visit. Florida Main Street

Program Coordinator Joan Jefferson notes: "Heritage tourism is not specifically

mentioned in our program literature, but it is very important to the success of the Florida

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[77] Bill Adams, Interview by author, St. Augustine, Fl, 25 October 2004.
[78] Stieghorst, "Florida's New Marketing Campaign"; Visit Florida, *2004 Florida Visitor Study*, summary, 24; Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse*, 3.
[79] Post interview.

Main Street Program. Heritage tourism reinforces historic preservation by demonstrating

that historic resources are strong assets for attracting visitors. Many cultural and historic

structures have been rehabilitated by state cultural and historic grants, and act as magnets

to the downtown area." [80]

Florida's Main Street program began in 1985, administered by the Bureau of

Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources. Between 1985 and 2002 more

than $569 million was reinvested in over 80 communities across the state. Designated

Main Street communities receive technical assistance in each of the four points of the

Main Street strategy: organization, promotions, design, and economic restructuring. For

up to three years Main Street communities are eligible to receive this technical assistance

via consultant team visits, design and historic preservation assistance, and architectural

advice. Joan Jefferson cites DeLand, Fort Pierce, Leesburg, Panama City, St. Cloud,

Stuart, and Winter Haven as Florida's most successful Main Street programs, and

comments upon heritage tourism in these, and other, Main Street communities, "Almost

all programs, by virtue of being a Main Street, offer an insight into the heritage of the

community. Many Main Street communities offer 'heritage day' type programming.

Everything from cane grinding to 'Boom Town' days. In fact, many people have told me

that they make vacation plans that include visiting as many Main Street communities as

time allows."[81]

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[80] Michael Zimny, "Preserving Florida's Historic Downtowns," *Florida History and the Arts,* (Spring 2002): 8; Joan Jefferson, Interview by author, telephone, 4 May 2006.
[81] Ibid.

The Florida Division of Historical Resources

Main Street falls under the auspices of the Bureau of Historic Preservation at the Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources. The Bureau also maintains the state's Master Site File, a database of all known historical structures and archaeological sites in Florida. In addition to the Bureau of Historic Preservation, the Division of Historical Resources oversees several other programs relating to heritage tourism in the state: the Bureau of Archeological Research, the Museum of Florida History, and a Grant Services program.[82]

The preservation and exhibit grants channeled through the Division of Historical Resources require that funded projects meet rigorous criteria for authenticity and are certainly the Division's biggest contribution to heritage tourism in Florida. But a more publicly recognizable contribution are the Division's magazines, heritage trail guides, historic markers, and websites produced as part of its art and publications program. The magazine *Florida History and the Arts*, published quarterly and distributed as an insert in the popular business magazine *Florida Trend*, covers issues relating to Florida heritage. The "Great Floridians" program recognizes individuals that have enhanced the lives of Florida citizens by placing plaques in their honor in cities across the state. A historic markers program memorializes important historic resources, persons and events in architecture, archaeology, Florida history and traditional culture. A series of five heritage trails help visitors explore World War Two, Jewish history, African-American history, women's history, and Cuban history throughout the state. And, finally, an interactive

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[82] My Florida.com, "Office of Cultural and Historical Programs," available from: http://www.flheritage.com; Internet; accessed 4/17/2006; My Florida.com, "Preservation," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/preservation/; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006.

website, the *Florida Heritage Tourism Interactive Catalog*, allows tourists and citizens to search a catalog of historic sites around the state in preparation for a visit.[83]

The Florida Humanities Council

The Florida Humanities Council (FHC), established as the Florida Endowment for the Humanities in 1973, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Its mission, to build "communities and informed citizens by providing Floridians with the opportunity to explore the heritage, traditions and stories of the state and its place in the world" is symbiotic with the development of heritage tourism infrastructure in the state. In particular the Council's Gathering program and grant program foster the sense of place experiences that are integral to heritage tourism.[84]

The Florida Humanities Council began the Gathering in 1996 as an experiment in cultural heritage tourism. The idea for the Gathering began in the home of then University of South Florida President Betty Castor, whose husband Sam Bell was a former state legislator and member of the FHC Board of Directors. Noting the popularity of FHC's week-long experiential placed-based seminars for Florida teachers, Bell

[83] My Florida.com, "Arts and Publications," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/services/; Internet; accessed 17 Apri 2006; My Florida.com, "Florida History and the Arts Magazine," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/services/magazine/; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006; My Florida.com, "Great Floridians," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/services/sites/floridians/; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006; My Florida.com, "Historical Markers," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/services/sites/markers/; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006; My Florida.com, "Heritage Trails," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/services/trails/bht/; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006; My Florida.com, "Heritage Tourism Interactive Catalog," available from: http://www.flheritage.com/services/sites/fht/; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006.
[84] Florida Humanities Council, "Mission," available from: http://www.flahum.org/sections/about_fhc/index.html; accessed 18 April 2006.

suggested that the Council offer similar cultural weekends to non-teachers as well. Thus, the Gathering was born.[85]

FHC's director of grants, Susan Lockwood, was the first coordinator of the Gathering program. She laughs when remembering Sam Bell's reaction to the Council's choice of location for the first Gathering: the rural and remote region around Lake Okeechobee. "I'm not sure that it is exactly what Sam had in mind for a cultural weekend." But the Council had been working with community colleges, historical societies, museums, chambers of commerce, and city governments around Okeechobee since 1990. Through its grants program, FHC had funded many projects in the region prior to the first Gathering, including a brochure of historic information and maps, titled "The Lure of Lake Okeechobee: Historic Tours of the Towns Around the Lake"; an exhibit and series of public programs in Palm Beach County interpreting the folk life of Lake Okeechobee; a collection of oral histories in the City of Pahokee; and an exhibit in the city of South Bay on the prehistory, history, and cultures of the Lake Okeechobee region. The Gathering in Okeechobee offered activities such as a trip to a Seminole Indian Reservation, an oral history program with Okeechobee "old-timers," and an exploration of an ecosystem restoration program. [86]

FHC's Gathering in Okeechobee proved to be popular and successful, and the Council has been conducting the cultural heritage tourism weekends ever since. Since 1996 Gatherings have been held in: Homosassa, Polk County, Mount Dora, DeLand,

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[85] Susan Lockwood, Interview by author, St. Petersburg, Fl., 4 May 2006.
[86] Florida Humanities Council, "Heritage Tourism Initiative" (St. Petersburg: Florida Humanities Council, 2000); Florida Humanities Council, "Some Cultural Heritage Grants Funded by FHC" (St. Petersburg, FL: Florida Humanities Council, 2000); Lockwood, Interview by author; "A Florida Gathering at Lake Okeechobee," (St. Petersburg: Florida Humanities Council, 1996).

Fernandina Beach, the Everglades, St. Augustine, Cedar Key, and Fort Pierce. In addition, through its grant program, FHC continues to fund projects that enhance cultural tourism infrastructure in the state, like the "Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail" in Fort Pierce, and a walking map of Calle Ocho in Miami. As much as possible, FHC tries to combine its Gathering and grants programs for maximum benefit.

Susan Lockwood credits the popularity of the Gathering weekends and grant funded cultural heritage projects to the authenticity that FHC brings to the table. "If you want to explore Florida as Florida, not as the 'Dark Continent' of Busch Gardens or the fantasy of Disney World, if you want an authentic experience, then the Florida Humanities Council can help with that. What distinguishes our programming are the scholars, and the processing, analysis, and interpretation that are such integral tools of the humanities." [87]

Florida's Unique Heritage Tourism Locations

Clearly there are several statewide organizations and agencies dedicated to the promotion, design, and implementation of heritage tourism in Florida. What exactly, then, would a geographical snapshot of the state's heritage tourism industry look like? What cities, towns, counties, or regions, are doing it well? Where has it been most successful? The most obvious answer is St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States, and the heritage tourism industry there will be explored in greater detail in chapter three. But other communities and sites around the state have also successfully tapped into the desire of tourists seeking more than just sunshine, sand, and super-mice.

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[87] Ibid.

During an interview with Florida travel commentator Herb Hiller, I engaged in a

virtual heritage tour through Florida, analyzing areas of the state that have long practiced

heritage tourism, and those that are engaged in innovative new practices. Hiller sees a

positive future for heritage tourism in Florida. He points out that since the beginning of

Florida's popularity as a tourist destination it was the history, heritage, and natural

environment that attracted people. He notes "If you look at all of the old touring books

they are all about the heritage and history of Florida: the Castillo de San Marcos, the

Bridge that Went to Sea."   But he argues that, for a long while, the heritage, culture, and

nature of the state were the three "great dismissed attributes" of Florida tourism, a trend

that he feels is changing due to increased cooperation between the tourism industry and

local communities.[88]

For the purposes of this thesis, I will conduct a similar virtual tour, but in the

interest of time and space I will highlight just a few heritage tourism sites that stand out,

in particular Miami, Key West, Pensacola, and Volusia County. While heritage tourism

is successfully practiced in many other Florida communities, these particular locations

demonstrate well-established or unique approaches to the industry.

Miami

With a history that dates back only to the late 1800s, the bustling city of Miami

may seem an ironic place to begin a discussion of successful heritage tourism. But few

places in the United States possess the diversity, vitality, and unique cultural heritage of

Miami, Florida, and fewer still have learned to sell it to tourists as well as Miami does.

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[88] Herbert L. Hiller, Interview by author, Georgetown, Fl., December 23, 2005.

Originally founded as an army outpost, Miami began luring modest numbers of visitors with its tropical warmth in the 1880s and 1890s. A hard freeze in 1895 convinced Henry Flagler that balmy Miami might be a more suitable location than St. Augustine for his winter resorts. He built the Royal Palm Hotel and the Miami Country Club in the late 1890s, and then offered five-week package tours of Florida to entice visitors. For a cost of $350, tourists received transportation to Florida, meals, and lodging at any of Flagler's luxurious hotels. [89]

The "Magic City," as Miami became known, boomed. Visitors flocked to the city and new hotel construction thrived. Men like George Merrick and Carl Fisher transformed nearby Coral Gables and Miami Beach into resort capitals in their own right. By 1915 annual visitation to Miami neared 1,000,000 tourists. They came for the sun, and they came to be seen. The Miami Chamber of Commerce, under the leadership of Everest G. Sewell, organized social events, festivals, boat shows, and sporting events to keep the tourists entertained. [90]

A stroke of bad luck plagued Miami in the mid-1920s as hurricanes, government crackdowns on pari-mutuel betting, and the closing of the Royal Palm hotel plunged the city into an economic slump. By the mid-1930s Miami Beach had taken over as the glamorous resort community of south Florida. The beach itself was largely man-made, dredged out of the ocean by Carl Fisher in 1914. Some 50 new hotels were built in 1935

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[89] George, "Passage to the New Eden," 442-454.
[90] Ibid.

and 1936 alone, their development coinciding with the height of the Art Deco design movement.[91]

In terms of tourism, Miami followed much the same trajectory as the state at large during World War Two, and in the decade that followed both Miami and Miami Beach learned to cater to a more middle class clientele. In 1950 almost two million tourists visited, and that number continued to climb in following years. But by the 1970s, the glitter of the Miami area had worn off, as Americans caught up in an economic recession stayed home. The glamorous hotels of Miami Beach fell into disrepair. Fortunately, Miami's tourism industry rebounded in the 1980s, thanks largely to the popular television show *Miami Vice*, which depicted Miami Beach as sexy, glamorous, and slightly dangerous. By 1987 more than 25 percent of air-travelers to Florida were headed to Miami-Dade County. Miami's popularity holds steady today. [92]

The Miami area has always appealed to tourists for reasons different than other Florida resort towns. Miami suggests danger, raunchiness, and vitality. Even a rising crime rate, a staggering influx of Hispanics, and one of the most devastating hurricanes in U.S. history have not dampened the visitation numbers. It would be unreasonable to argue that tourists are visiting Miami purely to seek out its history and cultural heritage, but Miami has done an admirable job of preserving the very attributes that made it unique and appealing to tourists in the first place. A case in point is the Art Deco district.

