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SOUTHERN SEDUCTION
CANADIAN AND AMERICAN SNOWBIRDS IN FLORIDA SINCE 1945

by
Godefroy Desrosiers-Lauzon

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Ph.D. degree in History

Department of History
Faculty of Arts
Université d'Ottawa/ University of Ottawa

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ABSTRACT

SOUTHERN SEDUCTION

CANADIAN AND AMERICAN SNOWBIRDS IN FLORIDA SINCE 1945

Godefroy Desrosiers-Lauzon,
University of Ottawa, 2007

Supervisor:
Professor Donald F. Davis

Since the late 19th century, Florida's promoters and civic leaders have constructed the state as a tourist destination. The result was a Florida Dream that visitors and migrants could interpret according to their own expectations: as an hedonist escape from the routine of work and family; as a warm refuge from northern winters; as a rapidly expanding pool of economic opportunity.

Florida's immense popularity as a tourist destination and migrant haven was then built on that Dream, as well as on abundant and escapist promotion, on transportation technology, on the development of its real estate industry and of its tourist accommodations, on rising disposable incomes since the 1940s. Florida's population grew rapidly, in great part because of its tourism.

This thesis explains and analyzes the phenomenon of seasonal, long-term winter travel to Florida, travelers that South Floridians have called *snowbirds*. It demonstrates what pushed and pulled snowbirds to Florida, analyzes their journey south, their settlement patterns and housing choices, their tendency to congregate together, the forms of their sociability. It mostly defines snowbirds as migrants who, down South, build communities of kindred spirits. In the fragmented built landscape of 20th-century Florida,

the congregation of snowbirds produced unique forms of socialization and, we argue, of community.

These unique settlements have uniquely influenced Floridians' debates about their own community-building issues, while playing a part in Northerners' views about Florida, the South, the North, the United States and Canada. Snowbirds, from their standpoint on Florida and North America, were agents in the definition of peculiar yet deeply modern, North American forms of sociability and community, as well as agents in the ongoing collective conversation creating a (late) modern folklore of leisure, geography, mobility, topophilia and identity.

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My first and foremost feelings of gratitude go to my thesis supervisor, Professor Donald F. Davis. Over seven years he provided me with guidance and encouragement: every meeting, every conversation was an epiphany, an experiment in sudden understanding, sudden meaningfulness, sudden optimism. He challenged me to see the big picture, to ask the big questions, to structure the facts with explanation and meaning. When the workload and the sheer passage of time got depressing, he expressed a warm understanding, and cheered me back to work.

His qualities as a mentor and an educator are more than outstanding, as this thesis might prove, as proven by his faithful following of colleagues and former students. I would dedicate this thesis to him if it was not already such a tribute to his work and his mind.

I then want to express my gratitude to the Faculty members and personnel of the History Department at the University of Ottawa. Professors Chad Gaffield, Jeff Keshen, Eda Kranakis, Michael Behiels, Sylvie Perrier and Mark Stolarik have been most supportive. At the Department, Danielle Charette, Suzanne Dalrymple, Nicole Baron, Francine Laramée and Manon Lalande saved me from certain doom, on many occasions, with ease, professionalism and grace.

In Florida, I found sincere expressions of interest and lots of help in Professors Ray Arsenault and Gary Mormino at the University of South Florida, and from Dr. Nick Wynne at the Florida Historical Society. In the archives and libraries of Florida, I got help from Jim Schnur, Mark Greenberg and Paul Camp at USF, Dawn Hugh at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida in Miami, and Debra Wynne at the Florida Historical Society in Cocoa. My memory fails me, and people do move on to other jobs, but I got lots of help as well at the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida in Gainesville, at the Florida State Archives and Library in Tallahassee, at Pinellas Park Heritage Center in Largo, the archives of the St. Petersburg Museum of History, and last but not least, the Florida Department at the Miami-Dade Main Library – I made friends there, amidst the bustling, beautiful Cuban neighborhood.

This thesis is dedicated to the Canadian students struggling to make ends meet in the face of inflationary tuition fees. While studying and teaching at the Université du Québec à Montréal, the University of Ottawa and at Université Laval, I have been increasingly appalled by the escalating class warfare waged by Canada's elites and decision-makers, through the ploy of turning superior education into an elitist diploma mill for the globalized job market. Inflationary tuition fees have been especially damaging to the Arts, Humanities and Social Science students and, eventually I fear, to the academic worth of these fields. While Québec students have successfully fought to

entrench a tradition of low tuition –the lowest in this part of the hemisphere, against the pressures of a powerful, self-conscious local elite– other Canadian students have been less successful, and the overwhelming majority of them increasingly have to jeopardize their studies, or move on to more financially rewarding academic “investments” to justify their spending of around \$10,000 per year in Ontario universities.

To ward off these very real threats, Arts, Humanities, and Social Science students, professors, programs and departments are necessary to understand what is happening in this world, and eventually to empower scholars and citizens to change it. Cette thèse est donc dédiée particulièrement aux étudiants auxquels j’ai eu le plaisir d’enseigner depuis l’automne 2005.

Mes mentors à l’UQAM ont beaucoup contribué à mes choix et points de vue académiques, même après la maîtrise. Leur influence est aussi dans cette thèse: merci à Isabelle Lehuu pour sa supervision de mon mémoire de maîtrise, ses conseils et ses lettres de recommandation qui m’ont apporté fortune et gloire, ainsi qu’à Joanne Burgess, Jean-Marie Fecteau et Albert Desbiens. Mes amis et collègues d’Ottawa, de l’UQAM et d’ailleurs ont su apporter un soutien discret – parce que je leur ai peu demandé – mais très satisfaisant. Ils s’appellent Betsey Baldwin, Ivana Caccia, Sacha Richard, Martin Auger, Martin Petitclerc, Jarrett Rudy, Marcela Aranguiz.

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INTRODUCTION

As many Florida stories do, this research started out from an interest in Florida images. The palms, the beaches, dolphin shows, Disney World, Jerry Seinfeld's parents, mobile homes and others shaped the initial efforts to decode the Sunshine State, as an icon. While scholarship on Florida normally seeks a detachment from the icons, this research was initiated around the icons. I wondered about the reality behind them, about the interaction of the "real" Florida with the images. Or my curiosity was admittedly motivated by my own gaze: like most northern academics, I have long looked at Florida through a smug, middle-class, proudly Northern – proudly Québécois and Canadian, to some extent – lens that captured the iconic image of Florida as mildly repulsive, tainted by crass commercialism, violence, and escapism from a superior North. Why go *there*? I wondered. Merely to escape winter, since there was so little to seek down there? How could that be? Winter *made* Northerners: historically it used to be part of the definition of their identities as Canadians, Yankees, Midwesterners, Québécois – and still is to an extent. The northern winter has been used to explain their drive, ingenuity, and work ethic: I endure, therefore I am.

Out of this ambivalent fascination with images has emerged research that has attempted to answer both the attraction and the repulsion: Why have people escaped winter in such numbers? Why to *that* particular destination? What can the Florida evasion tell us about the North? What has been the reality of sojourning in the Sunshine State, for Northerners? Has the act of going south been a renunciation of Northerness, a denial of

birthright? Or has it been rather an act of self-definition where the search for escape from the daily grind and the promise of sensuous pleasure only played a part? But how big a part? And was it the brain, or the heart of the escapees that sought the Sunshine State?

My first research journey to Florida struck right at the center of this ambivalence – the attraction of Florida blissfully dawned on me. At the end of a grueling, two-day motor coach ride that started in an early-winter Montréal cold snap, the sun rose on Jacksonville, Florida, warming the damp air to a temperature of over twenty degrees; by the time the bus reached Daytona, it was thirty degrees. Palms and beaches and exotic birds added their own shapes and sounds to the feeling of warmth, in an overwhelming sensuous experience. A few hours later came the destination: Miami Beach, by the Ocean under a dome of blue sky.

Out of this epiphany emerged a research project that attempted to explain the fascination of Florida, using the trope of a journey. Out of the actual journey that is Florida to so many Northerners, a research project was framed to reflect it experientially: from the North to Florida, and back. This dissertation is, therefore, organized in the stages of a journey: first, the choice to travel to Florida (Why Florida?); second, the "getting there" (How? Did it influence the travelers' worldviews?); third the "settling there" (How and where did snowbirds settle in Florida?); fourth the "living it" (How to explain snowbirds' congregation, and their interaction with the Real Florida?); and finally going back home (How were snowbirds changed by Florida? Was the North influenced by these sun-seekers?).

On their return, Northerners are unsure they understand Florida. Tourists are aware they may never have experienced the *real* place, the one only known to locals. Hence most accounts – both tourist or scholarly – write of seeking the *real* Florida, either

tantalizingly out of reach like the Fountain of Youth, or menacingly lurking in the shadows, like a gator in the Everglades, or like rednecks from *Deliverance*. Floridians are quite a sight themselves, delivering a complex human landscape: Southerners, former Northerners, Caribbeans, and a few Florida-born or self-appointed Crackers – all of them living testimonies about what life is in the *real* Florida. Reality can also be found in the surrounding landscape of canals and levees, streets and highways, commercial strips and malls, mobile home parks and motels, urban skylines and rivers of grass. They are all part of a landscape that the visitors' gaze has attempted to comprehend. These visitors may be closer to understanding the *real* Florida than it appears. According to sociologist Dean MacCannell, sightseeing might be the most readily available way to make sense of modern complexity: it is "a kind of involvement with social appearances that helps the person to construct totalities from his disparate experiences."¹

Because Florida is complex, and yet so readily available to an outsider's gaze, scholarship on Florida ought to proceed carefully with its own outlook. From its humble beginnings as a Caribbean trading outpost, as a plantation, orchard, pasture and timberland, and as a winter haven for Northerners, the Sunshine State has grown like kudzu in a subtropical sun. Now, Florida stands for a lot more than tourism: it has grown to become the fourth most populated state, it hosts a diverse array of international migrants, has its own growth and environmental problems, and the vibrant politics that arises from these problems. Florida is a place where modern social innovations and experiments take place, where one might see the future.

¹ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1976), 14, 15; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC, 2001), 302.

Out of the inescapable saliency of modern Florida grew a research project that attempts to see the ways in which Floridians have interacted with visitors, and the ways in which people build communities in Florida.

Of all the community-building (and community-deconstructing) taking place in the ever-booming Florida, this dissertation privileges the efforts of the snowbirds. At base it investigates the people who wintered in Florida. In the 1920s, Southerners named "snowbirds" the migrant workers, hoboes and laborers who traveled south for the cold season. In the 1960s, the term was first applied as well to winter tourists in South Florida. In this guise, snowbirds have had a complex identity: they *are* tourists because they are sightseers; they are *visitors* because they interact with Florida and Floridians, they are *migrants* because they settle in the state, and are seen as outsiders; snowbirds are *residents* because they elect to live in dwellings officially defined as permanent residences – apartments, condos, mobile homes – albeit in a unique, semi permanent fashion; and finally, snowbirds are community builders, through their unique lifestyle – leisurely but not quite like tourists, with homeownership but unlike permanent residents – and their practice of sociability and mutual help.² Snowbirds do not, in other words, fit any standard category. A liminal group, they were and remain those who stood in between normal tourists and permanent settlers; accordingly snowbirds were often defined as a step in one's tourist life-cycle, from tourist to snowbird to permanent migrant. Thus snowbirds have always been living at the boundaries of different cultures and folkways, at the juncture between accommodations and housing, leisure and workday routine, the North and South. I found the topic of snowbirds to be in a position to shed

² *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition (New York, 1989).

light not only on Florida but also on the North, the Northeast and Midwest, as well as English Canada and Québec, as well as the links and divergences between them.

Florida and snowbirds cry out for scholarly research: they are understudied, peculiar and hard to classify. Snowbirds for the aforementioned reasons, Florida because it is a highly atypical state that came to the national forefront relatively recently, arguably – if one overlooks for a moment the fateful 1876 presidential election – between the 1890s and 1910s, between the foundation of the Royal Poinciana hotel in Palm Beach, and the creation of Miami Beach. Ever the *limen*, the Sunshine State nonetheless (or because of its liminality) stands at the nexus of the most pressing issues in North America since at least the nineteenth century: first, community-building in a context of high mobility and spatial fragmentation. As instances of advanced modernity – understood as the complex of attitudes and institutions associated with urban/ industrial society³ –, Florida and snowbirds do create new meanings to life in our times.

Second, Florida has become one of the world's most visible nexus of debate about the management of natural assets between the increasingly divergent demands of real estate, agriculture, recreation, preservation, and natural emergency preparedness. Third, Snowbirds and Florida challenge the meaning of place and Northerness for both Canadians and U.S. Northerners; as such they threaten some of the foundational Canadian and American myths, what used to be this continent's dominant topophilia⁴ – the relationship between people and the Northern landscapes that has shaped much of North America's self-perception.

³ Definition inspired by Anthony Giddens' *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Stanford, CA, 1998).

⁴ Definition in Oxford's *Dictionary of Geography* (New York, 2004).

Finally, Florida has earned scholarly attention (and deserves more) because it was historically shadowed by the powerful images associated with it. It is a place where the North American society of the spectacle – understood as Guy Debord's realm of social relations mediated by images⁵ – took shape. Arguably, Florida deserves attention because its image-making was unique and important, but stood in the shadows of the icons pouring out of New York City and Hollywood. Most importantly, Florida image-making is unique because it drew the masses to travel and migrate to an accessible yet peculiar and liminal place. By virtue of their numbers, energy, sociability and community-building, Florida-seekers created their own images, and broadcast them as folk culture. Studying Florida images (and their relation to "reality") therefore allows us to understand the cultural power of ordinary folk in the context of the North American society of the spectacle.

⁵ Definition from Guy Debord, *La société du spectacle* (Paris, 1967).

CHAPTER I

WHY VISITING FLORIDA MATTERS

Florida was to Americans
what America had always been to the rest of the world
– a fresh, free, unspoiled start.

Susan Orlean
The Orchid Thief

To most people, Florida means leisure, seaside vistas and a semitropical climate. This popular meaning of Florida has been constructed over time, arguably since its European discovery in the 16th century. This view finds its counterpart in scholarly writing, where most portraits of the Sunshine State, historical or otherwise, have attempted to assess and analyze the powerful images it conjures, and the peculiar society, economy and culture that allowed and built on these images. Thus, it is in this historiographical endeavor that we found the important questions that shape this dissertation, and which make the history of visitors to Florida important to the understanding of twentieth-century North America.

The historiography of tourism in Florida is relatively recent, and is generally part of accounts on the evolution of contemporary Florida. This body of academic work is very much in phase with Sunbelt scholarship,¹ which highlighted the post-1941 development of the Southern and Southwestern United States as pivotal events in recent US history.

¹ Sunbelt scholarship summarized in David Goldfield, "Writing the Sunbelt," *OAH Magazine of History* 18 (October 2003): 5; Abbott, "Urbanizing the Sunbelt," *OAH Magazine of History* 18 (October 2003): 11-16; or, in a more monographic tone, yet typical in its call for further scholarship, for reasons that scream Florida too: Eugene Moehring, "Las Vegas History: A Research Agenda," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 47

Understandably, historians of Florida have shown an interest in the history of local tourism: its importance to the Sunshine State is obvious, if only for the economic growth and migration it has brought. Between 1950 and 2000, the state's population of 2.7 million increased sixfold, translating into 700 new residents per day. Meanwhile, tourists added their numbers to the permanent population, with a commensurable impact on the state's resources and economic health. If one counted the duration of all tourist sojourns and added them up as equivalent yearlong, 365-day residents, tourists have added between six to twelve percent to the state's population figure on any given day of the year since 1960.² With hindsight, all the postwar threats to Florida tourism – inflation, hurricanes, violent crime, 9/11 – merely slowed its growth: in 2005, the number of visitors reached 85.8 million (more than France or Spain's foreign visitors), including 2.1 million from Canada and 6.8 million from overseas (about the same as international visitors to the Czech Republic, Indonesia, or Brazil).³ These visitors poured \$57 billion dollars into Florida, or ten percent of the gross state product.

Attempts to explain the causes and consequences of this growth have made the recent history of Florida a fertile subfield of the Sunbelt scholarship created by Carl Abbott, David Goldfield, Mike Davis, and others.⁴ This scholarship still bears the imprint of its origins in social-political commentary, the term "Sunbelt" having been coined by political strategist Kevin Phillips in 1969 to describe the social and ideological changes

(2004): 259-282; Richard Bernard, "Cities, Suburbs, and Sunbelts: The Politics of Metropolitan Growth," *Journal of Urban History* 10 (November 1983): 4-7.

² Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville, 2005), 12, 13; figures on tourist numbers are compiled from Florida Development Commission and VisitFlorida annual reports.

³ *UNWTO Tourism Highlights* (Madrid, 2006).

⁴ *Cf* note 1.

that underscored the emerging Republican majority.⁵ Scholars since then have used the term to contrast the Southern and Southwestern regions with the American Midwest and Northeast.⁶ Despite being properly criticized for its inaccurate, leveling portrayal of what are numerous and differentiated subregions,⁷ Sunbelt scholarship has had this one great strength – its focus on the rapid changes, economic and demographic, that have taken place in the South and West of the United States since the Second World War.⁸

The Sunbelt story since Pearl Harbor has been one of phenomenal growth, of its sources and its consequences. The sources⁹ have included increased geographic mobility in America, made possible by improvements in transportation technology and infrastructure, and the rise of the affluent society. Throughout the twentieth century, and with accelerating speed since the 1940s, Americans have moved ever faster, and in greater numbers, around their country. Their cars and planes engendered a powerful engine for Sunbelt growth: oil extraction. Additional sources for the Sunbelt's rapid growth have been the commercialization of leisure, spurred by an advertisement industry with growing means and reach, by the rise of a consumer-oriented society (as opposed to a producer-oriented one), by rising disposable incomes, increasing vacation time, and old-age pensions. The Sunbelt has been boosted by its representation and promotion as a desirable place where living is easy, a place where movies and TV shows are shot, a place where, with help from local businesses and governments, North Americans can purchase

⁵ As explained by Mormino, *Land of Sunshine*, 12; explained as well by David Goldfield, "Writing the Sunbelt"; Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle, NY, 1969); Kirkpatrick Sale, *Power Shift: Rise of the Southern Rim and its Challenge to the Eastern Establishment* (Beverly Hills, CA, 1977).

⁶ Goldfield gives the example of David C. Perry and Alfred J. Watkins' *The Rise of Sunbelt Cities*, 1977.

⁷ See discussion in Bruce J. Schulman, "Searching for the Sunbelt: Historical Perspectives on a Region," *Reviews in American History* 21 (1993): 340-345.

⁸ This is stated clearly by Goldfield: 6.

sunshine. Sunbelt growth also hinged on industrial modernization and the search for non-unionized labor, on the rise of the service economy, on military spending, air conditioning,¹⁰ and the increased standardization and mechanization of building and construction techniques. In the South, these factors have been framed by the region's peculiar racial relations.¹¹ That's the big picture of the Sunbelt.

But, as scholarship has progressed, regional differences and nuances have appeared in the Sunbelt story, and the older scholarship is increasingly being criticized for lumping together different growth regimes: Sunbelt areas and cities differ from each other, we are told, in the relative importance and nature of their growth engines. There has emerged, therefore, a Florida literature that sees the state as a unique place, even by Sunbelt standards.¹²

True, most accounts of twentieth-century Florida follow lines similar to the Sunbelt scholarship. They start by discussing its impressive growth – demographic, urban and suburban, infrastructural, and economic. This literature, founded by Raymond Arsenault's

⁹ Goldfield quotes *verbatim* the factors identified by Perry and Watkins: "agriculture; defense, advanced technology; oil and natural gas; real estate and construction; and tourism and leisure."

¹⁰ A pioneering and brilliant work on the topic is Florida's Ray Arsenault, "The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioner and Southern Culture," *Journal of Southern History* 50 (1984): 597-628. See later, albeit similar, treatment by Mormino, 235-240.

¹¹ The southern nuance of Sunbelt scholarship is clearly put forward in Randall M. Miller and George E. Pozzetta, eds., *Shades of the Sunbelt: Essays on Ethnicity, Race, and the Urban South* (Westport, CT, 1988); Schulman, "Searching for the Sunbelt." Although Raymond A. Mohl's scholarship has national relevance, he is an authority in race relations in postwar Florida. Raymond A. Mohl, "The Second Ghetto Thesis and the Power of History," *Journal of Urban History* 29 (2003): 243-256; Kenneth W. Goings and Mohl, eds., *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1996); Goings and Mohl, "The Shifting Historiography of African American Urban History," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995): 435-437; Goings and Mohl, "Toward a New African American Urban History," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995): 283-295; Mohl, "Whitening Miami: Race, Housing, and Government Policy in Twentieth-Century Dade County," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 79 (2001): 319-345; Mohl, "The Transformation of the Late-Twentieth-Century South," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 76 (1998): 326-33; Mohl, "Making the Second Ghetto in Metropolitan Miami, 1940-1960," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995): 395-42; Mohl, Matilda Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth, eds., *South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960*, (Gainesville, 2004); Debra L. Schultz, "Review of *South of the South*," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 1995).

¹² Maurice Yeates, *North American Urban Patterns* (New York, 1980), 22, 42, 51, 66, 67, 72, 80, 137;

St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream (1988), was confirmed by Michael Gannon's *Florida: A Short History* in 1993, by his edited collection *The New History of Florida* in 1996, and has culminated, for now, in Gary Mormino's *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, a 2005 title that aptly sums up the intent, the prose, and the object of the author,¹³ and of the Florida classroom of the Sunbelt School.

Scholars of Florida have been scrambling to keep pace, analytically and topically, with their rapidly changing, increasingly contested social environment. Of Mormino's *Land of Sunshine* nine chapters, one is dedicated to the postwar Great Land Boom, one to tourism, another to retirement migration, and one to "The Beach." This last chapter delineates the interplay of promotional image-making, segregation, and capitalism at work on Florida's most emblematic space. Authors such as Mormino have suggested that Florida challenges existing theories of modernization and urbanization: first, because Southern culture and urban landscapes have survived amidst the contemporary landscape¹⁴; second, because recent immigration to South Florida rebuts the Chicago school of immigrant integration. Florida cities, it appears, have remained ethnically vibrant after years of settlement, to the point that local ethnic communities have

Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980*, in *A History of the South*, vol. XI, ed. Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (Baton Rouge, 1995).

¹³ Mormino; Raymond Arsenault, *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950*, Gainesville, 1996; Michael Rucker, Review of *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon, *Journal of Southern History* 63 (1997): 456-457; Paul S. George, Review of *Florida: A Short History*, by Michael Gannon, *Journal of Southern History* 60 (1994): 554-555; Rodney E. Dillon, Jr., Review of *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream*, by Raymond Arsenault, *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (October 1989): 218-220. See also Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino, "From Dixie to Dreamland: Demographic and Cultural Change in Florida, 1880-1980," in *Shades of the Sunbelt*, eds. Miller and Pozzetta, 161-191; Mohl and Pozzetta, "From Migration to Multiculturalism: Florida's Immigration History," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville, 1995).

¹⁴ See discussion in Mohl, "The Transformation of the Late-Twentieth-Century South," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 76 (Winter 1998): 334.

developed a local identity, divergent from others up North or across the sea¹⁵; and third, because, although the forces shaping the Sunbelt were often national in scope, they found some of their most extreme expressions in South Florida. Hence prosperity, consumerism, the democratization of automobile and jet transportation, old age pensions, state-sponsored access to homeownership, and defense spending all drove the growth of Florida as we know it, from the 1920s onwards, and most dramatically since the 1940s.

Florida scholarship, like the Sunbelt school, emphasizes the importance of image-building to the evolution of the Sunshine State, in its promotion as a desirable place to visit and settle. A permanent coalition of transportation executives, real estate and theme park entrepreneurs, boards of trade, and local and state politicians have zealously promoted Florida since the 1920s. Thus Florida's recent history is to a large extent the story of its promoters, its *amenity entrepreneurs*. In these narratives, one can appreciate how Florida has always been a result of land speculation, developing means of transportation, boisterous self-promotion, rising consumerism and commercial leisure, and the transformation of a fragile, swampy, subtropical landscape. Most recent accounts of postwar Florida have, like the Sunbelt scholarship before it, documented the environmental damage to the Sunshine State's natural assets, menacing even those that made people want to move to Florida. Mormino, Arsenault, and Gannon have written significant examples of this tragic trope, but the most ecologically sensitive narrative of development and planning has been R. Bruce Stephenson's acclaimed history of twentieth-century St. Petersburg.¹⁶

¹⁵ See discussion in Mohl, "Ethnic Transformations in Late-Twentieth-Century Florida," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15 (January 1996).

¹⁶ Stephenson, *Visions of Eden: Environmentalism, Urban Planning, and City Building in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1900-1995* (Columbus, OH, 1997); Stephenson is praised by Goldfield: 8.

These stories of postwar Florida have built upon the foundations laid by accounts of the first decades that Florida was promoted as, and transformed into, the Sunshine State. Much of twentieth-century Florida had its origins in Henry Flagler and Henry Plant's construction of railroads and luxury hotels¹⁷ in the 1880s. Flagler, after retiring from the active management of Standard Oil, vacationed in St. Augustine for the first time in 1881; there he decided to invest in Florida tourism by improving its railway lines and hotels. He bought and extended the Jacksonville-St. Augustine line in 1885, while building the 540-room Ponce de Leon hotel at the end of the line. By 1889, the Flagler railroad reached Daytona; in 1894, West Palm Beach, where the 1,100-room Royal Poinciana greeted wealthy patrons. The hotel attracted such a unique concentration of money that Henry James noted that "there as nowhere else in America, one would find Vanity Fair in full blast."¹⁸ By 1896 the railroad reached Miami, which was incorporated as a city the same year. Meanwhile, Henry Plant was extending his own line to Tampa by 1883, where he had a luxury hotel built the same year.¹⁹

This saga of resort-building found its most memorable episode between 1913 and 1928 with the dredging, clearing, subdivision and selling of Miami Beach under the aegis of Carl Graham Fisher. He had made his fortune in the automobile industry and his fame in creating the Indianapolis speedway. He was also one of the central actors in the opening of the Lincoln Highway between New York and San Francisco in 1915, and of

¹⁷ Larry R. Youngs, "The Sporting Set Winters in Florida: Fertile Ground for the Leisure Revolution, 1870-1930," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 84 (2005): 57-78.

¹⁸ Joe McCarthy, "The Man Who Invented Miami Beach," *American Heritage* 27 (December 1975): 66; on Coral Gables see "Coral Gables: The City Beautiful" on Historical Museum of Southern Florida's website: www.historical-museum.org/exhibits/gables/gables3.htm (retrieved November 2006); Gareth Shaw and Allan M. Williams, *Critical Issues in Tourism: A Geographical Perspective* (Oxford, 1994), 192; on railways, see Mohl and Mormino, "The Big Change in the Sunshine State: A Social History of Modern Florida," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville, 1996), 429; the evaluation of

the Dixie Highway from Michigan and Illinois to Miami in 1916. Though ruined by the Florida land sales crash of 1926, Fisher set the table for the dominant position Miami has held in American tourism.²⁰ Fisher and other land developers also set the tone for Florida's subsequent growth through their reliance upon publicity. Building upon the vernacular repertoire of images that the semitropical landscape conjured in Western culture, they created the modern version of Florida image-making: by sending pictures and laudatory articles to newspapers, and newsreels to movie distributors, all of which featured beach landscapes, pretty girls, rich and famous people in various leisurely activities, and tropical fauna and flora.

As Florida grew, so did muckraking journalism.²¹ Any study of Florida must take into consideration the legacy of folklorist-environmentalist, Jacksonville-born Stetson Kennedy, who put together *Palmetto Country* (1942) a collection of texts on Florida folklife, based on his participation in the Federal Writers Project²². The efforts of *Miami Herald* journalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and its editor John E. Pennekamp, who are considered the main actors in the creation of the Everglades National Park in 1947, also durably influenced Florida muckraking. This genre of Florida writing evolved into full-fledged historical accounts, though some of them retained a journalistic quality. Such histories included Alex Shoumatoff's social commentary mixed with travel narrative, *Florida Ramble* (1974); the story of Florida's development by David Nolan, *Fifty Feet in*

Florida resort architecture and the quote from Henry James are in Stuart B. McIver, "Titusville to Fort Lauderdale," in *The Book Lover's Guide to Florida*, ed. Kevin M. McCarthy (Sarasota, 1992), 186, 187.

¹⁹ On railways, see Mohl and Mormino, "The Big Change in the Sunshine State," 429.

²⁰ Joe McCarthy, "The Man Who Invented Miami Beach," 66; Mark S. Foster, *Castles in the Sand: The Life and Times of Carl Graham Fisher* (Gainesville, 2000).

²¹ Any catalog search of a significant Florida library, or a major Northern library, will yield some examples of these. See for instance Vince Conboy, *Exposé: Florida's Billion Dollar Land Fraud* (Naples, FL, 1973); Richard Austin Smith, "Florida: O.K., if the Brakes Work," *Fortune* 61 (January 1960); Theodore Pratt, *The Big Bubble: A Novel of the Florida Boom* (New York, 1951).

Paradise: The Booming of Florida (1984); John Rothchild's *Up for Grabs* (1985); David Rieff's *Going to Miami: Exiles, Tourists, and Refugees in the New America* (1987); and Mark Derr's *Some Kind of Paradise* (1989).²³

Also influential, though less concerned with history has been Carl Hiaasen and his emulators. Since the mid-1980s, this *Miami Herald* columnist has taken up the environmentalist, liberal stance of many of his predecessors, while showing a keen attention to the dystopian quality of contemporary Florida, framing his critique in provocative, merciless prose aimed at careless developers and boosterist, sometimes incompetent, politicians.²⁴

Taken together, the Sunbelt and muckraking tales of hubris and self-conscious image-building, tell us that to understand Florida as a desirable place to escape, one has to examine the agency of those who made it: in Gary Mormino's words, "tourism is not destiny."²⁵ Tourists do not grow naturally on sand like palms, or in swamps like kudzu. Like Florida's other cash crops, tourists are the fruits of careful cultivation. For tourists to appear in large numbers, Florida had first to be cleared, dried up, dredged from the bottom of the seas. In the words of Alex Shoumatoff: "Before it was any good to [Man], it had to be essentially destroyed by Man."²⁶ Mormino captured as well the agency that made the Sunshine State:

²² Stetson Kennedy, *Palmetto Country* (1942) (Tallahassee, 1989).

²³ Alex Shoumatoff, *Florida Ramble* (New York, 1974); David Nolan, *Fifty Feet in Paradise: The Booming of Florida* (San Diego, 1984); John Rothchild, *Up for Grabs* (New York, 1985); Mark Derr, *Some Kind of Paradise: A Chronicle of Man and the Land in Florida* (New York, 1989).

²⁴ Similar narrative and topics can also be read in Patrick Carr's *Sunshine States: Wild Times and Extraordinary Lives in the Land of Gators, Guns, and Grapefruit* (New York, 1990); Hiaasen, *Kick Ass: Selected Columns of Carl Hiaasen*, ed. Diane Stevenson (New York, 1999); Hiaasen, *Paradise Screwed: Selected Columns of Carl Hiaasen*, ed. Diane Stevenson (New York, 2001).

²⁵ Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States:" 9.

²⁶ Shoumatoff, 32.

In its natural state, Florida may appear poorly designed: meandering rivers, shifting coastlines, and shore-hugging mangroves. Malleable, accessible and seemingly inexhaustible, the Florida landscape can become anything that humans want it to be. Hot was made cool, and wet became dry.... land and water retreated before ax, machete, plow, steamshovel and construction crane.... Civic, mechanical and social engineers perfected an imperfect Florida. Air conditioning lowered the temperature, DDT banished the mosquito, and the bulldozer eliminated the mangrove. Floridians, more than most Americans, are hooked on technology.²⁷

Thus the Florida presented by these two approaches is much like Sunbelt scholarship in its sensitivity to the landscape since it too has changed dramatically. The two dominant versions of Florida, the modified Sunbelt and the muckraking, are a tribute to the American ethic of constant perfectibility that Tocqueville once saw at work. By extension of this optimistic outlook, Florida is an illustration of what Daniel Boorstin called the Republic of Technology, the reliance on technological skill in the building of American living spaces.²⁸

In a similar fashion, journalist Frances FitzGerald proposed that Florida escapism is a tribute to what historian Richard Hofstadter attributed to the mobility and loose social fabric in America – a rootlessness that can be read in the social structure and landscape. These factors have made Florida, in a dramatic fashion, one of the primary places where Americans have tried to remake themselves:

In times of discontent Americans traditionally resisted the elementary proposition that every social system carries a composite price. They would not relinquish the hope of finding somewhere in the world an ideal remedy ... to cure their nagging pains.²⁹

²⁷ Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States:" 7-9.

²⁸ Tocqueville and Hofstadter are quoted by Frances FitzGerald, *Cities on a Hill: A Journey Through Contemporary American Cultures* (New York, 1986), 390, 414, 415.

²⁹ FitzGerald, 414, 415.

For many that meant travel to Florida. Thus, any explanation of Florida has to consider what Edward Soja called its *raumgeist* – its spatial spirit³⁰. As the Sunbelt and muckraking schools have shown, most depictions of Florida are voyages through geography.

The Florida story told here includes tourism and retirement migration. Frances FitzGerald and social critic Vance Packard have written in depth on retirement migration in their attempts to analyze American rootlessness and the resultant attempts at community-building³¹. This migration is, after all, a most unprecedented fact in human history, for as FitzGerald suggests: "never before in history [have] older people taken themselves off to live in isolation from the younger generations."³² To make this move, Americans had to experience a "seismic mindshift," in Mormino's words, one in which technology, consumerism, social programs, and longer life expectancies allowed the creation of leisurely retirement beyond the upper-class confines of Palm Beach.³³

Because of the image of Florida as a desirable, accessible paradise on earth, and as a tribute to the efforts of those who endeavored to realize the myth, by building Florida or by moving there, Florida historians have identified the Florida Dream as a useful analytical category for the state's narrative. The departure point for any application of the Florida Dream trope is the underlying American Dream – the "hope for a better life" – that in some places like California is intensified by a growth mythology, giving it a

³⁰ Soja should know, he studied the other American Dream: California. Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, 1989), 62.

³¹ Vance Packard, *A Nation of Strangers* (New York, 1972), 100-103.

³² FitzGerald, 20.

³³ Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States:" 6.

