

# Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West

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Tourism, as much as any other industry, has defined the high and low points in the development of the twentieth-century West.<sup>1</sup> Despite its importance and its inclusion within an earlier generation's matrix of scholarly inquiry, the subject has remained largely unexplored even as its significance to the western economy has increased. Over the past century the West has experienced a proliferation in the varieties of tourism, from the marketing of the region's scenery and mythic past to the post-World War II development of recreation and entertainment. Tourism has also emerged as a hoped for panacea to which people turn when they seek to revive areas in economic decline. Because tourism is a malleable industry designed to anticipate and cultivate trends in American society, its growth since 1900 has been influenced by changing cultural iconography, increased wealth and broader distribution of income, and

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1. Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York, 1957) is the standard work even after more than thirty-five years. For a general overview of tourism history, see John Jakle, *The Tourist in 20th Century America* (Lincoln, 1985); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1989); Michael Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, 1991); and Anne F. Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York, 1990).

better transportation systems. In the West, these changes have resulted in tourist locales and activities as different from one another as Grand Canyon National Park, the quaint "historic" district of Santa Fe, the star-studded ski meccas of Sun Valley and Aspen, and the neon-lit order masquerading as chaos that is Las Vegas.

Yet despite the great variety among western tourist places, their history has a common thread—the presence of an entrepreneurial vision capable of defining a particular place and activity as a worthy investment of leisure time and money. Throughout the region, the development of tourism has depended on access to the capital needed to package and promote a tourist experience and the means to convey consumers to the site of that activity. Without a vision of its cultural meaning and the attendant infrastructure and technology to make it accessible, the Grand Canyon would remain no more than a remote geologic oddity. Santa Fe would be just another town bypassed by the railroad; Aspen and Sun Valley would be nearly deserted mining towns; and Las Vegas would still be the place Americans went for a quick divorce. In origin, economic structure, dependence on corridors of transportation, and in its transformative impact on existing communities, tourism in the twentieth-century West has demonstrated a remarkable developmental consistency that blurs the apparent distinctions among its different forms and reveals their fundamental similarity.

### **I. Heritage Tourism**

The marketing of historic and scenic sites dominated the western tourist industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Heritage tourism emerged as part of the *fin de siècle* effort by American elites to define a cultural heritage for themselves apart from the European legacy that they had long revered and sought to emulate, yet to which they felt inferior. This need for a national iconography made a reverential approach to the past and to the spectacular scenic attributes of the West a cultural imperative. The Grand Canyon and Santa Fe, New Mexico, were among the first places in the West to encounter the transformative power of heritage tourism. They

typify the process that changed heritage sites of all kinds—from national parks to historical battlefields—across the region. These two locations demonstrate the range of places with symbolic meaning that could be altered by the onslaught of visitors, providing two early instances of the creation of a national iconography for western places.

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) and its offshoot, the Fred Harvey Company, assumed the pre-eminent role in the development of the Grand Canyon. In 1901, the Santa Fe and Grand Canyon Railroad Company completed a railroad spur from Williams, Arizona, and promptly went into receivership. The AT&SF stepped in, and in 1904, built El Tovar, an impressive and rustically elegant hotel, on the very edge of the canyon. When it opened in 1905, the \$250,000, four-story hotel contained one hundred well-appointed rooms replete with hot and cold running water, electric lights, and steam heat. Its only concession to typical western accommodations was the single bath on each floor, which guests had to reserve. Visitors to the splendid dining room could select delicacies such as fresh salmon from the Pacific Coast, California fruit, Michigan celery, and Camembert cheese. Charles A. Brant served as mayordomo of the hotel from its opening until his death in 1921. He started as a clerk in the Harvey Company's Montezuma Hotel at Las Vegas Hot Springs, New Mexico, in the 1880s, and rose to the pinnacle of management within the company. Acclaimed as one of the best-loved men in the West at the time of his death, Brant had learned the behaviors and patterns necessary to cater to the privileged classes.<sup>2</sup>

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2. John R. White to Stephen T. Mather, Dec. 13, 1921, Records of the National Park Service, Record Group 79, Series 6, Grand Canyon National Park, National Archives; James O. Henderson, *Meals by Fred Harvey* (N.P., 1969); Lesley Poling-Kempes, *The Harvey Girls: Women Who Opened the West* (New York, 1989), 167–169; Keith L. Bryant, Jr., *History of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway* (Lincoln, 1974), 120–121, 186; John Willy, "Fred Harvey's Facilities and Service at the Grand Canyon," *Santa Fe Magazine* (Dec. 1928), Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad Collection, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; and Elizabeth Compton Hegemann, *Navajo Trading Days* (Albuquerque, 1963), 5–6. George Wharton James, *The Grand Canyon of Arizona* (Boston, 1910), describes the coming of the railroad to the area. While the consensus is that AT&SF rail service to the Grand Canyon began in 1904, Gordon Strachan, in "Arizona: Jewel in the Crown," *Santa Fe Magazine* (Aug., 1948), 14, gives July 1, 1907, as the date. The *Santa Fe Magazine* (Dec. 1929), 38, shows a photo of the first train to Grand Canyon

The marketing strategy of the AT&SF and the development of the Grand Canyon blended well. Since the days of pioneering anthropologist Adolph F. A. Bandelier and literary luminary Charles F. Lummis in the 1880s, the Southwest had been the focus of a concerted effort to present an exotic but uniquely American past in which Europe and its castles did not share. Lummis did not attempt to describe the canyon after his first visit: "there it is; go see it for yourself," he pronounced in *A Tramp across the Country*, investing the Grand Canyon with a meaning beyond words. Railroads recognized that they could increase their business by creating a "Romantic Terminus," an iconographic celebration of western topography and indigenous culture that convinced visitors to, in the words of a campaign of the time, "See America First." As a result of the use of lantern slides, promotional materials, and word of mouth advertising, thousands of visitors annually rode the train to the Grand Canyon. Traffic on the rails was up, and vacation travel began to include western places with symbolic meaning as well as extraordinary scenery and first-class amenities.<sup>3</sup>

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that is dated September 18, 1901. This photo is surely of the abortive Grand Canyon Railway Line, swallowed by the AT&SF. While train service certainly operated to the canyon before 1907, Strachan's assertion suggests that the AT&SF did not formally take over this line until 1907. According to Al Richmond, *Cowboys, Miners, Presidents and Kings: The Story of the Grand Canyon Railway* (Flagstaff, 1985), the line was held in AT&SF-controlled receivership from 1901 to 1907.

3. T. C. McLuhan, *Dream Tracks: The Railroad and the American Indian, 1890-1930* (New York, 1985), 16-23; E. R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis: Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino, Calif., 1955); Charles F. Lummis, *A Tramp across the Continent* (New York, 1892), 244; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (2d ed., Lincoln, 1987), 82-105; Runte, *Trains of Discovery: Western Railroads and the National Parks* (Flagstaff, 1984), 12-16, 36; Bryant, *Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe*, 105-122, 186; Hegemann, *Navajo Trading Days*, 7. For the "See America First" movement, see Marguerite S. Schaffer, "See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1905-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1994); see also Diane L. Thomas, *The Southwestern Indian Detours: The Story of the Fred Harvey/Santa Fe Railway Experiment in Detourism* (Phoenix, 1978), for a version of the development of AT&SF tourism in the 1920s and 1930s. Alfred Runte, "Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad," *California History*, LXX (1991), 62-75, has coined the phrase "experience advertising" to describe the promotion process. Although the development of the Yosemite Valley precedes that of the Grand Canyon in time, it served as a "romantic pleasure resort" until the popularization of the region as a result of the activities of John Muir. Only later did it acquire any sort of cultural meaning, which ironically was first associated with a recreational activity, camping; see Stanford E. Demars, *The Tourist in Yosemite, 1855-1985* (Salt Lake City, 1991), 27-54. Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness* (Lincoln, 1990), 13-21, makes the best case for Yosemite as an example of cultural and heritage tourism.

The lack of legislative protection for the canyon was an important factor in its development. The public clamored to see it, but only weak mechanisms for its preservation existed. The status of the Grand Canyon first as a forest reserve—an earlier nomenclatural designation of a national forest—and subsequently as a mining reserve did not prohibit other uses of reserved land. The Grand Canyon was the first forest reserve to have a hotel and a railroad terminus. Mining claims dotted its trails and trailheads. In 1908, it passed to the next level of minimalist protection when Gifford Pinchot told Theodore Roosevelt of a plan to build a tramway to the bottom of the canyon, and Roosevelt thwarted it by proclaiming more than 800,000 acres a national monument. Before 1910, the Grand Canyon had become a destination resort, a favored stopping place for railroad travelers; in 1914 and 1915, the AT&SF advertised the California Limited as its “train of comfort” and “train of luxury” in an effort to promote its concept of travelers’ experience: “roughing it in style.” As many as 30,000 visitors arrived by rail and 25,000 by auto in a single year during the middle of the 1910s, but the federal agency in charge, the Forest Service, had little inclination and less experience with managing tourism. A happy chaos resulted. The railroad and the Harvey Company ran the canyon, reaping a windfall. Only in 1919 did the Grand Canyon finally attain the administration, funding level, and protection assured by national park status.<sup>4</sup>

The real beneficiaries of this transformation were not the people of the region, but the railroad and its allied companies. In 1920, the first full year of national park status for the Grand Canyon, 67,315 visitors came, up from the 37,735 that represented the first total tabulated by the National Park Service in 1919; by 1928, the number topped 150,000. Prior to World War

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4. Congress in 1893 created the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve; in 1906 replaced the forest reserve with a game reserve; in 1908 established the national monument; and in 1919 established the national park. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, XXVII, 1064 (1893), XXXIV, 607 and 3263 (1906), XXXV, 2175 (1908), XL, 1175 (1919). *Forest Notes* (April 20, 1916) estimated that automobiles carried 20,000 people to Grand Canyon National Monument in 1915; an additional 92,000 arrived by rail. See also *The California Limited, 1914* and *The California Limited, 1915* promotional brochures, Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Collection, RR 929, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Hans Huth, *Nature and the American* (Berkeley, 1957), 159–161; John Ise, *Our National Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore, 1961), 232–235; and Hal Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments* (Urbana, 1989), 64–69.