[91] Ibid., 454-459; Foster, *Castles in the Sand*, 153; Jon Nordheimer, "Miami Beach Art Deco: Restoring a Flamboyant 1935 House," *New York Times,* 20 March 1986, [newspaper online], available from ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[92] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams,* 92-97; Florida Division of Tourism, *Florida Tourist Study*, 1980; Visit Florida, *2004 Florida Visitor Study*, 24; Cheryl Blackerby, "MIAMI'S PAST GLITZ, GLAMOUR AND THE LURE OF SUN, FUN," *Palm Beach Post*, sec. Travel, 23 June 2002, [newspaper online] available from: Lexis Nexis Academic.

In the mid-1970s, tourism to Miami Beach was stagnant. City leaders attributed this to the deteriorating condition of many buildings and the large numbers of elderly people, mostly Jews, that had relocated to Miami Beach beginning in the 1930s. In an attempt to wipe the slate clean and start fresh, the city commission declared the southern portion of the city "blighted" and targeted it for redevelopment, despite the fact that more than 80 percent of the buildings in the area were actually deemed to be in good or excellent shape. Elderly residents of Miami Beach feared for the loss of their homes and their way of life. Others lamented the potential loss of the unique architecture of 1930s South Beach.[93]

In 1976 a middle-aged widow named Barbara Capitman formed the Miami Design Preservation League in an effort to save the historic buildings of South Beach. The group identified a concentration of 1930s buildings designed in the "Art Deco" style, and worked to have it designated a historic district. In 1979 their efforts paid off, as a mile-square section of South Miami Beach containing more than 1,200 art deco hotels and apartments became the nation's first twentieth-century historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Artists, fashion designers, and musicians poured in. When *Miami Vice* began filming in South Beach in 1984 the tourists came in droves, looking for the tropical colored buildings and quirky architecture they saw each week on television. The preservation of the Art Deco district had paid off, and it continues to draw hordes of visitors today. The Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau claims that

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[93] Barron M. Stofik, *Saving South Beach* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 21-28; Dennis Wilhelm, "Chronology of the Miami Design Preservation League and Historic Preservation in Miami Beach," available from: http://www.mdpl.org/About%20Us/history.html2006; Internet; accessed 4 May 2006; Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 129.

over 11 million people visited the greater Miami area in 2005. The Art Deco/South

Beach area was the top area visited. [94]

The Miami Design Preservation League offers several walking tours a week of the

Art Deco district, but the league is not alone in capitalizing on the unique heritage of the

Magic City. In the late 1980s an enterprising historian named Paul George linked up with

the Historical Museum of Southern Florida to offer "Historic Tours with Dr. George"--

guided explorations of Miami's storied streets, cemeteries, and buildings. Tour topics

range from the "Secrets of Coconut Grove" to a "Murder and Mayhem" tour that looks at

the city's criminal element. George conducts over 100 tours a year, and routinely turns

away private tours for lack of time. George credits the popularity of his tours to the

thorough research conducted beforehand. He comments: "People perceive them as

extremely comprehensive. Other people conducting tours aren't historians, and tourists

know this. People want it straight out, including the negative aspects, and I try to be as

objective as possible." George sees a great need for similar tours all over Florida. He

comments, "Every city has its distinct qualities, and so many people are unaware of

place."[95]

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[94] This number is different than that given by Visit Florida. The Visit Florida 2004 visitor study shows Miami-Dade County capturing 6.2%, or 4,941,400 of that year's Florida tourists. Visit Florida, *2004 Florida Visitor Study*, 192; Stofik, *Saving South Beach*, 24, 106-109; Ralph Blumenthal, "Miami Beach Fights To Regain its Superstar Billing," *New York Times* 17 June 1979, [newspaper online] available from: ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Wilhelm, "Chronology of the Miami Design Preservation League*"*; Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, "Twenty-One Reasons Why Tourism is the Number One Industry in Greater Miami and the Beaches in 2005," available from: http://www.gmcvb.com/pictures/pressreleases/MPR233_21%20Reasons%20for%202005.pdf; Internet; accessed 4 May 2006.
[95] Paul George, Interview by author, telephone, 3 May 2006; Historical Museum of South Florida, "Historic Tours with Dr. George," available from: http://www.historical-museum.org/educate/tours/tours.htm#june; Internet; accessed 7 May 2006.

Miami has done an excellent job of protecting and highlighting the unique attributes that make it special. By preserving the architecture and heritage of the area through efforts like those of the Miami Design Preservation League and historian Paul George, Miami has been able to retain a very definable sense of place.

Key West

The island city of Key West boasts a long and colorful history. Incorporated in 1828, its salvage and fishing industries made it Florida's largest city by 1890. The U.S. Navy has a long relationship with the town, operating in some capacity on the island since 1822. For the next century most of Key West's citizens made their living from the sea, and a distinct culture emerged. The artists and writers that were attracted to the town in the twentieth century only added to its fascinating and unusual character.[96]

Realizing the value of the city's history, citizens formed the Key West Art and Historical Society in 1949 to begin preserving the distinctive character and maritime heritage of the area. The Society acquired and preserved the East Martello Civil War Fort, and in 1960 opened an old lighthouse keeper's home as a military museum. Following the lead of the Key West Art and Historical Society, the Old Island Restoration Foundation formed in the 1960s for the express purpose of preserving what remained of nineteenth-century Key West. One of their first successes was the preservation of the Audubon House, a nineteenth-century sea captain's home where James Audubon stayed during his 1832 visit. The Foundation also arranged for the demolition of the old city docks to create a public promenade at Mallory Square, where

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[96] City of Key West, "City Information," available from: http://www.keywestcity.com/ourcity/cityinfo.asp; Internet; accessed 7 May 2006.

they restored several historic buildings. During the same period of the 1960s, the city

council established an area known today as Old Town, a 190-block area containing 2,580

structures, including the largest collection of wooden buildings in Florida.[97]

Tourism is Key West's mainstay. The 2000 census showed that 30 percent of the

population was employed in the tourist industry. The city estimates that over 18,000

tourists visit *every day*; far more come for special events and holidays. Over two million

tourists visited Monroe County (which includes all of the Florida Keys) in 2004 alone. [98]

The tourists come for the translucent blue waters, and the debauchery to be found on

lively Duval Street, but first and foremost they come for a sense of place. They come to

discover the island that enchanted the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams,

and Jimmy Buffett, with its distinctive history and matchless beauty. As a 1978 study

conducted by the Key West Chamber of Commerce observed, "In many ways, history is

Key West's leading product."[99]

In the early 1970s an enterprising young visionary named Edward Swift decided

to capitalize on the city's unique past. Swift grew up poor on an island just north of Key

West, and worked in his father's photo shop on Duval Street, one of Key West's main

thoroughfares. When Key West plunged into an economic depression in the early 1970s

Swift joined up with two partners to buy and repair buildings on the run-down Duval

Street, kicking off a second-wave of historic preservation in the city. In the early 1980s

Swift and his partners ventured farther into the tourism industry, purchasing the Old

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[97] City of Key West, "City Information;" Maureen Ogle, *Key West: History of an Island of Dreams* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 122, 221-222. Martha Thompson and David Johnson, "History Preserved," *Florida Keys Magazine*, (3rd Quarter, 1979): 34-37.

[98] City of Key West, "City Information;" Visit Florida, *2004 Florida Visitor Study*, 1-92.

[99] City of Key West, "City Information;" Thomson and Johnson, "History Preserved," 36.

Town Trolleys and the Conch Tour Train, risky ventures in the tumultuous years following the Mariel boatlift. The Conch Tour Train, originally founded in 1948, was a beloved Key West attraction. It rumbled along a 14-mile route at 20 miles-per-hour, entertaining visitors with tales of the Island's famous and infamous characters.[100]

Swift's gambles paid off in a *big* way. The business venture he began with two partners in the 1970s would become Historic Tours of America, which now owns and operates 40 attractions in the city, including the Shipwreck Historeum, the Key West Aquarium, and the Harry S. Truman Little White House. Swift and his partners are the largest leaseholders of city land in Key West, and their success has spilled over into new markets. Historic Tours of America now runs tour trains and other attractions in Boston, San Diego, Savannah, Washington D.C., and St. Augustine. Dubbing themselves, "The Nation's Storytellers" the company has honed a method of keeping tourists entertained while at the same time educating them about the history of the city they are visiting.[101]

Some say that Historic Tours of America have become *too* successful, and that success is harmful to Key West. Critics call the HTA tours "Disneyesque" attractions that are sustained only by massive crowds of tourists. For years, environmentalists have decried the impact of millions of annual tourists trampling through the fragile ecosystem of the Florida Keys. Their dreams of fewer tourists may be materializing. As of May 2006, tourist numbers in Key West are down significantly from past years. Many cite economic factors that affect Americans' travel patterns. Others note the spate of

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[100] Cara Buckley, "Land Owner Lures Tourists, Gathers Critics in Key West, Fla.," *The Miami Herald*, 16 September 2003, [newspaper online] available from: Lexis-Nexis Academic; Marika Lynch, "All Aboard! All about the Conch Tour Train," *Miami Herald* 23 December 1998, [newspaper online] available from: Lexis-Nexis Academic.
[101] Buckley, "Land Owner Lures Tourists"; Dana Ste. Claire, Interview by author, St. Augustine, Fl., 27 December 2005.

hurricanes that have damaged or threatened the area over the past couple of years. Still

others credit the decreasing number of hotel rooms available to tourists because of

conversion of old hotels and motels to condominiums and single-family homes, part of

the gentrification process threatening tourism in Key West. Dana Ste. Claire, National

Museum Director for Historic Tours of America, admits that the market for heritage

tourism in Key West is not what it once was. He says, "The market is at an extreme point

of fluctuation. It's not what it normally is and it's going to be a while before it comes out

of that. It's a real challenge for us. Fortunately its not our only market or we would be in

real trouble. We're still doing real well down there, but the market is changing.