"probing, prophetic edge in which the good and evil of the American Dream [have been] sorted out and dramatized."³⁴

Like the California Dream, the Sunshine State has thrived on a coherent set of images and expectations that have framed the way that developers and promoters have presented it to the world, as well as the way in which newcomers and visitors saw their decision to come down. As summed up in a 1928 magazine article, and retold in 1989 by environmentalist Mark Derr, Florida is a "state of mind."³⁵ The Florida Dream was the Sunshine State's *place-ideology*, the historically- and socially-constructed correct way of seeing Florida, and of thinking about its future. Ray Arsenault defined the Florida Dream in 1988 as the "promise of perpetual warmth, health, comfort, and leisure." More recently, striving for a more workable theme, he proposed the more polysemous "dreamscape." The Florida "dreamscape" was, for him, "a cultural backdrop capable of inspiring a variety of dreamlike images and expectations." This is a more historicized concept, as landscapes – and the gazes they entice – change over time through the efforts of their users and inhabitants. Florida's dreamscape once consisted of reveries of cheap agricultural land, an almost frost-free climate, and abundant crops of citrus fruits. Nowadays "the dreamscape has moved to the city, the tourist camp, and the theme park," it now means:

The prospect of living (and perhaps even working) in a relatively beneficent climate; to others it is the expectation of a long and prosperous retirement.... To the millions of tourists who visit the state, it is a week or two of blissful sunbathing on a sandy beach, a breathless tour of Disney World and Busch Gardens³⁶

³⁴ Raymond Arsenault, "Is there a Florida Dream?," *Forum* 17 (Summer 1994): 22.

³⁵ Quoted in Tommy R. Thompson, "Florida in American Popular Magazines," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 82 (2003): 8.

³⁶ Arsenault: 25, 26.

Orchard, beach, and retirement community – the Florida dreamscape has also offered safe haven to millions of Latin American refugees and migrants, where they may dream of full assimilation, political hegemony, or triumphant return.

The dreamscape not only has varied over time, but also by perspective. Besides the Sunbelt and muckraking schools, Florida authors can be categorized as either recent migrants to Florida – if not Northerners, who only sojourned there temporarily –, or self-defined Floridians, natives or longtime residents.

Relative outsiders and newcomers to Florida are more likely to depict the ways that migration made Florida desirable, accessible, settled, blessed – and overcrowded. They are migrants writing about migration, Northerners writing about going to Florida. "Migrant" authors include Mormino, Arsenault, Rieff, Shoumatoff, Nolan, and Carr. Meanwhile, Florida-born and longtime-settled authors tend to see Florida from the inside, sometimes by leaving out the big picture. They concentrate on the *impacts* of migration, on the process and consequences of *growth*, and on the relations between communities in Florida, sometimes to the point of advocating growth-slowing policies. The "native Floridians" include Kennedy, Pennekamp³⁷, Stephenson, Rothchild, Derr, and Hiaasen. Both vantage points – the native's and the newcomer's – must perforce make observations on the two main themes of Florida's recent history: *migration and growth*.

Even on these two great themes the literature is still of the pioneering sort. Most authors are charting a virgin semitropical coast, because the Florida that these books describe is relatively new, and because the state's most impressive developments have

³⁷ John D. Pennekamp might just be a perfect hybrid of both Floridian and migrant. Born in Cincinnati in 1897, he moved to Miami in 1925 to take up the editorial helm of the *Miami Herald*. In the late 1940s he was instrumental in the dedication of the Everglades National Park, and went on to push for the U.S.'s first offshore protected area, off Key Largo, named John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park by governor Leroy Collins in 1960.

occurred only recently. Because of this modernity, the Florida they depict is diverse, multiple, complex, and fragmented. The contemporary Florida that they describe is an aporia – a "crazy hodgepodge," as Carl Hiaasen once put it. To make sense of it, authors have been tempted to fall back on explanations of the linear sort. Florida thus happened – in the textbook version – because capitalism fostered boosterism, which encouraged migration and tourism, which rapidly changed the state. Yet, as the multiple meanings found in Florida's dreamscape show, as the complex and changing intercommunity relations that take place in Florida show, there is more to it than a linear process.

To sum up, most accounts of Florida's recent history focus on four factors: constructed desirability, accessibility, migration, and growth. The first three can be summarized by migration, specifically migration of the Florida type, motivated by Florida's powerful dreamscape. There remains *migration* and *growth*, which in Florida merge together in *tourism*, since "tourism is the geography of consumption outside the home area; it is about how and why people travel to consume"³⁸ according to geographers Colin Hall and Stephen Page.

Fluttering through this historiography has been the *snowbird*. The *Oxford English Dictionary*³⁹ tells us that this term was initially used early in the twentieth century to name the men who enlisted in the army for the winter to avoid the cold, and deserted in the spring. The word took on a new meaning in the US South during the 1920s when it depicted the migrant workers, laborers and unemployed who went south each winter. Since the 1960s it has been used in the Miami area to name the migrants, many of them elderly, who winter down South away from cold conditions, in leisurely pursuits. The

³⁸ C. M. Hall and S. J. Page, *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space* (London, 1999), 92; John R. Kelly, *Leisure*, third ed. (Boston, 1996), 173.

term has since spread to other destinations of seasonal migrants, places like Texas, Arizona, and California.⁴⁰

Few historical inquiries have looked at snowbirds. An exception is Mormino's *Land of Sunshine*.⁴¹ A chapter discusses the changes that allowed the creation, after the 1940s, of leisurely, active, independent retirement in the South: between 1950 and 1990, one in every four elderly interstate migrants went to Florida. The 1960s saw the construction of specialized housing projects designed for them, although hotels and apartment houses catering exclusively to retired persons had existed in St. Petersburg and Miami Beach since the 1920s. Soon the demand for cheap and safe living spaces, the unemployed status of retired persons, and their leisurely lifestyle turned the less urbanized counties of South Florida into retirement magnets – northward from Miami, south and north from St. Petersburg. Mormino acknowledges the ethnic diversity of Florida's elderly residents, as well as their segregation by places of origin, their plethora of leisure sociability and affinity groups, their immense political clout, the snowbird presence, the popularity of mobile homes among them. Mormino concludes his chapter with a warning about the potential for intergenerational conflict in the sway seniors hold over public spending. Since Mormino it is essential to study the ethnic composition of snowbirds, their community-building, and their relations with their neighbors.

Another snowbird history that discusses community-building is Lee Irby's article on trailer dwellers in St. Petersburg during the 1950s-1960s, and their interaction with the St.

³⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, second ed. (New York, 1989).

⁴⁰ Howard Kleinberg, "All Aboard Hobo Express!," *Miami Herald*, 19 December 1995, 10A; on seasonal movement of "bums," drifters, migrant workers in South Florida: E. A. Lahey, "Miami's Sun Like a Magnet to Bums, Drifters," *Miami Herald*, 3 February 1955, 22E; two early mentions of the term, the former from a hobo in Miami, the second about Key West tourists: Paul Kosene, "Still Better Than Freezing Up North, Snowbird Says," *Miami Herald*, 13 February 1955, 18F; Marjorie C. Houck, "Welcome Mat Gets a Workout in Key West," *New York Times*, 5 December 1965, XX.

Petersburg city government.⁴² Irby shows their intense sociability, the degree of community-building within trailer parks, the racial and age segregation that fostered this integration in the first place, and the power of elderly people to mobilize in the face of adversity. Florida's influential Federation of Mobile Home Owners was created in 1962, he discovered, to face the threat of higher taxes.

A chapter, an article – the American literature on Florida's snowbirds has had scant space to discuss their national – or regional, or ethnic origins, if one overlooks the better-documented case of Miami Beach Jews⁴³, arguably a very unique case. For the Canadians among them one must start with an article by historian Robert Harney wrote an article on the "Patterns of Canadian Migration to Florida." To understand the process of Canadian travel to Florida Harney resorted to the patterns delineated by the migration scholarship: pioneer migrants first explore a destination; then, as the information about the new, desirable settlement gets back to the homeland, a "fever" can develop that will send migrants to the destination. Migrants will put to work social and commercial networks to facilitate their information-gathering and movement. Entrepreneurs will surface to specialize in migration brokerage; in Florida's case, motel owners, real estate agents, transportation companies and others have competed for, and prospered in the Canadian "migrant market," thus becoming an "organic intelligentsia" in the production of discourse on migration. Whenever the migratory movement is deemed to be significantly large, a counterdiscourse is likely to appear in the homeland to denounce the bleeding of the homeland's forces. The migrant market eventually fostered competition among

⁴¹ Mormino, "Old Folks at Home," in *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 123–148.

⁴² Irby, "Taking Out the Trailer Trash: The Battle Over Mobile Homes in St. Petersburg, Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 79 (fall 2000): 181-200.

migrant brokers and among potential destinations: soon Florida was challenged by other Gulf States, Mexico, Caribbean islands, and the Carolinas.⁴⁴

What is most interesting with Harney's text is the great similarity between Canadian snowbirds and other types of migrants: the "counterdiscourse" – for instance in Italy about emigrants and in Canada about snowbirds – shows how migration can become a salient issue in the affairs of the homeland. From this realization, it only takes a small step intellectually to see that the migration destination can influence the homeland, as has been observed in several studies of international migration.⁴⁵ Thus, Harney remarked that Canadian snowbirds might become more "hyphenated" when down in Florida, by which he meant that their ethnic cultural traits would become more visible. Down south, they might become less Canadian, and more Maritimer, Upper Canadian, or Canadien français, because of their clustering in a foreign land around shared lifestyles, leisure, neighborhood, community groups, and news sources from the North.

Social scientists have reached conclusions similar to Harney's. George Calvin Hoyt, for example, conducted a sociological survey and participant observation in Manatee County in 1960⁴⁶, where he documented the social networks that first brought people to the Bradenton Trailer Park. Hoyt further studied the sociability and perceptions of

⁴³ For instance: Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York, 1994); Raymond A. Mohl, *South of the South : Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960* (Gainesville, 2004).

⁴⁴ Harney, "The Palmetto and the Maple Leaf: Patterns of Canadian Migration to Florida," in *Shades of the Sunbelt: Essays on Ethnicity, Race, and the Urban South*, eds. R. M. Miller and G. E. Pozzetta (Boca Raton, 1989), 27, 28, 30, 31.

⁴⁵ In Québec and Italian history and historiography, for instance, the homeland impact of the nineteenth century emigration, to New England milltowns in the former case, and to England and North America in the latter case, is well known. See for instance Bruno Ramirez, "On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914," *The Canadian Historical Review* 74 (December 1993): 643; Ramirez, "Shifting Perspectives from the North: Quebec," *The Journal of American History* 79:2 (September 1992): 477-484; The same has been argued about Italians, eg Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle, 2000); Gabaccia, "Italian History and *gli italiani nel mondo*, Part II," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 3 (Spring 1998): 73.

retirement among the trailer park dwellers. Gerontologists meanwhile have studied the "patterns" of retirement migration; building upon migration theory,⁴⁷ they have found that the retired, like other migrants, use their social networks and their experience of previous migration – as tourists, for instance – to choose their destination. Thus they move in "streams," from common places of origin to common destinations. Retired persons, like other migrants, also tend to move more often when they are tenants than homeowners. Their wealth and occupation prior to retirement have also mattered: the educated and wealthy have been more likely to move.⁴⁸ Yet retirement migration has in some ways been unique, for lower-income and average-income retired folk have been relatively more likely to move than their peers in other age groups. Consequently, retired migrants have been cost-sensitive migrants, eagerly looking out for cheap housing. For this reason plus their yen for leisure activities and relative detachment from work, retired migrants have tended to settle in peri-urban, non-metropolitan areas with low economic and institutional centrality. Social scientists have also discovered that life-cycle events matter in decisions to migrate: for elderly people, the recent emergence of "early retirement" has been a key factor in migration. Later in life, inflation, the death of the spouse, increasing health costs

⁴⁶ George Calvin Hoyt, *A Study of Retirement Problems* (1962) (San Francisco, 1975).

⁴⁷ H.C. Northcott, *Changing Residence: The Geographic Mobility of Elderly Canadians* (Toronto, 1988), 7; Martin Cadwallader, *Migration and Residential Mobility: Macro and Micro Approaches* (Madison, WI, 1992), 39; Critique of this mainstream migration scholarship: Bruce Moon, "Paradigms in Migration Research," *Progress in Human Geography* 19 (December 1995): 507; instances of it: J. A. Brox, "Migration Between the United States and Canada: A Study of Labour Market Adjustment," *International Migration* 21 (1983): 6; K.V. Pankhurst, "Migration Between Canada and the United States," *Annals of the American Association of Political Scientists* 367 ("The New Immigration," September 1966): 53; R.E. Mueller, "Changes in the Quality of Immigrant Flows Between the United States and Canada in the 1980s," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 29 (Winter 1999): 621-649.

⁴⁸ On the clustering of snowbirds, see for example Ken S. Coates, Robert Healy and William R. Morrison, "Tracking the Snowbirds: Seasonal Migration from Canada to the U.S.A. and Mexico," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (Fall 2002), 433-435; Packard, 96; Daniel Clary, "La migration de retraite en Floride," *Noroiis* 38 (April-June 1991): 136; Harney, 27; Northcott, 7, 9-12, 16, 22, 81, 103; Steve L. Barsby and Dennis R. Cox, *Interstate Migration of the Elderly: An Economic Analysis* (Lexington, Ma, 1975), 10-13, 32-34, 41; Cadwallader, 9, 10, 39; Serow, "Economic Implications of Retirement Migration," *The Journal*

and dependency either discourage migration or encourage northward migration to the vicinity of their kin.⁴⁹

Snowbird scholarship has also studied specific snowbird communities through surveys and participant observation. In the mid-1980s, a Canadian-American team of gerontologists and geographers studied Canadian snowbirds in South Florida via two questionnaire-based surveys. Victor Marshall, Charles Longino, Larry Tucker and others observed that Canadian snowbirds in Florida were more educated, wealthier, younger, and healthier than those who stayed put in the Great White North. Most respondents, they found, had been touring in Florida or visiting friends and relatives before opting for a snowbird lifestyle. Many of them had chosen neighborhoods where their friends stayed by a process that Longino *et al.* called *network recruitment*. Around 75 percent of the respondents owned property in both Canada and Florida. While in Florida, more than half of them lived in mobile homes and one quarter in condominiums; a high percentage of them also owned a summer cottage in Canada.⁵⁰

Some of the snowbirds were bringing their home with them to Florida, in the shape of a recreational vehicle. Canadian anthropologists Dorothy Ayers Counts and David R. Counts conducted a participant observation of RVers in the early 1990s. The Counts

of Applied Gerontology 9 (December 1990): 455, 461, 462; Marshall and Tucker, "Canadian Seasonal Migrants: Boon or Burden?," *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 9 (December 1990): 429.

⁴⁹ Ruth A. Martin, *The Later Life Course: A Study of the Snowbird Phenomenon* (MA diss., Carleton University, 1999), 23, 24, 89-91; John F. Watkins, "Life Course and Spatial Experience: A Personal Narrative Approach in Migration Studies," in *Migration and Restructuring in the United States: A Geographic Perspective*, eds. K. Pandit and S. Withers (Lanham, Md, 1999), 307; Packard, 92, 94, 99, 100, 103; William J. Serow, "Why the Elderly Move: Cross-National Comparisons," *Research on Aging* 9 (December 1987): 583, 595; Eleanor P. Stoller and Charles Longino, "'Going Home' or 'Leaving Home'? The Impact of Person and Place Ties on Anticipated Counterstream Migration," *The Gerontologist* 41 (February 2001): 102.

⁵⁰ Marshall and Tucker: 421, 423; Longino *et al.*, "On the Nesting of Snowbirds:" 161; Tucker, Longino and Larry C. Mullins, "Older Anglophone Canadian Snowbirds in Florida: A Descriptive Profile," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 7 (Fall 1988); Marshall *et al.* are quoted in Northcott, 24; Longino, Adam T. Perzynski,

found that RV communities involved "a limited number of people in a somewhat restricted social space or network held together by shared understandings and a sense of obligation." In the RV communities they studied, relationships were intimate and face-to-face, the bonds between individuals determined by what they shared freely. These bonds were family-like in that favors were not counted on a personal balance sheet, because reciprocity was not expected from the person actually helped, but rather from the RV community at large, which enforced this familial ethic for its members.⁵¹ However, fellow anthropologist Célia Forget nuanced this roseate view in 2005 by uncovering the numerous social chasms and barriers to interaction, some of them physically inscribed on the landscape by the dwellers themselves, that run through a typical RV park.⁵²

Overall, Canadian snowbirds numbered between 250,000 and 500,000 per year in Florida out of the 1.5 to 2 millions of Canadian visitors (in 1984) of all categories. About 60 percent of Canadian snowbirds came from Ontario, the average length of stay for the entire group being five months. The Ontarian snowbirds concentrated on the Gulf Coast in the environs of Pinellas County; the Québécois, Broward County and its environs on the Atlantic side. Québécois snowbirds were less educated, less wealthy than the Ontarians, and more likely to arrive south in January, the late start because they preferred to spend Christmas with their kin. Québécois were also more likely to live in mobile homes, and to declare slightly shorter stays than Ontarians. Québécois were also four

and Eleanor P. Stoller, "Pandora's Briefcase: Unpacking the Retirement Migration Decision," *Research On Aging* 24 (January 2002): 41.

⁵¹ Dorothy Ayers Counts and David R. Counts, *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America* (Peterborough, ON, 1996), 167-177.

⁵² To their defense, the Counts were retired anthropologists, who relished their new RV lifestyle. Célia Forget, "Rencontre avec un nomade moderne," *Ethnologies* 27 (2005). Similarly Roger B. White's *Home on the Road* sees RVs are a form of mobility that has added to the tensions on traditional communities: families and neighborhoods. See Bernard Mergen, "Review Essay: Holiday Rates," *American Studies International* 39 (June 2001): 92.

years younger on average and had been wintering in Florida for a shorter time than Ontarians. They probably had fewer friends than the Ontarians in their sunny neighborhoods. Accordingly, they were more likely to host visitors from up North – family or friends.⁵³

This scholarly attention to neighborliness and sociability has also figured in the work of Québécois social scientists who have written about the French-speaking community centered on Hollywood, in Broward County. Louis Dupont characterized this "*Floribécois*" community as built around "captive tourism," that is, on a cluster of businesses owned or operated by Québécois migrants to cater to tourists in their own tongue. Since the 1960s tourists, snowbirds and more permanent settlers from Québec have chosen this part of Florida because of its climate, low cost, and "familiar cultural milieu." By the early 1980s, as a result of captive tourism and network migration, the Hollywood area had a quasi-permanent Québécois community of around 80,000 souls, complemented each winter by 60,000 snowbirds and 435,000 tourists from Québec.⁵⁴ A high proportion of the permanent residents hailing from Québec worked in or owned businesses catering to French Canadian snowbirds and tourists. Researchers have found that mobile-home dwellers within Floribec, whether snowbirds or permanent residents, have formed and maintained geographically, culturally and socially coherent communities similar to the textbook examples of immigration studies. That is to say, their communities

⁵³ Up to 75 percent of Québécois respondents stated they lived in mobile homes, but this result was partly due to a different sampling method. Tucker *et al.*, "Older Canadians in Florida: A Comparison of Anglophone and Francophone Seasonal Migrants," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 11 (Fall 1992): 283, 287, 291, 292, 296.

⁵⁴ Louis Dupont and Marie Dussault, "La présence québécoise en Floride, un portrait," *Vie française* 36 (1982); Dupont, "Le déplacement et l'implantation de Québécois en Floride," *Vie française* 36 (1982): 26-28, 31; Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride ou l'Amérique comme un possible* (MA diss., Université Laval, 1985); Dupont, *Entre sensibilité et discours: structuration et signification de l'américanité québécoise* (PhD

have been built upon a common language and culture through neighborliness and affinity associations, and strong, enduring links to the homeland. For Dupont, the Floribécois community has played an important role in Québec's society by being part of the *possibility of migration*, taking on a role once performed by New England's milltowns.⁵⁵ Dupont's example shows how Florida, understood as a part of Québec's continental imagination, part of its *American Dream*, has easily been interpreted by scholars and other members of the Québec intelligentsia as a commentary on the home society, most often on the degree of Americanization in Québec's culture, or on the Belle Province's choices in matters of economic planning, social welfare, taxes and economic regulation.

Building on the work of Dupont, Rémy Tremblay found that a large French-speaking community settled in and around Miami Beach between 1946 and 1960. Most of these people were Americans – Franco-Americans – who were seeking to better their fortunes. Since the 1960s the community became progressively more Québécois, thanks to economic growth, the rising consumer society, enhanced transportation access, and the crumbling of the cake of custom during the Quiet Revolution, all of which stimulated travel forth from Québec. The influx provided new members for the community and fostered the concentration of a French-speaking, tourist-hosting community of small business owners and workers on the Beaches north of Miami, and northward as urban growth and massive international migration pushed non-Hispanic whites in that direction during the 1970s and early 1980s. The French-speaking community, according to Tremblay, identified itself and built its internal networking around a common culture and

diss., University of Ottawa, 1993), 308; Dupont, Anne Gilbert, and Dean R. Louder, *Les Floribécois dans le contexte de la Floride du Sud* (Sainte-Foy, Université Laval, 1994, published online by CEFAN: www.cefan.ulaval.ca/franco/my_html/florida.html (retrieved August 2006).

⁵⁵ Dupont, *Entre sensibilité et discours*, 310; Dupont and Dussault, "La présence francophone en Floride:" 8-11, 14, 22.

sociability, as well as around "structuring places" – spatial and temporal hubs or nodes such as the Hollywood Broadwalk and retail and service businesses committed to a Québécois *clientèle*. Floribec was also structured around locally available Québécois media (printed press, TV, radio) and around French-speaking social and cultural activities, most notably CanadaFest, a one-weekend winter festival on the Boardwalk held since 1994. CanadaFest, wrote Tremblay,

Embodies what Floribec is: a community of working-class people of French-Canadian origin, who idealize the Miami lifestyle, who go to the same places where French is spoken – service and retail businesses, essentially, whose survival depends in all respects on a mass resort tourism in its image.⁵⁶

In 1990, Tremblay estimated the Floribécois community as 25,000 permanent residents in the cities of Hollywood, Hallandale and Dania, plus 200,000 to 400,000 Québécois tourists each year.⁵⁷

Tremblay, like Dupont, has depicted a migrant ethnic community built on continuing linkages with the homeland of Québec, on continuous traveling between the "home" and the new "settlement," on a geographically coherent area where daily, face-to-face contacts have preserved the "home" culture, as in other migrant communities.⁵⁸

Both Tremblay and Dupont have noted a class and/ or cultural rift between the "Québécois" of Floribec, and the French-Canadian snowbirds who stayed in Surfside and North Miami Beach or (more recently) have chosen the Gulf Coast or the Daytona Beach

⁵⁶ "incarne ce qu'est Floribec: une communauté formée de gens d'origine canadienne-française appartenant à la classe populaire, idéalisant le style de vie de Miami, fréquentant les mêmes lieux de vie française - essentiellement des commerces- et dont la survie repose, à tous points de vue, sur un tourisme balnéaire de masse qui est à son image": Rémy Tremblay, *Floribec: les Québécois en vacances* (Montréal, 2001), 11, 17-24, 41-45, 49 (quote); Tremblay, "Explorer la Floride canadienne-française," in *La francophonie panaméricaine: état des lieux et enjeux*, ed. André Fauchon (Winnipeg, 2000), 268-270; Dupont, *Les Québécois*, 28-30, 70, 71, 105.

⁵⁷ Tremblay, "Research Note: Géographie, espace social et communauté Floribécoise," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 13 (2004): 367.

⁵⁸ Tremblay, *Floribec*, 54, 57.

area. Only in Broward County have French-speaking snowbirds been able to develop an ethnic network, a communitarian sociability that has allowed its members to feel "just like home" in an environment of kindred folk, familiar social events, familiar food, familiar language, familiar mass media. Dupont and Tremblay see this rift as a product of culture, social status, wealth, language skills and lifestyle. There has grown in Florida a spatial dichotomy between an isolated, working class, French-speaking, tightly knit community of "Québécois" and a more dispersed group of wealthier, bilingual, and continentalized *Canadiens*.⁵⁹

Why continentalized? Because the literature on snowbirds by French Canadians, like some of the literature on French-speaking migrants in North America, has explored the *américanité* – the continental elements of culture and worldviews – of French Canadians, in the belief that the 1960s transformation of Québécois society revitalized the footloose continental cultural traits that had been there all along, since the *coureur des bois* of the first settlements, but had been repressed by the Catholic and sedentary rural life that prevailed for most of the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century.

This interpretive framework conforms to the "modernist" or "revisionist" Québécois historiography as defined by Ronald Rudin, one strongly influenced by the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and intent on exposing the "myths" of traditional historiography. The previous school, as taught by clerical-nationalist elites, told the story of the survival of French Canadians in a hostile Anglo-Saxon environment it focused on the French Regime before 1760, and on the evolution of the constitutional status of Franco-Catholic institutions and people under British rule. Rudin wrote that "modernists" reacted in the 1960s to this tradition by emphasizing urban and social history, in order to show the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23, 28, 38-40, 58; Dupont, *Les Québécois*, 37, 42.

participation of Québec in the modernization of North America. They emphasized the links and resemblances between *La Belle Province* and the Continental pattern. Any such demonstration of the continental *Zusammenhang* (understood as cohesion or coherence) tends to stress continent-wide forces of geographic mobility, the frontier, urbanization, capitalism and political liberalism.⁶⁰ With a similar intent, Québec's geographers have rediscovered the wanderlust – and the resulting free-spirited worldview – that French Canadians inherited from the far-flung French colonial empire in North America, from their contacts with First Nations, and with the wilderness beyond the Saint Lawrence valley.⁶¹ Dupont and Tremblay are, therefore, "modernist" in their analysis of Québécois snowbirds, as shown by their attention to their mobility in Florida.

Mobility found has raised the possibility of community lost. The Northerners studying snowbirds have depicted them as avatars of their own region's mobility, of its unease with winter, and of its membership in an integrated, continental culture. By contrast, those writing from the Florida perspective have been surprised and intrigued by the social and cultural cohesion achieved by snowbirds, yet worried as well about the overall fragmentation of Florida society and the potential for intergenerational conflict that elderly migrants' political, social, and economic power may engender for the state. Frances FitzGerald thus found in the Sun City Center retirement community a strong uniformity of professional background, culture, dress, eating, leisure, family history, and

⁶⁰ Such an argument is in R. L. Earle and J. D. Wirth, "Conclusion: the Search for Community," in *L'Américanité et les Amériques*, ed. Donald Cuccioletta (Québec, 2001), 205; on the Rudin controversy see Linteau and Harvey, "Les étranges lunettes de Ronald Rudin," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 51 (Winter 1998); Ronald Rudin, "Les lunettes différentes," *RHAF* 51 (Winter 1998); Marc-André Éthier, "L'histoire du Québec -Nouvelle sensibilité, nouveau conservatisme," *Le Devoir* (5-6 April 2003); Stéphane Kelly, ed., *Les idées mènent le Québec: Essais sur une sensibilité historique* (Québec, 2002).

⁶¹ Dean R. Louder and Eric Waddell, eds., *Du continent perdu à l'archipel retrouvé: Le Québec et l'Amérique française* (Québec, 1983); Christian Morissonneau, "Mobilité et identité québécoise," *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec* 23 (1979); Louis-Edmond Hamelin, "La dimension nordique de la géopolitique

political ideology – the sort of homogeneity from which community *and* social class evolve. Fitzgerald concluded about the Sun City dwellers: "In a country where class is rarely discussed, they had found their own niche like homing pigeons."⁶² Snowbirds should be understood, and studied, as a distinct class in Florida society.

To understand snowbirds as a *community*, it is necessary to get some purchase on a slippery, contested concept. Every attempt to define "community" starts by acknowledging the great number and variety of definitions. In a 1955 analysis of community that found ninety-five definitions, George A. Hillery, Jr., grouped them into three broad analytical categories: "commonality among people, social interaction, and common land."⁶³ Rémy Tremblay also came up with three definitions: social and cultural interactions; the spatial bases of organization and display of the community; and the member's attachment to the group, and the identity stemming from this. Thomas Bender called this identity "we-ness":⁶⁴

A community involves a limited number of people in a somewhat restricted social space or network held together by shared understandings and a sense of obligation. Relationships are close, often intimate, and usually face-to-face. Individuals are bound together by affective or emotional ties rather than by a perception of individual self-interest. There is a "we-ness" in a community; one is a member.⁶⁵

Steven High and John Walsh provide another triad: "community as interaction, community as imagined reality, and community as process."⁶⁶

du Québec," *Globe* 8 (2005): 17-36.

⁶² Fitzgerald, 205, 215, 218, 220; This point is also raised by Daniel Clary: 135.

⁶³ Quoted by Catherine Rockandel, *The Road from Resource Dependency to Community Sustainability: The Case of Kimberle, British Columbia: 1966-2001* (MA diss., Simon Fraser University, 2005), 30.

⁶⁴ Rémy Tremblay, "Research Note:" 370.

⁶⁵ Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1978), 7.

⁶⁶ J.C. Walsh and Steven High, "Rethinking the Concept of Community," *Histoire sociale /Social History* 64 (November 1999): 255, 257, 272. Indeed there seems to be a consensus on some sort of triadic categorization: "organization" suggested by Harry S. Stout, "Forum: The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies," *Religion and American Culture* 6 (Summer 1996): 118.

Community understood as interaction commands that we study snowbird clusters in Florida, their leisure and affinity groups, and their meeting places. Snowbirds and retired persons, it may be hypothesized, found through their affinity grouping around face-to-face leisure activities, reason to perpetuate and cultivate the "third spaces" that Ray Oldenburg has deemed so essential to community life⁶⁷. These third spaces, exemplified by the church, the pub, or the café, have been the relatively public, egalitarian, economical places where people can build community informally through socializing outside the first and second places, namely family and work. Retired migrants to Florida can be expected to invest heavily in third places.

Second, "community as imagined reality" tells us to look at how snowbirds have defined themselves, how they have used their lifestyle, northern identities, or Florida nests to construct a worldview of *where they belong as a group*.

Third, "community as process" begs the questions of how snowbird communities and identities have been connected to their collective memory as Northerners; how their sociability and identity have evolved over time; and how snowbirds were perceived in the North, within the dynamic context of Florida's evolving image. These three concepts of community – as interaction, imagination, and process – provide the primary analytical axis of this dissertation.

The third concept – process – begs the question of narrativity: how has community changed over time? As stasis is well-nigh impossible, it either has grown or declined, in Florida or elsewhere. There has been a pervasive sense in the social sciences of

⁶⁷ Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day* (New York, 1991). See quotes and a biography of Oldenburg on the "Project for Public Spaces" website: www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/placemakers/roldenburg (retrieved August 2006).

community decline since the advent of modernity. This worldview was imbedded in classical sociology⁶⁸ and has been durably integrated in the sociological imagination of Western historians, as Thomas Bender noted in 1978 in *Community and Social Change in America*. There acknowledged that community is polysemic (associated with a number of meanings, an insight from George A Hillery Jr.) and that a fear of community declension has pervaded American culture since the Puritans⁶⁹. Thus most social change, in America, has been interpreted as conducive to community decline. Bender acknowledges that, in the hands of historians, the trope of decline, modernization and fragmentation has been a convenient narrative tool. But he thinks that a more historical way of approaching community would avoid treating community as an ideal type, a thing of the past, the *gemeinschaft*, replaced in modern conditions by its polar opposite, society or the *gesellschaft*. Inspired by James Redfield's work on Yucatan communities and that of Helen and Robert Lynd on Muncie, Indiana, Bender finds it more interesting and workable to consider that *gesellschaft* did not linearly replaced *gemeinschaft*, but that they have coexisted for a long time, in conditions of modernization.⁷⁰

Recently, research on community has solidified around the theory of social capital. Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, an analysis of a myriad sociological studies of the ways people have interacted as community members concludes that community-building interactions have mostly declined in America since the 1960s. Putnam conceives of social capital as the outcome of non-pecuniary interactions with one's fellows. The goodwill,

⁶⁸ In their syntheses of classical sociology, Dennis Poplin and David Lyon found a pervasive theme of community change and possible decline amidst modernity, in Tonnies, Marx and Durkheim: Poplin, *Communities: A Survey of Theories and Methods of Research*, second ed. (New York, 1979); Lyon, "Cyberspace Sociality: Controversies Over Computer-Mediated Relationships," in *The Governance of Cyberspace*, ed. Brian Loader (London, 1997), 23-37.

⁶⁹ Bender, 3-7; Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA, 1964).

⁷⁰ Bender, 43.

shared understanding, help and emotional satisfaction arising from these contacts benefits the individuals involved and remains in store for future interaction, so that these individual actions benefit the whole community.⁷¹

What does the recent rejection of the declensional trope and *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* dichotomy in favor of a "social capital" approach entail for this study? Snowbirds and retired migrants seem, from the traditional perspective, to be uprooted individuals who introduce, because of their distinctive lifestyle, a degree of fragmenting heterogeneity in their host communities. Declensionists would regard their social and ethnic heterogeneity as yet another source of community breakdown⁷². Yet, a theorist of social capital would see that they seem apt at many kinds of bonding sociability: such as visits to family and friends and entertaining at home, mutual help, grassroots political participation, even militancy. It follows that this study of snowbirds should provide a testing ground for the interplay of bonding with bridging social capital. This dissertation asks whether snowbirds can provide a significant cultural link between their summer and winter roosts as a result – or in spite of – their intense in-group sociability? Have snowbirds connected Florida with the rest of North America, as international diasporas have done across the oceanic divides?

Social capital research has yet another implication for this study. One of Putnam's conclusions is that an important source of social capital's recent decline has been the gradual passing of the "long civic generation" born between 1910 and 1940 whose activities contributed enormously to American (and arguably Canadian) social capital,

⁷¹ Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000), 19, 20.

⁷² Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, "Understanding the American Decline in Social Capital, 1952-1998," *Kyklos* 56 (2003): 40, 41; Anil Rupasingha, Stephan J. Goetz and David Freshwater, "The Production of Social Capital in US Counties," *Journal of Socio-Economics* 35 (February 2006): 83-101.

mostly capital of the bridging, inclusive sort. These people, sometimes known as the New Deal Generation, were very active in formal organizations, like churches, political parties, volunteer and charity associations, and affinity clubs. Even they, Putnam has found, decreased their *private* socializing as the decades unfolded – in activities like visits to friends, playing cards and entertaining at home.⁷³

Overall, however, the *New Deal* or *long civic generation* (born on the cusps of world war between 1910 and 1940), had community, in spite of the modernist upheaval it experienced. Briefly they proved Durkheim wrong about the effects of modernization, and snowbirds have been a particularly vivid illustration of their community-building capabilities. However, this dissertation must address a troubling question: will the snowbirds born since 1940 create as much social capital as their parents' generation? If the answer is yes, if community is achieved by the first snowbirds to experience the post-modernity first widely noted in the 1970s, then there is reason for optimism that we post- (or late-) modern Canadians and Americans also can.