I, the Grand Canyon was part of the fiefdom of political boss Ralph Henry Cameron, a "down-East Yankee" by birth who settled in Arizona in 1883, became the first sheriff of Coconino County, and owned the many and frequently spurious mining claims in the Grand Canyon area. Local miners and personalities such as P. D. "Pete" Berry, William "Old Man" Bass, William Hull, Martin Buggeln, and John "Cap" Hance, some of whom were affiliated with Cameron, dominated the local visitor-service economy, but the service they provided was often mediocre. They picked up visitors in their horse-pulled wagons and brought them to facilities such as Buggeln's Bright Angel Hotel and the hotel that Cameron owned and Berry operated at Grand View Point. Accommodations were typically inadequate, and service was poor.<sup>5</sup>

Although the operators at the canyon initially welcomed the railroad and El Tovar as purveyors of greater business potential, by 1910 they began to feel threatened. Cameron used his position as territorial representative to the U. S. House of Representatives and his mining claims to protect his land interests in the canyon, but he and his friends soon found their options limited. Part of the problem was shoddy business practice; Berry was a notoriously bad businessman who never paid his debts and failed to keep agreements with potential visitors. The railroad and the Harvey company offered better and often more affordable service, and the local operations were soon feeling squeezed. Cameron, Berry, and their friends responded with a series of court cases and vitriolic resentment of federal authority.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Ralph Henry Cameron to P. D. Berry, June 22, 1909, Feb. 14, 1910, Jan. 2, 1914; Max Salzman to Berry, April 25, 1910, all in P. D. Berry Papers, Museum Collection, Grand Canyon National Park; *1915 Summer Excursions California and North Pacific Coast*, promotional brochure, AT&SF collection, RR 929, Kansas State Historical Society; Hegemann, *Navajo Trading Days*, 1, 4–5; Richmond, *Cowboys, Miners, Presidents, and Kings*, 59–67.

6. The P. D. Berry Papers are full of examples of poor business practice; see, for example, P. D. Berry to John Chetwood, April 12, 1902; Max Salzman to Berry, Aug. 11, 1909; and Maurice Salzman to Berry, Oct. 4, 1913. See also Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts*, 64; *Report of the Director of the National Park Service* (Washington, D.C., 1919), 94–102, 270; *Report of the Secretary of the Interior for 1920* (Washington, D.C., 1920), 25, 100–104; Horace M. Albright and Frank Taylor, *Oh, Ranger!* (Stanford, 1928), 18; J. Donald Hughes, *In the House of Stone and Light: A Human History of the Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon, Ariz., 1978), 47–57.

Within a few years of the transfer of Grand Canyon to national park status, local entrepreneurs completely lost their hold on the canyon and its environs. Most were replaced by Harvey cars with uniformed drivers who offered the standardized service for which the company was famous. Even Cameron could not maintain his dominance there after the arrival of the AT&SF, the Harvey Company, and the Park Service. He was compelled to sell his tracts to the government or face condemnation. Although Cameron was a powerful individual in northern Arizona, he was no match for the combined force of the government, the railroads, and the burgeoning travel industry. Cameron became a noted obstacle for the federal agencies that managed land in the West, but even his election as U.S. senator from Arizona in 1920 could not prevent his eviction from his prized mining claim, Indian Gardens on the Bright Angel Trail, and the eventual transfer of his holdings to the Park Service.<sup>7</sup>

By the middle of the 1920s, the transformation of the Grand Canyon was complete, with the Park Service, the AT&SF, and the Harvey Company in firm control. Its sublime characteristics had been packaged and promoted for an upper- and upper-middle-class clientele that could find all the amenities to which it was accustomed as well as enjoy an experience its members regarded as genuine. The Park Service standardized operations and the Harvey Company had firmly established a level of service that appealed to "the better class of people," while the hotels and camps that preceded El Tovar had gone out of business, been purchased, and demolished or abandoned. The first airplane landed and took off from the canyon bottom in 1922, a harbinger of many to come; at nearly the same time, the

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7. Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, 237–242; Hal K. Rothman, "A Regular Ding-Dong Fight: Agency Culture and Evolution in the NPS-USFS Dispute, 1916–1937," *Western Historical Quarterly*, XX (1989), 150–152; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 235–238; Edwin Corle, *Listen Bright Angel* (New York, 1946), 206–210; Horace M. Albright as told to Robert Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913–1933* (Salt Lake City, 1986), 169–186; *Report of the Director of the National Park Service, 1919* (Washington, D. C., 1919), 365–369, for the text of the Commissioner of the General Land Office final decree in the Cameron mineral cases. For the details of the NPS-Cameron battles, which lasted well into the 1920s, see Records of the National Park Service, Record Group 79, Grand Canyon National Park, Series 6, Buildings, part 1, boxes 50–54, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as RG 79, NA). Cameron was finally evicted from the canyon during his tenure as a U.S. senator.

Oklahoma Supreme Court upheld the Harvey Company rule that required men to wear suit coats in company dining cars and dining rooms, effectively affirming the status distinction built into the structure of the Harvey enterprises. The Harvey-run Hopi House at Grand Canyon Village sold baskets, blankets, and other crafts to visitors, becoming an important part of the market for Native American artifacts.<sup>8</sup>

The combination of entrepreneurial activity embodied in the Fred Harvey Company and the AT&SF and the rise of the Grand Canyon as national symbol created a special kind of meaning. To the people who rode the rails to the Grand Canyon, the canyon became much more than the immense obstacle it had been to explorer García López de Cárdenas, the first Spaniard to reach its rim.<sup>9</sup> The canyon represented what was grand about the American continent and the hardy people who believed they had conquered it. This meaning, the railroad spur from Williams, and the well-appointed El Tovar allowed the cultural symbolism of the era to meld with the appropriate level of amenity, creating an icon for Americans as well as one of the first easily reached national tourist destinations in the West.

Santa Fe, New Mexico, experienced a parallel transformation. Now considered a primary location for heritage tourism, the community barely escaped oblivion. The AT&SF bypassed it in the 1880s. Left outside the corridor created by the steel rails that drove western economic expansion, Santa Fe by 1900 appeared to be consigned to the scrapheap of western history. By 1910, despite some in-migration, its total population had decreased by more than twenty percent since 1880, leaving the town roughly eighty percent of the size it had been in 1817.<sup>10</sup>

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8. Hegemann, *Navaho Trading Days*, 13; J. Ross Eakin to Stephen T. Mather, June 11, 1924; Eakin to F. H. Bernard, April 4, 1924, Grand Canyon National Park, box 50, RG 79, NA; C. J. Birchfield, "First Airplane Landing at Bottom of the Grand Canon," *Santa Fe Magazine* (Oct. 1922), 17–20; "Fred Harvey Coat Rule Upheld by Oklahoma Supreme Court," *ibid.* (Oct. 1922), 29–32; Frank McNitt, *The Indian Traders* (Norman, 1962), 265–270.

9. Stephen J. Pyne, *Dutton's Point: An Illustrated History of the Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon, Ariz., 1978), 1–11.

10. Jerry I. Williams and Paul E. McAllister, *New Mexico in Maps* (Albuquerque, 1979), 104, provides population information for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Santa Fe; Oakah L. Jones, *Los Paisanos: Spanish Settlers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Norman, 1979), 117–129, provides earlier pop-



Marketed culture became economic salvation for Santa Fe, providing it with a growth industry at a time when few other options existed. Prior to 1910, Hispanos, Indians, and Anglos alike had used and overused the best grazing lands in the area. Agriculture in the region was marginal at best, and the quantity of minerals necessary to support a large-scale mining economy did not exist. Santa Fe's days as a commercial trading center ended when the railroad passed it by. Even late nineteenth-century tourists, expecting the amenities of the great hotels of that era, found it wanting.<sup>11</sup> Its future dim, the town faced the difficult realities common among communities without access to the corridors of connection that created easy links to the machined miracles of the twentieth century.