Dramatically." Environmental damage and gentrification are threatening the very history

and atmosphere that make Key West such a popular tourism destination.[102]

Pensacola

After St. Augustine, Pensacola may have the best claim to the title of Florida's

most historic city. Certainly many Pensacola boosters feel that they have a more rightful

claim to the title of Florida's *oldest* city. Founded by Tristan de Luna in 1559, the area

that is now the city of Pensacola was home to the first Spanish colony in present-day

Florida. But beleaguered by dissension, a lack of supplies, and a failure to find any

valuable natural resources, the colonists left the area just two years later. They took with

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[102] Ste. Clair interview; Buckley, "Land Owner Lures Tourists"; Thompson and Johnson, "History Preserved," 37; Kevin Fox Gotham, "Tourism Gentrification: The Case of New Orlean's Vieux Carre. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42, No 7, (2005): 1099-1121.

them Pensacola's claim to the title of oldest city in the United States, which went to St. Augustine, a city with the distinction of being *continuously occupied* since 1565.[103]

Despite losing the oldest city title, Pensacola residents and boosters still take great pride in their long and rich history, and they have been preserving and showcasing that history for years. In 1959 Pensacola was the site of the kickoff celebration of Florida's quadricentenary; in 1967 the *New York Times* wrote about the historic preservation of Seville Square, where most of the area's historic buildings are situated. Pensacolans have continued to preserve and proudly display their heritage. In addition to the lovely Seville Square, Pensacola boasts the Historic Pensacola Village, an area encompassing twenty properties on the National Register of Historic Places.[104]

But what makes Pensacola's heritage tourism unique is not its Spanish Colonial past, or its admirable preservation efforts over the years. Pensacola has instead discovered a niche market in the world of heritage tourism: military tourists. Home to the first Naval Air facility in the United States, and located adjacent to the massive Eglin Air Force base in Okaloosa County, Pensacola still relies heavily on defense spending and military payrolls. The city has tapped into an interest amongst retired military personnel, military history buffs, and families vacationing at Pensacola beach that want to teach their children something about U.S. military history (or at least keep them

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[103] Pensacola was the second Spanish colony in the present-day United States, after San Miguel de Gualdape in what is today Georgia. Michael Gannon, "First European Contacts," in Michael Gannon,ed. *New History of Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996): 22; Associated Press, "Pensacola Celebrates Tricentennial of Second Founding Second Time," *The Associated Press State and Local Wire*,19 November 1998; Pensacola CVB, "Pensacola Bay Area Convention and Visitors Bureau," available from: www.visitpensacola.com; Internet; accessed 12 May 2006.
[104] C. E. Wright, "Florida Looks Back Over 400 Years of History," *New York Times* 24 May 1959, [newspaper online] available from: ProQuest Historical Newspapers; C. E. Wright, "A Walk into History on a Pensacola Square," *New York Times*, 22 January 1967 [newspaper online] available from: ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Pensacola CVB, "Pensacola Bay Area Convention and Visitors Bureau."

entertained with flight simulators and restored planes.) Pensacola is home to several sites

relevant to military history, including four forts built by the Spanish, British, and

Americans--- Fort Barrancas, Fort Pickens, Fort McRee, and the Advanced Redoubt of

Fort Barrancas--- and also the site of "The Wall South," a replica of the Vietnam

Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. Opened in 1992 the Wall is located in a five-acre

park that also houses memorials to World War I and World War II. [105]

Pensacola's most impressive military tourism site is the National Museum of

Naval Aviation at Pensacola Naval Air Station (also home to the popular tourist draw—

the Blue Angels, a flight demonstration team.) The second largest aviation museum in

the United States, it is Florida's largest and most visited museum, welcoming more than a

million visitors a year since 1997. Established by the Secretary of the Navy in 1962, it

has grown exponentially and now occupies a facility with 291,000 square feet of space.

The museum offers dynamic exhibits like the Flight Adventure Deck, an interactive

exhibit that teaches children about gravity, lift, and propulsion; a Blue Angels flight

simulator; an extensive array of restored planes; and moving exhibits on Prisoners of

War, Medals of Honor, the South Pacific, and a host of other topics. The museum touts

itself as the leading tourist attraction between Orlando and New Orleans, and it

consistently ranks among the top ten attractions in Florida.[106]

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[105] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine*, 159-160; Gulf Islands National Seashore, "Forts," available from: http://www.nps.gov/guis/extended/FLA/History/Forts.htm; Internet; accessed 12 May 2006; Veterans Memorial Park, Pensacola Florida, "Home of the Vietnam Veterans Wall South," available from; http://www.pensacolawallsouth.org/; accessed 12 May 2006; Judy Wells, "On the Wings of History: The National Museum of Aviation is just 'Plane' Fun." *Florida Times-Union*, 15 August 2004, [newspaper online] available from: Lexis-Nexis Academic.
[106] Wells, "On the Wings of History;" National Museum of Naval Aviation, "Museum History," available from: http://www.naval-air.org/joinus/museum-history.htm; Internet; accessed 12 May 2006.

Volusia County

Volusia County's inclusion in a study of heritage tourism may come as a surprise. But tourism leaders in the western portion of the county, a region comprised mainly of small towns and rural landscapes that attract all manner of visitors, are currently engaged in a concerted attempt to save the area from the onslaught of development. Officials are diligently trying to generate support for the "River of Lakes Heritage Corridor," a geographical region lying amidst the St. Johns River and Highway 17. The proposed heritage area is comprised of historic buildings, roadways, landscapes, and places known for their art, literature, and ways of life--places like the Cassadaga Spiritualist camp, the city of DeLand, Blue Spring State Park, and the town of Lake Helen.   In addition, part of this heritage corridor strategy focuses on the development of agritourism--tours of the region's numerous citrus, dairy, and vegetable farms.[107]

Gaining support for the heritage corridor is a first step towards designation by the National Park Service as a National Heritage Area, defined as "a region in which residents, businesses, and governments join together to preserve, promote and celebrate their heritage, culture, and natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations." Designation as a heritage area entitles regions to limited technical and financial assistance from the National Park Service, connects them with other federal agencies, and lends the weight of the National Park Service name to the designated area. There are currently twenty-four National Heritage Areas in the United States, including

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[107] West Volusia Tourism Advertising Agency, "A Heritage Corridor for West Volusia's Future," (2006); Hiller, "Tourism and Florida's Emerging Downtowns and Small Towns," 36; Diane Sears, "Cash Crop: A West Volusia County Effort Hopes to Create a New Industry Bringing Tourists and Farmers Together," *Florida Trend,* (June 2005) [magazine online] available from: www.floridatrend.com/issue/default.asp?a=5536&s+8&d=6/1/2005; Internet; accessed 8 May 2006.

the Cane River National Heritage Area in Louisiana, the Augusta Canal National

Heritage Corridor in Georgia, the National Coal Heritage area in West Virginia, and the

Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania.   Volusia County's attempts to

garner support for such a designation represents a distinctive and forward thinking

strategy in Florida.[108]

Conclusions

We have looked at just a few of the many places where heritage tourism is being

practiced in Florida. A laundry list of other heritage sites and activities could include

such diverse projects as the restored Mission San Luis in Tallahassee, the murals

depicting local history in DeLand and Lake Placid, the antique shops of Mount Dora, the

sponge docks of Tarpon Springs, tours of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural works in

Lakeland, the Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival, the Zora Neale Hurston Heritage Trail

in Fort Pierce, Fort Clinch in Fernandina Beach, the seafood festival in Cedar Key, and

scores of other historic homes, heritage days, history festivals, and museums across the

state.

Florida has a rich heritage that many of the 85 million tourists who visited the

state in 2005 might have missed. Blessed (or cursed, depending on how one looks at it)

with beautiful beaches and the world's most popular theme parks, the state has little

difficulty attracting visitors.   Instead the challenge that Florida's heritage tourism

industry faces is one of recognition and legitimacy.   But with the support of state

organizations like Visit Florida, the Florida Humanities Council, and the Division of

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[108] National Park Service, "National Heritage Areas," available from:
http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/FAQ/INDEX.HTM; accessed 7 May 2006.

Historical Resources, heritage tourism locations in Florida are becoming more established and well known. The Art Deco district of Miami, Old Town in Key West, the National Museum of Aviation History in Pensacola, and the River of Lakes Heritage Corridor in Volusia, are just some of places in Florida that have made a name for themselves in the world of heritage tourism. They provide a sense of place for tourists who know little about Florida and its history and contribute to a growing awareness of the state as more than just a home to Mickey Mouse.

Chapter Four: Heritage Tourism in St. Augustine, Florida

There is no better place to study heritage tourism in the United States than St. Augustine, Florida. Founded in 1565, the city boasts more than 250 years of Spanish colonial history, 20 years of British colonial history, and 175-plus years of American history. Tourists have long been drawn to the narrow alleys, the broad tree-shaded plaza, and the unusual coquina buildings of the oldest city in the United States. The Castillo de San Marcos, the giant fort that stands guard over the city, has drawn curious visitors since it was decommissioned in 1899, and the patina of the ancient downtown lends a warm and inviting glow to souvenir shops and restaurants alike. Tourism has been St. Augustine's leading "industry" since the 1820s. But a recent study of tourism in St. Augustine showed that more than 40 percent of the city's visitors came from within the state of Florida, and another 20 percent hailed from states along or near the eastern seaboard; places all within a day's drive of the town. This would suggest that the city lacks a broader national and international appeal as a travel destination. Of the 75 million tourists that visited Florida in 2003, barely 5 percent of them paid a visit to the Oldest City. Why so few?[109]

Like Colonial Williamsburg, New England, and Santa Fe, St. Augustine provides a perfect setting in which to study some of the common trends and contradictions of

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[109] National Park Service, "Castillo de San Marcos," available from: http:www.nps.gov/casa/; Internet; accessed 9 May 2006; St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, and the Beaches Convention and Visitor's Bureau, *Tourism and Economic Impacts Research*, available from: http://www.visitoldcity.com/memers/research/files/0621121246.pdf; Internet; accessed 12 October 2004.

heritage tourism. Tourists are beguiled by the unique sense of place created by the Spanish ambience of the "Ancient City," but maintaining funding to preserve that historic character is a constant uphill battle for the city government. St. Augustine's long history is meticulously documented, yet the town struggles to maintain historical authenticity in many of its tourist attractions. The city also faces problems that are unique to it as a heritage tourism location: the question of primacy, and a historical disregard for the Hispanic influence in the discovery and settlement of North America.

Studying the history and problems of the heritage tourism industry in St. Augustine raises fascinating questions. If heritage tourism is gaining in popularity, why does one of the most historic cities, in one of the most visited states in the country, struggle to attract visitors? Does this neglect indicate a disdain for America's Hispanic roots? What does the paucity of state funding for historic preservation in St. Augustine say about Floridians' preservation ethic? Do the questions of authenticity raised at some of St. Augustine's tourist attractions demonstrate a sentimental interpretation of the past that is detrimental to Americans' historical memory?   The questions are difficult to answer in a place like St. Augustine where contentious battles over preservation, authenticity, and the commodification of history have raged for decades.