Readers will have to await an answer. Here, let us summarize this introductory chapter. First, this dissertation frames its narrative around the two themes of migration and community. These themes have suggested the questions that will shape the discussion. The first set of questions concern the decision to migrate, the decision best understood as an evolving, dynamic process: How have snowbirds chosen Florida? How have they traveled there? Did the journey south itself affect them? In other words, the dissertation starts with the *journey*. Its hypothesis is that the journey has historically been planned with a number of expectations. Because Florida was so advertised, formally by mass media and informally by social networks, travelers' expectations were high, and

⁷³ Putnam, 254-257, 265-276.

probably changed during the journey and upon arrival. The questions that flow from the most basic one of all – "Why Florida?" – are addressed in the Chapters Two and Three.

A second set of questions concern the process of settlement. How have snowbirds settled down south? How has this process related to their original expectations? Settlement raised questions of community-building: How have snowbirds fashioned their communities? What brought them together? What sorts of housing or accommodations have they chosen? Have their choices changed with affluence? Has social geography mattered? How have snowbird "communities" interacted with their Floridian neighbors? What can be learnt from snowbirds about community-building in conditions of post-modern rootlessness? (More on these conditions in Chapters Five, Six and Seven) Have snowbirds given new meanings to Florida's landscapes through their settlement? To what extent have snowbirds ghettoized? Were there forces tending to ghettoize them? If so, how have these been tempered?

Logically, given the findings of history and the social sciences, we may expect to find that snowbird communities carry a mixed message for North Americans fearful of "community decline." Optimists will be comforted by their vibrant sociability and their taste for *third spaces*, for informal and face-to-face social interaction despite their relative rootlessness. This finding is the most significant of this dissertation, and one relevant to the ongoing "urban" crisis, since modernity and post-modernity assailed community, each in its turn. In sum, community-building is the overarching theme uniting the second question set. Thus, Chapter Four deals with accommodations and housing; Chapter Five, with issues of community decline in Florida; Chapter Six, with the ways and means of snowbird community-building by affinity; and Chapter Seven, with a case study, using Canadian evidence, of snowbird community-building.

The third set of questions considers the legacy of going south: Have snowbirds been changed by their Florida experience? How has their Florida experience been transmitted, if at all, to their home states and provinces? While it is well-known that its Northern settlers have influenced Florida, this dissertation will look for evidence of feedback, of Florida's influence on the North. It asks: Did travelers to Florida experience a cultural change – a Gulf and Gold Coast "sea change," as it were – that the traveler took back home? Did, for example, Canadian snowbirds become less "Canadian" than those who have wintered in the North? Also, what has Northern discourse about Florida told us about the values and assumptions, over time, of the American Northeast and of "Central" Canada? It will be shown in Chapter 8 that winter travel to Florida has had a major influence on the culture, worldviews and cultural modernization of the northeast quadrant of this continent (for instance in foodways, or in the views held about continental geography and cultural divides).

To answer these three sets of questions, the narrative here unfolds in the same sequential manner that a vacation to Florida takes place. First there is the beckoning of Florida (Chapter 1), then the journey (Chapter 2), next the sojourn (Chapters 3-7), and finally the voyage home (Chapter 8) laden with fruit, seashells, memories, and insights. Chapter 8 and the conclusion attempt to answer the third set of questions. Florida stands for more than itself: it has had a major influence on North America, one that has been mediated by its image-making and advertisement as an Edenic place, since the late nineteenth century. After 1945, these images found a fertile ground in the consumer culture that was triumphing at the same time throughout the continent. As we shall see, the snowbird story reveals that Florida's influence on North American culture has been

more complex and ambiguous than the usual jeremiads of creeping cultural sameness do conjure.

My original interest in Florida's snowbirds – especially those from Canada – was stimulated by my suspicion of cultural sameness. Arguably this is what led me to Florida in the first place. As a young Québécois, I have been aware of the waves of cultural assimilation issuing forth from the Anglo-Saxon sea surrounding Québec. Canadians in general have been more fearful of continental, homogenizing forces than East Coast Americans. As a result, they fear few things more than being mistaken for Americans. Hence I have looked at the Canadian and Québécois snowbirds most carefully. Like canaries in a mine, these birds alert us to the risks of seeking El Dorado. My generation, like my parents', has been beguiled by the promise of continental mobility and comfort, leisure and pleasure promised by the Florida Dream. Those who snub Florida seem to have their own dream-destination of hope, pleasure and leisure – Las Vegas, California, Hawaii, the Costa del Sol, the Côte d'Azur, Mexico, Brazil, Australia. Most of us have been gazing at some version of the Florida dreamscape for some time now. Most of us have dreamt of freedom and pleasure somewhere *à l'envers de l'hiver*. Are these places *far away from winter, far away from the daily grind* necessary to life in the North, or are they, as they have often been depicted, mere mirages that beckon us to a friendless, meaningless life and death beneath the cruel southern sun? *In hiberna veritas?*

CHAPTER 2

FLORIDA DREAMING

"Why Florida?" Why has winter tourism been so important there? The obvious answer – its climate – is insufficient, for it ignores the extent to which Florida had to be constructed as a tourist destination. Florida's natural assets would have remained as ignored by mass tourism as the Mountains of the Moon had it not been for human artifice – the construction of hotels and "attractions," advertisements and media visibility, as well as transportation technology and accessibility. Improvements to transportation were so fundamental to the timing and character of Florida's emergence as a tourist Mecca that they require a chapter of their own – Chapter 3, that will follow Northern tourists and snowbirds, who, having surrendered to Florida's allure, took to the rails, the roads, or the air. Chapter 2 now examines the process by which Southern Florida was manufactured into one of the world's most lucrative artifacts: a tourist destination for 86 million people in 2005 – indeed, more than France's international visitors for that same year¹, without a glaciated alp, gothic cathedral, or Mona Lisa to visit.

¹ Visit Florida, "Florida Experiences Record Breaking Tourism Visitation in 2005" (February 2006) media.visitflorida.org/corporate/news/?ID=612 (Retrieved September 2006); For France, 76 million international tourist arrivals in 2005: UNWTO, *Tourism Highlights*, 2006 edition (Madrid, 2006), 5.

2.1 Before the Dream: Climate, the Beach, and Myths

Florida historian Raymond Arsenault, while concluding, contrary to Montesquieu, that "climate may not be the key to human history,"² has recognized that "Florida" has been sold to Northerners as the place "where the sun goes in winter."³ As a 1960s guidebook on Florida claimed, "climate is the ultimate factor in Florida." During the 1990s, when tourism was threatened by South Florida's reputation for violence, climate summed it all for a snowbird and a local journalist: "the only thing that Florida has to offer now is weather."⁴

Winter is indeed more temperate in South Florida than anywhere else in Canada or the Continental United States. Tourist businesses and tourism-dependent communities have not only thrived on warm Florida winters, but have also used their visitors' aversion to cold northern weather as an argument for extending their stays, or for overlooking Florida's defects. For decades it has been standard practice for Florida newspapers to comment on their front page on the weather forecast for Canada, the Northeast or the frigid Midwest. Typical was this front-page item in the *St. Petersburg Times* in February 1990:

The difference between February in Florida and February in the rest of the country was seldom better illustrated than it was on Thursday, when the

² Arsenault, "The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioner and Southern Culture," *The Journal of Southern History* 50 (November 1984): 599.

³ *Financial Post*, 5 November 1955, 12.

⁴ Stephen J. Flynn, *Florida: Land of Fortune* (Washington, DC, 1962), 6; quotes: "The 'real culprit'," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 20 February 1994, 3D; and Joey Slinger, "Retreat of the Birds," *Saturday Night* 104 (April 1989): 76; Other such testimonies: "Florida," *Financial Post* (hereafter *FP*), 3 November 1956; "The Lure of Florida's Sand and Sun," *FP*, 18 February 1956, 12; Lisa J. Huriash, "Canadian Winter," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, 1; "People over age 65 who were asked in a *Times* survey what they like about living here cited the weather nearly 80 percent of the time. The University of Florida found a similar result...": John A. Cutter, "Ah, Those Golden Years," *St. Petersburg Times*, 29 June 1995, 1a; 1991-93 survey of 13,183 snowbirds shows 61% say climate is the reason they are in Florida: John Maines, "Flock of Snowbirds is Increasing in Size," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 7 January 1995, 21A; "Study 'Snowbird' Flocks Growing," *Miami Herald*, 7 January 1995, 5B; Manon Lanthier, "Pour qui déteste les hivers d'enfer de l'Outaouais....," *Le Droit*, 4 January 1993, 20.

Sunshine state continued to bask in record temperatures while the rest of the country dealt with blizzards, cold and generally yucky weather.⁵

The following picture of a snow-covered Chicago suburb made the *Miami Herald* front page in February 1967:



Illustration 2.1: Chicago Suburb, Winter 1967. Source: *Miami Herald*, 7 February 1967, A1.

Within Florida itself, weather became increasingly less "yucky" as one went further south. If Florida was the place to avoid winter, the best place to do it was in South Florida, the region below Fort Pierce and St. Petersburg, for January temperatures within Florida vary between 10 and 19°C.⁶ In 1895, Henry Flagler, in response to a killer frost in the orange groves around Jacksonville, decided to extend his railway to Miami, thus

⁵ Karen Datko *et al.*, "Tampa Bay Bakes While Freak Snowstorm Batters Much of U.S.," *St. Petersburg Times*, 16 February 1990, 2A; awareness of this editorial policy: J.A. Loftus, "Old Joke, But True....," *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), 11 February 1958, sect. 2:1.

creating South Florida's "Gold Coast" – the four counties on the Atlantic Coast between Palm Beach and Key West known for their clement weather.⁷ South Florida thus had in the entire Twentieth Century a winter tourist season, with many fewer visitors during the summer – the opposite of the pattern even in states as untouched by winter's full force as South Carolina.⁸

The warm weather of South Florida in January allowed tourists to pursue beach activities in light clothing, to play golf, shuffleboard or practice fishing in short-sleeved shirts, even – if young or hardy – to swim in the Ocean or Gulf. Though most Floridians declined to take sea baths in January, Northerners found the water temperature off Miami and Key West (seldom lower than 70 Fahrenheit or 21 Celsius), quite tolerable compared to the perennially "bracing" waters north of Cape Cod.⁹ Although Floridians found the winter ocean to be too chilly, they understood the appeal of year-round swimming to Northerners. Sarasotan David Grimes facetiously put it:

Newspapers are also required by law to publish at least one photograph each winter of some nut from Ontario or Buffalo swimming in the Gulf of Mexico, along with a caption mentioning the projected high for the day, which is usually about 50 degrees warmer than it is in International Falls or Fargo.¹⁰

⁶ 9.5 degrees in Savannah, Georgia, and 19 °C in West Palm Beach. Source: NOAA, "Climate at a Glance – US Cities," www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/cag3/city.html (Retrieved March 2004).

⁷ "Exploring Florida: Social Studies Resources for Students and Teachers," web site hosted by the Florida Center for Instructional Technology, University of South Florida, Tampa: fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/miami/miami.htm (Retrieved August 2006).

⁸ In the late 1980s, the high season for the recreational-vehicle resorts of South Carolina's seacoast was summer; even though these campgrounds remained open year-round, most patrons, even retired persons, went there for the summer. Climatic data on U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website, under the heading "Climate at a Glance": www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/cag3/city.html (Retrieved September 2005); *NYT*, 23 February 1958, sect. 10:19; RV resort of South Carolina: Robert L. Janiskee, "Resort Camping in America," *Annals of Tourism Research* 17 (1990): 397.

⁹ See website created by environmental scholar Stephen J Leatherman, aka Dr. Beach, with water temperatures charts: "Dr. Beach," www.drbeach.org/drbeach/ (August 2006).

¹⁰ David Grimes, *Tourists, Retirees, and Other Reasons to Stay in Bed* (Sarasota, 2000), 20; About cultural differences in water temperature appreciation: Dr. Stephen Leatherman, environmental scholar and Director of FIU's Laboratory for Coastal Research, suggested that Northerners should subtract five degrees Fahrenheit to what was an optimal temperature for bathing comfort –between 70 and 80F. Stephen J Leatherman, www.drbeach.org/drbeach/ (August 2006).

Another columnist, a native Floridian, reacted to a blizzard that covered the Northeastern United States with a foot of snow by writing:

So why do we live here? Look outside.... Things could be worse. Sure, it's cold here this week – windy, too. But it's not snowing, is it? Roads and windshields are not coated with sheets of ice. Gutters are not creaking from the weight of hanging icicles. Driving is no more treacherous than usual. Businesses, schools and other public facilities are open. Electricity and traffic are flowing as smoothly as ever. We're not trapped in our homes for days on end, getting on each other's nerves and passing colds from one to another and back again.¹¹

¹¹ Ray Recchi, "Utopias 'Up North' Are Not So Hot Now," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 9 January 1996, 3E.

A January 1960 article of the *Miami Herald* relayed the testimony of a contemporary Caesar who "came, saw, stayed," on account of the almighty weather, the outdoor life, and the lower living costs associated with warmth.¹² This lower-cost argument is very often evoked in relation to mild weather: in Florida, clothing, heating and medical bills have been depicted as being inherently cheaper, *because* of the climate.

Illustration 2.2: *Miami Herald's* Summary of 'Why Florida?,' 1960. Source: Stephen Trumbull, "You Get More Out of Life in Florida," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1960.

¹² Stephen Trumbull, "You Get More Out of Life in Florida," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1960, 12E; Alex Shoumatoff, *Florida Ramble* (New York, 1974), 35-37; testimony of Chicago hotelman growing old under Florida's sun: "Beach Can't Miss, Hotelman Says," *Miami Herald*, 27 January 1950, 17A.



Why Florida? It Figures

Here's a few reasons why Floridians figure, their state's tops:

Average Winter Temperature
New York 49.2 Chicago 34.8
Detroit 35.8 MIAMI 71.2

Cost of Living

Consumer Price Index:

Average of U.S. Cities	Metro Miami
Food 118	113
Housing 129	125

Electric Power, 250 Kilowatt Hours:

MIAMI \$8.29 New York 8.52
Boston 9.89

Typical cafeteria meal:

MIAMI, \$1.00; New York, \$1.20; Newark, \$1.18.

Fuel use index:

MIAMI, 172; Atlanta, 2,811;
Chicago, 6,000.

State Income Tax
NONE

In addition to its warm weather, Florida has benefited from its beaches since the country's Puritanical values were joined at the end of the nineteenth century by a popular culture that embraced the casualness, self-indulgence, lassitude, and immodesty associated with beach (in)activities, Historian John Kasson has described this new culture – which first flourished in the United States at Coney Island – as "exuberant, daring, sensual, uninhibited, and irreverent."¹³ Thus an ideal of "fun" developed in North American culture, which became associated with the beach environment and with beach attire.¹⁴ Street railways throughout the United States and Canada accordingly developed beach "resorts" on a nearby waterfront to stimulate riding on weekends, holidays and summer evenings. With the beach experience available for a trolley fare, it was by no means certain that anyone would ever take the far costlier – in time and dollars – train trip to Florida.

Florida, however, came into the play zone as vacations lengthened and travel costs fell. It had 33,000 named lakes and 2,200 miles of tidal shoreline, boasting as of a 1996 survey, fifteen of the twenty best beaches in the United States including Hawaii.¹⁵ Though

¹³ Kasson, *Amusing the Million* (New York, 1978), 40, 41, 50, 63; Kraus, *Leisure in a Changing America* (Boston, 2000), 34; Chris Rojek, "Cybertourism and the Phantasmagoria of Place," in *Destinations: Cultural Landscapes of Tourism*, ed. Greg Ringer (London, 1998), 37.

¹⁴ Angela J. Latham, "Packaging Woman: The Concurrent Rise of Beauty Pageants, Public Bathing, and Other Performances of Female 'Nudity'," *Journal of Popular Culture* 29 (Winter 1995).

¹⁵ "Boating Enthusiasts Should Think of Florida," *FP*, 22 January 1966, 36; Since 1991, the annual top-ten of America's beaches published by environmental scholar Stephen P. Leatherman, has rated a Florida beach number one on five occasions, while the 2006 top-ten included two from the Sunshine State. Only Hawaii did better in Dr. Leatherman's (*aka* Dr. Beach) view. Leatherman is Professor and Director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University. The top-ten is on the LCR website: www.ihr.c.fiu.edu/nhbc/index.htm (retrieved August 2006). The 1996 survey took into account cleanliness and nonintrusive development: Gerry Hall, "Beaches Plus Culture," *Toronto Star*, 12 November 1996, B3; A survey of 298 persons attending the Canada Fest in Hollywood in 1998 showed 66% were there for the beach and weather: A.M. Voisard, "Sous les palmiers, la manne," *Le Soleil*, 3 April 1998, A1; Jean-Guy and Ginette Nadeau, at the C.B. Smith RV Park in Pembroke Pines testify they come for the sun and beach: Frank Fernandez, "Snowbirds' Impact Subtle in Southwest Broward," *Miami Herald*, 22 November 1990, 3BSW; 79% came for the Beach, 62,6% for climate and sunshine: survey of 15,000 outgoing conducted by J. Richard Stevens, School of Business, FSU, Tallahassee, in C.E. Wright, "Florida Checks its Guests' Likes and Dislikes," *NYT*, 20 October 1957, sect. 10:31; 1982 study of Canadian tourism finds them viewing

still entranced by their own beaches, Northerners increasingly regarded Florida as a wintertime alternative – its beaches the path to endless summer. Was there a Florida beyond the beach? Northerners rarely wondered – it was like worrying whether Atlantic City existed beyond Pacific Avenue. A long block farther from the water – from Atlantic to Pacific – was far enough for true beach lovers.

Florida was being constructed for them. But would Northerners actually venture that far south? To some extent, they came on the recommendation of friends and family. A great deal of Florida publicity was by word-of-mouth – via social networks. A resort could obtain free promotion as people spoke with peers back home, displayed their pictures, and sent postcards and letters – generating envy and desire. St. Petersburg's John A. Cutter has claimed that all snowbirds came because of their networks:

Sometimes you think, if you look back far enough, you might find the original: That first retiree who moved to the Tampa Bay area, the one who came for the weather and the low taxes and the cheap real estate. Everyone who came after could find a link to that person, through friends and family, on the Retiree Family Tree. "Oh, my brother lived here first," they say. Or, "My buddy on the auto line moved down, and the wife and I visited. We bought a house that week." Sometimes it's a variation on the genealogy theme: "We vacationed here and always loved it, so we bought a little place and became snowbirds. Then it got too much, the back and forth, so we stayed all year round." They got a taste of Florida on these visits or vacations and were hooked.¹⁶

Thus people vacationed in Florida thanks to people who had been there, through their kin and other social networks, through the postcards they received. The messages on postcards in Florida historical archives reveal what tourists looked for in Florida: sun, sea, warmth, and outdoor recreation. Nearly all of them mention how close to the beach their

Florida as mostly "Sunshine" (34%) and "Beach/ sea/ ocean" (13%): Ady Milman, "Canadian Tourism in Florida: A Treasure to be Kept," *Tourism Barometer II* 5 (Spring 1986); survey of visitors: 77.9% did subbathing, 63% swam, 49% said they liked Miami because of climate: V.W. Bennett and B.A. Westmoreland, *A Survey of the Winter Tourist Industry of Greater Miami* (Coral Gables, 1951), 8, 20.

¹⁶ John A. Cutter, "Ah, Those Golden Years," *St. Petersburg Times*, 29 June 1995, 1A.

hotel was, how they were able to fish in the sea, how the weather was, how the trip down south went, and how they enjoyed "the good life" they found there.¹⁷ There was, of course, an element of smugness or *Schadenfreude* in the act of writing home to freezing friends and family. One Canadian snowbird put it thus:

¹⁷ Kasson, 35; postcards found in Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami. Examples of text: 13 October 1950, to Washington DC "I needn't tell you the merits of Florida. Getting a suntan gradually. The ocean is in front of this pool"; 18 January 1961, to Fulton Av., Toronto: "We like this place so much, with its pool and the beach a half block away, we decided to stay a whole week.... This climate can sure make you lazy"; 22 January 1952 to Van Cortland Av., Bronx, "Sorry we couldn't get to see you. I was too ill. This place is my salvation. Wish you could join me"; 8 May 1960 to Berkeley Heights NJ; "Feeling fine and having a good time going to the beach every day.... Weather beautiful as usual"; 25 April 1961, Rochester NY: "I feel like a queen here, what we have seen of Miami is bright and beautiful"; 13 February 1950, to Rochester NY, MacFadden-Deauville Hotel is "fabulous as is everything else down here"; 18 February 1951, to NYC. After fishing, "I am sun burnt already"; 9 February 1954, to 9th Ave., NYC, "In the First Book of Genesis Chapter 10, if that is so, He did a good job down here"; 15 November 1956, to Richmond Hill NY, "This is the life. Retirement is wonderful"; 12 February 1956, to Troy NY, "nothing like it"; 20 February 1952, to Richmond Hill NY, "Greetings from the Sunny South"; 10 January 1962, to Berkeley Heights NJ, "Staying 4 months. Let me know if you are coming down"; 20 March 1956, to Plainfield NJ, "Can you go out the house on account the snow?"; 1 February 1951, to Pawtucket RI, "Guess we will be coming home in the bad weather"; October 1981, from Clearwater Beach to Pittsburgh, "Getting a good suntan"; 27 April 1961, St Petersburg to Buffalo, Commenting a beach picture: "This is the place I have been looking for"; 2 March 1951, from St. Petersburg to NYC, "Expected you in NYC frost of February"; 12 March 1963, image of Miami Airport, to Pittsburgh, "According to the papers it is still cold in Pittsburgh"; 30 September 1977, from Orlando to NY "After all that lousy weather up north, I'm finally soaking up the sun"; 9 February 1966, from Bradenton to Niagara Falls, Weather nice and "heard you had lots of snow!"; 5 January 1960, from Miami to Millsville NJ, with beach scene "The Beach is for me"; 30 December 1960, Ft. Lauderdale to Saginaw MI: "Hate to leave this Florida with warm weather."; 26 December 1958, from Miami to Rowayton CT "We are dreading to come back to the "frozen north"; 10 January 1957, from Miami to Plainfield NJ, will do the same trip next year; 23 February 1974, from Miami to Claysville PA, "This is really living"; 26 March 1955, from Miami to Cincinnati, "has spring finally come to you?"; 4 February 1956, from Miami to New Haven CT, "Arrived 4 o'clock Friday to kill the winter"; 24 February 1964, from North Miami Beach to Rochester NY, picture of beach scene "hope it is not too cold up north"; 1 December 1956, St. Petersburg to Farmington NH: "Hope you are not freezing"; 14 November 1967, Clearwater to Washington DC "We'll probably both get fat from being so lazy and eating so much."; 10 March 1976, St. Petersburg to LeRoy NY, when they left Buffalo it was 28F, in Tampa it was 83F; 17 March 1969, St. Petersburg to Auburn (?) NH "I guess you are still buried up there in snow"; 16 March 1960, St. Petersburg to Baltimore, image of Passe-a-grille Beach: "Had a snowy trip down," went to circus and Cypress Gardens; 8 January 1952, St. Petersburg to Batavia NY, will be back in February, "Weather here is like August weather in Batavia"; 5 March 1957, St. Petersburg to Toledo "It was nice in Chicago, but here we had a 4 Day Rain"; 11 March 1952, Clearwater to Oneonta NY "12 days in the sun here are not too many"; 26 February 1962, to Topsfield MA, "just biding my time until the driving conditions improve up north"; 6 May 1957, Zephyrhills to Columbus: "getting warm here in Florida"; Vinoy Park Hotel, 4 March 1950, mailed from St. Pete to Columbus, "will hate to get back in 'harness"; 18 October 1956, St. Petersburg to Ayer MA: "Some day you will come to Florida but just now it is lessons and learning now to go up to be a nice big girl. -Granny"; 22 February 1957, Bradenton to Dover, Del., we did 18.6 mi/gal, "scenery is just like the Carolinas until you get almost here"; 12 April 1965, Clearwater to Nutley NY "Lots of bugs" but nice weather, "so who should complain" we have seen Silver Springs and Busch Gardens; in Pinellas County Heritage Village collection: Colonial Motel and Apts. mailed in St. Petersburg, January 1965, to Baltimore: "Hear we missed a BIG snow."

We've just nicely settled in for the winter again.... Now, as the days slip closer to Christmas, the letters are filled with self-pity and horrors. "It's -10 degrees Celsius, and there's a foot of snow on the ground!" That roughly translates into 14 degrees Fahrenheit, and that is cold! So we read their letters and smile, pick up a pen and sheet of paper, and answer with, "It's still 80 degrees and sunny here. Thought you'd like to know that," and mail it with a heartless chuckle.¹⁸

Postcards, letters and word of mouth spread the Florida Dream up north. Arguably, this informal propaganda empowered tourists and migrants to craft their own versions of the Dream; this possibility will be analyzed in Chapters 3, 6 and 7. Yet postcards and gossip left far too much to chance for Florida's amenity entrepreneurs. A hotel or resort proprietor could not trust to luck to stave off bankruptcy in hard times – because of inclement weather or economic conditions.

To venture South in good times and bad, Northerners would have to believe that their trip would transport them into the realm of myth, far from their dull, quotidian lives. To set their lure, Florida's tourism promoters resorted to two ancient, universal cultural constructs – to sets of icons and expectations of pleasure and comfort, and of the behaviors associated with such images, fantasies, and leisurely pursuits of eons past. These constructs may be grouped in two categories: Edenism and Carnival. At the creation of the world, there was Eden. Since the peninsula's discovery by Europeans, Florida has been often depicted as an Eden-like garden, a symbol of harmony, and a proof of God's benevolence. Art historian Margot Ammidown has suggested: "Florida was mythologized based on the Judeo-Christian image of Eden as bountiful and temperate,

¹⁸ Carol A. Houghton, "Hard to Beat the Dual Life of a Snowbird," *St. Petersburg Times*, 17 December 1987, 2. Other such warmth-bragging from snowbirds: "When leaves leave, we leave.": Bill Coats, "As Leaves Hit the Ground, Retirees Hit Town Again," *St. Petersburg Times*, 18 October 1993, 2; "Every year when wintry blasts blow through Canada's cities, many Canadians migrate south to Florida": "Florida," *FP*, 3 November 1956; "escape from the wearing routine of snowsuits and slushy sidewalks": Jane French, "Florida on a Whim," *Globe and Mail*, 6 March 1993, F5; similar instance of bragging: Russell Baker, "Among the Gators," *NYT*, 28 February 1990, A27.

enlivened by the noble savage standing naked in the garden."¹⁹ In literature Florida has been an enchanted, enigmatic place where the extraordinary, the nearly supernatural might happen, or be expected.²⁰ As early as the Sixteenth Century, best-selling travel narratives constructed the Edenic legend around Ponce de Leon, who discovered Florida in 1513 on a voyage inspired by a rumor about a rich island north of Cuba – other, similar narratives would follow. Therefore, literary historian Anne E. Rowe has found a paradisiacal "idea of Florida" showing up in Northerners' prose and poetry since the 18th century.²¹

Hence, a Florida vacation evokes, however remotely, in the Judaeo-Christian mind, Eden and the paradisiacal afterlife. The "idea of Florida" has drawn on elements of this plot line of pleasure lost and pleasure promised: with Florida as Eden, a bountiful garden where life was conducted carelessly, in states of relative undress (unlike the cloth-bound life of guilt and misery since the Fall). Thus in Western culture an utopianism based on Eden thrived: when Westerners came to America, their Eden was a God-given garden of which Man was the caretaker, something which deeply resonated with the settling of America as demonstrated by Leo Marx, and it embodied in myth the longing for a simpler, unsophisticated, carefree life closer to nature. This spelled *Florida*.²²

¹⁹ Margot Ammidown, "Edens, Underworlds, and Shrines: Florida's Small Tourist Attractions," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 23 (1998): 240; Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States: A Social and Cultural History of Florida, 1950-2000," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Summer 2002): 10; Ken Breslauer, *Roadside Paradise: The Golden Age of Florida's Tourist Attractions, 1929-1971* (St. Petersburg, 2000), 10; Beverly Moon, "The Entrance to Paradise," *An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism* (Boston, 1991), 32; "Garden," in *The Complete Dictionary of Symbols*, ed. Jack Tresidder (London, 2004), 200.

²⁰ Maurice O'Sullivan, Jr., and Jack C. Lane, eds., *The Florida Reader: Visions of Paradise, from 1530 to the Present* (Sarasota, 1991); Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville, 1992).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6; see also Tommy R. Thompson, "Florida in American Popular Magazines," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 82 (2003): 1-2.

²² Stephen J. Tonsor, "Arcadia," in *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, ed. Jean-Charles Seigneuret, vol. 1 (Westport, Ct, 1988), 108, 109; Mary Ellen Snodgrass, "Eden," in *Encyclopedia of Utopian*

Later, many exegeses of the myth of Eden would see in the very common feelings of innocence and love, even in nakedness, traces of a pre-Fall grace that still could be found in human nature after the Fall. Hence Walt Whitman wrote that "evil doesn't exist" in nudity; Victor Hugo and Jean Giraudoux wrote nostalgically of a time when Man had a simple, innocent nature. All three drew from the myth of Eden the idea that Paradise was to be found in love, that Man could be his own God²³ – at least, said Florida mythmakers, while vacationing on a tropical beach on the Gold Coast.

This otherworldliness is found in the second myth that inspired Florida Dreaming: the Carnival. Like religious holidays, a vacation is a respite from the "normal" routine of life: work, domestic life, family, and neighborhood. Hence, a vacation in Florida was a special period, outside of the ordinary, much like the religious celebrations studied by Mircea Eliade;²⁴ that is, it was a "sacred time" where the ordinary ways of measuring time, duration, and duty are temporarily put aside. At the minimal level, it is a time of ritual evasion outside of the constraints of daily life, of normal space and time. Florida has meant holiday, a reversal of the ordinary, as occurred during medieval carnivals, with their days of feasting and symbolic reversals of the social order, their ritual enactments, of that which Mikhail Bakhtin called "the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality and abundance."²⁵ Like life in Eden, the ideal of carnival reversed the ordinary reality of power, inequality, and duty – within the temporary confines of a holy day or holiday.

Literature (Santa Barbara, CA, 1995), 185-187; Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1964).

²³ Henri Desroche, "Utopie," in *Encyclopaedia Universalis* 23 (Paris, 2002), 239-241; Robert Couffignal, "Eden," in *Dictionnaire des Mythes Littéraires*, New augmented edition, ed. Pierre Brunel (Paris, 1988), 546.

²⁴ The exegesis of Eliade is in Erik Cohen, "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences," in *The Sociology of Tourism*, eds. Apostopoulos, Leivadi and Yiannakis (London, 1996), 91, 92; M. Eliade, "Enfers et Paradis," *Encyclopaedia Universalis* 8 (Paris, 2002), 288-290.

Florida's seasonal rhythms have merged Eden and Carnival, the important festivals of Christianity and Judaism delimiting its prime holiday time – Christmas or Hanukkah for early winter, and Easter or Passover for early spring. Hence tourists came to Florida with expectations framed by a carnivalesque repertoire learned back home, through their deep cultural background, but also through commercial leisure, movies, and the laid-back lifestyle that Kasson observed on Coney. This modern carnival was a place and time where norms and mores were different, where time and space were "falsified." Walter Benjamin observed a similar brand of the modern experience, when suggesting that consumption was at the heart of the urban phantasmagoria, revealing the desires of the masses, thus participating in a creation of "utopian moments."²⁶

The most Edenic and Carnavalesque place in Florida has always been the beach. As on Kasson's Coney Island, beach behavior has been an important part in its "irreverent" popular culture. With life stripped to the essentials, the Florida Beach has been, according to anthropologist Michael Taussig, an iconic place where modern "rituals of reversal and pleasure take place"²⁷. Moderns see beaches as a place where they have the freedom to experiment or to play with one of the fundamentals of Western culture. Is not the southern beach perceived by many as the radical Other to frosty, northern virtue? And, Taussig asks, "is this dichotomy not built into the world's dominant languages and habits of perception?"²⁸ While the entire South has long had implications of secrecy and

²⁵ Quoted by Dean MacCannell, "Spectacles," *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers* (London, 1992), 233; on escapism as norms-reversal, see also John A. Jakle, *The Tourist* (Lincoln, Neb., 1985), 56-61; Vance Packard, *A Nation of Strangers* (New York, 1972), 100-103.

²⁶ Kasson, 40, 41, 50, 63; Chris Rojek, "Cybertourism and the Phantasmagoria of Place," in *Destinations: Cultural Landscapes of Tourism*, ed. Greg Ringer (London, 1998), 37; Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance* (New York, 1994), 210, 211, 231.

²⁷ Taussig, "The Beach (A Fantasy)," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago, 2002), 326.

²⁸ Taussig, 331.

transgression for repressed, uptight Northerners, the Southern *beach* is especially exotic, and full of possibilities for locating the Other *within*; it is a place, Taussig writes, where,

adults play at becoming children...[and] bodies are partially stripped of their clothes.... Here the margin between land and sea is where the repression sustaining civilization takes a transgressive dive and where, moreover, it is seen to be doing so.²⁹

Of course the "nudity" experienced on Florida's beaches has always been timid by the standards of European toplessness; in Florida, nakedness has remained distinctively American – irreverently titillating but *never* wicked. Any hint of sin in the media image of Florida beaches has always been promptly denounced, and regarded as bad publicity, even during the libertine late 1970s when a state advertisement actually showed the back of a bather without her bikini top.³⁰ Her front has yet to appear in state-sanctioned advertising.

The idea of the Good Life on Florida's beaches (and elsewhere) has had similarities with the idea of Utopia – it is *nowhere* – far, far from the ordinary *here*. It is utopian because it is a place where individuals live more satisfying, "stressfree" lives than seem possible in the "real" world. Florida, as utopia, offers escape from the routine and drudgery of daily life. Since the rise of industrial, modern society in North America this longing for an edenic, benevolent nature has become ever more intense, even as the machine relentlessly entered the American garden to the point where technology frames the American experience of nature.³¹ The tourist who flies in a jet plane to a steel-framed hotel hugging one of the busiest roads in the United States is definitely having a mediated relationship with nature. Her Eden comes with powerboats, his utopia with national

²⁹ Taussig, 340.

³⁰ S. Gyllenhaal, "Miami...", *Toronto Star*, 29 November 1981, D4; Morton Lucoff, "Picture of Girl's Eyes May Be Too Sexy," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 16 December 1979.

brands.³² Even so, tourists in Florida rely even now on the long-standing iconography of paradisiacal escape to justify and explain their sojourn.³³

The icons and myths from which the "Florida Dream" has been constructed are far from unique. Ideas of Eden and Utopia and the Carnavalesque reversal of norms are even more ancient and ubiquitous than North American culture. There are many dreams, not least of which are the California and American dreams – two examples that probably leap to the mind more readily than does Florida's southern version. The promoters of Florida borrowed heavily from the mythic repertoire available to Americans to create a unique Florida "dreamscape," as historian Ray Arsenault has called it. No mere copy or subordinate version of the American or California dream, the "idea of Florida" in the popular imagination is an original creation, one that predates the United States itself.