Edgar L. Hewett rescued Santa Fe. After being fired in 1903 from the presidency of New Mexico Normal School—now New Mexico Highlands University—in Las Vegas, New Mexico, Hewett moved to Santa Fe and began a career as a promoter of culture. His personal interest in archaeology and the fin de siècle discontent so aptly described by Henry Adams melded nicely. The prehistoric and Native American West became romanticized as the peripatetic Hewett found a new mission for his existence. After exploring the archaeology of the nearby Pajarito Plateau for a number of years and building ties with government officials, scholars in the emerging disciplines of anthropology and archaeology, and the business community, Hewett captured the Archaeological Institute of America's School of American Archaeology for Santa Fe in 1907. The location of the institute made Santa Fe far more attractive to the many visitors along the AT&SF's southern route; it seemed to link distance from the modern age with the convenience of the

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ulation figures. According to these sources, the 6,728 people in Santa Fe in 1817 roughly equaled the 1880 population of 6,635, but outnumbered the population of 1900 (5,603) and 1910 (5,072).

11. DeBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation*, 245–259; Hal Rothman, "Cultural and Environmental Change on the Pajarito Plateau, 1880–1910," *New Mexico Historical Review*, LXIV (1989), 185–212; Robert MacCameron, "Environmental Change in Colonial New Mexico," *Environmental History Review*, XVIII (1994), 17–40; Craig D. Allen, "Changes in the Landscape of the Jemez Mountains, New Mexico" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1989); Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 37; Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, and Suzanne Forrest, *Preservation of the Village* (Albuquerque, 1989).

railroad. An astute promoter who recognized the limits of the local economy, Hewett tied into the current that made pre-industrial experience important and created a marketable cultural heritage. Although the autocratic Hewett was always a controversial figure in Santa Fe, influential people such as attorney and legislator Frank Springer were consistent supporters. As the economic benefits of Hewett's activity became more apparent, the local business community followed him, recognizing that his energy and national ties provided it with something no one else in town possessed.<sup>12</sup>

For Hewett, the heritage he fashioned became a springboard to build a western center of culture as well as to enhance his growing but questionable reputation as the premier western archaeologist of the first decade of the century. With the help of friends such as self-taught archaeologist Jesse L. Nusbaum, writer Paul A. F. Walter, and artists Kenneth M. Chapman and Carlos Vierra, Hewett founded the Museum of New Mexico and the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, revived the Indian Market fair and the Santa Fe Fiesta, orchestrated the establishment of Bandelier National Monument in 1915, helped write the restrictive informal code that allowed Santa Fe to retain its now pseudohistoric character, developed the archaeological exhibits for the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1914–1916, and made Santa Fe into a town where the mythic and real were purposely indistinguishable.<sup>13</sup>

Finding in Hewett's Santa Fe the idyllic preindustrial vision they sought, artists and writers transformed the community they sought to embrace. By the late 1910s, an Anglo-American artistic community had emerged that attracted the attention of visitors and supplanted Santa Fe's primary economic attribute,

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12. The Edgar L. Hewett Papers, box 22, Museum of New Mexico History library, contain much of Hewett's correspondence on these matters. See also Beatrice Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends: A Biography of Santa Fe's Vibrant Era* (Santa Fe, 1983), 109–116; Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr., *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology, 1846–1910* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 231–256; Henry Adams, *The Education* (New York, 1931); T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York, 1981), describes the intellectual and cultural climate of opinion at the turn of the century.

13. Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends*, 63–174; see Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges*, 84–89, 95–104, 117–130, 150–152, for more on Hewett's personality and role in the cultural history of Santa Fe in the early twentieth century.

its status as territorial capital. Government patronage and its attendant corruption, long among the major industries in New Mexico, had been dispensed from there, but beginning with the arrival, first, of Chapman and Vierra and later Gerald Cassidy, the group called *Los Cinco Pintores*, Will Shuster, and many others, Hewett's cultural center had transformed the community into a destination for the upper middle-class, a place that served the needs of its visitors above its citizens. By 1925, the writer Mary Austin was firmly entrenched in her Camino del Monte Sol home, *La Casa Querida*, in which guests such as the pioneering photographer Ansel Adams stayed for extended periods. As more affluent and artistic visitors and residents came to Santa Fe, a change occurred that homogenized and mythologized a heritage that nineteenth-century Americans once found wicked.<sup>14</sup>

Santa Fe the icon became possible because the market economy and improving transportation networks brought people close enough to reach it but left them still far enough away to create the feeling of a trip back in time. Its creation was both innovation and response to the economic limits of the physical environment of northern New Mexico and resulted from the actions of a self-promoter with a vision of a certain kind of development. Its natural resource base could not have supported the kind of growth eventually engendered by the idea of the "City Different," an early twentieth-century appellation for the community. Although Hewett and his friends and enemies failed to anticipate the long-term change he caused, he quickly grasped that people outside of Santa Fe could provide the economic resources to transcend the typically western problems of the community: a lack of infrastructure, capital, and easily extracted natural resources to attract industry; its "foreignness" to early twentieth-century upper middle-class Anglo-Americans, and the absence of direct transportation. Without a visionary

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14. Howard R. Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846-1912: A Territorial History* (New York, 1970), 136-201; Arrell M. Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies: Age of the Muses, 1900-1942*, (Norman, 1983), 69-86, 199-217; Erna Fergusson, *New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples* (New York, 1971), 366-381; Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends*, 104-109; Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 37. For a comic view of the way many nineteenth-century Americans viewed Santa Fe, see Richard Allan Baker, *Conservation Politics: The Senate Career of Clinton P. Anderson* (Albuquerque, 1985), 15.

such as Hewett, the town would have more in common today with other small western state capitals than the Santa Fe of modern myth.

Santa Fe was different, and Edgar L. Hewett worked to keep it that way. He altered its economic and ultimately cultural identity because the main spur of the railroad passed it by. The distance from Lamby, the nearest AT&SF railroad stop about twenty miles from Santa Fe, provided the illusion of authenticity, something much in demand as industrial culture and its discontents spread. Hewett created the Santa Fe where people such as Mary Austin, Ansel Adams, and later, Georgia O'Keefe, who arrived in New Mexico to stay in 1929, felt comfortable. The wagon or auto ride from the train station in Lamby became part of the ambiance of a romantic niche in the modern world rather than the detriment it had been before culture took the town by storm. Its inconvenience became a symbol; by riding to Santa Fe in a wagon, modern people believed they left their culture of haste behind. Hewett helped make the aesthetic attributes of Santa Fe into utilitarian virtues. By 1925, because of the choices of a dynamic if obstreperous builder and his minuscule cabal, Santa Fe became what it is today—a state of mind.

## **II. Recreation Tourism**

Heritage tourism at places like Santa Fe and the Grand Canyon remained a key component of the western tourist economy, but the industry steadily diversified throughout the twentieth century by creating new forms of tourism. Recreation tourism, which attracts visitors to locales specifically designed around outdoor sports, has been particularly important in the American West. The ski industry is a good case in point. Utilizing eastern capital, entrepreneurs combined a European recreational sport, downhill skiing, with western locales to create a new kind of tourism. Yet, for all the apparent difference between the tourist experiences offered at scenic and historical sites and those typically encountered at ski resorts like Sun Valley, Idaho, recreation and heritage tourism share a similar pattern of economic development.

Sun Valley was by no means the first ski area in the West; it was only the first to have commercial recreation for a national

audience as its basis. Skiing had long been necessary for people at higher elevations. Since the Gold Rush of 1849 and the arrival of Scandinavian and Swiss immigrants, people traveled on what were then called "snowshoes" during winters at high elevation. Doctors relied on these long and clumsy accouterments to visit patients; midwives used them to reach expectant mothers. The mail was delivered on skis. Even census-takers had to ski. It was the only dependable form of winter transportation, but it could be dangerous. The death of Per Hansa in O. E. Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth* dramatized the hazards of skiing as a form of winter travel. Prowess at skiing was much respected, adding a recreational dimension to the utilitarian functions of the ski. In 1883, the first recorded ski competitions in Colorado were held at a mining camp called Irwin, near Crested Butte. A racing club existed at Crested Butte as early as 1886. In 1913, Steamboat Springs, Colorado, a summer resort and strawberry-growing center, initiated a winterfest that featured ski racing and ski jumping by the "flying Norseman," the famous Carl Howelsen, an international ski jump champion and attraction in the Barnum and Bailey Circus. In the days before paved roads and snowplows, the festival catered to often snow-bound locals.<sup>15</sup>

The popularity of skiing as a sport grew throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Skiing had long been a form of recreation in the East; during the 1920s it began to spread to residents of the West. Late in the 1920s, a local ski industry developed that targeted the people of Denver. At Mt. Rainier National Park outside of Seattle, Washington, a day-use ski area opened early in the 1930s, serving the people of Seattle, Tacoma, and the coastal Northwest. At Yosemite National Park, skiing became a major winter attraction. The National Park Service not only acquiesced to such developments, but also encouraged them. At Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood, Oregon, a similar endeavor serving Portland began. In 1932, "snow trains" first left Salt Lake City for the nearby Wasatch Front. Beginning in 1935,

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15. Charlie Meyers, *Colorado Ski Country* (Helena and Billings, 1987), 12–14, 49–50; Towler, *History of Skiing at Steamboat Springs*, 49; O. E. Rolvaag, *Giants in the Earth* (New York, 1927), 447–453. There is no comprehensive history of the ski industry to date; the closest is E. John B. Allen, *From Skisport to Skiing: One Hundred Years of an American Sport* (Amherst, N.H., 1993).