History of Tourism in St. Augustine

In many ways St. Augustine has always been the proverbial neglected stepchild. Founded in 1565 by the Spanish Naval Commander Pedro Menendez de Aviles, the town did little more than subsist as an outpost of Imperial New Spain for its first two hundred years. Its sandy soils, oppressive heat, torturous mosquitoes, and lack of any valuable

natural resources meant that its only real value for Spain was its strategic location. As
the only European foothold in the area, St. Augustine was in the perfect position to
defend the Gulf Stream, the vital shipping route used to transport Spain's newfound
riches from Mexico and the Caribbean back home. The Spanish began construction on
the great coquina fort, the Castillo de San Marcos, in 1672 to further secure their claim on
the area.[110]

Between 1565 and 1762 St. Augustine endured sieges from English colonies to
the north, deadly epidemics, chronic food shortages, Indian raids, and the neglect of its
mother country, but it survived as a Spanish colony. Spain finally lost the colony in
1763, when it was awarded to England as part of the treaty ending the Seven Years War.
England controlled St. Augustine for just twenty years, before it was handed back to
Spain as part of yet another treaty in 1783. Spain maintained a tenuous hold over Florida
for another thirty-eight years, until it became a U.S. territory in 1821.[111]

Despite the periodic "Indian troubles," St. Augustine began to develop a
reputation as a health resort in the 1830s.   In the early nineteenth-century a change in
climate was the most prescribed cure for diseases of the lungs like tuberculosis and
asthma. Northern newspapers printed favorable descriptions, often written by local
boosters, of the beneficial climate to be found in St. Augustine, Florida. The sea breeze
that blew through the town on most winter mornings was nicknamed "the doctor," and
one guidebook even cited "powerful chemical ingredients" in the air that acted as a
"neutralizer to disease." By 1827 the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Achille Murat,

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[110] Amy Bushnell, "The Noble and Loyal City: 1565-1668" in Jean Parker Waterbury, ed., *The Oldest City: St. Augustine Saga of Survival* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society: 1983); Jean Parker Waterbury, "The Castillo Years: 1668-1763," in Waterbury, *The Oldest City*.
[111] Ibid.; Daniel L. Schafer, "Not So Gay a Town in America as This," in Waterbury, *The Oldest City*.

nephew of Napoleon, had visited the town in search of rejuvenation and relaxation.

Emerson complained in letters and poems about the "lazy" and "motley population" of

St. Augustine, but conceded that the "air and sky of this ancient sand-bank of a town are

really delicious."[112] At least one unlucky stranger, as tourists were called in nineteenth-

century St. Augustine, died while in search of recuperation in the oldest city. An 1829

poem published in the *Florida Herald* memorialized a Mr. Morton, whose pursuit of

health in St. Augustine was unsuccessful:

> The Jesamine lends its perfume,
> Geranium Rosemary, Thyme
> The rose ever smiles, in rich bloom,
> In this Temperate, much favour'd clime
>
> Yet Here is no refuge from Death
> Though some for a time are repriev'd
> But Morton! Thou'st drawn thy last breath,
> And children and wife are bereaved.[113]

Nineteenth-century travelers destined for a winter's sojourn in St. Augustine had

to choose between two equally unpleasant modes of travel to reach the town. One could

approach from the sea, risking not only wretched motion-sickness but also the chance of

shipwreck on the treacherous sandbar at the entrance to St. Augustine's harbor. It was

not uncommon in the 1830s to read an advertisement in the local paper thanking a ship's

captain for delivering his passengers to the town alive! Or one could choose to approach

by river and land, traveling via steamboat down the St. Johns River to the town of

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[112] Thomas Graham, *The Awakening of St. Augustine* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1978), 67-69; Patricia C. Griffin, "Ralph Waldo Emerson in St. Augustine," *El Escribano* 32 (1995): 120; Mrs. Henry L Richmond, "Ralph Waldo Emerson in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* XVIII, no. 2 (October 1939): 76-93; Sylvia Sunshine, Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes, (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida; Facsimile Reproduction of the 1880 Edition, 1976), 161.
[113] "Poetry," *Florida Herald,* 15 April 1829.

Picolata, then jostling over eighteen miles of rugged dirt roads in a mule-drawn stagecoach—a trip one guidebook author described as "3 ½ hours of torture."[114]

Upon arrival in St. Augustine visitors had a rather limited choice of accommodations. Though various hotels existed, many travelers opted to stay in boarding houses, where the food was often better and a well-connected hostess might gain guests entry into the more cultivated circles of society. One popular establishment, the Fatio House (recently restored by the Colonial Dames of America) now serves as a heritage tourism location, providing visitors with a glimpse at an early nineteenth-century boarding house.[115]

Tourism in St. Augustine has *always* been heritage tourism. The great hope of all invalid tourists was that the favorable climate would restore their health and allow them to enjoy the many historic attractions that made St. Augustine unlike any other American city. Visitors risked twisted ankles and gouged shoe leather by traversing streets made of oyster shells and sand to visit the Castillo de San Marcos (then called Fort Marion), the old City Gate, and the Huguenot Cemetery. Invalids were often accompanied by able-bodied relatives, and these more energetic tourists might sail across the inlet to Anastasia Island to visit the lighthouse or have a picnic on the beach. Almost all nineteenth–

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[114] "Port of St. Augustine," *Florida Herald,* November 1829; "St. Augustine," *Florida Herald,* 2 December 1830; "St. Augustine," *Florida Herald,* 25 November 1830; "The Ancient City," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* December 1874, [periodical online' available from: http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/gifcache/moa/harp/harp0050/00011.TIF6.gif; Internet; accessed 6 January 2005; Ledyard Bill, *A Winter in Florida* (New York: Wood & Holbrook, 1869), 154; Edward A. Mueller, "East Coast Florida Steamboating," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (January 1962), 242.; Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, "Going South," *The Atlantic Monthly,* (1876), 32-33, [periodical online], available from : www.cdl.library.cornell.edu; Internet; accessed 6 January 2005; Author name unavailable, "The Great South: Pictures from Florida," *Scribner's Monthly,* (November 1874), 10.

[115] John Hammond Moore, "A South Carolina Lawyer Visits St. Augustine, 1837," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 43 (April 1965): 366; Jean Parker Waterbury, "Long Neglected, Now Restored: The Ximenez-Fatio House (Ca. 1797)," *El Escribano* 22 (1985): 1-29.

century visitors took frequent strolls along the sea-wall, a popular place to see-and-be-seen, and it's likely that more than one romance blossomed on this promenade. After his visit to Florida the poet Sidney Lanier praised the U.S. government for building the seawall just wide enough for two people to walk hand-in-hand, claiming that it was the rightful place of the federal government to encourage romance![116]

St. Augustine's popularity as a winter retreat continued to grow in the mid-1800s. Even war did little to dampen enthusiasm for the town. Throughout the Seminole Wars, determined travelers risked ambush to journey to the city, and the Union troops that occupied St. Augustine during the Civil War returned home to relate fond memories of the balmy weather and unique atmosphere of the town. Travel, however, still posed hazards, and St. Augustine's future as a winter resort was not truly secured until the completion of the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax Railway in 1883. With the railroad's arrival, the town lacked only an enterprising soul determined to develop the area's potential as a true winter haven for America's upper crust.[117]

Henry Flagler

In the early 1880s St. Augustine received its most important visitor since Pedro Menendez: Gilded Age millionaire Henry Flagler, partner of John D. Rockefeller in Standard Oil. Enchanted by the town's old-world feel but dismayed by the lack of

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[116] "Six Visions of St. Augustine," *The Atlantic Monthly,* (August 1886), 187-195; Author name unavailable, "The Ancient City"; George Barbour, *Florida for Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1884), 101-105; Author name unavailable, "The Great South," 9-19; Sydney Lanier, Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, Facsimile Reproduction, 1973), 41.

[117] George E. Buker, "The Americanization of St. Augustine" in *The Oldest City*, 151; Graham, *The Awakening of St. Augustine*; Thomas Graham, *Flagler's Magnificent Hotel Ponce De Leon;* Thomas Graham, "The Flagler Era" in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine Saga of Survival*, ed. Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 181.

lodging befitting someone of his stature, Flagler aimed to create a luxurious resort in the town. Foreshadowing Edgar Hewett's activities in Santa Fe, Flagler worked diligently to maintain St. Augustine's Spanish ambience, realizing that it was the key to the city's charm. In the process Flagler created his own version of Spanish "heritage" in the town. His two young architects, Thomas Hastings and John Carrere, designed the spectacular Ponce de Leon and Alcazar Hotels in style they deemed "Spanish Renaissance" and, in keeping with St. Augustine's long history of resourcefulness, built them largely out of locally quarried materials. Briefly but brilliantly, St. Augustine enjoyed great success as a premier winter resort. Presidents, millionaires, and blue-blooded Americans lounged in Turkish baths, gazed through Tiffany windows, swam in an indoor pool, and danced beneath hundreds of lights lit by Edison electricity, all in the comfort of Flagler's St. Augustine hotels.[118]

Ironically, the town's original appeal—its climate-- served its downfall. As the lower part of Florida became more accessible, tourists fleeing frigid temperatures at home chose to explore the subtropical southern climate. Faced with the shortcomings of St. Augustine's weather, and annoyed by the town's apathy towards civic improvement, Flagler extended the railroad down Florida's east coast. Always the savvy businessman, he built hotel after hotel as he went and effectively stole his own clientele from the St. Augustine resorts. Flagler, however, remained charmed by the city, and continued to spend winters there until his death in 1913. He remains in St. Augustine to this day,

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[118] Graham, *Flagler's Magnificent Hotel Ponce De Leon*; Graham, *The Flagler Era*, 181

interred in a marble mausoleum in the spectacular Presbyterian Church he built in the town.[119]

Twentieth-century St. Augustine

Much as Palm Beach eclipsed St. Augustine as Florida's premier winter resort, the automobile of the twentieth century eclipsed the much-heralded railroad of the nineteenth century. St. Augustinians, realizing that a successful future in tourism hinged on the availability of good roads, completed the St. Johns County portion of the Dixie Highway (today's U.S. 1) in early 1916. The 1920s ushered in middle-class tourism, and St. Augustine had its fair share of camps filled with tin-can tourists.[120]

Throughout the end of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century the economy of St. Augustine was bolstered by the Florida East Coast Railroad, fishing boat fleets, and farming, but the city's most recognizable industry, tourism, still provided many St. Augustine citizens with their day-to-day living.[121] Minorcan descendants sold palmetto hats and fans to tourists unaccustomed to the glaring Florida sun. "Top-hatted Negroes" drove carriages and regaled tourists with historical tales as they transported them to and from hotels. That ubiquitous Florida amphibian, the alligator, was turned into an asset, as live baby gators were packaged in cigar boxes and shipped home to unsuspecting relatives. In fact, the surprising popularity of the quintessential Florida animal led to the creation of one of the state's longest running roadside tourist attractions,

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Robert N. Dow, Jr., "Yesterday and the Day Before: 1913 to the Present" in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine Saga of Survival*, ed. Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 211.