No matter how natural or instinctive some of its components may be, the Florida Dream had to be constructed by the state's promoters and boosters. The next section discusses the ways in which the state's builders put to use the repertoires of icons, expectations and behaviors that history, climate and location had given them. This section will relate the story of how Florida created and advertised itself to potential tourists and migrants. Tourist Florida was, after all, made not begotten. What journalist R. L. Perry wrote of Miami Beach in 1962, could be said of Southern Florida as a whole: "Miami Beach owed its very existence (a) 25% to the climate and (b) 75% to a generation of canny promoters."³⁴

³¹ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1964).

³² Snodgrass, "Utopia," in *Encyclopedia of Utopian Literature*, 523.

³³ Kevin E. McHugh, "Oh, the Places They'll Go! Mobility, Place and Landscape in the Film *This is Nowhere*," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 23 (Fall/Winter 2005): 80.

³⁴ Quoted in George Bryant, "Nature's Assets Nearby Homes of Rich, Famous," *Toronto Star*, 12 November 1996, B4.

2.2 Promotion and Advertisement: Constructing the Florida Dream

Private enterprise dominated the earliest chapters of the story, which began with the commercial exploitation of a spectacular spring, Silver Springs, near Ocala, in 1878. The state's first commercial attraction, it offered a packaging of Florida's spectacular nature with the glass-bottomed boats that took visitors over its transparent waters. The Edenic significance of that attraction, and the reference of the "springs" to the Fountain of Youth legend, did not escape visitors. Despite this voyeurism, Florida was only testing the tourist waters; the full-scale plunge would have to wait for the popularization of sea bathing at Northern beaches like Coney Island.

In the 1880s and 1890s, with the building of the Flagler and Plant hotels and railways, tourism promoters, as well as land and railway companies (with help from local governments) started promoting the State as a new Fountain of Youth, the "Eden of the South."³⁵ They implanted their message in Florida's toponymy, as they named their towns after the flowers, trees and foliage that one might find in a orderly, cultivated Eden – for instance, with prefixes and suffixes like Magnolia, Palm, Citrus, Orange, Garden, Grove, Plantation. And everywhere there were promises of eternal sunshine, the landscape of the Sunshine State being populated by Sunshine City (St. Petersburg), Sun City, Suniland, Sunset, Frostproof, Winter Haven, Winter Park, Belleair, Buena Vista, Sun Coast, and Gold Coast.³⁶

Nowhere was Florida's iconography more clearly put to work by private enterprise than at its commercial attractions. Long before the opening of Walt Disney World in

³⁵ Stephenson, *Visions of Eden: Environmentalism, Urban Planning, and City Building in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1900-1995* (Columbus, 1997), 34, 35; Tim Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney: 100 Years of Roadside Fun* (Jackson, Miss, 1999), 44; Jean Taillefer, "Miami," *La Presse*, 28 October 1995, h1.

1971, theme parks, Ammidown³⁷ has shown, offered a whole repertoire of Edenic and Otherworldly scenes to passing motorists. Since the early twentieth century the parks have been rooting their own version of Paradise in the local landscape: "the theme was Florida" – rejuvenating springs, wildlife, folksy natives, and exotic vegetation. While the parks also presented the associated opposite of the garden – images of threatening wilderness of jungle fauna, snakes and alligators, and fierce Seminole Indians,³⁸ these mildly threatening versions of an exotic nature reinforced the Edenic genre which dominated Florida's performances, as most authors have noted. Illusions of Eden and wilderness were put to work in building a benign, leisurely, accessible semitropical place, where wild nature had been properly subjugated into Indian reservations, gardens, and zoological attractions. Ammidown has argued that none of the Florida icons was more paradoxical than the Indian, who represented both the experience of Eden because he lived in a "state of nature," and the Fall, the expulsion from Eden, in his "fantasized bestiality."³⁹

The most notable of Florida's commercial attractions took up the Edenic theme: Ross Allen's Florida Reptile Institute, opened in Silver Springs in 1930, became famous for milking its venomous snakes – in this case, science was symbolically and literally taming Eden's most emblematic beast, as Ross Allen developed antidotes to snakes' venom. Weeki Wachee Springs (near Tampa, 1947) featured live "mermaids" in underwater ballets at its exotically named venue. Marine Studios (St. Augustine, 1938)

³⁶ Bertha E. Bloodworth and Alton C. Morris, *Places in the Sun: The History and Romance of Florida Place-Names* (Gainesville, 1978), 4-6. 100.

³⁷ Ammidown: 240.

³⁸ *Ibid.*: 241-243, 250, 251; Breslauer, 9.

³⁹ See Ammidown and Christopher R. Eck, "Beasts and Savages: Taming the Wilds of Florida in the Popular Imagination for Five Centuries," *South Florida History* 29 (Fall 2001): 12-19; on Florida icons in

featured in 1951 the world's first dolphin show. Zoological attractions included Miami's Monkey (1935) and Parrot Jungles (1936) and Seaquarium (1955). Since the 1920s, Florida has also hosted a score of semitropical gardens that admitted visitors for a fee, and alligator farms and alligator-wrestling shows, starring "Seminole Indians." As of 1959, eighty exhibits in Florida had permits for live alligators.⁴⁰ The spectacular, mildly threatening and wild character of this Florida nature was well expressed in a 1950s pamphlet for Everglades Wonder Gardens, where founders Wilford and Lester Piper suggested: "We have only a sincere desire to give the visitor a clear picture of the thrilling life, dangers, intrigue and constant struggle for existence that goes on in the depth of the impenetrable and fascinating Everglades." In sum, heavily-promoted, commercial attractions contributed hugely to the state's image, long before Disney, and with much more relevance to Florida nature and image in the public mind. Commercial attractions became the Florida equivalent of Coney Island, and by their importance they durably associated the Sunshine State with Eden and the Fall, as well as with fun, leisure and spectacle.⁴¹

commercial attractions, see also Ammidown, "Edens, Underworlds, and Shrines": 240; Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States": 10; Breslauer, 10; Hollis, 33, 36, 39.

⁴⁰ 80 permits: Cal Brumley, "Florida's Roadside Shows," *Orlando Sentinel*, 15 February 1959; Stephen E. Branch, "The Salesman and His Swamp: Dick Pope's Cypress Gardens," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80 (Spring 2002): 487, 488, 494-496, 498; Breslauer, 10, 12, 13, 20, 45, 46, 56, 61, 62, 70, 71.

⁴¹ Shaw and Williams, *Critical Issues in Tourism: A Geographical Perspective* (Oxford, 1994), 178. Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami. Gators in postwar brochures: Ocean World, Fort Lauderdale; Everglades Alligator Farm, Homestead; Seminole Okalee Indian Village, Broward County; Everglades Wonder Gardens, Bonita Springs; Tropical Panorama, North Dade; Miccosukee Indian Village, Miami. Musa Isle Indian Village; Osceola Seminole Indian Village, Miami; Orlando Gatorland. Other wildlife: Parrot Paradise aka Tropical Paradise post-1950s, Miami. Miami Metrozoo; Africa USA, in Boca Raton; Sarasota Jungle Gardens; Miami Serpentarium. Lion Country Safari, Palm Beach County. Butterfly World, Coconut Creek. Ocean World Porpoise Show, Fort Lauderdale. Monkey Jungle, Miami, Parrot Jungle, Miami. Miami Seaquarium. Theater of the Seas, Islamorada (on the Keys). Eastern Garden Aquarium, Perrine. Rare Bird Farm, Dade County; Crandon Park Zoo, Key Biscayne. Gardens: Wray's Orange Grove, Fort Lauderdale; Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Miami; Fennel's Orchid Jungle, Homestead; Vizcaya, Miami; Tropical Jungle Land, Miami; Orchid Jungle, Miami. Coral Castle, Miami; Riviera Tropical Gardens, Dade County. Silver Springs, near Ocala; Cypress Gardens features a lush garden; McKee' Jungle Gardens, Vero Beach; Sunken Gardens, St. Petersburg; Flamingo Groves and Botanic

As part of the iconography of the benevolent garden, the entrepreneurs of the Florida Dream featured the state's iconic staple, citrus fruit, in their advertising. Florida citrus growers produced an important part of Florida iconography, one that was widely visible in Northern markets. From the 1890s, Florida citrus crates were adorned with labels featuring orange groves and the natural wonders of the state, as Florida identified with its oranges. In response to falling prices and glut, in 1929 the State Agricultural Marketing Board was created, and in 1935 an act of the Legislature created the Florida Citrus Commission with a mandate to promote the state's iconic crop. Meanwhile the citrus iconography was taken up by local and state government agencies in charge of promoting the state's real estate and tourism. Florida oranges were so entrenched in the early promotion of the Sunshine State that when the Florida Advertising Commission was created in 1945, lawmakers integrated it within the Department of Agriculture.⁴² Much of these enticing Florida images showed pictures of Southern Belles picking oranges or posing besides mounds of fruit. These images caught the eye and imagination of the

Gardens (aka Flamingo Gardens), Broward County. Pirates: Pirate's World, Dania, Broward County. Fishing is important tourist lure, but diminishing in visibility. Instance of early visibility in a 1950s State brochure, with a whole page flaunting Florida as a "Fisherman's Paradise": Florida Dept. of Agriculture, State Advertising Commission, and Florida Chamber of Commerce, *Welcome to Florida*; Similar pamphlets in collections of the Florida Historical Society, Cocoa: Pamphlet collection, box 6, fol.3, "Tourism, 1930s-1960s, pamphlets": In Clearwater: Eagle Nest Gardens, Sea-Drama; St. Petersburg: Florida Wild Animal and Reptile Ranch, Wedding's Botanical Gardens, Mullet Key Island, Caswell Orchid Gardens, Turner's Sunken Gardens, Walmsley Gardens; in Sarasota: Sunshine Springs and Gardens, Citrus Hall of Fame, Sarasota Reptile Farm and Zoo, Sarasota Jungle Gardens; in Tampa: Jose Gasparilla Pirate ship; Pirate village; shrimp and banana docks, Eureka Springs Botanical Gardens; Orlando: Lake Eola, Sanlando Springs; Sanford: Big Cypress Tree Park, Zoo; Silver Springs; Winter Haven: Cypress Gardens; Winter Park: Meade Botanical Gardens; Everglades; Ft. Myers: Sanibel Island; Vizcaya, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Seaquarium, Monkey and Parrot Jungle, Bird Jungle; Coppinger's Tropicaland (Gators), Zoo, Tropical Hobbyland, Serpentarium, Musa Isle (Indian village); Dania: Seminole Indian Res., Chimpanzee Farm; Boca Raton: Africa USA, Ancient America (Calusa indian village); Boynton: Waite Bird Farm, Rainbow Tropical Gardens, South Dade: Coral Castle.

⁴² State Department of Agriculture Historical Summary, in the catalog of Florida State Archives; "*History of Florida Citrus Crate Labels*," www.fred.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus/calendar.html, University of Florida, Food and Resource Economics Department (retrieved August 2006). This transition from advertisement for migrants to advertisement for tourists has been observed by Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism And Consumer Culture 1890-1970* (Vancouver, 2005).

northern public: in the early 1950s, a frequent question at Welcome Stations was "Where can we go and take pictures of ourselves picking oranges?"⁴³ This Southern Belle example also shows the extent to which the benign exoticism of the Old South – the Confederacy to some – was being peddled to Yankee tourists by some of the commercial attractions and promotional campaigns. These images and attractions also enticed Southerners vacationing by car in Florida.

However, the Southern belles wore too much clothing to dwell at the heart of Florida's iconography. Scantly clad bathing beauties posing on the sand, underneath a palm tree – they were *the* message most frequently beamed northward. The man behind the beach pin-up was Carl Graham Fisher, the promoter of Miami Beach in the 1910s-1920s. Fisher's publicity stunts often bordered on the *Barnumesque* (in imitation of the spectacular consumer culture of Coney Island).⁴⁴ Thus, he had the Flamingo Hotel opened on Christmas Eve, 1920; he bought a baby Asian elephant named Rosie and used it as a subject for photographic publicity, most famously in early 1921, when president-elect Warren Harding was photographed with the beast acting as a golf caddy. By 1919, Fisher was regularly sending to Northern newspapers pictures of bathing beauties on his beach (as well as reports on every rich and famous visitor). He made sure that the young women were undressed enough to generate publicity, explaining: "We'll get the prettiest girls and put them in the goddamndest tightest and shortest bathing suits, and no stockings or swim shoes either. We'll have their pictures taken and send them all over the goddamn

⁴³ C. E. Wright, "What About Florida," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, sect. 10:3.

⁴⁴ This new development in popular culture has been also depicted by Jackson Lears: "Mr. Miami Beach: Carl Fisher," PBS American Experience, PBS, www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/miami/peopleevents/pande03.html (retrieved August 2006).

country!"⁴⁵ Soon the practice was taken up by other Florida destinations, and remains in use today. Illustration 2.3 is a 1919 postcard of Miami Beach.



Illustration 2.3: Bathing Beauties, Miami Beach, 1919.

Source: "Historic Photo Gallery," Miami Beach city government:

www.miamibeachfl.gov
(retrieved August 2006)

Carl Fisher's strategy of feeding Northern newspapers and periodicals with free copy set the mould for Florida advertising. Since the 1920s, Chambers of commerce and commercial attractions have been following Fisher's technique, which Cypress Gardens' Richard Pope called using "other people's money": texts and pictures sent to newspapers across the continent, for free. In Miami Beach, the practice was taken over by Stephen J. Hannagan, who came to Miami Beach *circa* 1925, to work for Fisher himself.⁴⁶ During the 1920s and 30s, a quarter of the material emanating from Miami Beach consisted of society notes on the rich and famous visiting the Beach, three-quarters, pictures of pretty girls.

⁴⁵ "Mr. Miami Beach" documentary transcript,

www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/miami/filmmore/transcript/index.html (retrieved August 2006).

⁴⁶ William L. Rivers, "Florida: The State With the Two-Way Stretch," *Harper's Magazine* 210 (February 1955): 33; A. R. Roalman, "How They Get You to Fall in Love With Miami Beach," *NYT*, 9 January 1971, sect. 10:1; Ann Armbruster, *The Life and Times of Miami Beach* (New York, 1995), 151; Philip E. DeBerard, Jr., "Promoting Florida: Some Aspects of the Use of Advertising and Publicity in the Development of the Sunshine State," MA diss. (University of Florida, 1951), 146, 156; Rothschild, *Up For Grabs* (New York, 1985), 76; Gregory W. Bush, "'Playground of the USA': Miami and the Promotion of Spectacle," *Pacific Historical Review* 68 (May 1999): 167; "Miami Beach Divorce," *Time* (30 July 1945).

The most successful practitioner of "other people's money" was the man who coined the phrase: in the 1940s, Richard Pope used the technique to develop Cypress Gardens into the United States' most popular commercial attraction before the opening of Walt Disney World in 1971. In the process he raised the waterskiing cast of Cypress Gardens – and its Southern Belles – to an iconic status, for most North Americans. Illustration 2.4 has become a visual cliché because of its repeated, and successful use by Cypress Gardens in branding itself as a water ski-stunt Mecca, with bathing beauties as performers. Everyone has seen some version of that picture.⁴⁷ In 1967 it was estimated that Cypress Gardens had been the subject of 350 short films, 1,000 newsreels, three full-length movies, and tens of thousands of photographs, including 300 covers of national magazines. At one point in the 1950s, the *New York Times* and the Associated Press reacted to this excess by declaring a *moratorium* on Cypress Gardens' material.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Patrick Carr, "The Aquamaids," in *Sunshine States: Wild Times and Extraordinary Lives in the Land of Gators, Guns, and Grapefruit* (New York, 1990), 37-47.

⁴⁸ Branch: 487, 488, 494-496, 498; Breslauer, 10, 12, 13, 20, 45, 46, 56, 61, 62, 70, 71.



Illustration 2.4: Cypress Gardens, Florida, 1963. Source: Florida Memory Project, Florida Photographic Collection, Department of Commerce Collection.
www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/ (retrieved August 2006).

A search of Northern periodicals uncovers many of these purely promotional texts on Florida, or texts written by the newspaper's staff illustrated by promotional illustrations and pictures.⁴⁹ Historian Tommy R. Thompson found a plethora of

⁴⁹ In its 1965-66 *Annual Report*, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce boasts its role in this kind of promotion: in Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami: *1965-66 Annual Report*, 65. Among others: Ben Barber, "Le Paris de Miami," *L'Actualité* 11 (February 1986): 110, 111; Hazel Lowe, "Florida is Best Fall Vacation," *Montreal Star*, 1 September 1979, C1; Bella English, "Rich, Clean Naples, Fla., is Great," *The Gazette*, 22 March 1986, 13; Jay Clarke, "Florida," *The Gazette*, 19 October 1985; B. W. Riddell, "Wide, White and Winterless," *FP*, 1 December 1956, 12; Riddell, "Sand, Sun, Surf, Welcome You," *FP*, 24 November 1956, 12; Riddell, "Luxury and Comfort Offered in Florida," *FP*, 8 December 1956, 16; a whole series of articles in November-December 1955, in the *Financial Post*; no less than 6 texts in *FP*, 11 January 1964, 30; a special section in *FP*, 23 January 1965, 32; obviously courtesy of Florida Development Commission, *FP*, 22 January 1966, 36; "The High Bright World of Miami," *The Montrealer* 40 (March 1966): 32-35; R. F. Warner, "Busy Days on Florida's Leisurely West Coast," *NYT*, 17 January 1954, sect. 10:11; Susan Spano, "Deco and Deals In Miami's South Beach," *NYT*,

propagandistic, quasi-promotional articles on Florida in national periodicals during the 1960s and 1970s, with titles, illustrations and captions that looked like they were written by a resort's chamber of commerce.⁵⁰ For instance, in a January 1965 edition of Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, a girl-in-a-bikini picture was accompanied by the comment "No wonder Florida's beaches are popular."⁵¹

In addition to free copy, Northern journalists were entertained, hosted and fed with data while traveling in Florida, thanks to the local promotional agencies⁵². Lavish promotional tours were organized for northern journalists and editors by tourist development boards, visitors' bureaus, Chambers of commerce, and by commercial attractions such as Cypress Gardens, Disney World and the Anheuser-Busch theme parks.⁵³ For instance, in January 1962, the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, with the

14 April 1996, 5, 6; "La Floride... est-il besoin d'en parler?," *Le Devoir*, 20 January 1973, 23; Michel-G. Tremblay, "Le Nouveau Centre Epcot de Disney en Floride," *La Presse*, 23 October 1982, Y2; *La Presse*, 22 January 1955, 30 January 1955, 47; 2 January 1960, 10; 23 January 1960, 20, 21; 31 December 1960; 25 February 1965, 33; Marie Pronovst, *La Presse*, 4 December 1965, 37; *La Presse*, 5 December 1970, D13; 26 January 1980, 11; Louise Gaboury, "Les Québécois fidèles à la Floride," *La Presse*, 26 January 2002, H1; Charles Leerhsen, "How Disney Does It," *Newsweek* (3 April 1989): 52-55; Jean E. Stenton, "Fla. Popular in Christmas Season," *Globe and Mail*, 10 December 1955, 8; *Globe and Mail*, 17 December 1955, 13, 14; again the following Saturday: 24 December 1955, 17; Stenton, "Shades of the Old West in Hear of Florida," *Globe and Mail*, 15 January 1955, 13; Stenton, "Millionaire's Fortress Now Miami Museum," *Globe and Mail*, 1 January 1955, 13; 2 January 1960, 17; 9 January 1960, 17, 18; 16 January 1960, 17, 18; 23 January 1960, 17, 18; 30 January 1960, 17, 19; 3 December 1960, 18, 19; 10 December 1960, 20, 22, 24; 17 December 1960, 20; 24 December 1960, 16, 17; 2 January 1965, 16, 17; Three articles: *Globe and Mail*, 23 January 1965, 23; 30 January 1965, 22, 24, 26; 4 December 1965, 22, 24; 11 December 1965, 22, 23, 27, 28; Beverly Gray, "Canadians Seek Sun in Annual Migration," *Globe and Mail*, 18 December 1965, 21, also promotional articles on 22, 24; B. Gray, "Miami Has a Lot to Offer," *Globe and Mail*, 4 January 1975, 41; Kennon Cooke, "La face cachée de Disney World," *Touring* 65 (June-August 1987): 39-42; Cooke, "Les Keys de la Floride," *Touring* 64 (November-December 1986): 23-30; *Autoclub* 54 (1975): 16-19; Michel Crépault, "Le quiz de Mickey," *Touring* 71 (Winter 1994): 6-11.

⁵⁰ Thompson: 10, 11.

⁵¹ *Globe and Mail*, 16 January 1965, 21.

⁵² reproduced in the *Miami Herald*, two syndicated papers on Miami, reproduced in 29 and 30 newspapers in the U.S., respectively: Edwin A. Lahey, "Writer Tells Beach Story to the Nation," and Sylvia Porter, "Sylvia Makes Beach Business Her Business," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1955, 6F.

⁵³ Courtesy of Anheuser-Busch, Pinellas County and Canadian Holidays: Martine Provost, "Floride: Au pays des merveilles," *Femme Plus* (December 1992): 68-72; not explicitly, but obviously courtesy of Presidential Airways, Orlando Conventions and Visitors Bureau, and Disney: Michelle Labrèche-Larouche, "La Floride c'est plus qu'une plage," *L'Actualité* 27 (December 1986): 105-109; courtesy of the Orlando/Orange County CVB, Carolyn Green, "Other Side of Orlando Has a Lot to Offer," *FP*, 10 February 1992, S16; courtesy of Palm Beach CVB: George Bryant, "Nature's Assets Nearby Homes of Rich,

help of Eastern Airlines, hosted a "Showcase" for 1500 American and Canadian travel agents and travel writers for five days at the height of the winter season.⁵⁴ In October 1986 Disney World invited no less than 10,000 journalists and personalities to celebrate its 15th anniversary; in May 1989, for the opening of Disney-MGM Studios, free tickets and hotel rooms were given away to media people by the "several thousands"; in 1992, for the opening of an addition to Disney World, 6000 received invitations, the newspeople free passes.⁵⁵ In November 1988, for Mickey Mouse's 60th anniversary, the "ambassadors" taken on a free tour were 5000 children themselves.⁵⁶ The questionable ethics of accepting paid vacations did not escape most journalists, most of who neglected to mention how their trip south was made possible.⁵⁷

Famous," *Toronto Star*, 12 November 1996, B4; courtesy of Turnberry Isle Yacht and Country Club, Alan Ponsford, "Miami Nice' For an Action Weekend," *FP*, 27 January 1992, S16; courtesy of "Florida Center Tourist Board" (sic): Urgel Lefebvre, "...ce n'est pas uniquement Miami Beach!," *Le Devoir*, 20 January 1973, 23; courtesy of Pinellas Suncoast Tourist Development Council and Busch Gardens: Claude Picher, "Tampa-St. Pete," *La Presse*, 13 January 1990, I4; courtesy of Disney: Charles Leerhsen, "How Disney Does It," *Newsweek* (3 April 1989): 52-55; Disney again: Danielle Bonneau, "Walt Disney World: en croissance constante," *La Presse*, 2 December 1995, H12; Vianney Duchesne, "Walt Disney World," *La Presse*, 14 October 1995, D1; Martial Dassylva, "Le Monde de Walt-Disney," *La Presse*, 14 January 1995, H1; Dassylva, "Ce qu'il faut voir chez Walt Disney," *La Presse*, 23 February 1985, X3; courtesy of Greater Miami CVB and American Airlines: Jean Taillefer, "Miami," *La Presse*, 28 October 1995, H1; courtesy of Disney: Laura Robin, "Your Guide to Orlando," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 5 January 2002, E14; obviously courtesy of Central Florida attractions and communities: David J. Wilson, *Toronto Star*, 12 October 2000, ss1.

⁵⁴ Robert L. Perry, "Miami Beach Wingding Holds a Hidden Lesson," *FP*, 10 February 1962, 12.

⁵⁵ Charles Leerhsen, "How Disney Does It," *Newsweek* (3 April 1989): 52; François Trépanier, "Disney," *La Presse*, 7 November 1992, I1; Free AAA tour, depicted in FDC reports: FDC, *1967 Annual Report*; *1968 Annual Report*; *Tourism Industry Report 5* (30 October 1986); C.E. Wright, "Florida's Future," *NYT*, 6 September 1964, sect. 10:19.

⁵⁶ Courtesy of Disney and Delta Airlines: "Bon anniversaire Mickey," *La Presse*, 5 November 1988, A20; CAA taken on free tour: *Autoclub 54* (1975): 21; a CAA-Québec recruiting drive makes new members eligible for a 5-day trip to Disney, on Eastern Airlines: *Nouvelles du Club* (November-December 1985): 2; another Disney contest: *Touring 63* (February-March 1985): 40, 41.

⁵⁷ Those who did mention it: Special edition of CAA-Québec newsletter *Autoclub: La Floride* 1 (Fall 1982), sponsored by Air Canada Touram and Alamo car rentals; Danielle Bonneau, "Walt Disney World: en croissance constante," *La Presse*, 2 December 1995, H12; Anne Gardon, "La féerie de Disney World," *Affaires+* 10 (June 1987): 75-79; Claude Vaillancourt, "La Floride, captive des Québécois," *Le Soleil*, 21 March 1992, D1; Hazen Walters "The Mexican Alternative," *CSA News* 16 (March 1996): 28, 29; Michael McAteer, *Toronto Star*, 20 October 2001.

Real estate developers have been using similar tactics since the infamous 1920s "Great Land Boom" ...and Bust. Potential buyers were recruited by returning a coupon found in a magazine that provided them with a "free" vacation, during which they were subjected to a sales pitch to buy unbuilt home lots, sight unseen. Despite stricter regulations, such strategies continued well after 1945. A journalist noticed how, in the several years leading to 1958, "Northern publications have been flooded with glowing advertisements extolling the glories of new subdivisions where every prospect pleases and lots may be had for ten dollars down and ten dollars a month." These sorts of ads still appeared in Canadian newspapers in 1960 and 1975.⁵⁸ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the planned community of Cape Coral sprang up at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River, a few miles south of Fort Myers. Its parent company, General Development Corporation relied on the "free vacation" formula to attract positive coverage in Northern papers. Finally, as late as 1988, Miami area developers were still flying snowbird couples to check out a new retirement community.⁵⁹

In addition to "other people's money" and "our photographic material," the blizzard of advertising targeting Northerners naturally contrasted the North with Florida. To the positive – the lure of Edenic leisure and carnivalesque play – was contrasted the negative Northern climate and daily grind. Thus Florida Dreaming was striking at the heart of

⁵⁸ In Ocala, an acre for about \$3000, \$10 down: *La Presse*, 25 January 1975, e10; Ocala, land for no down payment: *Globe and Mail*, 23 January 1960, 17; 1971 brochure on Florida sponsored by the Webb Realty Corporation: in Tebeau Research Center, in Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami: *All About Florida U.S.A.*, Compliments of the Webb Realty Corporation, 11,575 NW 7th Ave., Miami.

⁵⁹ In fairness to Florida, other promotional institutions in North America relied on similar tactics. For instance, the Ontario Department of travel and publicity boasted such activities in 1961: free material to newspapers and magazines, free trips for out-of-province travel writers, promotional newsreels: see B.L. Cathcart (Minister of Travel and Publicity), *Ontario Legislature Debates*, 3rd session of the 26th legislature (5 December 1961): 199, 200; J.A.C. Auld (Minister of Tourism and Information): *Ontario Legislature Debates* 2, 27 (19 March 1964): 1802; "Cape Coral Becomes a Place in the Sun," *FP*, 11 January 1964, 30; Flynn, *Florida*, 19; Angelo Figueroa, "Developers Flying In Snowbirds," *Miami Herald*, 23 June 1988,

millions of Northerners' daily life, increasingly as Florida promoters refined their pitches after 1950. During the winter of 1963, for instance, the Florida Development Commission and the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce stressed the stark contrast between the Northern and Southern wintertime, by asking Northerners: "Wouldn't you rather be in Florida?" in ads featuring pictures of bathing beauties. In the fall of 1968, the slogan went, "Winter's coming... but Florida is not far away."⁶⁰

The reliance of Florida promoters on harsh northern winters was so important that the occasional cold weather *in Florida* forced promoters to reassure the potential visitors – or minimally reassure hotel owners. For example, in February 1958, a cold snap prompted a three-week emergency campaign in thirty cities. The ads' only text was the previous day's Miami Beach temperature.⁶¹

Miami Beach promoters created a number of slogans later used by state authorities like "Winter's coming" or "Wouldn't you rather be..."⁶² The winter 1969 campaign suggested that, "Winter's great... when you're in Florida," and was timed to appear on billboards during winter's worst. In 1977, radio ads that compared Northern temperatures

K24: "Close to 40 couples have been flown in from New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York to Keys Gate, the newest addition to the Villages of Homestead. Twenty have opted to buy."

⁶⁰ On the Fall and Winter 1968-69 campaigns: Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida Development Commission files, series 135, box 1; Advertising and Marketing Associates, "Winter Newspaper Advertisement" (Miami), in 1969 *Annual Report to Florida Development Commission*; *NYT*, 31 January 1955): 33; Advertising and Marketing Associates, Inc., *Report to Florida Development Commission* (Miami, 1969); Monthly publication of the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce: *The Miamian* 55 (December 1962); 1FDC boasts the success of the 6-months 1963 "Wouldn't you" campaign, in *Miami Herald*, 26 December 1963) (found in WTVJ TV Ephemeral Files, 1960s-1980s, in Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami); GMCC, *1962-63 Annual Report* (Miami, 1963), 47; *1963-64 Annual Report*, 51.

⁶¹ *NYT*, 19 February 1958, 17; *NYT*, 23 February 1958, sect. 10:19.

⁶² Instances of State of Florida advertisement in a Montreal paper: *La Presse*, 10 December 1955, 71; and, 9 January 1960, 16; 10 December 1960, 37; 4 December 1965, 37; The 1965 French ad read "L'hiver est beau en Floride!": *La Presse*, 4 December 1965, 37; another French ad, in 1970, for Miami-Dade, in *La Presse*, "Notre plus brillant visiteur reste chez nous tout l'hiver": 17 January 1970, 48; slogan for State of Florida ad: "Si les froids d'hiver vous figent le cœur, abritez-vous sous un ciel plus chaud...." in *La Presse*, 5 December 1970, d12; State of Florida in Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, 2 December 1950, 28; "Polar bears love winter... people love Florida!": *Globe and Mail*, 11 December 1965, 26; *Globe and Mail*, 5 December 1970.

with Florida ones reused the "Wouldn't you rather be in Florida?" slogan. Actually in 1977, winter-baiting advertisement was taken a notch up after another Florida cold snap: Governor Reubin O. Askew authorized an emergency radio-and-newspaper campaign in January 1977 in the top-14 northern markets, after it *snowed* in Tampa, West Palm Beach and Miami. Meanwhile, Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce's Tourist Development Authority, as well as National and Eastern Airlines coordinated their radio and paper ads in northern markets.⁶³

As we can see, the Sun and Fun slogan relied as much on the defects of Northern life as on Florida Dreaming. That is why slogans appealed to the desires of potential visitors; in 1979, one evoked desire: "When you need it bad we've got it good." A success, it was used during the following winters. 1979 also saw a campaign during the first cold snap of the fall season. For the winter of 1985-86, the Florida television ads ran on the Weather Channel, suggesting "We Got It. Come and Get It," and relied on the weather reports to contrast Florida's weather with the North's. In September 1986 the slogan promised a Carnival: "The Rules Are Different Here."⁶⁴ It went on to add that tourists can "cast off the restriction of such everyday annoyances as alarm clocks, diets and business suits." This slogan was controversial, for some thought it inadvertently

⁶³ Robert Hooker and Sam Jacobs, "Radio Ads to Blitz Potential Tourists," *Miami Herald*, 30 January 1977, D1; Robert Fabricio, "Ad Warms Tourist Officials," *Miami Herald*, 28 January 1977; 3B; Frederic Tasker, "Flakes Have Snowball Effect on Tourists," *Miami Herald*, 22 January 1977, B1; snow: F. Tasker and J. Arnold, "By George! Snowbirds Are Roosting," 22 February 1977, 10A; Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami: Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce fund, records, box. 2: GMCC, *Annual Reports*.

⁶⁴ *NYT*, 6 November 1979, d17; "When you Need it Bad...": *Tourism Industry Report* 9 (12 February 1990): 6; "Come and Get It": *Tourism Industry Report* 4 (11 December 1985); *Tourism Industry Report* 5 (1 October 1986); Michele Mecke, "Florida Needs it (\$) Badly," *St Petersburg Times*, 11 April 1981, 3B; Dan Fesperman, "Florida Unveils Winter Tourism Ad Campaign," *Miami Herald*, 20 October 1983.

alluded to criminality and ethnic conflict; muckraker Carl Hiaasen cracked that it was "the first honest tourist slogan we've had in long time."⁶⁵



Illustration 2.5: Miami Advertisement, Early 1960s. Source: Miami-Dade County, Main Library, Florida Collection, "Florida Tourist Trade."

⁶⁵ Carl Hiaasen, "Only a Fool Fails to Follow These Rules," in *Kick Ass*, ed. Diane Stevenson (New York, 1999): 128-130; Hiaasen (13 April 1995), *Paradise Screwed*, ed. Diane Stevenson (New York, 2001): 18;

Wouldn't
you
rather
be in
Florida



Call Your Air, Bus, Rail or Travel Agent Today
or write **SUNSHINE**, Tallahassee, Florida, for **FREE Florida Vacation Guide**

Illustration 2.6:
State
Advertisement for
Northern
Newspapers,
December 1961
and January 1961.
Source: Florida State
Archives, Florida
Development
Commission, series
135, box 1.

WINTER'S GREAT...
when you're in Florida



Leave all of winter's cold and come to fabulous Florida for the most glorious, sun-filled time of your life. Let us tell you all about it... write today!

Florida

FLORIDA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Room 6000, 107 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304
Please send Free Vacation Guide and information about

Vacations Honeymoon
 Conventions Retirement

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ ZIP _____

Illustration 2.7: Early 1960s Newspaper and Magazine Advertisement, Florida Development Commission. Source: Miami-Dade Main Library, Florida Collection, "Florida Tourist Trade" files.

Supp
Chicago
November 6, 1979



Florida
When you need it bad,
we've got it good.

Illustration 2.8: "Advertising Supplement to *Chicago Tribune*, November 6, 1979."
Source: Miami-Dade Main Library, Florida Collection, "Florida Tourist Trade."