Denver and Salt Lake Railroad snow trains sponsored by the *Rocky Mountain News* regularly left Denver for weekend and week-long excursions to ski areas.<sup>16</sup>

By 1938, nearly every accessible place to ski in Colorado had train service, and trains carried more than 2,000 skiers to these nearby slopes. The construction of the Moffat Tunnel, which gave the nation an improved central rail route through the Rockies when it first opened in 1927, also made better skiing accessible. A group of skiers from Denver, the Colorado Arlberg Club, cut their own ski trails where the tunnel opened on the western side of the continental divide, a place that came to be known as West Portal. In 1937, Berthoud Pass, near the western opening of the tunnel, commenced operations and quickly became the best known ski area in the state. In Creede, Leadville, Telluride, and Colorado Springs, ski trails were cut and efforts to attract visitors began. A European count taught skiing to locals on the slopes of Pike's Peak, volunteers used their own axes to clear skiways at Arapahoe, and the recreational club of the Climax Molybdenum Corporation groomed the slopes at Leadville and paid for lighting. One newspaper, the *Leadville Herald Democrat*, asserted that skiing could revive old mining towns, but the nascent ski industry still served a largely local constituency.<sup>17</sup>

Pre-Sun Valley recreational skiing in the West had one primary problem: physical access. The nature of the sport demanded steep slopes and difficult terrain, but the infrastructure and technology to deliver people to such places in inclement weather remained limited. Even reaching the top of good skiing mountains could be difficult. Only the most avid would master the tortuous herringbone step necessary to ascend a hill on skis; for most this was too much work merely to enable them to ski down. Many ski centers lacked even rope

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16. Allen, *From Skisport to Skiing*, 1-37; Raymond Flower, *The History of Skiing and Other Winter Sports* (New York, 1977), 120. For Mount Rainier, see Theodore Catton, "Mount Rainier National Park Administrative History," draft manuscript (copy in possession of author), part V, sections 1.0-4.0 (pagination not yet available); and Linda Helleeson, "The History of Skiing in Mount Rainier National Park," 8-9, undated typescript, Mount Rainier National Park Library. See also Runte, *Yosemite*, 152-153; *Denver Post*, Dec. 1, 1929.

17. *Rocky Mountain News*, Dec. 18, 1938; *Silverton Standard*, Nov. 26, 1937, Dec. 8, 1939; *Pueblo Star Journal and Chieftain*, Nov. 7, 1937; *Leadville Herald Democrat*, March 26, 1938, Oct. 26, 1939; *Routt National Forest, Colorado* (Denver, 1941); Meyers, *Colorado Ski Country*, 13.

tows, relying instead on boats or pontoons pulled by tractors to bring skiers to the hilltop. Two runs from top to bottom in a day was considered the maximum to expect, sufficient for an enthusiast but hardly enough for a vacationer experimenting with a new form of recreation. The Moffat Tunnel created a corridor of access to fine ski terrain, but inventing the amenities that could turn a backwoods experience into something resembling the desires of affluent travelers was expensive and time-consuming.

Nor did physically taxing outdoor exercise mesh well with the values of the wealthy of the 1920s and 1930s. The culture of much of the nation had a different orientation. The abundance of wealth in cold northern cities and the sophisticated travel infrastructure, advertising industry, and climate made Florida a major destination. Industrialists, civic leaders, and gangsters all spent winters in Miami, leading to a huge resort industry there as well as an iconography that isolated western skiing as a regional phenomenon. With extant slopes in the East, western day-use areas near major cities attracted few visitors from outside the region.<sup>18</sup>

National rail lines and the dollars that supported them had the ability to change that. W. Averell Harriman, the head of the Union Pacific Railroad, sought to create a national attraction of skiing in the American West. Less an enthusiast than a businessman, Harriman wanted to increase passenger traffic on his rail line. The popularity of skiing in the aftermath of the 1932 Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, New York, offered a mechanism. Skiing had a strong hold on the icy slopes of the Northeast. For affluent Americans, and particularly for their college-age youngsters, skiing as recreation became an important part of social life. Dartmouth College with its famous coach, Otto Schiebs, regularly had the best collegiate skiing team in the nation. At places such as Killington, Vermont, the popularity of skiing grew after 1932, but Harriman's rail lines were closer to western slopes than to the already crowded hills of the East. He

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18. Jakle, *The Tourist*, 59–61; Horace Sutton, *Travelers: The American Tourist from Stagecoach to Space Shuttle* (New York, 1980), 225–228; Polly Redford, *Billion-Dollar Sandbar: A Biography of Miami Beach* (New York, 1970); National Park Service, "Park Conservation: A Report on Park and Outdoor Recreational Resources in the United States for the Secretary of the Interior" (Jan. 28, 1946), 40–41, copy in possession of the author.

sought to invent a place that was far enough from western cities and close enough to the main line of his railroad to capitalize on captive regional populations and assure a healthy passenger trade in the winter.

Located in the Wood River Valley at the base of the Sawtooth Mountains, the little town of Ketchum, Idaho, had no future when representatives of the Union Pacific arrived to assess its potential as a ski resort in November 1935. During the 1880s, silver mining had created a brief heyday for the community. With thirteen saloons and a general store, its population reached 2,000, dwindling over the following fifty years to the approximately 270 who resided there in the 1930s. As many as could "went out," leaving for warmer places during the winter. A small, open valley, less than a mile from Ketchum's Main Street, protected from fierce north winds and surrounded by the treeless slopes of the mountains at its edges, offered an ideal location. Harriman bought nearly 4,000 acres from a local rancher who had lost his cattle to poisonous larkspur and his sheep to the plummeting prices of the depression.<sup>19</sup>

With the place selected, Harriman set out to create a national image. He hired a public relations specialist, Steve Hannagan, whose previous accomplishment was the development of the mythic Miami Beach for the northeastern public. On a spectacular sunny day in March 1936, Hannagan found himself sweating in the snow of Ketchum and promptly renamed the area "Sun Valley." Harriman had planned a medium-sized hotel, but Hannagan returned to New York bursting with plans for a million-dollar luxury hotel where the famous and wealthy would become part of the spectacle. The public relations specialist bombarded Americans with the image of a young man, muscular, handsome, and stripped to the waist, skiing through the powdery snow of Sun Valley. Although the advertisement was photographed in a Manhattan studio, it represented the ambience that Hannagan sought to promote as Sun Valley. The 250-room lodge, built to rival the chalets of the Swiss Alps, was

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19. Dorice Taylor, *Sun Valley* (Sun Valley, 1980), 39–52; Rudy Abramson, *Spanning the Century: The Life of W. Averell Harriman, 1891–1986* (New York, 1992), 221–233; Carlos A. Schwantes, *In Mountain Shadows: A History of Idaho* (Lincoln, 1991), 210–214; Rodman W. Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1840–1880* (New York, 1963), 144–149.



filled for the grand opening in December 1936. Errol Flynn, Robert Young, Melvyn Douglas, Claudette Colbert, David O. Selznick, and numerous other celebrities attended the affair, dining on an exquisite menu of Brioche au Caviar, Supreme of Sole au Champagne, and Tourenedos Saute Chatelaine. A lack of snow almost halted the festivities, but when it fell on New Year's Eve, Sun Valley became the Saint-Moritz of the U.S.<sup>20</sup>

Harriman and Hannagan effectively fused two different kinds of ethos in tourism. The Sun Valley Lodge was designed as a rustic version of the great nineteenth-century hotels that so attracted the affluent of that time. The purpose of the resort—skiing—fit the emerging value placed on recreation and supported by the infatuation that swept the nation in the aftermath of the 1932 Winter Olympics. Two dominant impulses in tourism, the upper-class desire for outstanding amenities and the increasingly upper-middle class and regional interest in skiing as outdoor recreation, came together in the new resort at Sun Valley.

The image of Sun Valley received crucial authentication with the appearance of Ernest Hemingway. In September 1939, he arrived with his companion Martha Gellhorn, staying two months and returning in each of the subsequent two years to hunt and fish. Harriman recognized the importance of a persona such as Hemingway. When he found that Hemingway moved from a suite at the main lodge to the less expensive Challenger Inn at the start of the 1939 ski season, Harriman brought him back at no charge to the suite with the patio where Hemingway reviewed the galley proofs of his masterpiece, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.<sup>21</sup> Hemingway embodied the image Harriman sought to promote.

As Harriman executed his plan in Idaho, a group that included Billy Fiske, who carried the American flag at the Lake Placid Winter Olympics and won the gold medal in the bobsled races, and a native Aspenite named Thomas J. Flynn attempted a similar project near the old mining town of Aspen, Colorado.