[121] *Sixth Census of the State of Florida*, (Tallahassee: State of Florida,) 1935, 130; John R. Dunkle, "Population Change as an Element in the Historical Geography of St. Augustine," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 1 1958): 24.; Dow, "Yesterday and the Day Before."

the St. Augustine Alligator Farm, opened in 1893.[122] Other enterprising citizens

exploited the town's title of "oldest city". The writer Ring Lardner wryly commented on

the phenomena in the early 1920s:

> First we went to St. George Street and visited the oldest
> house in the United States. Then we went to Hospital
> Street and seen the oldest house in the United States. Then
> we turned the corner and went down St. Francis Street and
> inspected the oldest house in the United States. We passed
> up lunch and got into a carriage drawn by the oldest horse
> in Florida, and we rode through the country all afternoon
> and the driver told us some o' the oldest jokes in the
> book.[123]

Historic Restoration and Post- 1950s St. Augustine

In the mid-1930s, in an attempt to capitalize on the unique history and atmosphere

of the old town, St. Augustine's power brokers looked to the success of the Colonial

Williamsburg restoration. Their motivations were by no means purely economic; many

dedicated residents were deeply concerned about the vanishing vestiges of the city's

colonial heritage.   By 1935 there were only thirty-five colonial buildings remaining in

the city of St. Augustine, down from about 300 buildings that were standing at the end of

the colonial era in 1821. In the depths of the Great Depression, civic leaders sought a

means of stimulating the economy while at the same time preserving St. Augustine's

historic character. In 1937 the St. Augustine Historical Program, organized under the

auspices of the Carnegie Institution and the St. Augustine Historical Society, began the

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[122] "The Ancient City," 7, 15; "Six Visions of St. Augustine," 187; Author name unavailable, "Gator Tale," *Folio Weekly,* 8 May 2001, 15; Karen Harvey, "Popular Attraction Enters Second Century," *St. Augustine Record,* 20 May 1993.
[123] Ring W. Lardner, *Gullible's Travels* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), 117.

research needed to restore the historic town. The St. Augustine Historical Society had been a local leader in historic preservation for years; their purchase of the Gonzales-Alvarez House in 1918 was the first of many acquisitions dedicated to preserving significant properties.[124]

A desire to capitalize on nostalgia and romantic notions of the past was evident in the early rhetoric of restoration advocates. The public relations director for the program professed that restoring St. Augustine's streets to their colonial appearance would allow the visitor to experience the "peace and quiet which is so much a part of their original character."[125]

World War Two halted the restoration efforts, and St. Augustinians involved in the tourist industry feared the War's rationing and general belt-tightening might keep tourists away from the city and undermine the town's economy. In a stroke of good fortune, the magnificent Ponce de Leon hotel was taken over by the US. Coast Guard, and the rhythmic sound of marching cadets replaced the idle chatter of sightseeing tourists during the war years.[126]

Restoration efforts gained renewed momentum after 1945 and came to fruition in 1959 when the State of Florida formed the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board. Because the Preservation Board was under-funded by the state (making it difficult to purchase and restore historic properties) a private foundation was organized to raise money for the restoration program. Under supervision of the newly formed Preservation

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[124] Albert Manucy, "Toward Re-Creation of 16th Century St. Augustine" *El Escribano*, 14 (1977) 1-4, Eleanor Beeson, "The St. Augustine Historical Restoration" *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XVI 2 (1937): 110-118; William Adams, "An analysis of the Management of Historical Resources in the city of St. Augustine: A Report to the City Commissions," St. Augustine, Fl., 1996.
[125] Manucy, "Toward Re-Creation of 16th Century St. Augustine," 1-4; Beeson, "The St. Augustine Historical Restoration," 110-118.
[126] Dow, "Yesterday and the Day Before,*"* 233-237.

Board and St. Augustine Restoration Foundation, work began on the restoration project, with the specific goal of helping Americans "understand more fully the Spanish role in the spread of western civilization in this hemisphere." The project caused some discord within preservation and academic circles, mainly relating to the question of exactly what time period the buildings should be restored to (those debates continue today.) In the end, the restoration of a historic quarter anchored by a recreated 1740s' village dubbed "San Agustin Antigua" was completed just in time for the city's 400th anniversary celebration in 1965. The recreated village has gone through several name changes. It is presently known as the Colonial Spanish Quarter and is maintained and operated by the City of St. Augustine's Department of Heritage Tourism. [127]

St. Augustine shared in the general postwar boom that fueled Florida tourism, though perhaps not to the extent its citizens might have hoped. Roadside motels and motor courts sprouted along US 1 and A1A, offering middle class families more egalitarian accommodations than the stuffy Ponce de Leon Hotel. And starting in 1949, tourists could save their shoe leather by boarding sightseeing trains designed to maneuver the narrow streets and give them 400 years of history in just a few hours. Yet by and large, American vacationers destined for Florida bypassed the oldest city for destinations farther south.[128]

Hoping to spur tourism by drawing national attention to its unrivaled historic attributes, St. Augustine planned a grand yearlong celebration of the 400th anniversary of

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[127] Bradley G. Brewer, "A Synopsis of Restoration," *El Escribano* 7, no. 1 (January 1970); Manucy, "Toward Re-Creation of 16th Century St. Augustine"; C. E. Wright, "Spanish Touch: St. Augustine Benefits from Restoration," *New York Times* 20 February 1966 [newspaper online] available from: ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Adams, "An Analysis."

[128] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 80.; Bill Eby, "Sightseeing Dispute Spans Three Decades," *St. Augustine Record*, 19 February 1981.

the city's 1565 founding. But national attention was destined to focus on the city for a much less self-congratulatory reason. Though the town's white citizenry had long considered the paternalistic race relations in the city to be natural and healthy, the veneer of civility created by the service-oriented demands of the tourist industry was wearing off. In 1964, Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), targeted St. Augustine as the site of its next campaign, hoping to maintain public pressure on Congress to pass a public accommodations bill. Building on a local movement led by black dentist Robert Hayling, and hoping to take advantage of national and international media coverage of the upcoming quadricentennial celebration, the SCLC staged marches, sit-ins, and even wade-ins at a local beach. Tourist numbers plummeted during the 1964 demonstrations, as visitors fearful for their own safety chose to avoid a town where a motel owner had thrown acid into a pool filled with protestors. The unrest eventually quieted down with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, though race relations in the city remained far from harmonious. In an ironic twist of fate, chartered tour trains currently drive visitors through St. Augustine's historically black neighborhood, Lincolnville, to see the houses where King slept during the civil rights campaign.[129]

Though the historic restoration program and the quadricentennial celebrations were considered a success, they stimulated only a modest increase in tourist visitation to the city. A look at the state's annual visitor study reveals that the percentage of Florida

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[129] Brewer, "A Synopsis of Restoration"; Manucy, "Toward Re-Creation of 16th Century St. Augustine"; Wright, "Spanish Touch: St. Augustine Benefits from Restoration," xx-7; David Colburn, *Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida 1877-1980* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991); Larry Goodwyn, "Anarchy in St. Augustine," *Harper's Magazine,* (January 1965): 74.; Larry Bingham, "Putting Black History on the Map," *Baltimore Sun Journal* 7 February 2000.

visitors destined for St. Augustine hovered just below one percent in the early 1960s and

crept slightly over the one percent mark in the years after completion of the restoration

program. But St. Augustine truly ceased to be a major player in Florida tourism after the

opening of Walt Disney World in Orlando in 1971. Even though hundreds of thousands

of tourists continued to visit St. Augustine during the 1970s, the massive increase in the

total number of tourists coming to Florida rendered St. Augustine's percentage un-

recordable in the Florida Visitor study. In fact, the city's name never again appeared in

the study, though St. Johns County captured enough visitors in 1989 and 1990 to surface

briefly, before dropping into oblivion again in 1991.[130]

Officials debate the number of tourists that annually visit St. Augustine today.

The total lies somewhere between a conservative estimate of 4 million people (a figure

based on the number of overnight hotel stays in 2003), and a more generous 6.2 million

people (a number cited by the University of Florida in 2003 that takes into account the

large number of day trippers visiting the town.) While these numbers are sufficient to

support the economy of St. Augustine, they seem meager when one realizes that 75

million tourists visited Florida in 2003. [131] Why does St. Augustine fail to capture a

larger percentage of Florida's tourists? Does the city lack a broad American appeal?

What motivates the millions of tourists that *do* visit St. Augustine each year? Do they

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[130] Florida Division of Tourism, *Florida Tourist Study* (Tallahassee: Florida Division of Tourism, 1958-1996).

[131] St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, and the Beaches Convention and Visitor's Bureau, *Tourism and Economic Impacts Research*, 4; National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Heritage Tourism Assessment and Recommendations for St. Augustine, Florida* (Washington D.C: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2003); Karen Janine Cohen, "Rising Florida Retailer Confidence Doesn't Yet Translate into Jobs," *South Florida Sun Sentinel* 25 February 2004, [newspaper online] available from: http://web.lexis-nexis.com.proxy.usf.edu/universe/printdoc; Internet; accessed 25 October 2004.

come to St. Augustine for its history, or its beaches? Will they continue to visit if the city

loses its historic ambience or authenticity?

Historic Preservation Funding

Before determining the reasons why St. Augustine has not become a more well-

known American tourist site, one must consider the city's struggles to maintain funding

for historic preservation. If the city is unable to preserve the historic treasures that

provide its charm and ambience, will the millions of tourists that *do* visit St. Augustine

each year continue to come?

Beginning with the formation of the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board in

1959, the state of Florida provided annual funding to St. Augustine to maintain the thirty-

three historic properties that had been restored or reconstructed during the city's

historical restoration.   But in 1997 that funding was eliminated.   Due to budget

constraints and internecine politics, the state of Florida dismantled the five Preservation

Boards it once funded, leaving St. Augustine, Pensacola, Key West, Tampa, and Palm

Beach solely responsible for the cost of preserving their historic sites. The City of St.

Augustine was given responsibility for the upkeep of the thirty-three state-owned historic

properties in the city, but the deeds remained with the state of Florida. Susan Parker, a

historian for the Florida Division of Historical Resources, calls it "the worst of both

worlds. The city has the maintenance, but not the ownership." [132]

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[132]   Katie Bexley, "City Hopes to Get State Funding for Historic Properties," *St. Augustine Record*, 5 December 2005 [newspaper online] available from: http://staugustine.com/stories/120505/new_3497668.shtml; Susan R. Parker, Interview by author, telephone 25 May 2006.

Bill Adams of the Department of Heritage Tourism points out that the city spends

$400,000 a year on maintenance of the state-owned historic properties. The money is

generated through four sources of revenue: museum admissions, museum store sales,

grants and gifts, and income from sub-leasing some of the properties. Though the city

received a $425,000 preservation subsidy from the state after the Preservation Board was

dismantled in 1997 and has received approximately $800,00 in state grants since then,

city leaders feel that is inadequate. They claim they barely have money to maintain the

state owned buildings (Adams notes many of them are held together with "chewing gum

and band-aids") much less purchase historic properties in danger of demolition.

Destruction of historic properties is a serious problem in St. Augustine; on average, one

historic property is demolished in the city every month.[133] Adams comments upon the

State's apathy towards preservation of the oldest city:

> If you had given any other state in this union the kinds of
> resources of the significance and extent and quality that we
> have in St. Augustine, they would regard it as a prize to be
> funded and supported and preserved and exhibited. In eight
> years here as the director of the Historic Preservation Board
> I got zero money in capital development funds in order to
> preserve or construct or even maintain the resources that
> we had. Zero.

Estimates for the cost of properly preserving all of St. Augustine's historic sites

range from $10 million to $100 million. But with a meager tax base (the city's

population is less than 15,000 and 38 percent of all land in St. Augustine is off the tax

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[133] Bexley, "City Hopes"; City of St. Augustine, "City Seeks Assistance for Historic Properties," (2006) [Press release online] available from: http://www.ci.st-augustine.fl.us/pressreleases/2_06/city_histprop-asst.html; Internet; accessed 24 May 2005; Amy Sancetta, "St. Augustine: Historic City Can't Afford its Past." *USA Today* (2005) [newspaper online] available from: http://usatoday.printhis.clickabililty.com/pt/cpt?action+cpt&title=USATODAY.com; Adams Interview.

roles) where will the funding originate? [134] And is there enough support for restrictive

legislation aimed at maintaining the city's historic attributes? Business owners in the city

have traditionally opposed proposals meant to preserve the city's historic character.