More direct means than printed and electronic advertisements were used to carry the Sun and Fun message to Northerners. New York City, Florida's primary tourist market, received a more permanent fixture: in February 1961 and for eight more years (at least) the Florida Development Commission operated a Florida Showcase, an exhibition of the attractive features of the State, in the vicinity of the Rockefeller Center. Shivering passersby could glance through nine plate glass windows at a display where, "in a created tropical atmosphere, the many faces of Florida [were] featured – one each month." At the 1964-1965 World Fair in New York City, the Florida exhibit, designed in part by Cypress Garden's founder Richard Pope, turned out to be the Fair's most attended state exhibit; it included dolphin and water ski shows and a 110-foot-high Citrus Tower. Meanwhile in Canada, starting in the early 1950s, some Florida communities presented exhibits at the annual Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto.⁶⁶

The previous efforts and advertising strategies discussed so far were the creation of private concerns – of Florida's tourists, attractions, and chambers of commerce who together worked on building Florida and its dream. At this point it seems obvious that Florida was promoted by a constellation – occasionally a coalition – of promoters: governments, chambers of commerce, and private companies involved in tourism. In the 1950s an important addition came from the airlines. Airline advertising, using the sun-and-fun iconography, was already important in 1950 (although few people had ever flown then) in every major Northern city. In November 1950, the biggest neon sign in the world belonged to Eastern Airlines; located on New Jersey's side of the Hudson River, it

⁶⁶ Hampton Dunn, *Florida, A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, Va., 1988), 210; *The Kiplinger Florida Letter* (Washington, DC, 27 February 1964); Florida Showcase was at 61 W49th St., inaugurated by Governor Farris Bryant: *NYT*, 25 February 1961, 46; Florida State Archives, Tallahassee: Fla. Development Commission, series 135, box 1, *Report on Fla. Development Commission, January-June 1961*; FDC, fiscal

beamed Miami temperatures to Manhattan. In 1955 Eastern helped pay for a forty-foot-wide Florida display in Newark Airport. In 1968, the Florida Development Commission had advertising partnerships with three Florida-dependent airlines – Air Canada, Northwest and Northeast. Air Canada inserted a color brochure into the November 23 *La Presse*, a promotional lavishness that lasted well into the 1980s. In 1968, Northeast Airlines paid half the costs of 121 Florida billboards in five northern cities.⁶⁷ By the 1970s, amidst a boom in charter flights ridership, the promotion of winter vacations by airlines was so important that the Florida Development Commission declared that it was reducing its winter advertising "because the airlines [were spending] about 77 per cent of their ad dollars during this period."⁶⁸

year 1958-59 *Annual Report* (Tallahassee, 1959), 14; FDC, 1968 *Annual Report*; Nixon Smiley, "Dick Pope": 4; C.E.W., "The Florida 'Sell'," *NYT*, 24 November 1963, sect. 10:7.

⁶⁷ Fall 1982, Air Canada's in-house travel agency (Touram) issues a special brochure to CAA members: *La Floride* 1 (Fall 1982); CAA-Florida contest sponsored by Touram: *Touring* 69 (Fall 1991): 12; and *Touring* 69 (Winter 1992): 17, *Touring* 70 (Spring 1992): 49; Advertising and Marketing Associates, Inc., *Report to Florida Development Commission* (Miami, June 1969); Florida display in Newark: *Miami Herald*, 27 February 1955, 17f; "TDA to Lure Canadians Here," *Miami News*, 8 October 1971.

⁶⁸ Larry Birger, "Visit Florida: We Have Gas, Ads Say," *Miami News*, 9 January 1974. Advertising clout not restricted to Florida-bound airlines: in 1978, all top-ten travel advertisers in U.S. newspapers were passenger airlines, spending \$3,3 to 16 million. Meanwhile eleven biggest travel advertisers on radio were airlines, firstly Florida-bound Delta. On TV, the first and third travel advertisers were United and American, with Eastern 9th, Delta 19th, and National 20th. Advertisement for North American Airlines, touting scheduled service from Montreal to Miami: *La Presse*, 16 December 1950, 45; 23 December 1950, 52; 30 December 1950, 53; Air Canada, Montreal-Tampa via Toronto: *La Presse*, 23 January 1960, 20; Air Canada, 2 daily flights Mtl.-Miami, one for Tampa: *La Presse*, 10 January 1970, 54; Air Cdn., 3 daily flights, Mtl.-MIA: *La Presse*, 31 January 1970, 48; 12 December 1970, e7; Eastern Airlines, a full page: *La Presse*, 11 January 1975, c7. Delta Airlines: *La Presse*, 18 January 1975, d8; Delta and Eastern, full page: *La Presse*, 25 January 1975, e11; Delta, "Fuyez l'hiver! Envolez-vous vers l'été grâce à Delta," *La Presse*, 26 January 1980, 10; Delta: *La Presse*, 6 December 1980, V4; Air Canada, "Florida is...," *Globe and Mail*, 10 January 1970, 30; idem 17 January 1970, 33; U.S. Travel Data Center and Business Research Div. (U. of Colorado), *Tourism's Top Twenty: Fast Facts on Travel and Tourism* (Washington DC, and Boulder CO, 1980), 4, 5, 7, 8; Mr. Ian Deans (NDP, Hamilton Mountain), *House of Commons Debates*, 2nd Session of the 32nd Legislature, vol. II (22 March 1984), 2318; In 1978 Eastern is the biggest travel advertiser on billboards in the US, second in magazines, fourth in newspapers, the first in newspapers being Delta. Delta was second to Eastern on billboards, Florida's National was 9th, and 7th in newspapers top travel advertisers. Eastern spent \$3,4 millions in magazine ads, second only to American Express, in 1978. In newspapers, Delta spent \$16 millions, followed by United, TWA, Eastern (\$11 millions), American, Braniff, and National (\$4,7 millions). *NYT*, 19 November 1950, sect. 2:21.

Airlines used Edenic slogans as well: National Airlines issued, in the mid-1970s, a printed advertisement wherein a pretty woman said "Fly me"; in a 1975 Canadian newspaper, an ad read "Eastern Airlines knows a place where winter is always wonderful... because it never happens. Florida."⁶⁹

Other transporters with a stake in Florida tourism were the motor coach and railroad companies. Florida East Coast and Seaboard Railways advertisements were highly visible in the December travel section of the *New York Times* for the whole postwar period until the 1980s. Canadian papers were also enticing would-be travelers by showing images of palm trees and references to sunshine. An ad for Greyhound buses in a 1960 Canadian paper asked readers: "Do you want sunshine?"⁷⁰

2.3 Promotion from Florida Governments

This activism of tourism-oriented businesses and other private concerns indicates where Florida Dreaming was being constructed: locally and privately, with chambers of commerce often taking the lead. Statewide, the Florida Chamber of Commerce estimated that "communities" spent \$1.33 million on advertising in 1950 only.⁷¹ In the early postwar period, a study found that most tourist destinations farmed out their promotion to the local chamber of commerce; they included municipalities as populous as Miami Beach, Hollywood, Clearwater, St. Petersburg, and Pompano. The Miami Beach Chamber

⁶⁹ "Eastern Airlines connaît un endroit où l'hiver est toujours merveilleux... car il ne vient jamais. La Floride.": *La Presse*, 11 January 1975, c7; "Fly Me": Frederic Tasker, "Airlines Rebound, Now Need Planes," *Miami Herald*, 23 January 1977, 6k; in one instance, Eastern put an ad in the *Miami Herald*, evocating a blizzard, and suggesting "Maybe you'd better stay another day": *Miami Herald*, 3 January 1967, 27A.

⁷⁰ Ad for Seaboard Railroad: *La Presse*, 3 December 1955, 76; and *La Presse*, 10 December 1955, 71; and *La Presse*, 25 February 1965, 34. Ad for Greyhound, "Voulez-vous du soleil?," *La Presse*, 3 December 1960, 39; and 17 December 1960, 38. Greyhound in the *Globe and Mail*, 9 January 1960, 18; Atlantic Coast

handled the biggest promotional budget: in the late 1940s its \$150,000 campaign targeted twenty-four northern periodicals. In October 1949, Hank Meyer became the director of public relations for Miami Beach; he stayed in charge until the 1990s, and his name still is associated with the Beach's best years, slogans, and media exposure.⁷² Meyer's long career was also a measure of the stability of the meaning of Florida carried by publicity.

The St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce countered Miami Beach's visibility in the early 1950s with its own promotional budget of \$250,000, almost twice Miami Beach's \$138,000. The St. Petersburg campaign was a visible and regular feature of travel section in Northern newspapers; the fall-winter campaign, in the early 1950s, was spread over 68 dailies in 23 states, and 19 magazines. The relative niggardliness of the Beach advertising could be explained by the difference in scale between Pinellas and Miami Beach hotels: St. Petersburg's relatively small hotels relied on their Chamber of Commerce to find some visibility up North, while Miami Beach's giant resorts could afford their own campaigns. They then spent \$2.5 million yearly in promotion. In Pinellas County, the St. Petersburg area, the tradition of relying on the Chamber of Commerce was so entrenched that the local government intervened relatively late in advertisement. Only in the late 1970s did the County establish a Convention and Visitors Bureau.⁷³

In spite of this private advertising clout, the postwar story of Florida promotion also featured continual pressure from business on local and county governments to fund and

Line Railroad, "Florida and the Sunny South; America's Favorite Winter Vacationland": *Globe and Mail*, 7 January 1950, 10; *Globe and Mail*, 17 December 1955, 14.

⁷¹ David Kilburn Morris, 34, 35.

⁷² on Meyer: Brian Warecki, "UM School of Communication Loses Friend and Benefactor," *Inside Communication* (University of Miami) 2 (Spring 1999): 6; Robert L. Perry, "Miami Beach Wingding Holds a Hidden Lesson," *FP*, 10 February 1962, 12; Robert N. Jenkins, "Ups and Downs," *Florida Trend* (June 1998); Flynn, *Florida: Land of Fortune*, 6; Stephen Flynn, "Thanks to Hank's Selling, Beach Known Over World," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1955, 6F.

coordinate the promotion of tourism. In the long run, governments felt compelled to take over advertisement efforts, the gradual process starting as far back as the 1930s, when Stephen Hannagan went to work for the City of Miami Beach. Competition with other destinations was the rationale most often evoked by tourist businesses, Chambers of commerce and local governments for demanding state assistance. In response, an act of the Florida legislature in 1945 created the Florida Advertising Commission to promote tourism, industry and agriculture. Four years later the Commission divided its three promotional mandates into three distinct campaigns. In 1950, the general manager of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, I. N. Parrish, and City Manager Claude A. Renshaw suggested to the local planning board that one of the direst community needs was the promotion of tourism. There was, in the words of the Miami Chamber, "terrific competition – domestic and foreign." Accordingly in 1954 the State Chamber of Commerce asked the state government to double its promotional credits.⁷⁴

Partly in response to Miami's appeals, the newly created Florida Development Commission (FDC), a nine-member body appointed by the Governor, took over the state's advertising efforts in 1955. This new effort at coordinated advertising of Florida as a destination for both investment and travel was immediately felt in October 1955 when FDC's thirty-six-page, full-color promotional brochure appeared in the *New York Times*.⁷⁵ Hence, even as local initiatives fostered a slow unification of private promotional efforts,

⁷³ Kaylois Henry, *St. Petersburg Times*, 23 January 1995; David Kilburn Morris, 34, 35, 38, 43, 49; Philip DeBerard, 140, 152, 161-164.

⁷⁴ The strategies proposed remained along traditional lines of tourist promotion: newsworthy promotional events, providing periodical publications with photographic material: beauty contests, sports events, and "increased cooperation with transportation lines." Marschal Rothe, "Beach Warned to 'Sell' New Tourists," *Miami Herald*, 22 January 1950, 11F; "Renshaw Cites Resorts' Competition for Tourists," *Miami Herald*, 15 January 1950, 7F; DeBerard Jr., 124, 194; doubling of credits: C. DeWitt Coffman Hotel Sales Engineering, *Miami Beach Convention and Tourist Promotion* (Washington, DC, ca. 1954).

⁷⁵ Governor Collins invites you to "Take a Fresh Look at FLORIDA," *New York Times*, 30 October 1955, 3.

the State of Florida came to play an increasingly important role in constructing the Florida Dream.

By the late 1950s, there would have been flocks of Florida sirens beckoning Northerners to Eden even had there been a total ban on material from private concerns like Cypress Gardens, for the State government had learned well from Fisher and Pope. In 1960 the Florida Development Commission reported that it had been sending weekly packages, which included at least one picture, to travel and outdoor editors for northern newspapers. In 1958, the list of tourist editors included 355 entries, while the one for outdoors editors had 135. In the mid-1960s these numbers stood at 640 and 340 respectively. The picture output was comparably impressive, growing from 12,000 in 1955 to 135,000 in 1962. The FDC also sent 1,600 color transparencies during fiscal year 1959-60, thirty of which had made it to national magazines front pages; that same fiscal year this "free copy" had an estimated circulation of 500 million.⁷⁶

The FDC also took up the practice of sending free posters each quarter to travel agencies and to the ticket outlets of every major interurban transportation company, for a poster outlay of 76,000 for fiscal year 1958-59, a figure that had doubled ten years later. "Other people's money" relied on moving images as well: in 1949 (following a national precedent set by St. Petersburg in 1946) the Florida Advertising Commission started distributing its promotional movies to television stations. During 1962, the FDC sent weekly film clips of sporting events to 355 TV stations. By then its film library had a

⁷⁶ Besides the aforementioned data: 72,425 black and white prints in fiscal year 1959-60, up from 64,446 during fiscal 1958-59. Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida Development Commission (thereafter FDC), series 135, box 01, *Progress Report 1955-1959*, published 1960; FDC, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1958-59* (Tallahassee, 1959), 12; FDC, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1959-1960*; Mike Beaudoin, "Progress Over 50 Years....," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1950, 16B; DeBerard, 156.

catalogue of 140 titles and 860 prints. In 1980 the "publicity bureau" of the FDC was still sending away a plethora of free copy to national media in the US and Canada.⁷⁷

Thus Florida's promotional efforts from the 1950s increasingly focused on local and state governments. From the late 1950s onward, both the Miami and Miami Beach Chambers of Commerce petitioned county and state governments to increase their coordination of advertising to Northern tourists; by the mid-1960s, ads ran in national magazines on behalf of both the Greater Miami and Miami Beach Chambers.⁷⁸ Avowedly these efforts were made necessary by a "disastrous" 1959-60 season. In 1960 the Miami Chamber could boast that it had successfully pressured Dade County into doubling its advertising budget and the State into adding a million dollars to its own advertising budget.

In 1960, the Miami-Dade Chamber's campaign for the unification of Dade County and Miami promotional efforts resulted in the creation of a Tourism Council under its own supervision, although Miami Beach kept an independent promotional body until the 1980s. The Miami Chamber also pushed for a regional travel council for the Gold Coast, comprising three, then four counties, which was created in 1962. It also lobbied for a permanent Florida Travel Council, which it finally obtained in 1964, under the aegis of the State Chamber of Commerce. In 1971, Miami's efforts secured a new Division of Tourism within the State Department of Commerce. The Miami Chamber's efforts to offload the cost of tourist promotion onto taxpayers were crowned in 1978 with the

⁷⁷ FDC, *1967 Annual Report*, and *1968 Annual Report*; June Cleo and Hank Mesouf, *Florida: Polluted Paradise* (Philadelphia, 1964), 62; Toni Splichal, "State Plans Global Drive for Tourists," *Miami News*, 2 October 1980, 10A.

⁷⁸ In Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami: Catherine Rodgers funds, box 1, "Miami Tourism" folder.

enactment of a countywide Tourism Development Tax, and the creation of a federally funded US Travel Service.⁷⁹

For the FDC, as for chambers of commerce, outside competition was the main factor the growth of spending after the war on tourism promotion. As early as 1960, the FDC, worried that the state's competitive edge was being eroded by the improved accessibility of other subtropical destinations in the Jet Age, complained about the stagnation of its promotional budget at a time when the cost of advertising was rising eight percent a year.⁸⁰

The pressing demands of Miami area promoters on local and state governments explain why the latter took up so diligently the former's advertising techniques. In addition to using "other people's money," the FDC took journalists on promotional junkets. In 1964 it planned free bus tours for 600 gas station managers since these were "good salesmen for the state." In November 1967, the FDC took twelve editors from the American Automobile Association on a ten-day tour; the following year it entertained 40 of them at State expense. In 1975 it hosted a grateful delegation from the Ontario and Québec's chapters of the Canadian Automobile Association.

The FDC also took up the tactic of contrasting Northern winters with Florida's: by 1961 it was using a suitably modified version of a Miami slogan: "Wouldn't you rather be

⁷⁹ In Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami: Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce fund, Records, box 2: Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce, *1960-61 Annual Report*; *1961-62 Annual Report*, 35; *1964-65 Annual Report* (May 1965), 59; on the "disastrous" 1959-60 season: *1963-64 Annual Report*, 51, and in Fla. State Archives, Florida Development Commission funds, series 135, box 1: Speech de B. R. Fuller Jr., Executive Director of the Fla. Development Commission (26 August 1960), "The Competition Florida Faces for Tourists"; *1971-72 Annual Report*; *1978-79 Annual Report*.

⁸⁰ Competition acknowledged by B.R. Fuller, Jr., director of FDC: "Tourist Leaders Take A Long Hard Look," *Florida Trend* 3 (October 1960): 25; FDC boasting 53% augmentation of tourism between Winters of 1961 and 1964: *Miami Herald*, 15 August 1965, found in *WTVJ TV Ephemeral Files, 1960s-80s*, in Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami; FDC, *Annual Report, FY 1959-1960*; Concern for competition from executives of a Miami TV station: in Tebeau Research Center, Historical

in Florida?" (Compare Illustrations 2.5 and 2.6.) In November 1968, The FDC paid for special, glossy-paper sections in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, with the lead caption, "Winter's coming... but Florida is not far away." This slogan also appeared on billboards, newspapers and magazine ads picturing a young, bikini-clad woman. "Sun and fun" was the motto of the campaign that ran in thirteen national magazines and thirteen major newspapers in the Northeast, Montréal, and Toronto.⁸¹ The triskedekaphilic text invited the visitor to indulge: "Over it all is an umbrella of sunny skies, mild climate, and tropical trees that makes doing anything, or doing nothing, more fun."⁸²

The FDC also operated a direct mail department that answered around 800,000 mail queries per year around 1960, most of them via coupons cut from Florida advertisements in northern newspapers. For instance, its campaign for fiscal year 1959-60 published ads with return coupons in four major magazines and eighty-seven newspapers in the Midwest, Northeast and Central Canada. In 1968 it presided over the first state-sponsored

Museum of South Florida, Miami, in *WTVJ TV Ephemeral files, 1960-1980s: Editorial from WTVJ 4* (3 February 1961).

⁸¹ Advertising and Marketing Associates, "Winter Newspaper Advertisement," in Florida State Archives, series 135, box 1; Same report in Florida State Library: Advertising and Marketing Associates Inc, *Report to the Florida Development Commission* (Miami, June 1969). For Fall-Winter 1968-69 campaign, the magazines and papers targeted are: *Brides Magazine*, 1 page, circulation 290,000; *Modern Bride*, 1 page, 273,000; *Sales Meeting*, 1 page, 47,400; *Meetings and Conventions*, 1 p., 62,200; *World Convention Dates*, 1 p., circulation unknown; *Atlantic Magazine*, 1 p., 286,500; *Life*, half page (in Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio), 1,040,000; *Sports Afield*, 1 column, 1,370,000; *Outdoor Life*, 1 col., 1,640,000; *Field and Stream*, 1 col., 1,500,000; *Southern Living*, 1 p., 509,000; *Recommend*, 1 p., 10,700. Newspapers: *Akron Beacon-Journal*, 3 days, circ. 203,118; *Boston Globe*, 3 days, 566,377; *Boston Herald*, 2 days, 298,557; *Boston Record/ American/ Advertiser*, 2 days, 432,963; *Chicago Sun Times/ Daily News*, 4 days, circ. 712,175 and 453,757; *Chicago Tribune*, 1 day, special section, 1,131,752; *Cincinnati Inquirer*, 3 days, 302,445 ; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 3 days, 545,000; *The Gazette*, 14 and 28 September, circ. 113,000; *Montreal Star*, 14 September and 5 October, circ. 218,414; *La Presse*, special section, 23 November, circ. 226,000; *NYT*, 3 days: 12 and 22 September and 6 October, circ. 3,132,083, besides a color brochure on 24 November, circ. 1,445,507; *Toronto Telegram*, 14 and 28 September, circ. 240,051

⁸² Special 24-pages advertising section, *NYT*, 21 January 1968, 3; We suspect other special advertising sections, FDC-sponsored, 1968, in *La Presse*, *Boston Herald*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Newark News*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Charlotte Observer*, *Financial Times*, *Glamour Magazine*. Special advertising section on Florida, *NYT*, 24 November 1968, section 13; Florida State Archives, Florida Development Commission files, series 135, box 1: Advertising and Marketing Associates, "Special *New York Times* Roto Section," in *1969 Annual Report to Florida Development Commission*; FDC, *1968 Annual Report*.

televised campaign, at the cost of \$200,000; the following winter, in 1969, it paid for new television ads on NBC's *Today* and *Tonight* Shows. By then, the evolving FDC strategy was relying less on coupons and free copy, and more on billboards (generally in association with airlines), and special sections in newspapers and magazines.⁸³

As the cost of advertising Florida outpaced inflation, the interest of tourist promoters increasingly focused on financing. They found frustrating the wide swings in state spending on advertising: in 1954 it stood at \$680,000, down from a million the previous year; by 1957 it was at \$1.3 million, but decreased to \$1.1 million in 1960. By the time that state funding declined from a peak of \$2.15 million to a paltry \$300,000 in 1973, the industry's alarm had already been heard in Tallahassee: in 1972 Governor Reubin O. Askew appointed a Tourism Advisory Council to advise him, among other items on its agenda, on the creation of alternative, more constant sources of revenue in an era when Florida was being dangerously outspent on tourist promotion by its Caribbean competitors.⁸⁴ By 1978, Bermuda and the Bahamas were, respectively, the fifth and tenth most lavish travel advertisers in US newspapers. That year, these two plus Jamaica and Mexico spent more than \$12.3 million on travel advertising. Florida's \$600,000 state advertising budget in 1978 was puny compared to New York's \$5 million, and trailed five other states, including direct competitors Georgia, North Carolina and Hawaii. The steady

⁸³ Florida State Archives, Tallahassee: Fla. Development Commission, series 135, box 1, *Progress Report 1955-1959*; FDC created by ch. 288, Fla. Statutes, 1955; Speech from B. R. Fuller Jr., Exec. Dir. of FDC, "The Competition Florida Faces for Tourists" (26 August 1960); Fla. Development Commission, fy 1958-59 *Annual Report*, 8, 14, 19; FDC, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1959-1960*; 1968 *Annual Report*; Advertising and Marketing Associates Inc., *Report to Florida Development Commission* (Miami, June 1969). 15 NBC commercials, one minute each in duration, in color; Carl Spielvogel, "Advertising: Putting Out the Welcome Mat," *NYT*, 19 January 1958, F10; C.E. Wright, "Florida Looks to its Future," *NYT*, 9 April 1961, sect. 10:15; Mike Beaudoin, "Progress Over 50 Years....," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1950, 16B; A. L. Himbert, "Florida Tourist Trade Still Growing," *NYT*, 18 October 1953, sect. 2:28; DeBerard, 124, 176.

advertising of this disparity by the tourism industry in Florida's press finally compelled the state government to raise FDC's promotional budget so decisively in fiscal year 1979-80 that it was now second best in the nation.⁸⁵

Thanks to the pressure from the direct beneficiaries of Florida's tourism for Government (i.e., taxpayers) to provide the "other people's money" necessary to provide the soaring promotional budget they craved, there were several outbursts of debate during the postwar period over the financing of tourist promotion through special taxes. Following St. Petersburg's example set in 1911, a proportion of the Miami Beach property tax revenue was earmarked for tourist promotion in the late 1940s (it yielded \$700,000 a year in 1966). These efforts, on the part of local governments, created a constituency that opposed any initiative to tax tourist services for tourist promotion. Consequently, in April 1949, Miami Beach hoteliers were the most vocal opponents to a proposed local tourist sales tax.⁸⁶ The chambers of commerce in tourist towns agreed, however, that local governments should pony up.⁸⁷ Advertisement of the Florida Dream was, accordingly, increasingly financed through special taxes.

Following a precedent established by San Francisco, New York, and Chicago, Miami Beach imposed a "tourist tax" in 1966 – a two percent sales tax on restaurant, bar and hotel bills, for an anticipated \$3 millions in revenues to be spent on promoting the

⁸⁴ Rick Abrams, "Tourism Groups to Make Plea for \$3.4-million Promotion Budget," *Miami News*, 24 March 1973, 5A; Christina Evans, "Tourism Budget to Get \$1.4 Million Increase," *Orlando Sentinel*, 3 June 1973; "Tourist Promotion Weak, Divided," *Miami News*, 10 August 1971.

⁸⁵ U.S. Travel Data Center, and Business Research Div., U. of Colorado, *Tourism's Top Twenty: Fast Facts on Travel and Tourism* (Washington DC, and Boulder CO, 1980), 2-4, 8.

⁸⁶ Marschal Rothe, "With Extra Services -On the House," *Miami Herald*, 8 January 1950, 5F.

⁸⁷ In Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami: Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce fund, Records, box 2: Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report 1959-60: "The Challenge of the '60s,"* 23; same demands in 1960-61 and 1961-62 *Annual Reports*.

resort.⁸⁸ The monies were split evenly between the City Council and a new Tourist Development Authority. In addition to advertising, the money was used to lure conventions to Miami Beach, among them the Republican National Convention in 1968 (which received a \$235,000 subsidy). Four years later Miami Beach's financial incentives were sufficient to attract both, the Democratic and G.O.P. national conventions. Tax money was also set aside to subsidize locally produced TV shows; for instance, a subsidy of \$123,000 brought the Miss Universe pageant to the Beach for two years, in 1970 and 1971.⁸⁹ The City Council share of revenue from the tourist tax collected went to capital improvements in connection with tourism, which in Miami Beach could mean nearly anything. The tax thus financed a Convention Center big enough to hold the swollen egos of both donkey and elephant alike.

As the administration of funds came under criticism for its disregard of public scrutiny, the State reacted by establishing guidelines on the scope and administration of the local tourist taxes. A 1973 state law allowed the cities of Miami Beach, Surfside, Sunny Isles and Bal Harbour to levy a two percent tax on accommodations and restaurant meals. The law spurred the rest of Dade County, through its Chamber of Commerce, to ask for a similar privilege. Eventually, the countywide financing of promotional efforts

⁸⁸ Roalman, "How They Get You to Fall in Love With Miami Beach," *NYT*, 9 January 1971, sect. 10:24; Agnes Ash, "Miami Beach Tax Aims at Improving Her Image," *NYT*, 25 December 1966, D23; *NYT*, 16 December 1966, 22; H.M. Raloy, L.G. Plolansky, and A.J. Millas, *Old Miami Beach: A Case Study in Historical Preservation: July 1976-July 1980* (Miami Beach, 1994), 19.

⁸⁹ James Savage, "Tourist Board Spends Like Topsy Playboy," *Miami Herald*, 28 March 1971, A1; Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, *1971-72 Annual Report; 1978-79 Annual Report; Merger: Tourism Industry Report 5* (14 May 1986); cuts: *Tourism Industry Report 5* (15 October 1986): 3; on merger of County and Beach tourism administrations: Dory Owens, *Miami Herald*, 20 September 1984; "Drop in Tourism Hits Miami Beach," *NYT*, 29 August 1971, 51; "Miami Beach Changes Image," *Florida Trend* 16 (December 1973): 104.

produced the long-awaited merger of Miami-Dade and Miami Beach Tourism Councils in the spring of 1986.⁹⁰

Following Miami's example, and pressured by Dade County, the Florida Legislature adopted in 1977 a law enabling every county to adopt a local "bed tax" on accommodations in order to finance tourist infrastructure and promotion. Individual counties could now request a Local Option Tourism Development Tax from their voters in a local referendum. However, a County-appointed, advisory Tourism Development Council would have to plan the proposed uses for the funds collected before a plan went to the voters. The tax had to apply impartially to all tourist accommodations.⁹¹

The tax (initially limited to one or two percent, but three percent since the mid-1980s) could go to any of these four domains: first, for tourist promotion, including salaries, the tourist and conventions bureau or the OPM news bureau; second, for the purchase, improvement, financing, promotion or maintenance of publicly owned or operated stadiums, arenas, convention centers, and auditoriums; third, for beach restoration and erosion control; or, fourth, for the cleanup or upkeep of any publicly accessible body of water. In eligible counties, the basic levy could be supplemented by additional one-percent increases – one to pay the debt service of a professional sports facility; one to buy up land deemed of "critical state concern," and a final one for counties

⁹⁰ *Tourism Industry Report 5* (12 November 1986): 3; *Tourism Industry Report 4* (30 October 1985): 3; 1973: Robert A. Liff, "Tourism on Skids in Miami," *Orlando Sentinel*, 18 July 1983, C1; Robert Johnson, "The Resort Tax: Tourism Promotion Funds Hang Just Out of Reach," *Florida Trend* 21 (May 1978): 51.

⁹¹ Florida Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, *Report-in-brief: Local Option Tourist Development Tax* (August 1990); State Rep. Fran Carlton, "A Look at the Tourist Development Act," *Tourism Barometer II* 3 (Spring-Summer 1984).

especially dependent on tourism.⁹² Beyond that, an extra two percent on food and beverages could be levied by "blighted" areas to assist their economic revitalization.

In the Florida Keys, the voters of Monroe County initially rejected the tax in 1979, but accepted a watered-down proposal in December 1981 that limited it to Key West. Fearful that tourists might balk at a targeted tax, by early 1984 only fourteen counties collected the two percent levy, which they mostly applied to promotion. A notable exception was Hillsborough (Tampa), which used its tourist tax for sports stadiums and a convention center. In reaction, the tourist commission of neighboring Pinellas County decided to use its tax levy to finance its own professional baseball stadium, but a local hotel-owners association successfully filed suit against the Tourism Commission's decision in 1984 forcing a suspension of the stadium subsidies – the Florida Suncoast/Tropicana Field stadium finally opened in 1990 in St. Petersburg, to host the Tampa Bay Devil Rays franchise in the fall of 1998.⁹³ As of 1990, out of 67 Florida counties, twenty had a two percent tourist tax, and twelve, a three percent. Miami-Dade levied an additional two percent on food and beverages and a three percent convention development tax on tourist accommodations (first authorized in 1983). Hillsborough imposed an extra one percent to pay for a professional sports facility (the Buccaneer's Raymond James Stadium), while Orange (Orlando) and Monroe (the Keys) counties

⁹² Tourism impact is considered high if: the amount of transactions submitted to the basic "bed taxation" exceeded \$600 million the previous year; no less than 18% of the county's taxable sales are subjected to the bed tax -this amount must exceed \$200 million. As of mid-1990, the 1% for a sports stadium was only used in Hillsborough, for Tampa's stadiums; the 1% for "high tourism impact" was used solely in Orange County; the 1% for "critical state concern" only in Monroe (the Keys); the extra 2% was only applied in Miami-Dade; Florida Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, 5.

⁹³ opposition to stadium project: Austin C. Griffin, exec. director of St. Petersburg Beach Chamber of Commerce, letter to *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 May 1981, 4D.

charged an additional one percent to adjust to the high impact of tourism they experienced.⁹⁴

The Local Tax nearly quenched the thirst of local interests for advertising money. In a tourism-and-conventions-rich county such as Orange a four-percent tourist tax meant in 1990 an advertising budget of \$7.6 million; four years later its tourist tax revenues reached \$27 million. Palm Beach County similarly enjoyed tourist tax revenues of \$18.1 million in 2000. And in Broward County (Fort Lauderdale), the county spent \$2.7 million on a single promotional campaign in 1986 (out of tourist tax receipts of \$5.8 million). Not every county saw fit to tax the tourist; some of them simply lacked the population and tourist allure to make it worthwhile. Thus the commissioners of Pasco County, a haven for moderate-income snowbirds, rejected a tourist tax in September 1988 whose proceeds would have been spent on improvement of local parks and the construction of an auditorium.⁹⁵ Table 2.1 summarizes the incidence of the Tourist Development Tax as of the late 1980s.

⁹⁴ R.A. Liff, "Tourism on Skids in Miami," *Orlando Sentinel*, 18 July 1983, C1; *The Tourist Tax: Dollars Adrift*, 4-part series in the *Fort Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel* (April 1984); *Tourism Industry Report 9* (26 March 1990): 3; *Tourism Industry Report 5* (12 November 1986): 3; *Tourism Industry Report 4* (30 October 1985): 3; Carlton; Orlando/ Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau Inc., *Tourism is the Driving Force in Central Florida's Economy: A Report on Tourism's Economic Impact* (Orlando, 1995), 10.

⁹⁵ On Sarasota, which got 2% tax in 1988: *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, 16 January 1998; Liff; *The Tourist Tax: Dollars Adrift*; Palm Beach County, *Department Summary: Tourism Development Council* (West Palm Beach, 1990), D252; *Broward County Statistical Abstract and Fact Book* (Fort Lauderdale, 1989), 76; *Tourism Industry Report 9* (26 March 1990): 3; *Tourism Industry Report 5* (12 November 1986): 3; *Tourism Industry Report 4* (30 October 1985): 3; Bruce Vielmetti, "Commission Kills Tourist Tax Plan," *St. Petersburg Times*, 14 September 1988, P1; Carlton; Orlando/ Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau Inc., 10.

Table 2.1: Implementation of the Local Option Tourist Development Tax, selected counties, with amount collected for fiscal year 1988-1989 (in thousands of dollars).

County	%	Collections fiscal year 1988-89 (\$1,000)	Collections fy 1989-90 (\$1,000)	Uses
Florida		80,291	104,279	
Charlotte (Port Charlotte/ Punta Gorda)	2	431.6	502	100% for County facilities
Broward (Fort Lauderdale)	3	10,276.4	10,376	50% County facilities, 50% operating tourist bureau
Miami-Dade	2	8,348.5	NA	40% promotion, 60% operating tourist bureau
Hillsborough (Tampa)	3	4,446.2	5,541	40% operate County facilities, 60% tourism bureau
Lee (Fort Myers)	3	5,109.8	NA	13.4% County facilities, 53.6% promotion, 33% beach/ lake restoration
Manatee (Bradenton)	3	1,279	NA	19% County facilities, 29% promotion, 26% tourism bureau, 33% beach/lake
Monroe (Keys)	3	4,908.6	5,683	40% promotion, 29% bureau, 31% others (events, arts council, cultural development, landscaping)
Orange (Orlando)	3	24,922.9	37,002	88% County facilities, 4% promotion, 8% tourism bureau
Osceola (Kissimmee)	3	6,589	8,338	27.8% County facilities, 45.1% promotion, 2.9% beach/lake; 20.5% tourism bureau
Palm Beach	3	5,748.5	7,286	7% County facilities, 17% beach/lake, 76% tourism bureau
Pinellas (St. Petersburg)	3	7,488.7	8,534	35% County facilities, 49.5% promotion, 15.5% beach- lake;
Sarasota	2	1,012.9	2,235	25% promotion, 50% beach/lake; 25% others
Volusia (Daytona)	2	3,278	4,512	66.6% County facilities, 33.3% promotion

Source: Fla. Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, *Report-in-brief: Local Option Tourist Development Tax* (Tallahassee: August 1990); fy 1989-90 data in *Florida Statistical Abstract 1991* (Gainesville: 1991), 470; State Rep. Fran Carlton, "A Look at the Tourist Development Act," *Tourism Barometer II* 3, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1984).