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20. "East Goes West to Idaho's Sun Valley, Society's Newest Winter Playground," *Life* (March 8, 1937), 20–27; *Rocky Mountain News*, Feb. 9, 1986, p. 72; Taylor, *Sun Valley* 45–46; Abramson, *Spanning the Century*, 222–230; A. Scott Berg, *Goldwyn: A Biography* (New York, 1989), 287.

21. Lloyd R. Arnold, *Hemingway: High on the Wild* (New York, 1968), 1–33; Abramson, *Spanning the Century*, 225–230.

Aspen had been in decline since the silver panic of 1893, and locals sought a basis for revival. During the 1920s, one effort advertised Aspen as a summer vacationland. It offered an economical playground where a visitor could see "the majestic wonders of our ageless sentinels." The Forest Service had even established a primitive area (the service's designation for wilderness during the 1920s) in the nearby mountains, but few people came for what at the time was an extreme form of recreation. Despite attempts to promote it, Aspen failed to develop.<sup>22</sup>

These entrepreneurs envisioned a future for Aspen similar to the one Harriman produced for Sun Valley. They hired Swiss avalanche expert Andre Roch to help design a ski trail at Highland Slopes, halfway between Aspen and nearby Ashcroft. Believing that streamliners, the new trains of the 1930s, would make Aspen an overnight trip from Chicago, the men named their hotel the Highland-Bavarian Lodge, installed a 1,600-foot tow rope, and planned a tramway, called a "teleferique," to the top of nearby Mt. Hayden.<sup>23</sup>

Despite having a vision that mirrored Harriman's, the Aspenites had begun to market their town before the infrastructure necessary to support their endeavor existed. Tourists could reach Denver by train, but getting from there to the distant Aspen area remained a chore while ski areas closer to Denver were more easily accessible. The constituency for this incarnation of

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22. *Spend Your Vacation in Colorful Aspen Colorado* (N.p., ca. 1927), promotional brochure, Aspen Clippings, 1920–1929, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; Harold K. Steen, *The United States Forest Service: A History* (Seattle, 1976), 153–156, 158–159; Donald C. Swain, *Federal Conservation Policy, 1921–1933* (Berkeley, 1963), 137–138. For a history of the mining boom in Aspen, see Malcolm J. Rohrbaugh, *Aspen: The History of a Silver Mining Town, 1879–1893* (New York, 1986); for a history of the so-called "quiet years," see Anne M. Gilbert, "Rural People with Connections: Farm and Ranch Families in the Roaring Fork Valley, Colorado" (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1992).

23. Robert Benchley, "How to Ski Aspen," Aspen Clippings, 1930–1939, subject file, Denver Public Library; *Gunnison News-Champion*, Dec. 2, 1937; Robert Athearn, *The Denver and Rio Grande Western: Rebel of the Rockies* (Lincoln, 1977), 158–164; F. Martin Brown, "Let's Aspen," n. d., F1, Thomas Flynn Papers, Denver Public Library; "Highland-Bavarian Lodge, Highland, Colorado," *ibid.*; *Denver Post*, April 4, 1937; *Aspen Times*, April 14, 1938. For the history of streamliners, see Jeffrey L. Meikle, *Twentieth-Century Limited: Industrial Design in America, 1925–1939* (Philadelphia, 1979); Thomas Flynn to W. C. Tagert, Jan. 14, 1936(?), June 5, 1938; Flynn to K. G. Fuller, Dec. 8, 1938; Flynn to William S. Biddle, Dec. 12, 1938, all in FF24, Flynn Papers.

Aspen was a fringe group within the skiing community. Few Americans in the 1930s possessed the skill to match the Europeans who devised places such as Ashcroft. The remote location of the resort limited the chances of economic success. Although Aspen capitalized on Roch's presence and hosted the 1941 National Downhill and Slalom Races, it continued to lack the features of a national tourist destination.<sup>24</sup>

Accessibility and capital explained the differences in the fates of Aspen and Sun Valley. In the 1930s, Sun Valley had both; Aspen, neither. Harriman had transcended the problem of access. He picked a place he knew could only be reached through the infrastructure he controlled. Despite the fact that Sun Valley was farther from major cities than Aspen was from Denver, Harriman could assure efficient transportation to and from his pet project. His wealth and the proximity of the mainline of the Union Pacific made the creation of his resort relatively easy. Identified with celebrities in the public mind, Sun Valley developed an iconography and economy that transcended transportation revolutions and fostered the democratization of outdoor winter sports that followed World War II. Americans wanted to partake of the experience they saw on the slopes of Sun Valley. After World War II, visitors who came by automobile quickly exceeded those arriving on the Union Pacific, and ski resorts sprang up all over the West, but Sun Valley retained the special cultural meaning that came from being first.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast, Aspen floundered. The community was too far from Denver and transportation to it was undependable. The project was undercapitalized, and successive efforts to raise money failed. Skiing in Colorado continued to be locally based. Despite the more than 70,000 people who skied in Colorado in 1938–1939 and a boom in ski areas between 1939 and 1942, when Monarch, Winter Park, Wolf Creek, Ski Cooper, and the now defunct Pioneer opened, Aspen lacked the major financing necessary for success. It was also on the wrong side

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24. Meyers, *Colorado Ski Country*, 13, 54; Verna Noel Jones, "Downhill in Colorado: From Boat Tows to High Speed Lifts," *Rocky Mountain News Sunday Magazine* (Nov. 13, 1988), 17M–19M; *Aspen Times*, April 6, 1939; "Colorado Rockies Unsurpassed as Skiing Territory," *Western Nyheter*, Dec. 21, 1939.

25. Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965), 366–367; Runte, *National Parks*, 156–177; Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 209–211.

of the mountains and too far from populations that could ski closer to home. No certain way to get visitors to the area existed, and when they arrived, there were few amenities. The partners in the venture correctly recognized that Aspen needed a national constituency. They lacked the means to assure that those people arrived at their mountain in a timely, comfortable manner.<sup>26</sup>

Following World War II, the importance of the western tourist industry dramatically increased. The war had deprived Americans of most opportunities for nonmilitary travel but it had also allowed them to improve their financial status. In the war's aftermath, more widespread distribution of wealth gave greater numbers of people the means to travel at a time when previously inaccessible places were more easily reached as a result of new and better roads. The Grand Canyon experienced a harbinger of this change when visitation totals reached new highs in the fall of 1945 as discharged military personnel and war-industry workers made their way home. Americans had more disposable income and larger amounts of vacation time, and the increase in visitation to the West in the immediate post-war era reflected these changes. A combination of affluence, pent-up demand for leisure after more than a fifteen-year lean period, and new fashions heightened the importance of tourism.<sup>27</sup>

The aftermath of the war played a major role in the advent of skiing as an economically significant industry in the West. Although only about 10,000 Americans were avid skiers in 1935, by 1945, more than 200,000 nationwide had experienced the sport. They were determined to continue to enjoy it as a form of recreation. Western ski areas particularly benefitted. In-

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26. *Leadville Herald Democrat*, Oct. 26, 1939; Verna Noel Jones, "Downhill in Colorado," 17M-19M.

27. Monthly Reports, Grand Canyon National Park, Aug., Sept., and Oct., 1945, all in series 7, Grand Canyon, RG 79, NA; Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sun Belt: Las Vegas, 1930-1970* (Reno, 1989); Eric Goldman, *The Crucial Decade—and After: America, 1945-1960* (New York, 1960), 4-5, 12-15; Jakle, *The Tourist*, 185-198; Bernard DeVoto, "The National Parks," *Fortune*, XXXV (1947), 120-121; DeVoto, "Let's Close the National Parks," *Harper's Magazine*, CCVII (1953), 49-52; Robert D. Baker, Robert S. Maxwell, Victor H. Treat, and Henry C. Dethloff, *Timeless Heritage: A History of the Forest Service in the Southwest* (Washington, D.C., 1988), 59-68, 131-133; Foresta, *American National Parks*, 50-55.

creased leisure and money to spend as well as tremendous growth in western population helped expand the number of skiers. Numerous postwar ski instructors had been associated with the 10th Mountain Division, the cadre of American ski troops that trained at Camp Hale, Colorado, about two hours drive from Aspen. A veteran of the ski corps, Frank Bulkley, returned from military service in 1945 to restart his Eskimo Ski Club in Denver, which taught ten- to sixteen-year-olds the fundamentals of skiing. He became one of the most well-known of a burgeoning group who tutored novices. Surplus military equipment made skiing economically accessible, and the industry boomed throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, albeit in the reversible olive drab/white parkas of the military. By 1953, Colorado sported more than 200,000 skiers annually at its nine resorts.<sup>28</sup>

At the end of the war, skiing still presented problems for potential entrepreneurs. Besides physical access, it depended on inclement weather, required a large initial investment, usually took place on land leased from federal agencies such as the Forest Service or the new Bureau of Land Management, and was limited at best to six months of the year. As a seasonal industry, it mirrored historic problems in the western economy. Weather conditions and problems of access limited the profits for owners and stockholders as well as employment possibilities for locals. Building an economy on a seasonal industry, particularly one dependent on the vagaries of the weather, remained difficult.