Susan Parker notes, "A lot of business people don't give enough thought to what brings

their business in. They fight the historic stuff because they think it impedes their

business."[135]

Are these business leaders correct? Do the restrictions and costs that historic

preservation demands hamper the city's ability to attract visitors? Or is it just the

opposite? If St. Augustine citizens fail to maintain those historic sites and structures that

make the city unique will tourists visit anyway? What exactly are tourists coming to St.

Augustine to see?

St. Augustine tourist motivations

In order to determine why millions of visitors to Florida overlook the oldest city,

we must first explore why millions of tourists *do* visit St. Augustine. What motivates

them to spend time there? What activities do they participate in when they visit? And

how satisfied are they with their experiences? Several studies have been conducted to

answer these questions in the past few years, including a 2002 *Heritage Tourism Study* by

the University of Florida, a 2003 *Heritage Tourism Assessment* by the National Trust for

Historic Preservation, and a 2003 *Tourism and Economic Impact Research Report* by the

St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau. In addition to the trends revealed by

these market research studies, we will consider such contributing factors as sense of

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[134] Bexley, "City Hopes"; Sancetta, "St. Augustine: Historic City."
[135] Parker interview.

place, nostalgia, and the human fascination with primacy when trying to determine the reasons why people visit St. Augustine, Florida. By considering motivations *for* visiting St. Augustine, we can theorize why so many millions of Florida tourists do *not* visit the oldest city.

The 2002 and 2003 studies conducted by the University of Florida (UF) and the St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau reveal that the primary reasons for visiting St. Augustine are general sightseeing and visits to historical sites and museums. Over 22 percent of respondents in the UF study note that they came *specifically* to visit historic sites, while 80 percent of respondents said they visited one or more historic sites while they were in town. Interestingly, the beach was rarely listed as a primary reason for visiting the area, and only 51 percent of respondents even *went* to the beach during their stay. More than half (54 percent) of the visitors to St. Johns County in 2002 were repeat visitors, and 49 percent of survey respondents in 2003 said they visited the area because it was a "nearby getaway." According to the UF study, the most visited historic attractions in St. Augustine in 2002 were the Castillo de San Marcos (52 percent of respondents), the Colonial Spanish Quarter (41 percent), the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum (37 percent), and the Oldest House Museum (35 percent). Over 90 percent of visitors surveyed reported satisfaction with their visit, and more than 36 percent indicated that the quality of their experience was *perfect*.[136]

Clearly most tourists in St. Augustine come to visit heritage sites. And yet one wonders, how much do these tourists know about St. Augustine and its history before

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[136] A discussion of which attractions the UF study considers historic will be considered later in this chapter. John Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. Johns County Florida* (Gainesville: Center for Tourism Research and Development, University of Florida,2002); St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, and the Beaches Convention and Visitor's Bureau, *Tourism and Economic Impacts Research*, 25.

they visit, and where did they learn this information? Over 88 percent of the visitors

surveyed in the UF study indicated that they had some "previous historical knowledge

about the sites they visited," though most of them admitted that knowledge was

"limited." Over 13 percent of the surveyed tourists reported that they first heard of the

area through school or history class, a surprisingly large number, considering that many

school textbooks overlook the founding of St. Augustine completely. For example, the

popular high school textbook *The American Pageant*, has only one reference to St.

Augustine—a map portraying its discovery in 1565. This perfunctory nod to St.

Augustine is typical in many history textbooks that have been used in American

classrooms for years, though this trend is slowly changing as scholars of the Spanish

borderlands work towards better coverage of North America's Hispanic past.[137]

Primacy

It is interesting to consider the neglect of St. Augustine in history textbooks and

American travel plans in the face of the human fascination with primacy. In his 1996

book *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, historian

David Lowenthal comments upon the claims of primacy that permeate what he calls the

"heritage industry." Lowenthal notes, "precedence evokes pride and proves title." Not

only does "being first" show superiority and rights of possession, but it also proves

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[137] Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. Johns County Florida*, 4, 45; Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1979), 7. These conclusions were reached after a systematic review of 21 American history texts, conducted for a graduate research paper: Monica Rowland, "The Treatment of Florida in American History Books," unpublished seminar paper, December 2004, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg.

durability and worth. It suggests an accumulation of wisdom.[138] This fixation on being

first has led to long-running competitions between St. Augustine and other locations that

claim primacy in Florida and the United States, like Pensacola, Jamestown, and Plymouth

Rock. When the distinguished colonial historian Michael Gannon suggested that the first

feast of Thanksgiving actually took place in St. Augustine in 1565, and not Plymouth

Rock in Massachusetts, New Englanders began referring to him as "the Grinch that stole

Thanksgiving."[139]

Considering this fascination with primacy and the popularity of heritage tourism,

why has St. Augustine not earned a place in the canon of American tourist sites? Why is

the city unable to tap into Americans' nostalgia for the golden days of the past? Could it

be because the past portrayed in St. Augustine is not the typical Anglo-American version

to which most Americans relate? In a 2003 journal article, "The Core of Heritage

Tourism", researchers showed that the more a tourist considers a site to be part of their

personal heritage the more they regard their visit as an emotional experience; indeed

tourists who considered a site "absolutely part of their heritage" were more likely to

revisit.[140] Perhaps the Spanish colonial past portrayed in St. Augustine is so alien, so

different than the "common background" and "shared national purpose" portrayed at

Colonial Williamsburg, that tourists have difficulty relating to the experience.

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[138] David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 173-187.

[139] Natalie Troyer, "Grinch Gives Florida Credit for First Thanksgiving," *The Washington Times,* 25 November 2004, [newspaper online] available from: http://washingtontimes.com/national/20041125-011215-4343r.htm; Internet; accessed 25 May 2005.

[140] Yaniv Poria, Richard Butler and David Aiery, "The Core of Heritage Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 1 (2003): 245-248.

The Black Legend

Some scholars and tourism professionals in St. Augustine attribute the neglect of

St. Augustine in the American historical record and the canon of American tourists sites

to the "black legend." Passed down from American's Protestant forebears, "la leyanda

negra" portrays "Spaniards [as] unusually cruel, avaricious, treacherous, fanatical,

superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent, and authoritarian."[141]   This lingering

scorn can be traced to sixteenth-century European Protestants' contempt for Spain's

aggressive Catholicism and triumphant imperialism. The black legend appeared in the

New World as a scathing criticism of Spanish colonial policy, portraying the Spanish as

murderous thieves who tortured and killed millions of Indians. Competition between

Spain and England, and later the United States, for territory in North America fueled the

dislike, and the anti-Spanish rhetoric of Spanish-American revolutionaries in the early

nineteenth century revived and reinforced the black legend in the English speaking world.

Julian Jederias eloquently summarized the stigma against his nation when, in 1914, he

described the black legend as an "assertion that our country constitutes an unfortunate

exception in the community of European nations in all that relates to toleration, culture,

and political progress."[142]

Many people intimately involved with tourism in St. Augustine believe that

disdain for Hispanic history and culture still taints Americans' views of the ancient city.

Bill Adams, director of the City of St. Augustine's Department of Heritage Tourism,

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[141] David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 336.

[142] Gary Mormino, "The Black Legend," unpublished paper; Ramon Menendez Pidal, "Father Las Casas: His Double Personality, 1963" in *The Black Legend*, Charles Gibson, ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1971): 206-218; Julian Juderias "The Black Legend, 1914" in *The Black Legend*, 193-195.

argues that Americans are "reared in the English historical tradition" and that this

tendency has led to an ignorance of "all of the contributions and participation of Spanish

speaking people in the development and settlement of this country."[143] Dr. Tony

Ganong, director of the St. Augustine Historical Society from 2003 to 2006, likewise

credits the black legend with responsibility for American ignorance of the oldest city in

the nation. Ganong however, sees an inherent barrier to St. Augustine's hopes of fully

overcoming the black legend. He points out that, unlike restored Colonial Williamsburg,

St. Augustine's heritage tourism industry is trying to interpret a *Hispanic* culture for an

English speaking audience, and is therefore automatically one step away from

accuracy.[144]

Dana Ste. Claire, the National Museum Director for Historic Tours of America

(based in St. Augustine), dismisses the black legend as the reason for low visitation

numbers to the city, and instead attributes it to poor interpretation of the city's varied

historic attributes. He believes that by limiting historic interpretation to the "arcane"

Spanish colonial period, the tourism industry in St. Augustine is wasting a valuable

opportunity. He notes:

> The preservation board and the city have decided that in
> this four hundred-plus years of history we are going to
> interpret and bring everything back to the period of 1750,
> not recognizing the historical richness, the eclectic
> architectural feel of the city. When you start talking to
> people about Spanish colonial, that doesn't make any sense
> to them. You've got to bring them in another door and you

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[143] Adams interview.
[144] Tony Ganong; Interview by author; St. Augustine, FL, October 2004.

have to help them connect to that history through tangible
　　　　　links that they understand.[145]

　　　Ste. Claire suggests that more time and effort should be spent interpreting St.

Augustine's British colonial period, a time that resonates better with many Americans.

He contends that by conducting thorough research on the heritage tourism market (a

market that he notes is not homogenous and is constantly changing) tourism professionals

in St. Augustine can retool their programs and attractions to connect more with the

American public. [146]

　　　Is Dana Ste. Claire correct? Are some tourism professionals in St. Augustine

using the black legend as a convenient excuse for low visitation numbers that should be

blamed instead on poor product quality and interpretation? Or is there some merit to the

idea that St. Augustine is often neglected because of its Hispanic past? Marguerite

Shaffer's study of American tourism argues that modern tourism evolved in the United

States during the nineteenth-century, a point in the nation's history when its citizens were

searching for a national identity. The budding travel and tourism industry seized this

opportunity to sell America's landscape and historic sites as the embodiment of the

American spirit and character. This translated into a celebration of Western scenery and

an embrace of Anglo-American heritage that essentially created a "canon" of American

tourist sites. St. Augustine, a city settled by Spanish conquistadors, has never fit into this

mold of a quintessentially "American" place. Lacking the wide-open scenery of the West

that had become so symbolic of American individualism, St. Augustine's 250 years of

Spanish history do not mesh with the nostalgic American myth. Could this be part of the

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[145] Ste. Claire interview.
[146] Ibid.

reason that a visit to the fascinating old city of St. Augustine did not become an early

ritual of American tourism like a trip to Mammoth Caves, or Yellowstone National

Park?[147]

Authenticity in St. Augustine

Having explored historic preservation funding and the black legend as obstacles

to heritage tourism in St. Augustine, we will now examine how well the city's tourism

industry informs the millions of visitors who do make a stop in the oldest city each year.

With such a rich and well-documented history, historic interpretation should be an easy

task for the city's tourism industry. But from its earliest days as a tourist destination St.

Augustine has struggled with historical authenticity. From the Huguenot Cemetery

(where no Huguenots are buried), to the Old Slave Market (where few slaves were ever

sold), to the Oldest School House (that probably was never a school house), to the city's

most famous historical hoax—the Fountain of Youth-- St. Augustine has always kept

tourists entertained with inauthentic interpretation.