The local tourist tax did not quench the tourist industry's financial demands. During the 1980s and early 1990s there was a drawn-out legislative quarrel in Tallahassee over the proper level of state-funded advertising. In 1981, a statewide one percent tax on rental cars, accommodations, restaurants, tavern bills, and on attractions' entrance fees, was proposed to the State legislature, to be used for statewide tourist promotion (over and besides the local tourist tax) under the supervision of a new industry-led Tourism Commission. The bill died in committee, partly because of competition from a proposal to increase the State sales tax by one percent, and partly because of opposition from the Secretary of Commerce and the state's theme parks.⁹⁶ In 1985, Governor Bob Graham appointed a Tourism Advertising Study Task Force, which duly voiced concern over the inadequacy of advertisement at the State level. It pointed out that funding had stagnated over the previous four years at a miserly \$4.3 million. The Task Force proposed a State advertising budget of \$20 million, to come from general revenue. It also advocated a statewide 0.5% special tax on tourist services expenditures to be supervised by an industry-led Tourism Commission in collaboration with a new state Department of Tourism. The plan was bold; it was also too costly to be implemented.⁹⁷ In 1990, to revive the tax debate, Gold Coast representatives persuaded the legislature to ask the Tourism Advisory Council for recommendations on the feasibility of creating a Tourism Commission independent of the Department of Commerce.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Patrick McMahon, "Proposed 1% 'Tourist Tax' is Gaining Support," *St. Petersburg Times*, 21 April 1981, B1.

⁹⁷ *Tourism Industry Report* 4 (30 October 1985); 5 (22 January 1986): 1, 5; 5 (19 February 1986).

⁹⁸ *Tourism Industry Report* 9 (12 March 1990); Phillip Longman, "How Badly do we Want his Money?," *Florida Trend* 34 (December 1991): 48; Business & Industry Study Group, Leadership Broward 1983-1984, *Has Broward County Been Mickey-Moused?* (Fort Lauderdale, 1983), 37; one failure of a Tourism Commission Bill: *Tourism Industry Report* 5 (25 June 1986); *Tourism Industry Report* 9 (12 March 1990).

In 1991 came results: the Advisory Council recommended the creation of a separate Department of Tourism, and a Tourism Commission was finally created, albeit on a provisional basis with no spending power. The Council also recommended a state advertising budget comparable to that of the Bahamas, which then spent \$30 million. In June 1992, a permanent Florida Tourism Commission was created by statute, to be comprised of industry representatives, some from the big players such as Disney, Universal, Sea World, Silver Springs, the remainder from the principal regional and local tourist authorities. Its first mandate from Governor Lawton Chiles was to recommend ways to finance an increase in advertising and an appropriate five-year marketing plan.⁹⁹ That same year, the Commission devised a plan to tax tourist-dependent businesses in tourist-dependent counties, but Chiles, a populist Democrat, opposed the plan for being too soft on big business. Disney's contribution to the state advertising budget would have been, for example, a paltry \$30,000.¹⁰⁰

Despite the widespread concern over the level and funding of the state's advertising, the new Commission failed to wring additional money from the legislature to undo the stagnation of the state advertising budget at the State level during the late 1980s (even though six states were by then already besting Florida in promotional spending), followed by an actual cut during fiscal 1989-1990. The following year the legislature, heeding the pleas of Governor Bob Martinez, begrudged twelve million dollars.¹⁰¹ Florida

⁹⁹ Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Senate Committee on International Trade, Economic Development and Tourism, series 18, box 2006, Bill sb. 1984, submitted by Sen. Diaz-Ballart, creating the Tourism Commission in the Department of Commerce; series 18, box 2005, sb 196-h, June 1992, Act to create Fla. Tourism Commission; OPPAGA, *Program review*; angst in hotel industry: Charles E. Hecker, "Broward Steps Up Advertising To Head Off Slump," *Miami Herald*, 4 November 1990, 27a; Lore Croghan, "Snowbirds Flocking Elsewhere," *Miami Herald*, 11 February 1993, 1C.

¹⁰⁰ Bob LaMendola, "Plan To Finance Tourism Ads," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 3 January 1992, 2b.

¹⁰¹ *Tourism Industry Report 9* (26 February 1990); Paid advertising jumps from \$4.1 to 5.9 million: *Tourism Industry Report 9* (May 1990): 2; Elisabeth Willson, "How Will We Keep the Tourists Coming," *Florida*

still lagged: "in 1993-94, for example, Hawaii spent approximately \$30 million" – more than twice as much as Florida.¹⁰² By then, Florida's competitors in the United States and Caribbean had not only increased their visibility significantly, they had even started to target snowbirds.¹⁰³ Florida's expenditure of \$5 million on television and newspaper ads placed it a laggard seventh among US States.

Though chronically failing to result into action, these repeated schemes for increased financing paved the way to an eventual solution: a merger of public and private promotional efforts in an independent, private-public body, and through it the raising the necessary advertisement money via membership fees and taxes. In the mid-1990s, a plan proposing just such a public-private partnership was presented to the State Legislature by the Florida Commission on Tourism; it had been jointly drawn up by the industry's big players and leading Conventions and Visitors Bureaus. The legislature's approval hinged on the promise of private players to match the State dollar for dollar on promotion in order to raise the promotional budget to a total of \$30 million – industry and state.¹⁰⁴

This plan replaced the Tourism Division of the state's Department of Commerce with the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, more generally known as Visit Florida. State tourism promotion was revamped, receiving increased financing, hence greater visibility. The initial 1996 state appropriation for Visit Florida was \$20 million, a third of it for advertising, the money coming entirely from a share of the state tax on car rentals. Tourist businesses were required to provide an equal amount by the year 2000 through

Trend 32 (1990 yearbook): 18; M. Chase Burritt, and David R. Williams, "Tourism," in *The Economy of Florida*, eds. Denslow, Pierce, Shermyan (Gainesville, 1990), 261.

¹⁰² Marilyn Adams, "Catch You Later, Eh?...", *Florida Trend* (November 1999); Herbert L. Hiller, "How To Save Florida Tourism," *Florida Trend* (March 1996); Hiller, "Marketing the Real Florida," *Florida Trend* (March 1996): 44; Longman.

¹⁰³ E.A. Torriero, "Snowbirds Called To Flock Out Of Florida," *Ft Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 4 February 1996, 1A.

membership fees in Visit Florida and contributions to the cost of "cooperative advertising" – that is, the cost of media time and space that the private-public partnership deemed necessary for the promotion of Florida as a tourist destination. The approach was voluntary – none of the private operators *had* to partner with Visit Florida – and voluntarism had its usual problem with free riders. As a result, as of September 1997, Visit Florida still had fewer than 500 private partners and had collected less than \$2 million in fees from an industry generating \$2.34 billion in annual sales taxes.¹⁰⁵

The industry's contribution to Visit Florida eventually became significant: corporate membership fees for cooperative advertising began to be collected in fiscal 1998-99, a year in which Visit Florida received \$22 million to spend (including the industry's contribution) as concern mounted over the deep pockets of competing destinations. As concerned, its advertising budget had fallen to a projected \$9.1 million for fiscal year 2001-2002.¹⁰⁶

Then fell the Twin Towers. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Visit Florida was credited with preventing the collapse of the state's tourist industry. The State government, alarmed by the predictions of the Tourism Commission,

¹⁰⁴ Hiller; Florida Dept. of Commerce, *1995: The Year in Review* (Tallahassee, 1996).

¹⁰⁵ Visit Florida had a new logo, a web site, a new toll-free information service, new "Vacation Guide" brochures (1.3 million copies), \$1 million more in advertising, new thematic brochures (including one on ecotourism), increased presence in consumer-oriented travel shows, including in Canada. *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, 15 August 2001; Deborah Borfitz, "Fewer Bodies But Deeper Pockets," *Florida Trend* (January 1997); Robert N. Jenkins, "Innovations," *Florida Trend* (October 1997); David Wilkening, "More, More, More....," *Florida Trend* 40 (January 1998); *La Presse*, 23 September 1995, H10; *NYT*, 24 November 1974, sect. 10:25; Beth Dickey, "U.S. Tourism Promoters See the Visit Florida Partnership as a Blueprint for a National Effort," *Florida Trend* (July 2002); OPPAGA, *Program review*; Gwen Smith and Jane O'Hara, "Flocking South," *Maclean's* 113 (31 January 2000): 60, 64, 65.

¹⁰⁶ Jim Talley, "Fruitful Exchange," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 19 December 1988, 8; "Canadians Deserting Florida's Sun," *Sun-Sentinel*, 21 August 1999, 10B; Helen Huntley, "Northern Exposure," *St. Petersburg Times*, 20 January 2000, 1E; Ken Becker, "US Looks for Ways to Attract Canadian Travellers," *Canadian Press Newswire*, 11 October 1999; Business & Industry Study Group, *Leadership Broward 1983-1984*, 37; "Mexican Lore," *Miami Herald*, 29 January 1995, 1B; Jennifer Babson, "Broward Banks On Canadian Influx," *Miami Herald* (21 November 1999, 1BR); Prior Smith, "Florida Calling," *Toronto Star*, 12 February 2000.

appropriated \$20 million for emergency measures to double the income of Visit Florida from public sources. In the summer of 2003, Governor Jeb Bush made a promotional visit to Canada. By then, Visit Florida had been able to advertise the Florida tourism industry sufficiently out of trouble that some federal politicians proposed that the US Travel Service develop a similar public-private partnership. Some critics, however, alleged that Visit Florida had developed a bias in favor of big attractions like Disney World, when in their opinion Florida should be promoting its smaller attractions, including cultural and ecological tourism.¹⁰⁷

Their call for marketing diversity begs the question of the content of advertisement at the Twentieth Century's end. Did the messages of publicly- and privately-financed state advertising differ? *Not at the local level*, it seemed. Both reused the "Sun and Fun" slogan year after year. As late as 1982, Miami Beach advertising still combined bathing beauties and local temperatures. For its December 1986 campaign targeting Boston, New York and Chicago newspapers, Broward County's slogans presented a Florida vacation as "Antifreeze" and "Cold Medicine." In the economically uncertain early 1990s, Broward still defined its potential visitors as winter-weary northerners, for its advertising agency advised Broward to target "potential business resulting from poor weather conditions in feeder markets during the winter months."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Dickey; Visit Florida, *Opportunity Florida* (October 2002); Mitchell Smyth, *Toronto Star*, 8 November 2003, K24; "La Floride tente de reconquérir les Québécois," *La Presse*, 2 November 2002, H9; Herbert L. Hiller, "How To Save Florida Tourism."

¹⁰⁸ in Greater Fort Lauderdale Conventions and Visitors Bureau, fy 1990-91 and fy 1994-95 *Marketing Plans*: 1991 brochures in *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Boston Globe*, *New York Daily News*, *Long Island Newsday*, *Newark Star Leger*; 1991 regular ads in the latter papers and *Toronto Star*, *The Gazette*, *Le Journal de Montréal*; 1994 brochure is a *Canadian Vacation Guide* for Southeast Florida, in *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Sun*, *Toronto Star*, *The Gazette*, *La Presse*; 1994 regular ads in *New York Times*, *L.I. Newsday*, *Star Ledger*, *The Record* (Bergen County, NJ), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun Times*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Journal de Montréal*, *La Presse*, *The Gazette*, *Toronto Star*; Scott A. Zamost, "The Lesson For Locals," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 17 November 1986, B6; Lyda Longa, "Hollywood Officials Cite Cold Shoulder In Radio Ads," *Sun-Sentinel*, 21

At the state level, promotional efforts and messages have always been more diverse than those of private sources because selling Florida also meant attracting permanent settlers and selling citrus. Since the 1970s, there has also been intermittent pressure on state authorities to vary their advertising pitch to take into account the state's attractions beyond the Beach and theme parks and the staleness of the Sun and Fun message.

Sun and Fun could seem stale in many ways. For instance, the resurgence of feminism challenged the inherent sexism of Florida's advertising tradition. In 1978, a mere six years after Congress voted for the Equal Rights Amendment, the maidens in swimsuits – the cheesecake¹⁰⁹ – suddenly became an embarrassment. For the next three years the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority banned advertising with scantily dressed women, in accordance with the city's adherence to the Amendment. In 1980, with the US economy faltering, Harold Gardner, the Authority's new Director, reinstated the tradition – in response, he said, to repeated demands from Northern dailies, many of them Canadian.¹¹⁰ Despite this setback to feminism, by the 1980s Florida's advertisements moved away from the sexually blatant (as in "when you need *it* bad") towards messages more appealing to Florida's diverse traveler base, which included married couples.

November 1991, 2b; Greater Fort Lauderdale Conventions and Visitors Bureau, *Marketing Plan*, fiscal year 1991, 16A; Broward County Tourism Development Council, Broward County Convention and Visitors Bureau, *1994-95 Marketing Plan* (Fort Lauderdale, 1994), 46; TravMark Group Inc. (Niagara), "Sales Representation proposal for the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau," with theme of "3000 Hours of Fun in the Sun": in Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Marketing Plan*, fiscal year 1991, appendix; Gregory Jaynes, "A Shadow Darkens a Bright Image," *NYT*, 31 January 1982, 24.

¹⁰⁹ Roalman; Nixon Smiley, "Dick Pope: The Man Who Can't Stop Running," *Miami Herald Sunday Magazine* (5 February 1967): 4; Stephen E. Branch, "The Salesman and His Swamp: Dick Pope's Cypress Gardens," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80 (Spring 2002): 495; DeBerard, 191; Gregory Jaynes, "A Shadow Darkens a Bright Image," *NYT*, 31 January 1982, 24; Jay Clarke, "Foreign Flavor," *NYT*, 4 September 1966, D26; Greater Miami Conventions and Visitors Bureau, *1996/97 in Review*.

¹¹⁰ Jay H. Leve, "The New Mr. Tourism," *Miami Herald*, 1 January 1981, 11, 12.

Unavoidably, Florida's very popularity and growth eventually created a landscape that evoked feelings of placelessness, a sense that the state looked like any other state and so had lost the exoticism that underlays the Florida Dream. In 1983, a *New York Times* writer commented on the growth-induced placelessness of Florida: "If the Florida that was unique destroys what made it unique, doesn't Florida also become as extinct as the dinosaur? Oh sure, it will still be a geographical site at which people can arrive by air, rent automobiles... And so what?... Florida becomes every place else, and every place else becomes Florida."¹¹¹

Even the business-oriented *Florida Trend* magazine adopted elegiac tones in the 1990s to lament the placelessness of the Florida landscape. Florida was turning into "Anywhere, U.S.A." at a time where the most lucrative tourist segments – ecotourism, for instance – thrived on pristine nature, exotism, local character, historical and archaeological sightseeing, etc.

Florida tourism is also losing market share because consumers around the globe increasingly prefer destinations that evoke a strong and unique sense of place. In the face of this trend, Florida continues to squander its natural and cultural assets, to the point that its image is now increasingly that of a non-place — a land of generic attractions and condo canyons, surrounded by featureless sprawl that might as well be anywhere.¹¹²

Montréal columnist Pierre Foglia likened highway US 1 in the Keys to a proverbially ugly commercial strip in suburban Brossard, near Montréal. Another writer, finding it "very depressing" to see so many signs of continuing and rapid development, concluded that Florida was doomed to become "nothing but subdivisions, tourist traps, and a few beleaguered nature reserves." Many commentators tried to inform readers of "real Florida" attractions away from the malls, golf courses and suburban landscapes, with

¹¹¹ Russell Baker, "Road to Extinction," *New York Times Magazine* (3 April 1983): 18.

words speaking scores about the sense of loss experienced in Florida: "The Florida Isle Developers Missed," "the strip malls are left behind," "one of Florida's best-kept secrets." Thus, for Herbert Hiller, a former cruise line executive, it was a happy coincidence that "the only way to save Florida tourism is to save Florida itself" by fighting environmental damage and urban sprawl.¹¹³ This state of affairs also commanded a reform of tourism promotion, not necessarily away from the Sun and Fun, but in a way that made the Florida Beach a unique experience.

Another critique of Florida's culture of self-promotion came in 1997 in response to master plan devised by the new Visit Florida agency. Critics – mostly Miami-area promoters and leaders – complained that the dominant "sun and fun" iconography failed to promote the "environmental and historical assets ... at a time when more and more tourists are looking for unique destinations. Beaches and theme parks? Been there. Done that." Floridian John Nease deplored that he had seen virtually interchangeable spots on a New York City television channel for the Bahamas, Barbados, and Florida, all of which featured "a beautiful girl on a beach."¹¹⁴ Nothing made Florida stand out.

In the end, the staleness of the representation of the Dream has diminished the attractiveness of the Sunshine State, creating an impression that the Florida Dream has been developed out of existence. Or was suffering from its own excess. Some critics said

¹¹² H.L. Hiller, "Marketing the Real Florida." *Florida Trend* (March 1996): 44.

¹¹³ Pierre Foglia, "Plus il y a de gens quelque part...", *La Presse*, 24 April 1995, A5; along similar lines: Lysiane Gagnon, "De Gordon à Dompierre," *La Presse*, 17 November 1994, B3; Robert Turnbull, "Gulf's Great Arc: Big Sky for Snowbirds," *Globe and Mail*, 13 December 1975, 40; Rod Currie, "The Florida Too Few Canadians See: Florida, Eh?," *National Post*, 30 November 2002, PT7; Hiller: 45, 48; Joey Slinger, "Retreat of the Birds," *Saturday Night* 104 (April 1989): 80; Marianne B. Scott, "Paradise Lost on Route 19," *Globe and Mail*, 11 March 1996, D6; Nancy Lyon, "Florida's Nature Coast," *The Gazette*, 25 September 1993, 11; Wilf List, "The Florida Isle Developers Missed," *Globe and Mail*, 30 October 1993, F3; Guy Deshaies, "Une Floride de bon goût et à bon marché," *Le Devoir*, 7 November 1980, 11.

¹¹⁴ John F. Berry, "Selling Florida Short," *Florida Trend* (March 1996); another scathing comment on Florida staleness: Herbert L. Hiller, "How To Save Florida Tourism," *Florida Trend* (March 1996); "See it

that the carnival atmosphere had turned into a hangover for the host community. Others replied that the carnival had been exaggerated in the first place, as Florida had never offered more than a pale version of genuine Caribbean pleasure.

Since 1997, Visit Florida has attempted to cater to a fragmented public – by beaming images of an increasingly fragmented Sunshine State. The agency has diversified its advertising images and messages: these now include touring circuits of backcountry roads, ecotourism, heritage destinations, and ads specifically for Floridians. Among these efforts at market segmentation, one worth noting here targeted snowbirds: in 2002, alarmed by the proliferation of retirement communities in competing states, Florida's tourist industry realized it could no longer take retirees' patronage for granted, even as the graying of the Baby Boom generation guaranteed that snowbirds would soon be flocking south in record numbers. It persuaded Governor Jeb Bush to create Destination Florida, a 15-member Commission to promote retirement migration. The initiative owed much to Al Hoffman, a major fundraiser for the Governor and Chief Executive Officer of WCI Communities, a company that built retirement communities. Hoffman asked in June 2002 for a new marketing institution, specifically aimed at affluent retirees. A study by WCI claimed the impact of retired persons in Florida was great, but warned that other states managed better in recruiting them: during the year 2000, more had settled in the Carolinas than in Florida. Destination Florida issued its report in 2003, advocating a strong promotional initiative. Instead, in 2006 the Florida Department of Elder Affairs downplayed the recommendations, ostentatiously warning

like...": S. Gyllenhaal, "Miami...", *Toronto Star*, 29 November 1981, D4; Morton Lucoff, "Picture of Girl's Eyes May Be Too Sexy," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 16 December 1979.

potential elderly migrants to inquire as to the "real" Florida before making a move.¹¹⁵ For this Department, the complex reality of late-twentieth Century Florida (including its frightening traffic and simmering ghettos) had made the Dream *passé*, even dangerous to public health in a state with an unprecedented number of elderly residents. Chapter 5 will examine in more detail some of the ways in which mass tourism and rapid population growth have altered Florida since the Second World War.

Competition and the increasing complexity of the tourist product were only part of the problem for Florida tourism. The industry's low wages were also problematic for the state's prosperity: many of the tourism jobs were dead-end motel chambermaids and gas station attendants. From the 1970s onwards, there was an increasing unease in elite circles with relying excessively on low-wage tourist development. This concern was vividly illustrated by the 1995 decision of the Florida legislature to replace the state Department of Commerce with Enterprise Florida, a public-private partnership mandated to achieve a consensus on how to develop the state's economy to "create high-quality jobs for Floridians."¹¹⁶ While the resulting strategic plans recognized the current importance of tourism, Enterprise Florida repeatedly affirmed the necessity of diversifying the state's economy in order to provide better-paying, knowledge-based jobs to Floridians and to raise the technological and competitive level of the state's businesses.¹¹⁷ Many of these objectives ran counter to the reality of the tourist economy. It was, therefore, highly significant that a consensus-building, consultative initiative such as Enterprise Florida

¹¹⁵ Cynthia Barnett, "How Many Retirees?," *Florida Trend* (September 2003); Julie Dulude, *Toronto Star*, 7 October 2000, TR5; Destination Florida Commission, *Securing Florida's Place as a Premier Retirement Destination* (Tallahassee, 2003); see website of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, elderaffairs.state.fl.us (Retrieved May 2007).

¹¹⁶ Enterprise Florida, *2000-2001 Annual Report* (Tallahassee, 2001).

¹¹⁷ See Enterprise Florida, *Annual Reports*, www.floridabusiness.com/aboutus/default.asp?tn=3&bn=5 (Retrieved August 2006).

could agree on rejecting the existing development model. As Florida's government has increasingly felt the need to diversify the local economy, it decided that the tourist sector would have to make do with Visit Florida, which meant by the year 2000 that the industry would largely have to fend for itself: that year only one-third of the partnership's money came from public sources – actually from a statewide, soak-the-tourist tax on car rentals.¹¹⁸

While it is too soon to know whether Florida will be able to diversify its economy without sacrificing its tourist industry or whether its tourist industry can survive its own past success, looking backward, however, it can be concluded that Florida, the tourist mecca, was constructed from a repertoire of icons and expectations deeply embedded in Western culture. This repertoire was put to use by promoters of Florida tourism, in order to make Florida glimmer like paradise or Eden on the southern horizon. These advertisements were framed to put northern winter in sharp contrast with Florida. The ads targeted the main reservoir of potential visitors – the winter-weary residents of cities in the Northeastern quadrant of North America.

The symbolic constructs for Florida's sales pitch were elaborated eons earlier than the opening of Disney World in 1971 – despite the obsession of American and cultural studies with the marauding Mouse. It even predated Disneyland's opening in 1955. As Ray Arsenault and Gary Mormino have suggested, *the Florida dreamscape was created in, and promoted by, Floridians*, much too early for Hollywood to have made a significant contribution to it. Artifice is not the exclusive property of special effects teams

¹¹⁸ In 2006, the 39th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism took place: Press release from the Florida Cabinet: "Governor Bush Gives Keynote Address at Annual Tourism Summit" (15 August 2005), from the State government website: www.flgov.com (retrieved August 2006); see also Visit Florida, *2005-2006 Annual Report* (Tallahassee, 2006), 30.

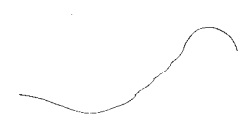
and imagineers. The Disney World theme park, featuring next to nothing relevant to the Florida landscape beyond escapism, came relatively late to Florida, at a time when Florida was already being pushed away from tourism through the pressure of population growth, international migration, and high-technology economic growth. Thus Disney is not so much relevant to the greater story of Florida Dreaming, except in the way it marked the transition of Florida history away from the hegemony of the Fun and Sun version of Florida Dreaming. The Mouse actually delayed Florida's necessary transition to a high-wage, postmodern economy, by spreading the empire of tourism northward. This is supremely ironic, given that Walter Elias Disney himself had promised to Floridians, when unveiling plans for his World in 1965, one of his pet projects: a model, planned community for the future, a solution to the urban crisis named the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT). Instead, the Orlando area has been plagued, since 1971, with an unprecedented shortage of cheap housing for its population employed in tourist businesses. And the only housing that Disney could come up with has been hotels, temporary shelters for its seasonal workers, and the upper-end planned town called Celebration (since 1994).

Disney has promoted Florida so energetically as a year-round resort that it is easy to forget the importance of winter tourism to the construction of Florida. Yet its imprint on South Florida is indelible. Florida would be an entirely different state had tourism's entrepreneurs not spent so much of their own – and other people's – money on selling a dream. Despite their enormous success in this endeavor, the entrepreneurs always indulged in angst over its long-term viability. They took some comfort from the misfortunes of rivals – of Cuba's isolation under Castro, the Dominican Republic's political volatility since Trujillo, Jamaica's gang wars and homophobia, or Mexico's

social turmoil in 1968 and 1994; but betting on the competition to self-destruct was hardly a viable strategy for the long run. In recent years, the level of alarm has risen, as the natural, cultural and geographic advantages enjoyed by Florida have become less exceptional in the continental picture, allowing competing destinations to become more visible, and more popular. The Carolinas, Texas and Arizona, the most visible competitors, have been courting the retirement market in both Canada and the United States. Yet Florida tourism has defied reports of its demise. In 2005, Visit Florida announced that the state had hosted a record 86 millions of visitors, more than 79 million of them from the US – and 2.1 million Canadians.¹¹⁹

Even so, the fear remains that the visitors, finding their experience less than dream-like, may one day not return in such multitudes. As well, as the costs of relying on mass tourism have mounted, tourism promoters are less able to count on support from Florida's residents and elites. Even many of the tourists wish that the hordes would go elsewhere. One of the most obvious of the negative externalities of growth has been the high cost of bringing tourists to Florida and of unclogging the highways they use when they reach it. Highways and airports have been fundamental to the building of South Florida. They are the subject of the next chapter not only because they made the Florida dream plausible – by giving Northerners access to the state – but also because the first taste of the Florida experience and the first opportunity to test the advertisers' myths against concrete reality occurred during the trip southward – especially if that trip came, as it usually did, during a season when Florida's sunny skies contrasted most advantageously with the North's twilight gloom.

¹¹⁹ Louise Gaboury, "Les Québécois fidèles à la Floride," *La Presse*, 26 January 2002, H1; Visit Florida press release: "Florida Experiences Record Breaking Tourism Visitation in 2005" (27 February 2006), on



CHAPTER 3

THE DREAM NEXT DOOR: GOING TO FLORIDA

Tourist Florida is a result of relatively cheap, abundant, and easy-to-use means of transportation.¹ Tourism in the twentieth century is sometimes seen as a quintessentially modern experience, if only for its reliance on technologically advanced means of transportation: trains, planes, and automobiles (and the occasional cruise ship). But a modernist metanarrative would lead us to conclude that the story of going to Florida inevitably ends with uncontested domination by airlines. Yet this chapter will show that automobile use by Florida-bound tourists and snowbirds has not faltered. For some, that is counterintuitive also because Florida is a long, exhausting drive from the Northeast: the Georgia-Florida state line is about 1,600 kilometers (a thousand miles) from both New York City and Chicago – and 2,100 kilometers from Montréal. And Miami is another 560 kilometers (350 miles) from the state line.

The modernist metanarrative hinges on the economics of transportation, but the story of Florida since 1880 has more to it than the economics of pleasure, more than intersecting curves of supply and demand of technology and leisure, more than a mechanistic schema. Historians of technology and culture have warned us repeatedly against top-down explanations, based solely on the agency of the capitalist, the administrator, and the engineer. The receiving end of the process, *that is*, users, consumers

¹ Mohl and Mormino, "The Big Change in the Sunshine State: A Social History of Modern Florida," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville, 1996), 429-431.

and travelers, also participates in the social construction of technology, leisure, and landscape. Consumers have agency. While transportation technology framed Florida, Floridians and northern visitors were able to redefine the frame as they put it to use, redefining their own worldview in the process. In arguing for a social constructionist approach to technology, historian David F. Nye has stated that:

Technologies are central parts of American self-representation, tourism, narrative practice, and visual sensibility.... Technologies of transportation and representation were inseparable from the construction of "natural" tourist sites at Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon, and likewise, the American sense of urban space is inseparable from the automobile, the freeway, and the skyscraper.²

Thus, as we see in this chapter, roads and automobiles have largely been used by tourists and snowbirds to define, and redefine, the Florida Dream that they were seeking, even as their Florida was being shaped, and reshaped, by the automobile in the process. While the motor car allowed millions to enjoy Florida who could not afford to reach it by air, its use should also be understood as a zero-sum game, whereby all individual players enjoyed a formidable expansion of their horizon of possibilities, even while each individual decision to drive a car led to a collective decline in the enjoyment of the roads.

3.1 Paradise on Wheels

The private automobile has shaped Florida as a tourist haven³ – much as it has shaped America's culture, leisure, and landscapes.⁴ The US Bureau of Public Roads

² Nye, *Narratives and Spaces: Technology and the Construction of American Culture* (Exeter, 1997), 3, 4.

³ Mohl and Mormino; Jakle, *The Tourist* (Lincoln, Neb., 1985), 125-128.

⁴ Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York, 2001), 182, 183. Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and national Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, 2001), 314; Automobile determinism also in Breslauer's history of Florida roadside attractions, *Roadside Paradise: The Golden Age of Florida's Tourist Attractions, 1929-1971* (St. Petersburg, 2000), 22-31; Mohl and Mormino, 429-436, 444, 445; Tim Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney: 100 Years of Roadside Fun* (Jackson, Miss, 1999), 5-19; Leon F. Bouvier and Bob Weller, *Florida in the 21st Century: The Challenge of*

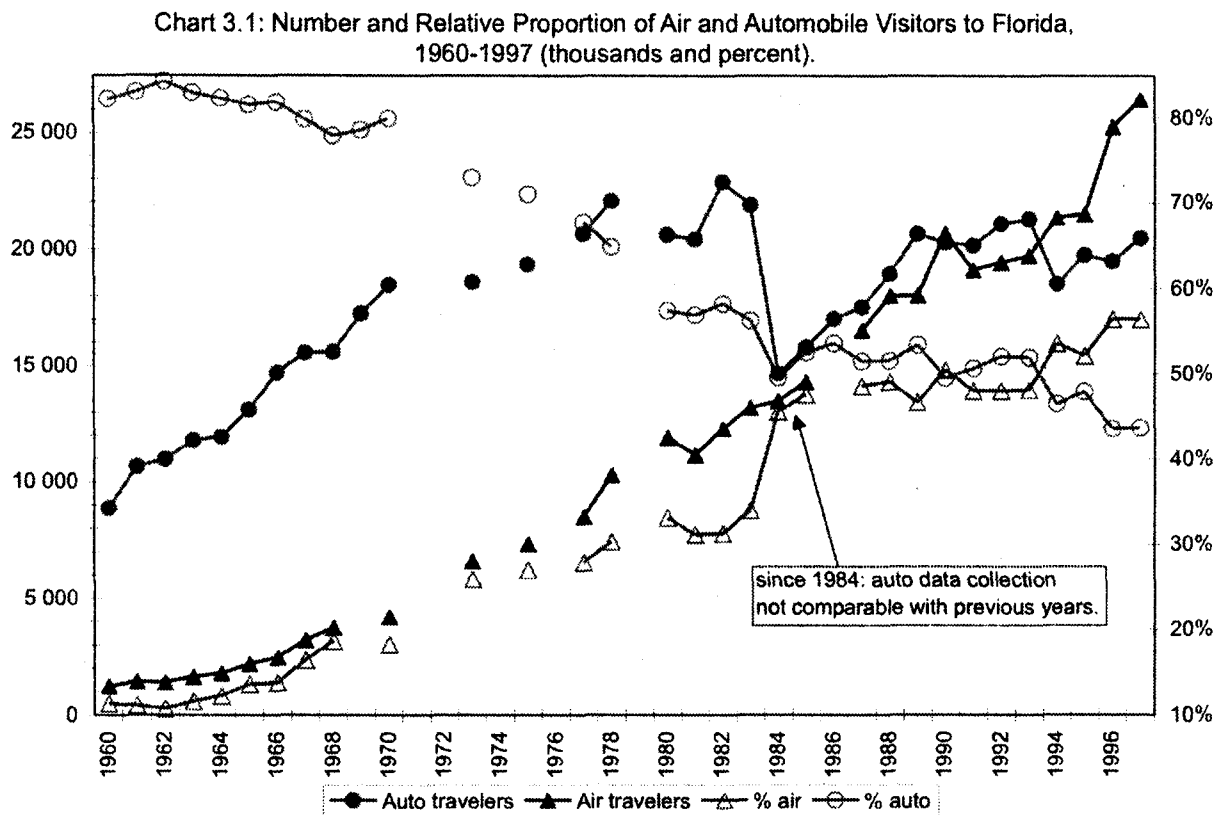
estimated in 1953 that 83 percent of vacation traveling was being done by car. In 1971, a good ten years into the "Jet Age," a study of automobile use in the United States found that the recreational use of the automobile was strong and growing – that car journeys were becoming more frequent and longer, thanks to divided highways, cheaper cars, and higher disposable incomes. Meanwhile tourist authorities in Florida estimated that 80 percent of out-of-state visitors had come by car.⁵ Consistently since the 1980s, the Travel Industry Association of America (TIAC) has reported that 73 to 79 percent of pleasure trips by US residents have been by private automobile. TIAC also found that 82 percent of "leisure" trips (as opposed to "business" or "visiting family") were done by private automobile, in the early 1990s. As recently as 2001, the American Automobile Association noted the continued reliance on the automobile for long-distance travel, as it predicted that 79 percent of Christmas holiday travelers would use their automobiles – four percent more than in 2000 – because of the recession.⁶

Population Growth (Washington, DC, 1992), 40, 41, 147-153; Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States: A Social and Cultural History of Florida, 1950-2000," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Summer 2002): 9, 10, 17; Mormino, "Trouble in Tourist Heaven," *Forum* 17 (Summer 1994): 12, 13; Mormino, "Eden to Empire: Florida's Shifting Dreamscape," *Forum* 24 (Spring 2001): 9.