In the post-World War II era, Aspen solved its capital and access problems as it combined features of recreational and heritage tourism at the precise moment that the popularity of skiing mushroomed and growing numbers of Americans had the time and money to experiment with a venture in a remote

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28. H. Benjamin Duke, Jr., "Skiing Soldiers to Skiing Entrepreneurs: Development of the Western Ski Industry," 8–9, typescript, H. Benjamin Duke, Jr., Vail Associates Collection, Denver Public Library; *Ski News*, Dec. 1, 1945; Jones, "Downhill in Colorado," 17M; "Skiing Then and Now," *Overland News*, I (1958), 1–2; Runte, *National Parks*, 156–177; Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 123–130, 145–151; John Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992), 14–33; Gerald D. Nash, *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (Lincoln, 1990); Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson, 1993), 3–31.

location. After the war, a number of veterans of the 10th Mountain Division, including Peter Seibert and Steven Knowlton, both of whom later emerged as leaders of the Colorado ski industry, became "ski bums" in Aspen. As soldiers at nearby Camp Hale, they had become acquainted with Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley and thought it a fine place to spend a few years. Soon the two sought to develop a resort, but lacked capital for development.<sup>29</sup>

Chicago industrialist Walter Paepcke, head of the Container Corporation of America, solved that problem, turning Aspen into a unique modern resort. He and his wife Elizabeth had deep interest in culture as well as sport. Visiting the area in 1939 when, according to local legend, there was only one electric light in the town, the couple recognized the potential of Aspen as a summer camp for humanistic studies in music, literature, and the arts. The Paepckes listened to the urging of Freidl Pfeiffer, an Austrian who had been the assistant manager of the Sun Valley Ski School and had helped train the 10th Mountain Division, and funded a ski resort as well. Pfeiffer brought more veterans of the 10th to Aspen, while Walter Paepcke's funds strung the first chairlifts on Ajax Mountain in 1946. By the beginning of 1947, the longest chairlift in the world, which covered 14,000 feet in two sections, had begun operation, and Paepcke's Aspen Ski Company had been founded.<sup>30</sup>

The idea of a year-round resort in the mountains, offering different kinds of experiences in summer and winter, was a far-sighted attempt to counter one of the long-standing problems of northern tourist destinations: the winter. Aspenites had been aware of the need for twelve-month recreation since the early 1940s. The Pitkin County brochure for 1940-1941 trumpeted "year-round recreation" with, for the first time, a stronger emphasis on skiing than on summer education and

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29. Duke, "Skiing Soldiers," 10-12; Jones, "Downhill in Colorado," 17M; "Skiing Then and Now," 1-2.

30. Duke, "Skiing Soldiers," 9; Bill Sonn, "The Life and Times of Aspen," *Colorful Colorado Magazine*, XII (1977), 6-10, 72-73; James Sloan Allen, *The Romance of Commerce and Culture: Capitalism, Modernism and the Chicago-Aspen Crusade for Cultural Reform* (Chicago, 1983).

recreation. Paepcke's summer institute opened in 1949 with a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Göethe. It featured lectures by Albert Schweitzer and Thornton Wilder and music by Arthur Rubinstein and Gregor Piatagorsky, but the real future of the resort was its winter activity. Aspen hosted the World Ski Championships in 1950, the second time such an event had occurred there and an indication of impending transformation.<sup>31</sup>

Although in the late 1950s Aspen was known for its combination of lectures, music, and skiing, winter sports became dominant. The Winter Olympics in 1960 at Squaw Valley, California, again catapulted skiing to the forefront of American winter recreation. Colorado skiing was at the apex; in 1968–1969, more than 2,300,000 lift tickets were sold in the state. The Aspen Ski Company accounted for 653,303 of those, nearly double the number sold at the next leading resort, Vail. This growth ultimately supplanted the high culture that Paepcke encouraged, changing the feel of Aspen from that of a cultural center to an anti-intellectual athletic resort where parties became the primary activity. The shift was so complete that in 1975, the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, the rubric for Paepcke's summer institute, moved its headquarters to Maryland. By then, Gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson's appearance on the local scene and his candidacy for sheriff as well as the rise of John Denver and his "Rocky Mountain High" had so transformed the iconography of Aspen that a high culture headquarters there made little sense. By the late 1980s the last vestiges of Paepcke's vision had been overwhelmed, as Aspen's self-proclaimed role as the "benchmark for deep thought in high places" was threatened by the upscale boom that resulted from the appeal of the area to the wealthy and the fashionable. Steve Martin, Don Henley, and Jack Nicholson were among the

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31. *Pitkin County: Year-Round Playground* (N.p., 1940), promotional brochure, Aspen Clippings, 1940–1949, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; Aspen Chamber of Commerce, *Beethoven, the Brown Hackle, and the Schuss* (N.p., 1949), promotional brochure, *ibid.*; *Pueblo Chieftain*, Feb. 4, 1968, 5C, pp. 1–5; Meyers, *Colorado Ski Country*, 38; Jones, "Downhill in Colorado," 18M–19M; Luke Short, "Nightmare in Lace Pants," *Denver Post Empire Magazine* (Oct. 22, 1950); Duke, "Skiing Soldiers," 10.

many celebrities who had joined John Denver by then. Even Donald Trump sought to make Aspen his own. The town had become a "wealthy campus town" in the most pejorative sense.<sup>32</sup>

### III. Entertainment Tourism

As western tourism evolved in the postwar era from an affirmation of cultural nationalism for the privileged into an industry offering leisure to the vast and expanding middle class, new forms of tourism emerged. The growth in population and employment opportunities in the postwar era, technological innovations such as air travel and air-conditioning, and the rise of a society that placed a premium on leisure and had the discretionary income to fund that obsession helped inaugurate a new phase that can be labeled entertainment tourism. In the post-1945 United States, tourist travel acquired the status of a national birthright, and the changing modes of transportation and accommodation made all its forms accessible to a broader range of people than ever before. The West became a playground, the American dreamscape, historic, mythic and actual, spawning a complex industry with the ability to invent places such as Disneyland and to transform places such as Las Vegas, Nevada as well as to create a new economy for destitute and flourishing communities alike.<sup>33</sup>

With the construction of the Flamingo Hotel in 1945 on

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32. *Rocky Mountain News*, March 12, 1978, Sept. 4, 1988; *New York Times*, March 2, 1975; *Denver Post*, Jan. 20, 1963; Colorado Ski Country USA, *Lift Tickets Issued* (N.p., ca. 1972), Steven Knowlton Collection, Denver Public Library; Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and David McComb, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State* (Niwot, Colo., 1982), 317; Meyers, *Colorado Ski Country*, 43.

33. Thomas R. Cox, *The Park Builders: A History of State Parks in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle, 1988); Cox, "Before the Casino: James G. Scrugham, State Parks, and Nevada's Quest for Tourism," *Western Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (1993), 333–350; Warren J. Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 129–173; U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *America's Highways, 1776–1976: A History of the Federal Aid Program* (Washington, D.C., 1977); Jakle, *The Tourist*, 123–125; Michael Wallis, *Route 66: The Mother Road* (New York, 1990); Quinta Scott and Susan Croce Kelly, *Route 66* (Norman, 1988); Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York, 1991). There had been federal efforts to pave roads across western states prior to the New Deal. The Federal Highway Act of 1916 allowed for a 50–50 split between state and federal funds; the Highway Act of 1921 changed the ratio to 84–16, and the Oddie-Colten Highway Act of 1927 had the federal government paying all of the cost across federal lands and Indian reservations.



what is now "The Strip," Las Vegas became the first community to capitalize on improving transportation to create a truly national form of entertainment tourism. In this process a pseudowestern amusement palace that featured legalized gambling as part of the wide-open nature of the supposedly institution-free "Old West" reinvented itself as an emblem of the leisure and prosperity created by the great economic aberration of the post-World War II era. Between 1945 and 1973, a larger proportion of Americans did better economically than at any time before or since. At the same time, the Sun Belt emerged, adding population at a rapid rate and mirroring the economic practices and social and cultural conditions of the rest of the nation. Two East Coast mobsters, Meyer Lansky, who kept the books for organized crime, and Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, who spent much time in Florida and California, recognized this potential. Predicated on the expansion of air travel and aided by the spread of air conditioning, an increasingly common feature of American life by the late 1940s, the two erased a past founded on the premise of eschewing morality in the context of the "Old West" and made Las Vegas into a national center of leisure and pleasure.

Las Vegas owed its initial growth to the development of infrastructure and federal spending. In 1910, shortly after the arrival of the railroad, the population of Las Vegas stood at 945. In the 1920s, it lost its role as division point and regional center for the railroad to nearby Caliente as punishment for the support locals offered the national railroad strike in 1922. Then the passage of the Boulder Dam Act in 1928 led to a sixfold increase in population by 1930. The combination of the dam project and the legalization of gambling in 1931 changed the orientation of the town. In 1933 alone, more than 200,000 visitors combined a trip to see the dam with a visit to Las Vegas. The Nevada divorce industry also offered lucrative economic possibilities with its six-week residency requirement.<sup>34</sup> Las Vegans began to see visitors as a basis of the local economy.