The 2002 heritage tourism study conducted by the University of Florida showed

that on a scale of 1 to 5, tourists gave St. Augustine's historic architecture, museums, and

historic objects a 4.1 ranking for perceived authenticity. Almost nine in ten of the

tourists said they felt that they had learned something new by visiting sites in the oldest

city, a number that suggests a large degree of trust that they are being presented with

truthful, accurate versions of history. [148] Travelers in St. Augustine believe what they

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[147] Shaffer. *See America First;* Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*; Kammen, *In the Past Lane*.
[148] Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. Johns County Florida*, 83-91.

are being told, even though, in the tradition of the "manufactured" heritage sites of nineteenth-century New England, many of St. Augustine's most popular tourist attractions lack authenticity.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation divides St. Augustine's attractions into three categories:

1.)   *Authentic*: Those sites managed by professional preservationists, historians, and interpreters that seek to preserve and promote a site's authentic history. These include the Oldest House and the Castillo de San Marcos.

2.)   *Not authentic*: Sites presented as heritage attractions, but which do not meet standards of authenticity. The National Trust criticizes these sites for "embellishing stories" and "relying on myths to 'improve' on the historical facts." They cite the Fountain of Youth and the Oldest Wooden School House as "not authentic" sites.

3.)   *Theme park attractions*. Those sites that have little to do with St. Augustine's history, but capitalize on the large number of tourists that come to St. Augustine, including Ripley's Believe It or Not, and the area's many Ghost Tours.[149]

Interestingly, the University of Florida study on heritage tourism did not even include most of the "not authentic" sites or "theme park attractions" in its questionnaire to determine St. Augustine's most visited attractions, making it difficult to determine how many tourists are visiting these sites. In 2003 John Fraser, general manager of the

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[149] National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Heritage Tourism Assessment*, 24.

Fountain of Youth Park, put the number of annual visitors to that attraction at well over 125,000 people a year.[150] This number may seem small when compared to the Castillo's 2003 visitor tally of 1.3 million people, but it is more impressive when compared with the estimated 50,000 people visiting the St. Augustine Historical Society's Oldest House each year, the 15,000 estimated annual tourists that visit the Government House museum (managed by the Department of Heritage Tourism and located in the heart of the historic district), and the approximately 50,000 tourists that visited the Colonial Spanish Quarter in 2004.[151]

Both the Historical Society and the Department of Heritage Tourism are managed by professional historians, preservationists, and interpreters, and endeavor to portray an accurate version of St. Augustine's history. Yet, these sites, and others like them, are non-profits whose limited budgets often hinder their marketing potential, a problem that many of the for-profit attractions in St. Augustine do not have. Consequently, tourists, many of whom have little or inaccurate prior knowledge of St. Augustine and its role in American history, choose to visit places like the Fountain of Youth Park where they are subjected to distorted versions of the past. A close look at this popular attraction reveals the difficulty in maintaining authenticity in St. Augustine.

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[150] Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. Johns County Florida*; Douglas Kalajian, "Fountain of Youth, Ancient Reptiles-Florida Sells it all," *Palm Beach Post,* 14 January 2003, [newspaper online] available from: http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/printdoc; Internet; accessed 23 October 2004.
[151] Ganong interview; Adams interview; Margo Pope, "Perspective: Keeping Tourism Numbers High Depends on Us", *St. Augustine Record*, 6 October 2004; Katie Bexley, "Spanish Quarter Short on Visitors: City Seeks Ways to Bring People into the St. George Street Museum," *St. Augustine Record*, 16 April 2005.

The Fountain of Youth

The Fountain of Youth Park occupies fifteen acres on the Matanzas River, just north of the Mission Nombre de Dios in St. Augustine. It was opened in 1909 by Luella Day McConnell, who claimed that she had discovered a coquina cross consisting of fifteen stones in the up-right, and thirteen stones in the crossbeam. The cross, supposedly discovered after a heavy storm uprooted a tree on McConnell's property, lay neatly beside an old well. Also "discovered" in the area was a Spanish casque, or salt cellar, containing a piece of parchment that read, in Spanish:

> Be it known by this, that I, Alonzo Soriano, shareholder
> and resident of Brillar, contributed and certify to the public
> that I was present at the beginning of the foundation, which
> is the religion, and is with the rising and setting of the Sun.
> By order of the Royal Crown of Aragon he made his
> description at the Fountain which is good and sweet to the
> taste. It was in the year 1513.

McConnell claimed that the discovery of the parchment, salt cellar, and coquina cross in the immediate vicinity of the old well was incontrovertible proof that Ponce de Leon had landed in this precise spot in 1513 and discovered a natural spring that he hoped was his long-sought Fountain of Youth. She immediately opened the "historic" site to paying visitors. The property was later purchased by Walter Fraser, a former Florida state senator and mayor of St. Augustine from 1936 to1943 (who, somewhat contradictorily, was a leader of the historical restoration effort in the late 1930s.) Fraser bestowed the name 'Fountain of Youth Park' on the attraction and went to great lengths to prove that the coquina cross and the story of Ponce de Leon's landing site were authentic. He even went so far as to sue the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1949 for libel after they printed an

article criticizing his numerous tourist attractions in the city (including, among others, the Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse.)   Fraser, referred to in the article as the "local Barnum," claimed the statements were injurious to his reputation. He won the case.[152]

The Fountain of Youth Park still displays the coquina cross, and tour guides inform visitors that the well was a natural spring around which Timucuan Indians built a village, and that this spring and village were what drew Ponce de Leon to land at this location upon sighting Florida in 1513.   It is remarkable that this story is still being told. Virtually all professional historians now believe that the principal motivation for Ponce's journey was riches, not a magically healing fountain. Historian Michael Gannon notes that nowhere in Ponce's charter from Fernando II, a fastidiously detailed account of the expedition's purpose and goals, was there any mention of "mythical waters." In addition, no mention of a fountain is found in any first-hand report or narrative. Carl Sauer refers to a contemporary of Ponce, citing that "Las Casas, who had soldiered with Ponce in Higuey, said Ponce's purpose in going north was to take slaves." Sauer argues that middle-aged Ponce was not seeking a Fountain of Youth. Gannon agrees, stating that gold and the glory of conquest were probably most important to Juan Ponce de Leon. Still, the idea of Ponce searching for healing waters need not be wholly discounted. There may be some merit to the idea that in addition to his search for gold, Ponce may have been seeking restorative waters, rumored by the Indians to exist to the North.

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[152] Dolph (tour guide at Fountain of Youth Park), interview by author, St. Augustine, Florida, October 25, 2004; Charles B. Reynolds, *Fact vs. Fiction: For the new Historical St. Augustine. A review in support of E. Chattlains declaration: "The Program at St. Augustine must be absolutely sound historically without any flimflams or phony stories*, (Mountain Lakes, NJ: published by author, 1937); "The First Landing Place of Juan Ponce de Leon On the North American Continent in the Year 1513" (St. Augustine: published by Walter Fraser, 1956.)   Leigh White, "The Cities of America", *The Saturday Evening Post*, (March 1949); "Pellicer Testifies in Federal Court That Historical Society Refused to Endorse Fraser's Oldest Schoolhouse," *The St. Augustine Record,* 8 April 1952.

Consideration must be taken of the sixteenth-century historian Antonio de Herrera's account of Ponce's voyage, in which he states "It is certain that Juan Ponce de Leon… was intent upon finding out the Springs of Bimini, and a River in Florida… where there is a continual spring of running water of such marvelous virtue, that the water there of being drunk, perhaps with some diet, make the old men young again." Such legends abounded in the world of sixteenth-century Spain, and a place with healing waters may not have seemed as far fetched then as it does now. [153]

Yet even if we lend weight to a Spanish belief in healing waters, it is historically inaccurate to portray Ponce's voyage as a search for a "fountain of youth," and it is ludicrous to suggest that he discovered such a fountain in the vicinity of present day St. Augustine. All historic and archeological evidence points to the likelihood that Ponce de Leon landed in the vicinity of Melbourne, 137 miles south of St. Augustine. In addition, coquina, a native shellstone quarried on nearby Anastasia Island, was not discovered until 1580, some sixty-seven years after the coquina cross was supposedly laid by Ponce de Leon. The salt cellar that reputedly contained the parchment with a Spanish inscription has been "lost" and lengthy testimony shows that the "spring" which Ponce reportedly believed to be his Fountain of Youth was no more than a well dug in 1875 by the property owners of that time.[154]

What makes the Fountain of Youth story even more incredible is that the fifteen acres the park encompasses truly *are* home to one of the most important archeological

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[153] Carl Ortwin Sauer, *Sixteenth Century North America: The Land and the People as Seen by the Europeans* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1971), 26-68.; Michael Gannon, "First European Contacts" in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon, 1996), 17.
[154] Douglas T. Peck, "Reconstruction and Analysis of the 1513 Discovery Voyage of Ponce De Leon," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (1992) :133-154; Reynolds, "Fact vs. Fiction."

finds in Florida and American history. Archeological excavations in the 1980s revealed

that there was a sixteenth-century European occupation of the site. Further research

suggested that it was in fact, the original occupation site of Pedro Menendez de Aviles

upon the founding of St. Augustine in 1565. The irony is noteworthy. One can almost

visualize innocent tourists listening to the fabricated story of Ponce de Leon's coquina

cross and mythical spring while just yards away renowned archeologist Kathleen Deagan

uncovers the remains of the first European settlement in the United States. [155]

Why is such a rich opportunity for education about St. Augustine's place in

American history squandered in favor of a fabrication? A tour guide at the Fountain of

Youth Park explained it this way:

> It's not about a history lesson. This is a happy attraction.
> Mythical. What we do here is how accurate? I don't know.
> It's not my job to know. People come because it's the
> Fountain of Youth. People are more interested in that than
> the archeological significance.[156]

Bill Adams, Director of St. Augustine's Department of Heritage Tourism, alludes to the

profit motive involved in promoting the story of the Fountain of Youth as opposed to the

important archeological finds at the site when he comments: "Ponce de Leon is much

better known than Kathy Deagan."   Dr. Deagan agrees. She remarks, "no one is going

to pay seven dollars to look at an archeological site." At the same time Deagan is keenly

aware that the enduring popularity of the attraction makes her archeological excavations

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[155] "Site information for 8-SJ 31: Fountain of Youth," Historical Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, available from:
http://flmnh.ufl.edu/histarch/Collections/sa_site_info.asp?site_name=fountain%20of…; Internet; accessed 5 December 2004.
[156] Dolph (tour guide at Fountain of Youth Park) interview.

possible. Had the park not been so successful it likely would have been sold off to real-estate developers years ago. As such, The Fountain of Youth Park has perhaps *served* historical interpretation more than it has damaged it. [157]

Solutions

Can the St. Augustine tourism industry strike a balance between authentic historical interpretation and entertaining attractions based on myth and legend? The National Trust for Historic Preservation recommended the creation of authenticity guidelines for St. Augustine, using Lancaster, Pennsylvania as a model. Lancaster County, home to one of the largest Amish communities in the United States, created criteria for different types of authentic resources including heritage sites, services, and events. They then devised a logo used to identify a site, service, or event that authentically presented Lancaster's heritage. Venues that qualify for the authentic designation may use the logo for advertising and promotion.[158]

Tony Ganong, former director of the St. Augustine Historical Society, chuckled at the idea of an authenticity board in St. Augustine. He commented, "Theoretically it would be possible to have an organization like that. But it…, well, it may be hard to do. I think it would be hard to do. This is a very competitive place."[159]   Dana Ste. Claire of Historic Tours of America echoed this sentiment when he noted that "St. Augustine has become this major heritage tourism destination, but we don't know how to market and

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[157] Adams interview; Kathleen Deagan,, iInterview by author, St. Augustine, 22 June 2006.
[158] National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Heritage Tourism Assessment," 25-26.
[159] Ganong interview.

manage our resources. Its just sort of there, and it always has been, and the tourists have always come."[160]

But will the tourists *always* come? Will heritage tourism remain St. Augustine's bread-and-butter industry? Presumably it will, as St. Augustine has a long, long history of survival. It is certain that with millions upon millions of tourists visiting Florida each year, some of them will always pay a visit to the oldest city. Perhaps, as the nation's Hispanic population continues to grow at a phenomenal rate, the history of the Ancient City will resonate more with the American public, and the black legend will be overcome. Perhaps the citizens of Florida, and the United States at large, will realize the unrivaled value of the historic treasures to be found in St. Augustine, and will designate funding to preserve them. Perhaps with more cooperation and better interpretation the city's tourism leaders can demand and enforce more authentic historical interpretation.