⁵ In 1979 airlines accounted for 13.5 percent of passenger-miles traveled in the United States. Ady Milman, "In Spite of Florida's Popularity, Some Visitors Will Not Return," *Tourism Barometer II* 6 (Fall-Winter 1987); "Characteristics of Passenger Traffic of Orlando International Airport," *Tourism Barometer II* 5 (Fall 1986).

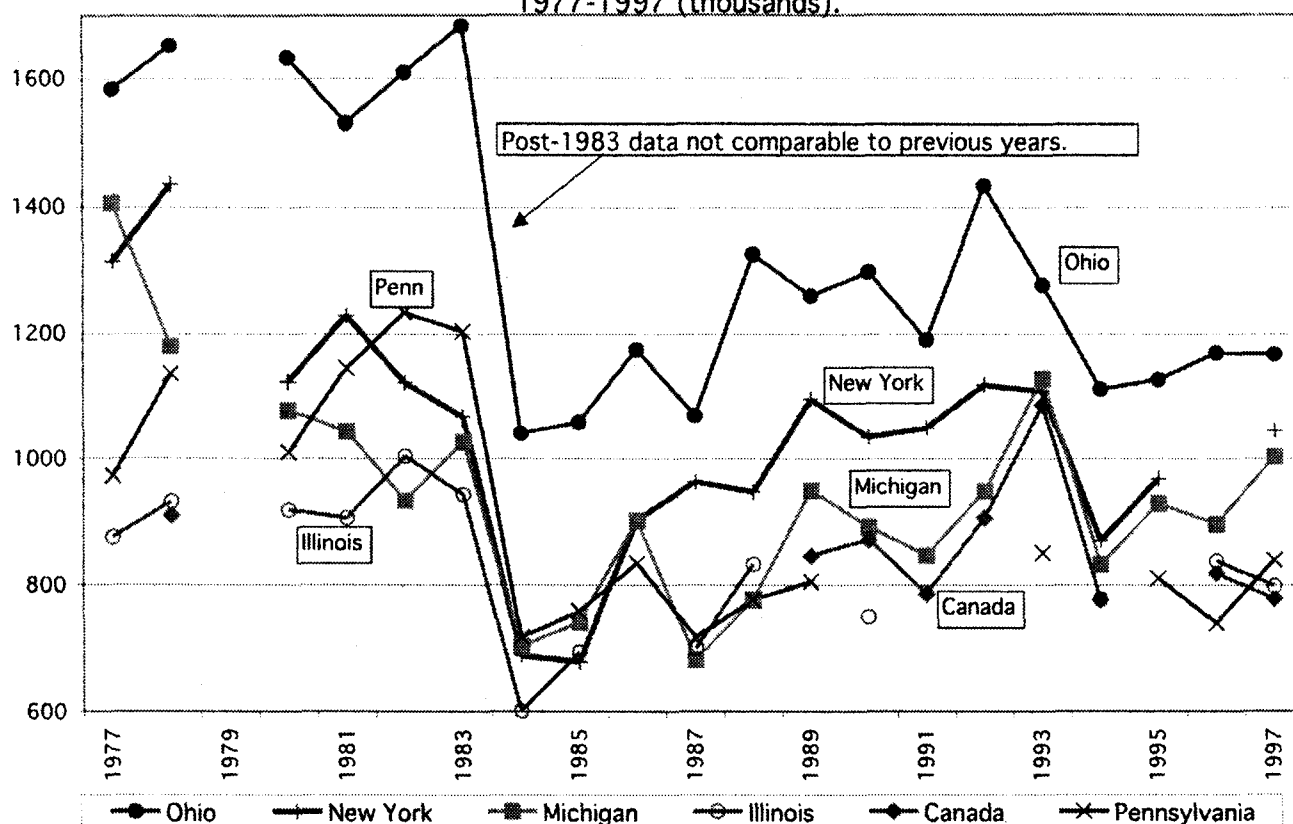
⁶ John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge, Ma, 1971), 138, 139, 142; Agis Salpukas, "Vacationing by Car Makes its Comeback," *New York Times* (thereafter *NYT*), 5 July 1993, A37; Jakle, 125-128; Charles R. Goeldner, Karen Dicke, and Yvonne Sletta, *Travel Trends in the United States and Canada* (Boulder CO, 1979), 71, 72; "U.S. to Import 51 Percent of its Oil," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1977, 24A; Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "America on the Go -U.S. Holiday Travel (Fall 2001)," Washington, 2003), www.bts.gov/publications/america_on_the_go/us_holiday_travel (retrieved September 2006); BTS, "Highlights of the 2001 National Household Travel Survey; Long-Distance Travel" (Washington, 2002) www.bts.gov/publications/national_household_travel_survey; 1995 data: BTS, "American Travel Survey: Long-distance Leisure Travel in the United States" (Washington, 1996) www.bts.gov/publications/1995_american_travel_survey/long_distance_leisure_travel_in_the_united_states/index.html; TIAA data is in Census Bureau's 2000 and 1996 *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, 1996 and 2000) tables 424, 445; American Automobile Association, "AAA Projects 6 percent drop in Holiday Travel" (2001) www.aaa.com/news12/buttons/travel.html (all retrieved April 2005).

Charts 3.1 and 3.2 show that despite the growth of air transportation, the number and proportion of automobile travelers to Florida have not abated; in 1964 the Florida Development Commission estimated the proportion of auto visitors at 83 percent. And in 1998, more visitors came to Florida from Ohio and Indiana by car than by air (as Michiganders split evenly).⁷



⁷ Data for Charts 3.1 and 3.2 was found in the Florida Development Commission *Annual Reports*. C.E. Wright, "Florida in Focus," *NYT*, 21 June 1964, sect. 10: 13; *Florida Statistical Abstract 2000* (Gainesville, 2000), 539, 540.

Chart 3.2: Automobile Visitors to Florida, by State of Origin, Selected States, 1977-1997 (thousands).



As for Canadians, Statistics Canada and the Florida Development Commission reported in the 1980s and 1990s that 31 to 48 percent of Canadians going to Florida chose to drive. A 1995 Canadian Automobile Association survey of its members found that Florida was the most popular winter automobile destination; in Québec, the *yearly* favorite of CAA members, in 1994, was Florida. An informal survey of persons attending the 1998 edition of CanadaFest in Hollywood, found that 77 percent of respondents had come from Québec by automobile. And in 1999, the Canadian Snowbirds Association estimated that 88 percent of its members drove their own cars to the US South and Southwest.⁸

* Traveldata, *Vacation travel by Canadians in 1970* (Toronto, 1971), 24; study by Market Facts of Canada on 1004 consumers and 250 travel agents in 6 eastern Canadian cities: *Tourist Industry News* 6 (21 January 1987): 1; *La Presse*, 29 April 1995, H17; "La Floride toujours en tête," *La Presse*, 28 January 1995, H9; Pierre Vincent, "Auto: louer avant de partir, ou en Floride?," *La Presse*, 12 November 1994, I4; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (September 1995): c9; Canadian Snowbirds Association, *CSA Special Report* (Toronto, 1999):

The reliance of Florida snowbirds and winter tourists on their automobiles made the American and Canadian Automobile Associations (AAA and CAA) important institutions in the historical linkage between Florida and the North. The AAA and CAA have, since their origins in 1902 and 1904 respectively, been actively promoting long-distance travel by automobile, not only through lobbying for better roads and lower taxes, but also through their distribution of maps and guides to auto travelers. Their services have had a considerable impact on North American travel patterns, given the number of members who benefited from them: 19 million in 1977, including 1.4 million in Canada; by 2001, AAA members were 45 million, while the CAA counted 4.3 million beneficiaries. Since 1932, the AAA has issued popular custom-made linear road maps, for given departure points and destinations; a driver who wanted to drive from Cleveland to Pensacola could receive, as an AAA member, a detailed itinerary, complete with maps, sightseeing and roadside services information.⁹ The local chapters of the Associations published periodicals that provided members with enticing information on Florida, much of it fed by Florida tourist promoters. Since the 1960s in Canada, AAA and CAA branches also put together packaged tours to Florida. Both associations have their own travel agencies, in the US since 1948, in Canada since the 1970s. As of the mid-1990s, the CAA had, with 126 outlets, one of the biggest networks in Canada. The AAA and CAA offered car-sharing services to Florida; discounts at most North American hotels, motels, and theme parks; and automobile and travel insurance services since the 1960s.¹⁰

6 ; survey of 298 snowbirds at January 1998 CanadaFest: A.M. Voisard, "Sous les palmiers, la manne," *Le Soleil*, 3 April 1998, a1; Pierre Vincent, "Vivre au soleil l'hiver," *La Presse*, 8 November 2003, V1; Mitchell Smyth, *Toronto Star*, 8 November 2003, K24.

⁹ Canadian Automobile Association, *CAA Annual Report* (Thornhill, On., 2002), 7.

¹⁰ Raymond Beck, "Roads That Run into Florida," *American Motorist* (October 1925): 28; New York State AAA: Bert Pierce, "Tips for Motorists Driving to Florida...," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, sect. 10: 21; agreement with CAA for out-of-country medical/ travel insurance: Croix Bleue/Blue Cross Montréal, 1988

The number of trips to Florida facilitated by the AAA and CAA has long been impressive. In the winter of 1925, the AAA routed 60,000 automobiles to Florida. In 1953 the AAA in New York State announced that 40 percent of the winter vacationers who asked for driving advice were headed for Florida. By the late 1980s, the demand for customized itineraries to Florida was 20,000 a year in Montréal only. By popular demand, in 1986, the second French-language Tour Book that the CAA ever published was a translation of the *Florida Tour Book*, which sold 38,500 copies in 1990 alone – the first French Tour Book was about Atlantic Canada, another favorite in Québec.¹¹ Americans were also using the AAA to travel to Florida: in 1994, the AAA opened an information center for incoming automobile travelers to Florida, in cooperation with Disney, in Ocala along Interstate 75 – the Midwesterners' gateway to the Sunshine State.¹²

Annual Report (Montréal, 1989), 1; *Vous et la Floride: Touring* 71 (Fall 1993): 36; and "CAA-Québec vous conseille: En voiture pour la Floride?," *La Presse*, 24 October 1994, C5; own travel agency: *Autoclub* 52 (1973): 21; traveller checks: *Autoclub* 61 (March-May 1982): 13; car shipment arranged by New York City's AAA: J. B. Albright, "Getting Your Car to Florida," *NYT*, 20 February 1983, sect. 10:3; Air Canada and its in-house travel agency (Touram) issue a special brochure to CAA members, inside a special Florida edition of *Autoclub: La Floride* 1 (Fall 1982), in *Autoclub* 61 (Fall 1982); Florida ad, CAA's travel agency: *Touring* 61 (Nov.-Dec. 1988): 13; idem in *Touring* 71 (Summer 1993): 47; Florida contest, sponsored by Air Canada's travel agency: *Touring* 69 (Fall 1991): 12; and *Touring* 69 (Winter 1992): 17; *Touring* 70 (Spring 1992): 49; Marie Cartier, "L'autre Floride: six jours de découvertes," *Touring* 70 (Winter 1992): 11-16; Michel Crépault, "Direction Sud," *Touring* 77 (Winter 2000); N. Cazalais, *Touring* 79 (Spring 2001): 22; "Spotlight... Miami," *News From the Club* 5 (1980): 3; "La Floride : en français !," *Nouvelles du Club* (Nov.-Dec. 1987): 11; Denis Duquet, "La route du Sud, en hiver...," *Touring* 65 (Nov.-Dec. 1987): 38-42; André Vigneau, "Une autre Floride," *Touring* 65 (Sep.-Nov. 1987): 6; Kennon Cooke, "La face cachée de Disney World," *Touring* 65 (June-August 1987): 39-42; Kennon Cooke, "Les Keys de la Floride," *Touring* 64 (Nov.-Dec. 1986): 23-30; Florida contest (1 week for two in Ft. Lauderdale) in CAA-Québec periodical: *Autoclub* 60 (December 1981): 25; Disney contests: *Nouvelles du Club* (Nov.-Dec. 1985): 2; Daniel LeSourd, "De l'autre côté de la plage," *Touring* 62 (Nov.-Dec. 1984): 37-40.

¹¹ *CAA Annual Report* (1975, 1976, 1977); (1978), 13; (1979, 1980, 1981, 1984); (1987), 15; (1993), 7.

¹² 1980 *Florida Tour Book* "back order": *Touring* 60 (September 1980): 31; Triptik guides: *Autoclub* 38 (April-June 1959): 6; demand for Florida routings: Paul Roy, "La route de la Floride," *La Presse*, 6 February 1988, D1; Pierre Vincent, "Auto: louer avant de partir, ou en Floride?," *La Presse*, 12 November 1994, 14; Tourism Canada, *A Profile of Tour Operators and Travel Agencies in Canada* (Ottawa, November 1994), 74; popularity of the Florida Tour Book: *Autoclub* 56 (1977): 4; speed limits and construction work: Grimes, "How to Get to Florida," *NYT*, 25 January 1976, sect. 10:1; *Touring: Nouvelles du Club* 67 (Fall 1989): 5; *Nouvelles du Club* 66 (Nov.-Dec. 1988): 9; *Nouvelles du Club* 67 (Winter 1989): 4; *Nouvelles du Club* 67 (Fall 1989): 5; *Touring* 69 (Summer 1991): 50; *Touring* 70 (Fall 1992): 11; Michel Crépault, *Touring* 73 (Winter 1995): 7-11; *Touring* 74 (Fall 1996): 16-17; Jean-Yves Girard, *Touring* 74 (Winter 1996): 14; *Nouvelles du Club* 64 (Nov.-Dec. 1986): 7; *Touring* 63 (Feb.-March 1985): 40, 41; "About AAA: Interesting

Snowbirds were an important proportion of Canadian automobile visitors in Florida. In 1978 and 1979, Canadians who drove to Florida were, 90 percent of the times, repeat travelers to Florida. Canadians driving to Florida were overwhelmingly staying there for long periods: in 1981 and 1982 it was estimated that they stayed on average for 42 nights (American auto tourists stayed for two weeks on average).¹³ These numbers not only affirmed that long-term visitors gained from avoiding car-rental fees, but also the appreciation that repeat visitors gained of the centrality of automobiles to the Florida way of life. In any case, why should Florida tourists and snowbirds have been any different?

The popularity of driving to Florida is all the more salient when one considers that its overall costs were, as Table 3.1 shows, often comparable to those of flying. Yet Northerners clearly enjoyed this means of getting to Florida, for they were willing to face three days on the road, each way, from most of the big cities of the North. It is possible, however, that some of those driving South felt they had little choice, given that a visitor to Florida needed a car to do pretty much anything beyond the narrow confines of Miami Beach, downtown St. Petersburg, and Key West.¹⁴

AAA Facts," www.aaaohio.com/about_aaa/about_aaa.jsp (retrieved March 2005); Orlando HQ: Priscilla Painton, "Fantasy's Reality," *Time* 137 (27 May 1991): 52.

¹³ Traveldata, *1979 Vacation Travel by Canadians in the United States* (Toronto, 1980), 68, 69; Burak M. Ar, "An Empirical Study of Canadian Tourism in the United States," MA dissertation (Boca Raton, 1984), 53.

¹⁴ Mitchell Smyth, *Toronto Star*, 13 October 2001, L1.

Table 3.1: Estimated Costs of Driving, Flying, and Taking the Train From New York City (unless specified) to Miami, since the mid-1950s, US Dollars.¹⁵

		Driving		Flying (Coach)			Train (Coach)
Year	Source of auto estimate	Cost	Characteristics of trip	New York	Toronto (\$Can)	Montréal (\$Can)	
1954				\$100	\$164		\$71
1957	AAA	\$265 for four	With meals	\$82	\$140-165	\$150	\$111
1965				\$115	\$140		\$87
1976		\$380 for two	With meals		\$200		\$144
1981	AAA	\$224-424	Without meals	\$240-300	\$200-250 (charter)		\$212
1984		\$800 for two	With meals	\$270	\$300-400	\$300-400	
1988	<i>La Presse</i>	\$380 for two	From Montréal, with meals				
1990	AAA	\$1050 for four	From Montréal, with meals				
1993					\$500-600	\$500-600	

¹⁵ Pierce, "Tips..."; Pierce, "Automobiles: En Route," *NYT*, 20 December 1953, sect. 10:10; "Économique, la Floride en auto?," *La Presse*, 17 November 1990, 110; Jack Westeyn, "On the Road to the South," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, sect. 10:5; Paul Grimes, "Pointers for the Florida-Bound," *NYT*, 19 December 1982, sect. 10:3; Grimes, "How to Get to Florida," *NYT*, 25 January 1976, sect. 10:1; Grimes, "Getting to Florida," *NYT*, 9 December 1979, sect. 10:5; Roy, "La route de la Floride," *La Presse*, 6 February 1988, D1; J. B. Albright, "How to Get Your Car to Florida," *NYT*, 8 January 1984, sect. 10:3; "Winter Vacation Guide to Southern Resorts," *NYT*, 4 November 1956, XX21; Norman D. Ford, *Norman Ford's Florida* (Greenlawn, NY, 1967); Arthur Himbert, "Busy Miami Keeps Up," *NYT*, 20 December 1953, sect. 10:5; Bliss K. Thorne, "Aviation: Everybody Up," *NYT*, 20 December 1953, 19; Jay Clarke, "More Air Routes to Miami," *NYT*, 2 November 1969, 20-3; Grimes, "Pointers for the Florida-Bound," *NYT*, 19 December 1982, sect. 10:3; Albright, "Getting Your Car to Florida," *NYT*, 20 February 1983, sect. 10:3; Grimes, "How to Get to Florida," *NYT*, 25 January 1976, sect. 10:1; Grimes, "Getting to Florida," *NYT*, 9 December 1979, sect. 10:5; *Miami Herald*, 25 October 1964, 14b; *Financial Post* (hereafter *FP*), 3 December 1955, 12; *FP*, 1 December 1956, 12; *FP*, 3 November 1956; *FP*, 19 November 1955, 12; *FP*, 5 November 1955, 12; *FP*, 16 November 1957, 56; *FP*, 24 November 1956, 12; *FP*, 31 March 1958, 12; *FP*, 21 January 1956, 12; *La Presse*, 12 December 1970, e7; *La Presse*, 5 January 1980, V4; *Globe and Mail*, 10 December 1960, 20; *Globe and Mail*, 30 January 1965, 19; B. Riddell, "More Accommodations, Lower Rates in Florida," *FP*, 6 February 1960, 12; "Price for All Purses," *FP*, 11 November 1961, 62; Guy Deshaies, "Du côté de Tampa, une nouvelle Floride," *Le Devoir*, 13 November 1981, 7; Marianne Tefft, "Miami," *FP*, 13 March 1993, S13; Carolyn Green, "Other Side of Orlando," *FP*, 10 February 1992, S16; Gilles Gauthier, "Il faut réserver tôt...," *La Presse*, 2 November 1985).

Moreover, as the Table reveals, an automobile with two people always had a definite cost advantage over two airfares. As for trains, they were noncompetitive in cost with both road and air. Coach fares cost little less than flying, while sleeping berths were actually more expensive. And a sleeping berth was, for most, a necessity, given that the run from New York to Miami took twenty-four hours. Worse, delays were commonplace thanks to the ageing equipment and priority given to freight trains. It was, in words, almost as unpleasant to take a train to Florida after World War II, as it has recently become to take a discount airline on a busy weekend.¹⁶

Furthermore, Table 3.1 does not include the cost of renting a car, almost a necessity for airline and train passengers. Thanks to mass tourism, car rental in Florida has always been a lucrative – and since 1956, a highly competitive business. Car rental lore tells the epic battle fought by Hertz and National between 1948 and 1956 to break the Avis monopoly franchise at Miami International Airport. Yet, even as entrepreneurs swarmed into the Florida car-rental business, prices held up: in 1960, national companies were charging an average ten dollars per day plus ten cents per mile for Miami rentals – a charge matched only by Las Vegas. Thus, a two-week vacation on the fly in 1960 cost about \$350 for two return tickets and a rental car (not including gas). A family of four could drive to Florida and back for that money, while having the use of their own car all the while (which might have more status, and certainly be a more familiar machine than a rental). Fortunately for the airlines, it was always possible for a tourist, aware of the local entrants into the rental business, to lease an automobile for as little as two dollars a day in 1960. By the mid-1960s, price wars forced even Avis to offer British-made Ford Cortinas

¹⁶ Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami, Postcards Collection: 30 September 1977, Orlando to New York: "Got pissed-off again at AMTRAK. Finally took a bus from Jacksonville to here. May fly back if I

for four dollars a day.¹⁷ Thus, competition brought cheap prices for the cognoscenti after the mid-1960s, and by the 1980s most Florida weekly fares were cheaper than Canada's. This factor, the growing affordability of Florida car rentals, explains the relatively late boom in airlines' ridership. However, the story of Florida car rentals only entrenched the empire of the automobile on the Sunshine State.

Those who *really* wanted to save – like Ratso Rizzo and Joe Buck in the 1969 Oscar winner *Midnight Cowboy* – opted for the motor coach. Throughout the 1960s, round-trip bus fares from New York City to Miami hovered between 75 and 85 dollars (and 80 to 90 dollars from Montréal). Decades later, in the fall of 2006, that same ride from New York cost \$175 (\$250 from Montréal) – an extraordinary bargain, given inflation in the meantime. An airfare could cost three times as much (\$410 to \$550). And because the rest stops were briefer than for an automobile trip, and because the bus drove through the night as the traveler slept, Paradise was less than an uncomfortable forty-eight hours away. Buses were popular with poorer, younger and older travelers, those visiting friend and families, students, and seasonal workers. Motor coaches were popular with snowbirds too: in the mid-1950s, a survey found that bus riders to Florida stayed longer, and had the smallest daily spending – the normal snowbird pattern.¹⁸

The standard fares discussed so far do not tell the whole story of travel to the Sunshine State, because, for the whole postwar period, many winter tourists went south on packaged tours. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad has offered packages to Florida since the 1930s. National Airlines and the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad started offering winter

don't cool off soon."

¹⁷ "US Industry Profile: Passenger Car Rental (SIC 7514)," *Gale Encyclopedia of American Industries* (Farmington Hills, MI, 2005).

¹⁸ survey conducted by J. Richard Stevens, School of Business, FSU, Tallahassee; C.E. Wright, "Florida Checks its Guests' Likes and Dislikes," *NYT*, 20 October 1957, sect. 10:31.

packages to Miami in 1955, departing from New York. These packages accounted for a great deal of Florida's popularity among less affluent visitors. From Toronto in the winter of 1950, a ten-day train package for Miami Beach cost \$160. In 1955, New Yorkers were offered one-week packages to Miami for \$140 by train, and \$160 by air, meals not included, at a time when a return flight normally sold for \$90. And the package did not strand the tourist far from the strand: National Airline's packages were applicable to forty-nine Miami Beach oceanfront hotels. From Montréal in 1960, a one-week bus and hotel package to Miami Beach went for \$104. In the winter of 1974, from Toronto, twelve-days air packages started at \$225, sixteen days by motor coach at \$211. In 1982, Orlando air-hotel packages from New York and other northeast cities cost less than \$300, at the top of the winter season.¹⁹ From Montréal and Toronto in 1990, one-month-long bus packages to Miami were sold for around \$2,000. Packages appealed to the elderly: an Ontario travel agent then noted that 95 percent of his patrons were elderly.²⁰

At the other end of the cost spectrum, starting in the 1970s, some businesses offered to move automobiles to Florida. Southbound travelers could have their car driven from New York to Florida by paid drivers for \$320 to \$400 return. Given the penchant of these young chauffeurs – who tended to enjoy driving a car more luxurious or powerful than they could afford to own, a safer – but costlier – option was to ship an automobile by truck (for \$600 return in 1980, \$750-850 in 1983, \$1000 in 1997), with delivery taking five to nine days each way. The Auto Train service was another option: originally offered by a private company under contract with Amtrak, which took it over in 1983, it remains active

¹⁹ Diana Rice, "What the Trip Will Cost," *NYT*, 20 December 1953, sect. 10:9; C.E. Wright, "Package Deals for Florida," *NYT*, 29 November 1959, 2-27; Sam Schneider, "Winter Wrappings," *NYT*, 12 December 1954, sect. 10:14; Lower summer patronage: *Vacation Travel Market of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1950), 33.

to this day. The Auto Train allows travelers to accompany their own car on an overnight train from Washington D.C. to the vicinity of Orlando. The idea originated with the Atlantic Coastline Railway and the Florida Development Commission, who found substantial backing for it from visitors surveyed at Florida's Welcome Stations. In the winter of 1976, the one-way fare for two persons and their car was \$225; in the winter of 1984, Auto Train coach fares for two passengers ran in the neighborhood of \$570 (a bedroom \$220 extra); in 2006, of \$680, a price-cut in constant dollars. As the real price fell, the Auto Train attracted 116,000 vehicles in 1996 (one way), but carriage declined to 103,000 in 2005.²¹ Obviously, the Auto Train remained a marginal alternative to driving and flying, two uses of transportation technology that achieved hegemony in American tourism during the Twentieth Century. Yet this enduring practice testifies to the symbiosis of automobiles and Florida sawgrass.

In sum, the private automobile remained popular for Florida destinations for a variety of reasons – technological, economic, and cultural. North Americans love their cars, and love to drive them as part of leisure activities – even at the price of a rental car in Miami or drudgery of spending three days on the road to Florida.

²⁰ *La Presse*, 3 December 1960, 39; *Globe and Mail*, 10 December 1960, 20; *Autoclub* 52 (1973): 21; *Globe and Mail*, 14 January 1950, 25; *Globe and Mail*, 7 January 1950, 11; Felicity Munn, "Vers les destinations soleil... en autobus," *La Presse*, 17 November 1990, 113.

²¹ Paul Grimes, "Ways to Send Your Car to Florida," *NYT*, 14 December 1980, sect. 10:15; John Brannon Albright, "Getting Your Car to Florida," *NYT*, 20 February 1983, sect. 10:3; Albright, "How to Get Your Car to Florida," *NYT*, 8 January 1984, sect. 10:3; Ardy Friedberg, "Residents Beware: Visitors Are Here," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 29 November 1997, 3B; "Trains to Haul Car and Driver," *Miami Herald*, 23 March 1967, 14G; "Amtrak Fact Sheet, Fiscal Year 2005, State of Florida," www.amtrak.com/pdf/factsheets/FLORIDA05.pdf (retrieved August 2006).

3.2 Roads to Paradise

Three days are a long time for hard-working North Americans, but the journey used to be a lot longer before the construction of limited-access, multilane highways. Yet Florida was already a popular automobile destination in the 1920s, thanks to the two-lane federal highway system. Since then, the transformation of Florida from a backwater swamp into friendly, accessible paradise has owed much to highway construction. As a journalist commented in 1954, upon completion of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay, "[I]t has been the automobile highway that has developed Florida."²²

One has to grasp the complexity of driving to Florida prior to the Interstate system. Itineraries between northern cities and Florida were punctuated by changes in direction, discontinuities between different legs of the same highway, detours, road construction, and heavy traffic in urban areas. In the mid-1920s, a few months before the federal Bureau of Public Roads enforced its system of road numbering, the AAA recommended these routes from New York City to Florida (all taking between four to seven days): first take the Lincoln Highway to Philadelphia; then select one of two "improved" highways from Philadelphia to Washington D.C. Washington was considered the hub for Northeastern travel to Florida. The easternmost route south from the capital was dubbed the "Coastal Plains" road; it ran through Richmond, Raleigh, Columbia (or Orangeburg, S.C.), Augusta, Savannah, to Jacksonville, Florida. When numbered a few months later, most of this route became US1 and US17. One could also reach Florida via a more westerly route through Greensboro NC, then on to Charlotte and Atlanta by a mishmash of roads that eventually included US11, 23 and 29. From Washington, another option was the Lee Highway through the Shenandoah Valley, to Roanoke, Va., thence to Greensboro, or

through Appalachia to Bristol, TN, Asheville, and Atlanta. From Atlanta a driver had a choice between the highway to Albany, GA., Monticello, Florida (and from there to Lake City) or the road through Greensboro to Macon GA, where there was a choice between three routes: the Dixie Highway to Jacksonville via Waycross (basically US1); the highway to Lake City by way of Valdosta (soon-to-become US41); or the road due south through Albany, Ga., to Monticello and Lake City.²³

By the mid-1950s, years of road construction on behalf of Florida had greatly simplified these itineraries. Road improvements had also shortened the trip duration to a mere three days. Part of the acceleration of the journey owed to the New Jersey Turnpike-Delaware Memorial Bridge, a pioneering stretch of limited-access highway and bridge inaugurated in 1951 between the Big Apple and Wilmington, Delaware. According to the *New York Times*, the three main routes to Florida in the winter of 1954 were the Ocean Highway (mainly US13 and 17), the slightly inland Tobacco Trail (US301), and US1. Despite improvements, delays and slowdowns remained numerous in the 1950s because of construction, detours, narrow bridges, ferries, and city traffic.²⁴

From the Midwest, the journey to Florida started with the Dixie Highway, first constructed in 1915. It had two legs, one from Northern Michigan to Miami (via Detroit, Cincinnati, Lexington, KY, Asheville NC, Greensboro SC, Savannah GA and Jacksonville, FL), the other from Chicago, through Indianapolis, Lexington, Nashville, Chattanooga TN, Atlanta, Tallahassee, and Orlando. Motorists could transfer easily between the two legs in either Tennessee or Georgia. In the mid-1920s, recommended

²² R. F. Warner, "West Florida Expects Boom," *NYT*, 13 June 1954, sect. 10:31.

²³ Raymond Beck, "Roads That Run into Florida," *American Motorist* (October 1925): 28, 29.

²⁴ Pierce, "Automobiles: En Route," *NYT*, 20 December 1953, sect. 10:10; Jack Westeyn, "Alternate Routes Down to Florida," *NYT*, 26 October 1952, sect. 10:14; itineraries without the Garden State Parkway: J. J.

routes were the following: from Detroit and Ohio, southward on the eastern leg of the Dixie Highway, south to Lexington, Corbin, Knoxville, Chattanooga (all in Kentucky) by Sherman's march to Atlanta. Another important Midwestern route originated in St. Louis, and followed the Mississippi River to Memphis, and from there to Birmingham, Montgomery AL and the Florida Panhandle.²⁵ When the numbered federal highway system was implemented, most of the Dixie Highway became US41; and the Michigan-to-Miami road through Central Florida, US27.

The roads to Paradise, before the Interstates, are displayed by Illustrations 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. The first is a map of the Dixie Highway in the early 1920s. The second is a map in the *New York Times* from the 1950s; the third is a schematic view of the principal federal highways to Florida from the Northeast and Midwest. Inevitably, many Northerners' encounter with Florida was framed by these cartographical representations and by the actual roadscapes they depicted.

Westeyn, "Main Motor Routes That Lead South," *NYT*, 15 January 1950); J.C. Ingraham, "Through Roads to Miami," *NYT*, 3 November 1957, sect. 10:7.

²⁵ Beck; Betty Briggs, "Highway to Yesterday: US 27 is Florida's Forgotten Highway," *St. Petersburg Times*, 24 March 1991, 16; Tom Kastanotis, *Boca Raton News*, 7 January 1979).



Illustration 3.1: Map of the Dixie Highway in 1923.
 Source: Robert V. Droz, "U.S. Highways From US 1 to (US 830)," www.us-highways.com/tzimm/dhmap23.htm (retrieved August 2006).

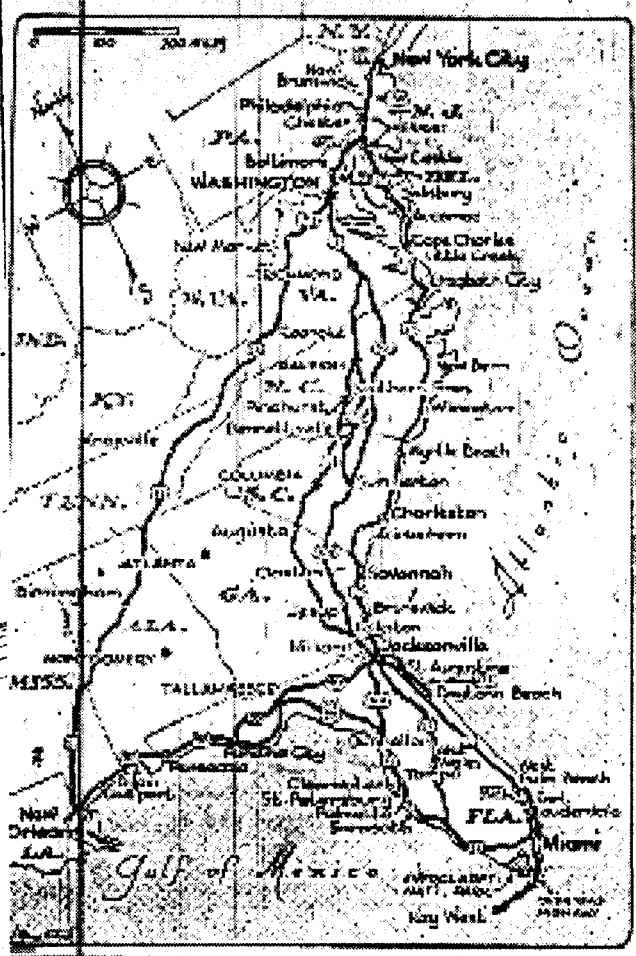


Illustration 3.2: Roads From New York to Florida, 1950.
 Source: Jack J. Westeyn, "Main Motor Routes that Lead South," *New York Times*, 15 January 1950.