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34. John M. Findlay, *People of Chance: Gambling in American Society from Jamestown to Las Vegas* (New York, 1986), 111–116; Moehring, *Las Vegas*, 41, 68; Richard Lilliard, *Desert Challenge: An Interpretation of Nevada* (New York, 1942), 335–376; Russell R. Elliott with William D. Rowley, *History of Nevada* (2d. ed., Lincoln, 1987), 284–285; Glenda Riley, *Divorce: An American Tradition* (New York, 1991), 135–144. For a community study of another "division point" on a railroad, see Paxton P. Price, "The Railroad, Rincon, and the River," *New Mexico Historical Review*, LXV (1990), 437–454.

The completion of Hoover Dam in 1935 presented the town with a problem of immense proportions. Accustomed to the impact of the paychecks of construction workers, the town faced the prospect of finding a new source of revenue. Visitors seemed the most likely remedy. The dam remained the best feature that southern Nevada had to offer. Las Vegasans saw their town as the "Gateway to the World's Greatest Engineering Project" as well as a symbol of the western past. In a place that conceived of itself as, in the phrase of the chamber of commerce, "Still a Frontier Town," western festivals, horsemen in the streets, and miners and their mules in hotel lobbies reflected an image of an open, pre-railroad past that accentuated traditional western values. Gambling was part of the matrix, but not always one of the central features in local promotional activities.<sup>35</sup>

Municipal reform in Los Angeles stimulated the growth of gambling in Nevada. In the late 1930s, the reform-oriented administration of Mayor Fletcher Bowron drove gambling underground, and some operators relocated across the mountains to southern Nevada. These included a former Los Angeles Police Department vice division captain turned gambling entrepreneur, Guy McAfee, and gambler Tony Cornero, who had run floating casinos off the coast of California until they were shut down. Such individuals were crucial to the expanded importance of gaming in southern Nevada. Only illegal operators had the kind of expertise in casino management that the growing industry required. Their arrival in southern Nevada was a precursor of a change in the way that the city packaged its attributes.<sup>36</sup>

The construction of the first resort hotel in Las Vegas was another harbinger. Lured by developer Robert Griffith and car dealer James Cashman, Californian Thomas Hull added a new hotel to his holdings, which included the Bellview in San Francisco, the Mayfair in Los Angeles, and the El Rancho chain. De-

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35. Findlay, *People of Chance*, 115–117; Alan Hess, *Viva Las Vegas: After-Hours Architecture* (San Francisco, 1993), 14–26.

36. Findlay, *People of Chance*, 122–126; Moehring, *Las Vegas*, 42–43; Perry Kaufman, "The Best City of Them All: A History of Las Vegas, 1930–1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1974), 189–190.

signed by Los Angeles architect Wayne McAllister, the Las Vegas hotel, called the El Rancho, contained expansive gardens and a large swimming pool, a rustic-looking casino and restaurant, the Opera House Showroom, and a few shops when it opened in April 1941. The first resort in town, it offered Las Vegas its initial opportunity to draw the kind of clientele that came naturally to places such as Sun Valley.<sup>37</sup>

Hull added one little twist to his new resort: he built it beyond the city limits in an area that Guy McAfee later called the "Strip." Hull desired more space than he was willing to pay for within the city limits and also wanted to be free of what he regarded as the onerous local tax burden. He also served as a promoter for the area, convincing others in the hotel business to follow him onto the highway south of town. In 1942, the Last Frontier opened about a mile south of the El Rancho; in 1947, it added the Last Frontier Village, an historic recreation of the western past a decade before Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm began to experiment with similar concepts. Despite the timeliness of the idea of a resort, the El Rancho and the Last Frontier, as well as most of the hotels built downtown during the first half of the 1940s, continued the Old West theme. In 1944, civic leaders sought legislation to assure that all new buildings built downtown would conform to this pattern, indicating a continuing ambivalence about gambling as the primary attraction of the town that its visitors clearly did not share.<sup>38</sup>

The ingredients were in place before Lansky and Siegel thought to fashion them into a resort with national appeal. The extension of gambling beyond the city limits, the idea of resort hotels, and the desire to appeal to a wealthy clientele were all evident before the construction of the Flamingo Hotel. Missing was the vision of a national constituency, access to capital that could support such widespread development, and the concept of a place that transcended regional themes. Siegel's hotel re-

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37. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sun Belt*, 43-44; *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 4, 1941; George Stamos, "The Great Resorts of Las Vegas and How They Began," *Las Vegas Sun Magazine* (April 1, 1979), 6-10; Hess, *Viva Las Vegas*, 26-32; Kaufman, "The Best City," 170-172.

38. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sun Belt*, 44-46; Findlay, *People of Chance*, 124-128; Hess, *Viva Las Vegas*, 32-33; Findlay, *Magic Lands*, 27-28, 65-70.

solved these issues by creating a resort to serve the modern luxury traveler. He envisioned a place that would impress people such as Cecil B. DeMille and that would, in Lansky's words, take a "dinky, horrible, little oasis town . . . [and build] the greatest, most luxurious hotel casino in the world."<sup>39</sup> Using underworld financing to attract a free-spending clientele, Las Vegas could transcend the limits of the local and regional economy as well as inherent limitations in vision.

When the Flamingo opened in half-finished form in December 1946, it instantly became the finest place in town, attracting a fashionable constituency that had previously eschewed the town. Although the hotel portion of the complex was not yet complete, the resort set a new standard in Las Vegas. Its architecture mirrored the modern styles developing in Los Angeles. The casino embodied the opulence of Monte Carlo, while the hotel, which first opened in March 1947, reflected the ambiance of Miami Beach. The 105 rooms were lavish; the grounds contained a three-story waterfall and beautiful landscaping replete with exotic trees; and the staff wore tuxedos. The building was even air-conditioned. Jimmy Durante headed the opening night bill. Comics Abbott and Costello were the first act to play in the completed Flamingo.<sup>40</sup> Such celebrities had never before visited the dusty desert town, and they put the finishing touches on the first of many new Las Vegases.

The combination of capital and vision was more prescient than even Siegel could have realized. As Las Vegas evolved from rest stop to destination on the Los Angeles highway, a greater transformation was on the way. The town became a distillation of postwar California culture and a combination of fun, sun, and opportunity that drove the state and eventually national popular culture. Las Vegas created a national clientele that awaited the next advance in access, when air travel could whisk visitors to an entirely different world of leisure. As Las Vegas grew, it increasingly offered a middle-class clientele the potential of a luxury experience.

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39. Uri Dan, Dennis Eisenberg, and Eli Landau, *Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob* (New York, 1979); Peter Wiley and Robert Gottlieb, *Empires in the Sun: The Rise of the New American West* (New York, 1982), 191.

40. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sun Belt*, 47–49; Findlay, *People of Chance*, 163–164; Hess, *Viva Las Vegas*, 38–46; Wiley and Gottlieb, *Empires in the Sun*, 191.

The key to this new form of tourism was the jet airplane. Particularly before World War II, propeller planes provided a dependable if ponderous mode of transportation. The frequent stops required by such aircraft made communities such as Columbus, Oklahoma City, and Wichita central in air travel; post-1960 jet engine travel obliterated that importance. Passengers from everywhere crowded flights to Las Vegas.<sup>41</sup> In the same manner that streamlined trains brought visitors overnight to the slopes of Colorado and Idaho, Las Vegas fell within the reach of millions. People from throughout the country and the world could enjoy this city of illusions.

The new form of accessibility changed the demography of visitation to Las Vegas. Before 1960, Californians predominated, making up between sixty-five and seventy-five percent of visitors. The opening of the new domed terminal at McCarran Airport in 1962 reflected the impact of jet travel and highlighted the broadened geographic reach of Las Vegas. Although Californians made up an enormous proportion of automobile visitation, ranging from a high of 90.3 percent in 1963 to a more typical 58 percent in 1978 and 60 percent in 1980, as a percentage of total visitation, Californians peaked in the late 1950s. With the ease of air travel, auto visitation declined as a percentage of the total. By the 1970s, midwesterners comprised the majority of Las Vegas visitors, with Californians slipping to as little as thirty percent. The appeal of Las Vegas had become truly national.<sup>42</sup>

The corporate takeover of the gaming industry in the

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41. Kenneth Hudson, *Air Travel: A Social History* (Totowa, N.J., 1980); Sutton, *Travelers*, 247–260; Jakle, *The Tourist*, 176–184.

42. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sun Belt*, 238. Findlay, *People of Chance*, 134, 137, 138–139, suggests that Las Vegas “amounted to little more than another subdivision of metropolitan Los Angeles” because before 1960 “Southern Californians amounted to between three-fifths and three-fourths of all visitors to Las Vegas,” while also arguing that Las Vegas “demonstrat[ed] its nationwide popularity” in the same time period as the “futuristic strip captured the imaginations of Americans.” By the 1970s, Californians and the westerners made up a significantly smaller percentage of Las Vegas visitors. The lowest years for California visitation were 1979, when approximately thirty-one percent of visitors reported Golden State addresses, and 1988 when the total was twenty-nine percent. See Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Las Vegas Visitor Profile Study* (Las Vegas, 1975–1990); Nevada State Highway Department, *Nevada Out-of-State Visitor Survey* (Carson City, Nev., 1963).