There surely is no better place in the United States to study heritage tourism than St. Augustine, Florida. With over 400 years of history it has been a popular tourist destination since the 1800s, drawing visitors eager for a glimpse at the area's unique past. St. Augustine is matchless in its quality and quantity of historic sites, yet it struggles with many of the same problems found in other heritage tourism locations: commodification of its history, authenticity, and a romanticization of the past. St. Augustine also presents some unique problems for a heritage tourism site. City officials constantly fight for money to preserve its unparalleled historic attributes, and the tourism industry must overcome a lingering American scorn for the city's Hispanic past.   But despite these

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[160] Ste. Clair interview.

obstacles, the heritage tourism industry seems destined to survive in St. Augustine. For as long as Americans are searching for a sense of place, romantic views of the past, and a dose of history while on vacation there will be a demand for the ambience of America's Ancient City.

Conclusion

Tourism has been called the "largest peacetime movement of people." It has a unique ability to mold and redefine physical and cultural landscapes, and can greatly influence people's interpretation and definition of themselves. In the United States alone the tourism industry generates $1.3 trillion a year in economic activity. Tourism begs to be studied for the insights it can reveal about human behavior, culture, and personal and national identity.[161]

Tourism, in its most basic form, can be defined as a circular journey. Though humans have always traveled, the foundations of modern tourism were laid during the Enlightenment, when new philosophical, cultural, and socio-economic patterns created a change in thought and approach towards nature, travel, and recreation.[162] Tourism in America developed as a result of the transportation revolution of the 1820s and 1830s, when technological advances spurred the growth of industrial and commercial centers and greatly expanded the American middle classes.[163] The influence of romanticism and a burgeoning patriotism in the United States inspired many Americans to travel to see the

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[161] D. J. Greenwood, "Tourism as an Agent of Change: A Spanish Basque Case," *Ethnology* 11 (1972): 80-91, as quoted in John F. Collins, *Efforts to Promote Tourism as a Catalyst for Urban Redevelopment in Florida: Insights from the Anthropology of Tourism and an Annotated Bibliography*, (Master's thesis, University of South Florida, 2004), 13; Shaffer, *See America First*, 6; Travel Industry Association of America, "Travel Industry Fun Facts," available from: http://www.tia.org/pressmedia/fun_facts.html; Internet; accessed 11 July 2006.

[162] Sears, *Sacred Places*, 3; Shaffer, *See America First*, 11; Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 53-56; Feifer, *Tourism in History,* 63-93; Metropolitan Museum of Art, "The Grand Tour," available from http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grtr/hd_grtr.htm; Internet; accessed 13 March 2006.

[163] Sears, *Sacred Places*, 3-5; Shaffer, *See America First*, 13.

country's beautiful landscapes and participate in the creation of a national identity. [164]

By 1950 the age of modern tourism had begun, with two out of three American families

taking an annual vacation.[165] As the U.S. tourism industry grew, professional scholars

realized its potential as an avenue for academic inquiry, and the anthropological and

historical study of tourism has acquired increasing legitimacy since the 1970s.

Heritage tourism is particularly interesting for what it reveals about human

behavior. Why do millions of tourists spend billions of dollars a year to visit historic

places? What exactly are these tourists hoping to find? Heritage tourism raises thought-

provoking questions about American culture and society, and encourages tourists to

contemplate their national history and identity.[166] Heritage tourism is a popular and

lucrative trend in the United States, with over 80 percent of American tourists

participating in a historic or cultural activity while traveling.[167]

Heritage tourism gained popularity in tandem with several trends in American

society: the historic preservation movement, a growing American desire for a sense of

place, and nostalgia for a more innocent time. Driven by these motivating trends,

heritage tourism often falls victim to a potentially damaging romantization of the past and

can lead to a troubling commodification of history and a lack of authenticity at many

heritage sites.

Of the many possible heritage tourism locations in the United States few people

would suggest Florida as a potentially successful locale. Famous for its beaches, golf

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[164]Shaffer, *See America First*, 13.
[165] Mieczkowski, *World Trends*, 68-69; Shaffer, *See America First*, 100; Aron, *Working at Play*, 204-205, 248-249; Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 77.
[166] Confer and others, *Heritage Tourism Study: St. John's County Florida*, 7.
[167] Travel Industry Association of America, "Travel Industry Fun Facts," available from: http://www.tia.org/pressmedia/fun_facts.html; Internet; accessed 11 July 2006.

courses, and amusement parks, the Sunshine State is often overlooked in the American historical memory. But Florida is home to some of the oldest and most historic sites in the United States, and Florida's well-established tourism industry is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the growing popularity of heritage tourism. Studies reveal that tourists visiting Florida are seeking historical and cultural diversity. Already, heritage tourism generates billions of dollars in the state. With the ever increasing number of marketing campaigns, grant initiatives, and heritage tourism programs operated by organizations like Visit Florida, Florida Main Street, the Florida Division of Historical Resources, and the Florida Humanities Council, the heritage tourism industry in Florida promises continued growth. Perhaps such growth will inspire more awareness of the value of Florida's historic landmarks and landscapes, and lead to a heightened sense of place for Florida tourists and residents. Already, locations like Miami, Key West, Pensacola, Volusia County, and St. Augustine have realized the value in preserving and promoting those attributes that define and distinguish them.

It is only fitting that a study of heritage tourism in Florida should conclude with a reflection on the remarkable town of St. Augustine. As the oldest continuously occupied settlement of European origin in the United States it is easily recognizable as the state's most historic city. Millions of tourists have visited the "Ancient City" since the early 1800s, eager to soak up a bit of history along with the Florida sunshine. But one wonders how many of them see beyond the superficiality of tourist traps like the Fountain of Youth, the Oldest Wooden School House, and the t-shirt shops that clutter historic St. George Street. One wonders if the day-trippers that partake in one of the narrated tour trains (often subjecting themselves to bad history and bad Ponce de Leon jokes) are able

to truly appreciate the significance of the "Oldest City."   Do they realize that the streets on which they are traveling are some of the oldest in the United States, and that the town plan itself is a National Historic Landmark? Can they appreciate the importance of Fort Mose, the first free black town in what is now the United States, which lies just north of downtown? Do they even know that it is there? Do they really know anything at all about the history of Spanish St. Augustine? Or about Spanish colonization in the present-day United States?

St. Augustine faces unusual challenges as a heritage tourism location, perhaps the most glaring of which is an ignorance of America's Spanish past. Has this led to a lack of concern for preserving the vestiges of such a past? St. Augustine has certainly struggled to obtain funding to restore and maintain the remnants of its colonial history. Can this be attributed to the black legend? Is there a lingering American scorn for all things Hispanic? Do American's schooled in the English roots of American history simply not relate to a story outside of the traditional master narrative? Perhaps. But one must also consider the complexity of tourism in a town like St. Augustine. Unlike Colonial Williamsburg, where scores of modern buildings were razed to bring the area back to its colonial appearance, St. Augustine is a *living* town. People have been occupying its historic streets since the 1600s; working, eating, playing, living.

St. Augustine is not a stagnant museum, and it can not be understood as such. The old Ponce de Leon Hotel, a Gilded-Age marvel, rises imposingly along Cordova Street, the former western edge of the colonial walled city. The old hotel is now Flagler College, home to twenty-first century students. It sits upon what used to be Maria Sanchez Creek, filled in by Henry Flagler in order to build his hotel. Conjecture says that

the fill dirt came from the site of Fort Mose, America's first free black town. Tourists

riding by on tour trains often confuse the 19th century hotel for a remnant of St.

Augustine's colonial Spanish past. It all serves to show the depth of history in this

unusual American city, and the difficulties of authentically depicting that history to a

public that is often completely unfamiliar with it. Little wonder that city and tourism

industry officials in St. Augustine struggle to find accord when dealing with the

preservation and display of the city's exceptional heritage. A 1937 subcommittee report

from the Carnegie Institution could be mistaken for a report written in 2006 to describe

many of the problems facing St. Augustine:

> The visitor, upon his arrival in St. Augustine, is able
> nowhere at present to secure a comprehensive statement of
> the principal historical features in relationship to each
> other….Confronted as he is with the confusion of badly
> congested traffic conditions, disconcerting signs, overhead
> wires, and other obstructions to his full appreciation of an
> historical situation, he is likely to make a timid attempt to
> enjoy and to understand old St. Augustine, after which he
> finds relief in driving his car out of the town, probably with
> the unsatisfactory feeling of realizing that he has not gotten
> what he came here to find.[168]

Yet, despite the difficulties that St. Augustine faces, it is certainly successful as a

heritage tourism location. Its visitation numbers may pale in comparison to the amount

of tourists that visit Disney World annually, but certainly those tourists that visit St.

Augustine come away with a better sense of Florida, and a better understanding of the

diverse history of the present-day United States. And in the end, what more can heritage

tourism hope to achieve in American culture? In closing, let us look back at the words of

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[168] Report of Sub-Committee No. 2 of National Committee for the Survey and Development of the
Historical Resources of St. Augustine, FL., March 1937, 5, as quoted in Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of
Age*, 318.

the venerable Florida historian Albert Manucy as he reflected on the progress of the St.

Augustine historical restoration in 1944, in the midst of the Second World War:

> Though St. Augustine prides itself upon the title of
> "Ancient City," yet its citizens are forward-looking.
> Pushed aside for the moment are the memories of Spanish
> soldiery who gave life to the town centuries ago, for
> present concern involves a military in less colorful dress.
> But if St. Augustine has any lesson to teach, it is that peace
> must come eventually. Florida has undergone many wars,
> many sacrifices, many privations. And St. Augustine, the
> logical focal point for telling the dramatic story of Spanish
> colonial effort as related to the beginnings of our own
> nation, will not be denied the opportunity to present that
> narrative of inspiring tenacity. Time is nothing in the story
> of the Ancient City. Its people can wait…. For what use is
> history if history remains untold?[169]

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[169] Albert Manucy, "A Review of the St. Augustine Historical Program," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 24 (2): (May 1944: 356.

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