1970s added a new dimension to tourism in Las Vegas. After 1967, when the Corporate Gaming Act passed at the behest of Howard Hughes, and 1969, when it was revised, corporations could invest in casinos without each stockholder passing a background check. With the advent of so-called "junk bonds" during the 1970s, the capital available in the gaming industry increased dramatically. Changing mores in the nation contributed to a climate in which gaming was seen less as a vice than as a legitimate recreational activity. The number of people who participated in gaming grew as corporatization removed some of the stigma of organized crime from the lucrative industry.<sup>43</sup>

In the late 1980s, the spread of gaming to other locales and the decline of the California economy threatened the hegemony that Las Vegas enjoyed over this important form of tourism. The challenge began with the renovation of Atlantic City as a gambling town in the late 1970s and was bolstered by the popularity of dog tracks, horse racing, jai alai, state lotteries, and other forms of wagering. Gambling ceased to be considered a moral deficiency as more and more destitute state and local governments saw the industry as a source of revenue. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 allowed Native Americans to operate casinos in a variety of settings, providing another potential competitor for Las Vegas.<sup>44</sup>

Las Vegas had always contained more than just casinos. Many of its visitors came for the spectacle as much as for the gambling, and the impresarios of the industry offered innovations to attract a broader audience. Even the Strip expanded beyond "high rollers," the heavy gamblers who had been its mainstay in the period following World War II, and sought to attract a middle-class clientele. In the late 1960s, the Circus Circus

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43. Spanier, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*, 35–38, 95–96, 135–166; Elliott, *History of Nevada*, 333–336; Moehring, *Resort City in the Sun Belt*, 86–87, 243–244. Most who work in the hotel and casino industry attribute their high wages to unionization. Even non-unionized resorts pay well; owners and managers are often prepared to pay higher than union scale and to offer more benefits to keep unions out. Interviews with Joyce Marshall, Oct. 23, 1993; Robert Guebard, Nov. 22, 1993; Cathleen Dooley Loucks, Nov. 18, 1993; and Paul Schmitt, Nov. 17, 1993. See also *Las Vegas Review Journal*, May 12, 1989.

44. Findlay, *People of Chance*, 142–143, 201–202, 205–208; David Rich Lewis, "Still Native: The Significance of Native Americans in the History of the Twentieth-Century West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (1993), 215; "Indian Gaming: Law and Legislation," *NARF Legal Review*, X (1985), 1–5; *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 5, 1991.

Casino added a new dimension with its emphasis on entertainment for a younger crowd. Although the initial owner, Jay J. Sarno, who previously built Caesars Palace, lost money, the place had flair. A baby elephant walked the aisles, pulling slot machine levers for customers. Slides and firepoles took customers from the midway, where Orangutan acts were among the attractions, to the casino floor. One former employee remembered that a major issue at the casino was keeping the smell of the Orangutans out of the hallways. When Sarno sold the operation in 1974, its new owners, William Bennett and William Pennington, recognized the appeal of a family vacation resort with gambling. Circus Circus went from a "playhouse for adults" to a "themed destination resort for families," adding a new dimension to the myriad attractions of Las Vegas. They decided that they would make their profits through volume, targeted a middle-class constituency, and succeeded wildly.<sup>45</sup>

Two other visionary entrepreneurs, Kirk Kerkorian and Steve Wynn, laid the basis for the reinvention of a new and presumably competition-proof Las Vegas. Wynn opened the Mirage resort in 1989, adding the dimension of fantasy embodied in its title in a way that no previous resort had. With "fantasy become reality" as a theme and a volcano kept cool by water in a desert locale, the Mirage embodied the essence of what Las Vegas could offer a tourist: it invented a reality that only rarely required the suspension of disbelief. Siegfried and Roy and their famed white tigers were part of this ambience, as were dolphins and, later, the nouvelle circus, Cirque du Soleil. Kerkorian set another standard with his plans for the second MGM Grand hotel and theme park, complete with an Emerald City and Wizard of Oz motif, first announced in the late 1980s.<sup>46</sup>

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45. Drexel Burnham Lambert Research, "Circus Circus Enterprises," April 9, 1984; "Souvenir Program and Guide, Circus Circus Casino, Las Vegas," ca 1971, both in Circus Circus Collection, Special Collections, James Dickinson Library, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; interview with Joyce Marshall, Oct. 23, 1993; *Las Vegas Sun*, July 22, 1984, Oct. 17, 1993. Circus Circus's occupancy rate is consistently above ninety-nine percent.

46. Spanier, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*, 17–59; Dial Torgerson, *Kerkorian: An American Success Story* (New York, 1974); Susan Gould, "Kirk Kerkorian," *Signature*, IV (1969), 1–5; *Las Vegas Review Journal*, Jan. 23 and Nov. 13, 1983; Oct. 30, 1986; March 1, May 28, June 16, Nov. 20, 1987; Dec. 10, 1988; March 22, Oct. 1, 12, 27, 29, 1989; Nov. 20, 22, 23, Dec. 7, 22, 1989; April 8, May 16, Oct. 7 and 8, 1991; April 7, 1992.

As gaming spread, Wynn, Kerkorian, Bennett, and others in Las Vegas began to recast the town as a family entertainment resort. The exotic themes of earlier resorts—the Dunes and its Sahara Sultan motif, the Tropicana's Cuban decor, Caesars Palace and its Greco-Roman theme, the Rio and its "Carnival" theme, and others—were replaced by an iconography derived from popular culture and directed at younger people. In 1993 the opening of the Grand Slam Canyon at Circus Circus, the Luxor, Wynn's Treasure Island resort, and the MGM Grand signaled a new Las Vegas, designed to appeal to adults and young people alike and eager to continue the adaptable traditions of its past.<sup>47</sup> Kerkorian, Wynn, and their enterprises represented the changes in the gaming-as-entertainment industry. The initial, western-themed casinos had been run by crusty iconoclasts, individualists who were themselves participants in the industry they developed. Some built empires, others just ran their one hotel and casino. Many of them were not far-sighted, and many did not survive.

As early as the 1950s, western tourism had begun to take on corporate and institutional characteristics. The successful entrepreneurs of the first half of the twentieth century had grown old or died—at least one prematurely in a hail of gunfire—and the business had become too lucrative to be left to mere entrepreneurs. The construction of interstate highways during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower added to the mosaic, increasing access to some places, bypassing others and leaving them out of the main corridors of the flow west, and generally encouraging further travel.<sup>48</sup> As in other industries that developed from local, regional, or idiosyncratic roots, the western tourism industry was coopted; after a certain point, the people who marketed it spent more time guessing what the public wanted and invested less time in retaining the special character of what they presented.

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47. *Las Vegas Review Journal*, Sept. 23, 1988, Nov. 11, 1989, Dec. 22, 1991, Aug. 27, 1992, Jan. 31 and Aug. 22, 1993; Jeff Rubio, "Las Vegas: A Sure Bet for the Entire Family," *Hemisphere* (1993), 119–121; Spanier, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*, 83–85, 99–101. The analysis of the major hotels and their themes is courtesy of Gene Moehring (copy in possession of author).

48. Findlay, *People of Chance*, 110–135, 157, 163; Richard O. Davies, *The Age of Asphalt: The Automobile, the Freeway, and the Condition of Metropolitan America* (New York, 1975); Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 218–232.



The creation of the modern tourism industry required people who recognized that the attributes of a place had potential appeal and who could muster the capital to turn that perception into a tangible entity. The combination of such entrepreneurship and the relationship of places to the dominant cultural themes of the different eras created a climate in which a tourist industry could flourish. These factors also diminished the differences among the various kinds of tourism, packaging the historic and cultural past in a manner that gave it meaning as American tastes changed and conversely making the recreational and later entertainment features of tourism acceptable up and down the social spectrum. The similarity in structure of the various kinds of tourism illustrated the way in which the needs of twentieth-century America blurred the distinction between categories of potential visitor attractions.

To complete this process, physical access became the critical feature. The development of rail lines, highways, interstates, and air travel facilitated the development of the tourist industry. Without these technologies, the combination of inspiration, marketing, and capital were insufficient to create even the illusion of an economic future. As the American public became accustomed to greater ease in modes of travel and level of comfort, the corridors of access created by railroads, highways, and eventually airports became linchpins on which the tourist industry depended.

Yet the roots of the industry were the entrepreneurial individuals with unique visions who carried western tourism forward in ways scholars have only begun to appreciate. As much as Theodore Roosevelt, Owen Wister, and Andy Adams, these entrepreneurs—in heritage, cultural, recreation, and entertainment tourism—utilized local attributes, law, and technological innovation to transcend the limits of the western physical environment and invent a western past and future for the American public. In the process they perfected a form of economic endeavor—the modern service economy—that became a regional export as industrial employment declined in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the OPEC Oil Embargo in 1973, and the rise of the information-based world economy.