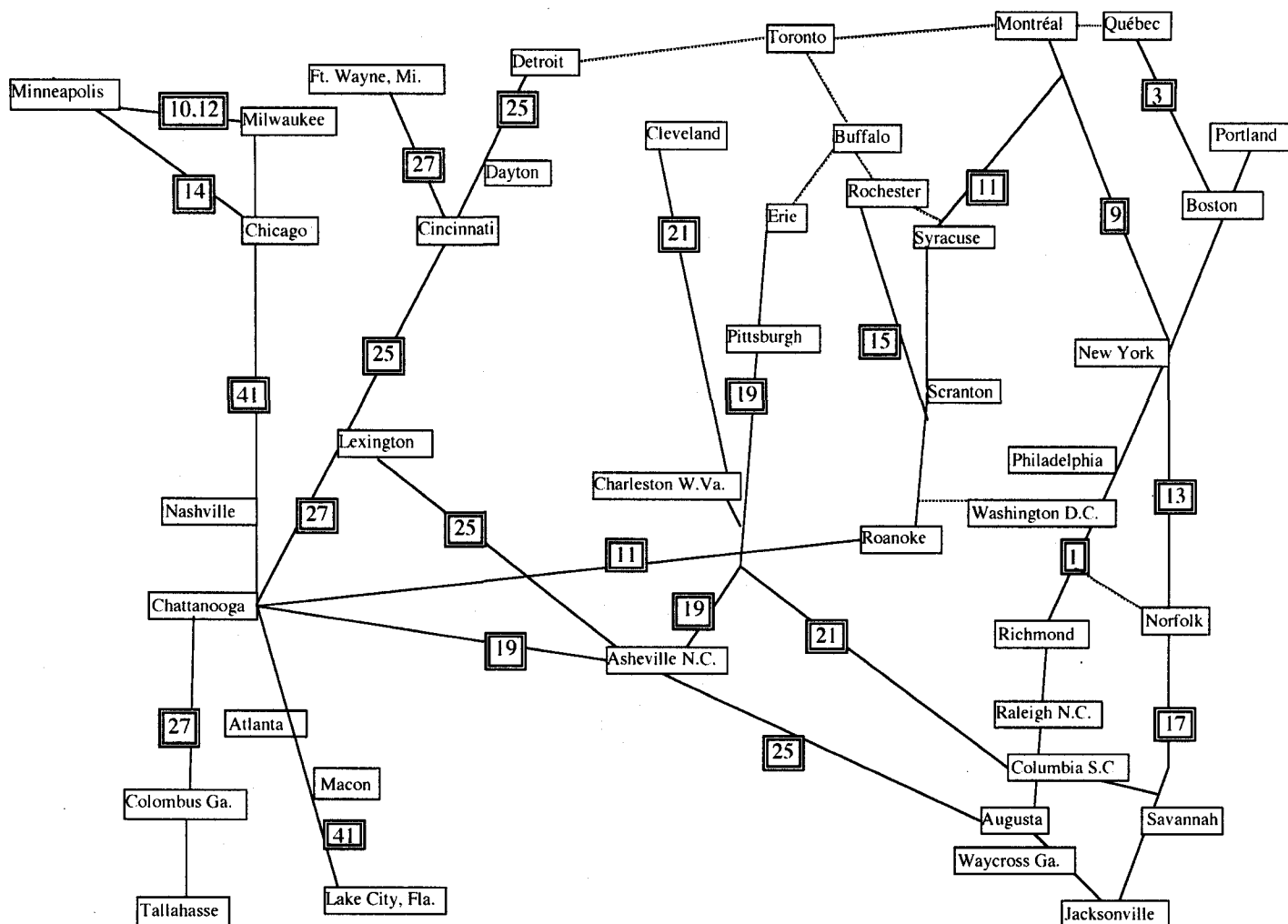


Illustration 3.3: Schematic Summary of Federal Highways from the Northeast and Midwest, to Florida.

Before the Interstates, there were a bewildering number of options for the journey south. To help the Florida-bound to make their choices, Highway associations were formed by Chambers of Commerce and tourist businesses to promote "their" route to tourist destinations, for the benefit of businesses and communities along the roadway. Most of the associations' efforts entailed publishing colorful brochures, road maps, and advertisements in Northern papers. The most prominent of these associations, judging from archival material, was the Ocean Highway Association, "from pines to palms," from

New York on US 13 to Norfolk, Virginia, then on US 17 to Jacksonville. Based in Wilmington, Delaware, the Association was big enough in the early 1950s to issue brochures specifically for the Canadian market. It remained active even after the Interstates were built; one of its brochures dates from 1982²⁶. The main selling pitch of the Ocean Highway, and its alleged superiority over US 1, was that its route, by staying closer to the seaboard, avoided the heavy traffic around Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington.²⁷

Other routes represented by associations included US 1; US 15 (the "Lafayette Highway Association," based in Bennettsville SC), US 19 and US 25 (the "US 25 Dixie Highway Association," headquartered in Corbin, Kentucky); and US 27 (originating in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, including stretches of US 301 and US 441). In Florida, US 27 ran through the centre of the peninsula; its Association, a creature of the Orlando Chamber of Commerce in 1934, dubbed the dusty highway the "Orange Blossom Trail." It boasted numerous attractions along its roadside, including Silver Springs, Cypress Gardens, and the Bok Singing Tower. US 41 had its own association headquartered at the Macon GA Chamber of Commerce. Its name, the "Uncle Remus Route," embraced the folkloric, "Old South" overtones previously associated with the old Dixie Highway that US41 had

²⁶ Orange County Public Library, Ephemera, item no. 3429: "Official Short Route Canada-Florida, The Golden Isles Route, Map Guide 1952-53"; 3403: "New York-Florida Free 1958 Map Folder," by Ocean Highway Association, since 1935; there are brochures for the same association issued in the 1960s and one in 1982, by then it had moved to Virginia Beach, Va.).

²⁷ Ad for Ocean Highway Association, *Globe and Mail*, 8 January 1955, 12; Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami: brochure from Ocean Highway Assn., 1955, with slogan "Pines to Palms"; Breslauer, 25-27; in Orange County Public Library Ephemera: item 3441, "The Nation's No. 1 Highway, Safest Canada to Florida."

supplanted; starting off in Tennessee, it passed through Georgia and central Florida before terminating at its junction with US 1 in West Palm Beach.²⁸

The trails extended into Canada at an early date. Since 1912-1913, provincial governments in Ontario and Québec have been subsidizing "modern roads" to lure American motor tourists with their Yankee dollars. Thus, the first such road, the first two-lane paved highway in America, linked Montréal to New York State in 1912. The second, Canada's first concrete road, linked Toronto to Hamilton in 1913, and went from there to the Empire State via Niagara Falls. This tourist-welcoming agenda was the rationale behind the decision to build North America's first super-highway, the Queen Elizabeth Way, opened in 1939. Ironically, these highways were even better at taking Canadians south than Americans north; they became access lanes to the United States and eventually to Florida, by linking to US highways at the international border – to US 15 at Niagara, to US 23 and 25 at Detroit, US 9 north of Plattsburgh NY, and US 11 at the Thousand Islands.²⁹ Building on these precedents, the best highways in Canada have generally been oriented in the north-south direction. Thus for Canadians, long-distance automobile travel very often meant going to the US; as Donald Davis has argued, proximity to the United States was an important factor in Canada's motorization.³⁰ Meanwhile, East-West links

²⁸ Orange County Public Library Ephemera, item 3418 by US Highway 27 Association of Florida, "Complete Map -Florida Travelling Featuring US 27"; 3489 from Orange Blossom Trail Association, for its 25th anniversary in 1959; 3436, "US41 Highway Traveler," official publication of US Highway 41 Association; item no. 3437, "Follow "Dixie,"" by the US 25 Dixie Highway Association; item 3445, "The Short Highway North-South," for the Lafayette Highway Assn.; 3446, US441; 3467 "Florida Holiday Highways," by East Coast Highways Association, New Smyrna Beach; 3464, "Dixie Highway US25"; 3471b, "Orange Blossom Trail, Florida's Scenic Route Thru Central Florida."

²⁹ Jack Westeyn, "On the Road to the South," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, sect. 10:5; Orange County Public Library, Ephemera, item no. 3429, "Official Short Route Canada-Florida, The Golden Isles Route, Map Guide 1952-53."

³⁰ Donald F. Davis, "Dependent Motorization," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 21 (Fall 1986): 121, 125, 126; Jakle, 125-128, 186, 192-195; When completing the 401, an international bridge will be built in Niagara: *Ontario Travel News* 11 (November 1960) 2.

lagged: as late as 1959, even as it pled for a "national system of highways," the Canadian Automobile Association downplayed the necessity of a Trans-Canadian highway.³¹

3.3 Postwar Road-building

In the United States, the principal highways were by the 1950s becoming perpetually clogged. Tourist-dependent states, communities and businesses lobbied for surcease, with the help of the so-called Highway Lobby, a constellation of special interests before which the Military-Industrial Complex paled, as the highway and motorist associations joined hoteliers, chambers of commerce, automobile and parts manufacturers, car dealers, filling stations, petroleum, tire, glass and steel companies, civil engineering companies, and state highway departments to demand increased spending on highways. Consequently, between 1945 and 1960 the mileage of federal roads *tripled*, from 300,000 to 900,000 miles. Meanwhile, state governments were building some of the most important, controlled-access highways for the Florida-bound: the New York State Thruway (built between 1952 and 1956), the Garden State Parkway (1946-1957), the New Jersey Turnpike (1950-52), the Chesapeake Bay Bridge (1949-52), the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (1947-54), the Sunshine Skyway over Tampa Bay (completed 1954), and Florida's Turnpike (whose first stretch was completed in 1957).³² In 1956, the Highway Lobby, taking advantage of a sharp recession blamed on falling defense spending, pushed through the deceptively named National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, whereby the Federal government committed itself to paying ninety percent of the cost of a 41,000 mile network (reaching 65,000 miles by the 1990s) of four-lane,

³¹ CAA, *A System of National Highways for Canada*, "A submission to the Government of Canada by the CAA" (1958), 9.

controlled access freeways connecting every state and metropolis in the United States at ...an eventual cost of \$114 billion.³³

All this construction was highly aggravating in the short run. Postcards sent north by Florida-bound tourists frequently commented in the 1950s and 1960s on the countless bottlenecks and road construction crews on the road to Paradise.³⁴ In Florida, newspaper articles on tourism read like traffic reports: in the winter of 1950, Miami tourist officials complained, after reading traffic counts, that the bottlenecks on US1 were forcing motor tourists to take inland and Gulf coast roads. They blamed the communities along US1 for the tortoise-like pace of its traffic, for their leaders had not, like those in Orlando and Sarasota, built by-passes, which meant that traffic on Florida's number one tourist highway still crept through congested business districts. A *New York Times* article noted, in the fall of 1952, that propositions to build an expressway along Florida's Atlantic shore

³² Shaffer, 314.

³³ Jakle, 189-197, 218; Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia, 1987); Mark H. Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-1989*, revised edition (Knoxville, TN, 1990); Federal Highway Administration, "Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways," www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/interstate.cfm (retrieved June 2007); Richard F. Weingroff, "Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956: Creating the Interstate System," *Public Roads Magazine* 60 (Summer 1996); Justin Fox, "The Great Paving: How the Interstate Highway System Helped Create the Modern Economy--And Reshaped the Fortune 500," *Fortune* (26 January 2004)

³⁴ Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami, Postcards Collection. 23 March 1988, Clearwater Beach to Pittsburgh; 19 February 1959, from Haven Beach Hotel, Cottages and Trailer Court, Indian Rocks Beach, to Buffalo, "1550 miles 80 gal of gas"; February 1962, from Keystone Hotel, West Palm Beach, to Westerly R.I.; 15 March 1958, from Lake Worth to Rochester: "Some trip. Rose drove all the way the old Studebaker done a good job we hope it does as well on the way back."; 7 February 1958, from Sarasota to Buffalo, with picture of the Sunshine Skyway; 15 August 1958, from Ft. Myers to Ellins Ave., Toronto, will drive back through Detroit; 1 January 1973, from Tampa to Freeport, Ill., picture of Coral Castle, been there en route to Keys; from Ft. Myers to Ohio, 10 August 1957, bought in Daytona, was impressed by Washington D.C., on the road; 6 September 1954, Miami to Rochester, "Used your advice to good advantage. Followed 15-17-1"; 9 April 1954, Ft. Lauderdale to Dayton, Oh., typical instance of hop-on/ hop-off auto touring: St. Augustine, Marineland, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Key West, then Gulf Coast; 19 January 1957, Miami to Akron, Oh., it snowed all the way down; 10 April 1951, from Ft. Myers to Cleveland, picture of South Winds Motor Hotel, 635 Brickell, Miami, will drive on US 41 "to Ft. Myers and up north"; 25 March 1962, Miami Beach to Bellmore NY (or NJ), will make stops along the road back; 8 April 1952, from Miami to Cleveland, already drove 1900 miles; from North Miami Beach, 24 February 1964, to Rochester, "lots of change down here new Roads..."; In St. Petersburg Historical Society archives: 25 August 1954, from Eagle's Nest Motel, 3530 Tyrone, St. Pete, St. Pete to South Bend, Ind., "The Smokies were beautiful came right down the center."

had drawn a "storm of disapproval" from business interests from Jacksonville to West Palm Beach.³⁵ The situation was a classic example of the "Tragedy of the Commons," for it made economic sense for individual municipalities and chambers of commerce to channel traffic past the vendors on Main Street, but the combined effect was to deter some travelers from journeying to Florida – or at least to its southernmost counties. Hence by 1960, as North Americans became more aware of the advantages – in safety as well as speed – of expressways, Florida was being assailed for its backwardness. A travel writer that year deplored Florida's congested and "antiquated" roads.³⁶

Roadbuilding in Florida was framed by the competing claims of municipalities along, and at the terminus, of the historic trails. Three decades of tourist traffic had created a plethora of vested interests, who had sufficient clout in the 1950s to have a peripheral highway built around downtown Jacksonville and to have US1 and US 41 widened to four lanes in most of Florida to counter pressure from motorists and communities farther south for construction of limited-access highways that would divert traffic from their commercial interests. Around 1950, the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, noting a rapid growth in inquiries from potential visitors and newcomers, attributed it to recent road improvements.³⁷

The most notable of the improvements, responsible for a great part of the post-1954 growth of the area south of St. Petersburg, was the Sunshine Skyway, bridging the mouth of the Tampa Bay, between the Pinellas Peninsula and Palmetto, near Bradenton; it

³⁵ Stephen Trumbull, "Figures Prove Tourists Shun U.S. 1...", *Miami Herald*, 27 January 1950, 13A; Bert Pierce, "Tips for Motorists Driving to Florida...", *NYT*, 1 November 1953, sect. 10:21; Pierce, "Automobiles: En Route," *NYT*, 20 December 1953, sect. 10:10; C.E.W., "Aid to Motorists," *NYT*, 26 October 1952, XX17.

³⁶ Shirley and Bob Sloane, "Florida Brimful of Sights and Seers," *Miami Herald*, 24 January 1960, 10F.

³⁷ C.E.W., "Florida Pike Approved," *NYT*, 15 January 1956, sect. 10:3; B. W. Riddell, "Sand, Sun, Surf Welcome You Down Florida's Gulf Coast," *Financial Post*, 24 November 1956, 12; R. F. Warner, "West

opened on 6 September 1954. Meanwhile, highways 19 and 41 were being improved in preparation for the increased traffic, notably through St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Bradenton, and Fort Myers. In response to the Skyway, land development accelerated at the southern tip of Pinellas County, a peninsula that used to be a dead end. Soon the pristine barrier islands of Pinellas – places like Mullet Key, Pine Key, and Long Key – were cleared, dredged out, and developed.³⁸ In the spring of 1969 the Skyway was duplicated by a second bridge, and soon thereafter linked Southwest Florida with Interstates 4 and 75. Meanwhile, by the late 1950s, stretches of Central Florida's roads (US 27, 301, and 441)- had been widened to four lanes.³⁹

In the mid-1950s, explicitly over concern about growing tourist traffic, the State government ordered the construction of the Sunshine State Parkway, also known as Florida's Turnpike, along the Atlantic shore between Fort Pierce and Miami; its first stretch opened in January 1957. In 1964 it was extended northwestward to connect with Interstate 75 just west of Orlando. After June 1967, when Interstate 95 linked Jacksonville to Daytona, all the major tourist areas of Florida were connected to the rest of the United States by continuous, limited-access highways.⁴⁰

The motorists' paradise did not last long. By the end of the 20th century, Florida's growth was putting its road network under intense stress, as Interstate 95 between West

Florida Expects Boom," *NYT*, 13 June 1954, sect. 10:31; four lanes on US1: C. E. Wright, "Part of a Turnpike," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, sect. 10:17.

³⁸ Cf previous note; Robert A. Catlin. *Land Use Planning, Environmental Protection, and Growth Management: The Florida Experience*, Chelsea, MI, 1997), 36; C.E.W., "Florida Pursuing Big Highway Plans," *NYT*, 13 December 1959, sect. 10:5.

³⁹ *FP*, 5 November 1955, 12; John Durant, "St Petersburg Gives Gladys the Brush-Off," *NYT*, 1 December 1968, sect. 10:11; C.E.W., "Aid to Motorists," *NYT*, 26 October 1952, XX17; C.E.W., "Florida Tends Its Roads," *NYT*, 28 October 1951, sect. 10:15; A.L. Himbert, "New Roads South," *NYT*, 29 October 1950, sect. 10:19; central Fla.: C.E.W., "The Middle Way," *NYT*, 12 April 1959, sect. 11:7.

⁴⁰ C. E. Wright, "Florida Sets Goal: The Friendly State," *NYT*, 4 February 1968: sect. 10:6; Alex Nitzman and Andy Field, "Interstate 95 @ Interstate-guide.com," www.interstate-guide.com/i-095.html ; Robert V.

Palm Beach and Miami became one of the nation's busiest highways. As a result, it became increasingly difficult to declare Florida's portion of the Interstate Highway System to be complete. A specialist from the federal Department of Transportation suggested in 1986, that since "much of the state's development has come as a result of the interstate highway system, there are always changes and new additions being made." One of those "additions" was the 30-mile "missing link" of Interstate 95 between Palm Beach and Fort Pierce, inaugurated in December 1987. Another was the extension of I75 south of Tampa, along the Gulf Coast through Fort Myers to Naples between 1978 and 1985. I75 was eventually pushed across the Everglades in 1992, thereby converting the famous Alligator Alley into a blind alley for reptile-watchers, in order to connect with Atlantic coastal highways in Broward County. By the mid-1980s, there were 1350 miles of interstate highways in Florida and 1472 by 2005, leaving the state a distant seventh in the nation in miles of limited-access freeways (behind Texas at 3233 miles, California at 2455, New York at 2100 miles). This mileage gap still plagues Florida motorists on a daily basis; even so, the construction of limited-access highways had, in the words of a *St. Petersburg Times* journalist, "made a bigger impact on [Florida's] coastline than even beach erosion. They have breathed life and development into areas once inhabited only by swamp critters. They have given us suburbs and snowbirds, radar detectors and Disney."⁴¹

In time, Florida highways, which – like Canada's best highways – had been rationalized and justified by the need to accommodate tourists, had become essential to

Droz, "Historic Roads and Highways of Florida –Interstates," www.us-highways.com/fli.htm; "Sunshine State Parkway," www.tropicalturnpikes.com/Regions/focus/ssp/ssp.htm (all retrieved April 2005).

⁴¹ Specialist's name is Don Marttila: Sid Kirchheimer, "King Of The Roads," *St. Petersburg Times*, 21 August 1986, 1e; Kathleen Kernicky, "I-75 Takes a Major Bite Out of Alligator Alley," *St. Petersburg Times* 24 June 1990, 1a; Dave Nicholson, *Tampa Tribune*, 28 April 1996); *Tampa Tribune*, 28 November 1992); Nancy Sullivan, "Love your Area? Better Love Tourists!," *Beach Bee* (Pinellas County), 17 September 1982, 2.

year-round residents. Commuters inevitably clogged roads built to facilitate migration, for Florida has developed into an especially auto-besotted state, even by American standards. In 2006, 80 percent of commuters in Florida used their private cars, compared to a US average of 77 percent; their commuting times were slightly longer than average as well.⁴²

Despite the efforts of locals to block their route, the Interstate highway system has greatly simplified the life of Florida-bound drivers since the late 1950s.⁴³ This change did not happen overnight: as late as 1967, a magazine suggested itineraries between Toronto and Florida to avoid ongoing Interstate construction.⁴⁴ I75 seemed more popular with snowbirds than I95, because Midwesterners, who had higher rates of car ownership than New Yorkers and Central Canadians, were more likely to drive to Florida. As a tribute to its popularity, I75 was the exclusive focus of a tourist guide published in the late 1980s, while I95 had to wait to 2003 for a guide of its own.⁴⁵ The early completion of I75 (to Tampa in 1968), relative to I95 (1987) was another factor in the former's popularity.⁴⁶

3.4 The Experience of the Road

As southbound roadways have changed since 1945, so have their roadscapes, in the process reshaping travelers' worldviews, ideas of geography, of the distinctions between the North, the South, and Florida. On southward roadscapes, travelers learned about and

⁴² Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *State Transportation Statistics 2006* (Washington, 2006), table 4-1.

⁴³ Betsy Wade, "All Roads Lead to Disney World, Slowly," *NYT*, 18 November 1990, 5-3; Michel-G. Tremblay, "Les routes vers la Floride," *La Presse*, 3 November 1984, X1; "CAA-Québec vous conseille," *La Presse* 13 November 1995, c6; Paul Roy, "Des traces de neige jusqu'en Caroline du Sud," *La Presse*, 7 February 1988, B1; Roy, "La route de la Floride," *La Presse*, 6 February 1988, D1; Denis Duquet, "La route du Sud, en hiver....," *Touring* 65 (Nov.-Dec. 1987): 38-42; CAA, *Autoclub* 54 (1975): 16-19; David McFadden, "A Typical Canadian Family Visits Disney World," in *The Contemporary Canadian Poem Anthology*, ed. George Bowering (Toronto, 1984), 204-208.

⁴⁴ Beatrice J. Latimer, *Canadian Trailers, Mobile Homes and Campers* 13 (August 1967): 10.

⁴⁵ Dave Hunter, *Along the I-75*, revised edition (Brampton, ON, 1992); 195 guide written by Sandra Phillips: Cheryl Cornacchia, *The Gazette*, 20 September 2003, J7.

patronized – often for the first time – commercial attractions, motels, campgrounds, restaurants, self-service gas stations, and people of markedly different demeanor and accent.

Through these largely consumer-oriented experiences, Florida contributed in a major way to the North American definition of pleasure, desire and leisure even before it became a major state. Indeed, it was along southbound roads to, and in, Florida that many North Americans first consumed the lifestyles, goods and services that increasingly play a vital role in individual self-definition. Historian Hartmut Bergoff has noticed how consumerism and modern tourism have been parallel, mutually reinforcing realms: "The values encoded within modern mass vacations – of individual choice, pleasure, self-gratification, abundance and comfort, beauty and youth – helped create the values of postwar consumer culture." Conversely, advertisements for goods intended for daily use commonly relied on a sun-and-fun imagery, as if buying this product would make "your holiday feeling become part of your everyday life."⁴⁷

The experience of the road stood for more than itself – for more than either mobility or leisure. A rite of passage, it refined and redefined the travelers' conception of their own identity as Northerners, Midwesterners, Yankees, New Yorkers, Ontarians, Québécois, or Canadians. Inevitably, their identity was *regionalized* in the sense that they learned the particularity and limits of their own identities. In Québec for instance, the southward trip halfway across the North American continent reminded the population that "Je me souviens" did not necessarily require them to remember and to preserve the sedentary

⁴⁶ I 95 was practically completed in 1977, but a gap between Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie, filled by Florida's Turnpike –which remained a toll-road- was closed only in 1987.

⁴⁷ Hartmut Berghoff, "From Privilege to Commodity? Modern Tourism and the Rise of the Consumer Society," in *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience 1600-2000*, eds. H. Berghoff *et al* (Basingstoke, 2002), 166, 167.

version of French-Canadian identity fostered by the clerical-nationalist elites of the 19th and early 20th century, but also offered them folk memories of earlier times when not only famous explorers like Radisson, LaSalle and La Verendrye but also simple, unlettered men and women from the *classes populaires*, the common people – traders and trappers of pelts, paddlers and oarsmen, bison hunters and fishers – roamed freely between the Grand Banks of Newfoundland and the Rockies, between the Gulf of Mexico and the Arctic Sea, in defiance of orders to stay put in their founding settlements. As the Québécois migrated to Florida in ever rising numbers, academics and pundits learned in the 1970s to appreciate – and to work with – the idea that a highly mobile, continental element of popular culture has always been part of Québec's identity, and that this element has been learned on North America's rivers and roads. This new, "revisionist," *américaniste* (as opposed to Europeanist or localist) version of Québec history and culture has prompted sizeable research in recent years on the geographic mobility and transiency of French Canadians, including their snowbirds.⁴⁸ Indeed, the southbound road led directly to this dissertation.

⁴⁸ among others: Louis Dupont, *Entre sensibilité et discours: structuration et signification de l'américanité québécoise*, PhD dissertation (University of Ottawa, 1993); Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride ou l'Amérique comme un possible*, MA dissertation (University of Ottawa, 1985); Rémy Tremblay, *Floribec: les Québécois en vacances* (Montréal, 2001); Tremblay, "Explorer la Floride canadienne-française," in *La francophonie panaméricaine: état des lieux et enjeux*, ed. André Fauchon (Winnipeg, 2000), 267, 268; Dupont, "Le déplacement et l'implantation des Québécois en Floride," *Vie Française* 36 (October-December 1980); Guy Rocher, "Le Québécois, un certain homme nord-américain," in *Dossier-Québec*, ed. Jean Sarrazin (Paris, 1979), 33-43; Gérard Bouchard, *Genèse des nations et cultures du Nouveau monde* (Montréal, 2001), 141; Bernard Arcand and Serge Bouchard, "La neige," in *Du pâté chinois, du baseball, et autres lieux communs*, eds. Arcand and Bouchard (Montréal, 1995), 58; Bernard Arcand, "Mon grand-père aimait l'hiver," in *Québec: Espace et Sentiment*, ed. Stéphane Batigne (Paris, 2001), 123; Anne Gilbert, "À propos du concept d'Amérique Française," *Recherches sociographiques* 39 (1998); Anne Gilbert, "Territoires" and "La nature comme légitimation," in *Dislocation et Permanence: L'invention du Canada au quotidien*, ed. Caroline Andrew (Ottawa, 1999); Robert Harney, "The Palmetto and the Maple Leaf: Patterns of Canadian Migration to Florida," in *Shades of the Sunbelt: Essays on Ethnicity, Race, and the Urban South*, eds. R. M. Miller and G. E. Pozzetta (Boca Raton, 1989).

The experience of the southbound road is marked by a dramatic change in landscape and climate, from snowbound conifers bent by an icy wind to Azaleas and Magnolias stretching to a warm breeze. In one guidebook's words: "For us who live in the Northern states, one of the most enjoyable aspects of a winter drive to Florida is the manner in which the weather rapidly improves as you go South. Along with this comes startling changes in the vegetation and countryside."⁴⁹

This experience has been occasionally defined as the "heat line," a misleading phrase because it conjures the vision of a fixed, invariable frontier. Temperatures vary on a daily basis, and occasionally it freezes in North Florida, something that would put the heat line somewhere in the Sunshine State. Moreover, the timing of the transition between cold and warmth is likely to depend on the timing of the individual traveler's southbound journey: at sunrise after a night of driving, or after checking in at a roadside motel, the motorist who sees the sun rising on a landscape of green grass, palms, or trees with hanging moss, is likely to experience an epiphany that will accidentally be located in space and time. Thus, any definition of the heat line is path-dependent.

Even so, the heat line is a defining moment in the southbound narrative. Dave Hunter, who wrote a guidebook for motorists on Interstate 75, describes the heat line as a gradual process: "we know that Michigan's and Ohio's winter will rapidly change into Kentucky's and Tennessee's "spring," and then into the warmer benign temperatures of Georgia, and finally the full blown warmth of Florida's "summer."" Hunter was in effect describing three different heat lines, with the first one being highly significant to Canadians and other Northerners: the disappearance of snow cover. Canadian author

⁴⁹ Dave Hunter, 81 *et al.*

David McFadden and his family had a different three: the first when they felt temperatures warming up, next when they saw green leaves and blooming vegetation, and finally when they spent their first night in the Sunshine State.⁵⁰

This path-dependent epiphany with warmth happened on their first trip to Florida to the authors of a 1950s guidebook for snowbirds. They recalled the journey south as the gradual shedding of their heavy winter clothes, as thoughts lingered in frozen Chicago: "The breath of soft balmy air just north of Ocala.... The bowl of citrus fruit on the table to start a crisp but sunny morning that, by noon, had warmed to early June. The morning paper, headlining cold, snow, and high drifts up North."⁵¹ This experience of going from cold to warm in the process of a two-to-three days drive has arguably been a (re)defining factor in Northerners' perception of winter. In a similar fashion, the sudden rush of warm air one encounters when walking out of an airplane in a southern airport qualifies as an epiphany too – but more of a shock.

Upon entering Florida, by air, motor coach or automobile, many tourists have passed through a state-operated Welcome Station. The first of these in Florida (and the United States) was opened in 1949 near the state line on US 17. By the winter of 1953 a second one had opened on US1, while two others were being built. In 1960 Florida had six of them, collectively attracting 40,000 persons monthly. They distributed free cups of orange juice, maps, and brochures for attractions, roadside services, and 162 Chambers of Commerce. Between the winters of 1970 and 1971 the number of stations fell from ten to six in recognition that the Interstates were killing tourist traffic on the two-lane routes. For

⁵⁰ "Heat Line" movie: Hubert-Yves Rose, "La ligne de chaleur," (Montréal, 1988); Réjean Tremblay, "Conte de Noël... Noël, Ça se fête dans la neige!," *La Presse*, 24 December 1993, A1; Paul Roy, "Des traces de neige jusqu'en Caroline du Sud," *La Presse*, 7 February 1988, B1; Réal Pelletier, "De Montréal à Bethléem, en passant par Melbourne," *La Presse*, 29 December 1990, G10; McFadden, 204-208; Hunter.

⁵¹ Max E. Bulske, *Florida Isn't Heaven* (New York, 1957), 113, 114.

many, the heat line was crossed at the Florida Welcome Station as they quaffed the state's iconic beverage.⁵²

For automobile passengers cocooned from the elements by their car heater and air conditioner, their eyes flickering left and right to relieve the boredom of traversing the same highway for a third or fourth time, the "heat" line might be less a change in climate than a familiar sight, a site along the road that told them that they had reached the final laps of their journey. Though unnoticed by the literature, for repeat visitors and snowbirds this "beacon line" must have been an important milestone in their journey to paradise. Roadside beacons could be anything, natural or man-made, but very early on the southern roadscape was dotted with commercial signs and buildings. Since the 1920s, the southern roadscape has included a great number of billboards advertising nearby businesses, attractions, and communities. By the 1950s, a guidebook warned that the roadscape had the "most battering barrage of billboards on the continent." These billboards earned a reputation for carrying misleading information. Indeed, so numerous were complaints concerning the room rate information posted by roadside hotels and motels that the usually sedate Florida legislature enacted strict regulations for the posting of room rates in 1951 and again in 1955. In 1960, in the face of continuing complaints, the Florida Motel Association proposed to ban any posting of rates outside of the hotels' or motels' premises.⁵³

⁵² Donn Pearce, *Dying in the Sun* (New York, 1974), 240; Jay Clarke, "Why Florida's Season 'Suddenly Caught On'," *NYT*, 7 March 1971, sect. 10:8; Florida State Archives, Tallahassee: Florida Development Commission funds, series 135, box 1, *1955-1960 Progress Report*; C. E. Wright, "What About Florida," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, sect. 10:3.

⁵³ Larry Solloway, "Motels on Alert," *NYT*, 13 November 1960, sect. 10:3; Report of "an ugly array of big signboards" in Nassau County, south of Georgia-Florida line: C. E. Wright, "Florida Wars on Speed Traps as Abuses Rise," *NYT*, 12 February 1961, X25.

Billboards were judged abundant and unseemly enough that President Kennedy and First Lady "Lady Bird" Johnson pushed for their regulation, resulting in the federal Highway Beautification Act in 1965, ratified by the Florida Legislature in December 1971. This delay itself spoke volumes about the complexity of enforcing such a regulation; in mid-1977, a spokesman for Kissimmee's Gatorland Zoo admitted the rules had not yet been enforced on its "several" billboards.⁵⁴ The "Lady Bird Act" forbade billboards within a thousand feet of the Interstate's roadway, while providing compensation – 75 percent of it from the federal coffer – for "dispossessed" businesses. Because of the thousand-foot rule, the Act favored the big chains, which could afford bigger, higher displays to tout their roadside services. In spite of regulation, billboards remained numerous and unseemly by travelers' standards: in the 1980s, a Montréal journalist deplored the numerous and gaudy billboards along Interstate 95.⁵⁵ Alex Shoumatoff described his 1973 experience of Interstate 75 thus:

Below Atlanta the unsuspecting snowbird ... plunges into a forest of billboards which gets him so worked up about Florida, that, by the time he crosses the border, his vacation is liable to be an anticlimax.... From Gainesville to the Route 27 exit in Silver Springs, a distance of twenty-odd miles, the southbound passenger on I-75 is confronted with a billboard every few seconds – two-hundred sixty-seven all told when I passed that way.⁵⁶

In the mid-1990s, billboards still blighted the highways of Central Florida.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ L David Harris, "Central Florida's Gatorland Going Strong After 27 Years," *Amusement Business* (30 July 1977).

⁵⁵ regulation of room rates: A. L. Himbert, "'Greater' Miami," *NYT*, 13 January 1952, XX-9; C. E. Wright, "New Laws Aid Florida Tourists," *NYT*, 6 November 1955, sect. 10:21; abundance: Cal Brumley, "Florida's Roadside Shows," *Orlando Sentinel*, 15 February 1959; Paul Roy, "Des traces de neige jusqu'en Caroline du Sud," *La Presse*, 7 February 1988, B1; Hollis, 16; Alex Shoumatoff, *Florida Ramble* (New York, 1974), 169; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 11 (December 1993): b6; Sucker trails: June Cleo and Hank Mesouf, *Florida: Polluted Paradise* (Philadelphia, 1964), 2; Shirley and Bob Sloane, "Florida Brimful of Sights and Seers," *Miami Herald*, 24 January 1960, 10F; Peaceful Patricia, "Dig a Tunnel to Jacksonville," *Miami Herald*, 19 February 1955, 6A.

⁵⁶ Shoumatoff, 163, 168.

⁵⁷ Réal Pelletier, "De Montréal à Bethléem, en passant par Melbourne," *La Presse*, 29 December 1990, G10.

Yet they had a purpose: billboards led the traveler to the businesses that put them up, to roadside services and other motorist-dependent businesses and institutions. Hence their history has been intertwined with the history of Florida tourism. They have always been part of the roadscapes, dispensing much of the geographical knowledge to be acquired along roads. For example, a *New York Times* journalist in 1951 discovered along Virginia's roads signs advertising the cheapest cigarettes in the United States.⁵⁸

According to Tim Hollis, the historian of southern roadscapes, the most iconic postwar roadside service was Stuckey's, a chain of candy stores cum gas stations famous for its pecans, yellow signs, and red roofs. Since the 1930s, Stuckey's has thrived on Florida-bound traffic: its first outlet was in Eastman, Georgia, along a stretch of federal highway where US 23 and US 341 ran concurrently. Its second opened in 1941 along US 41, its third on US 1. In the late 1940s, Stuckey's entered into a co-branding agreement with Texaco, and in the 1950s many of their outlets contained souvenir shops and snack bars. Most of these were built on the eastern side of the roads, along the northbound lane, on the premise that homeward bound travelers were more likely to stop for candy and souvenirs, even though they had recognized a Stuckey's on their journey southward as a beacon, as evidence that Florida was within grasp. According to Hollis, Stuckey's became in the 1960s the first roadside retailer to open branches at Interstate exits. Its success triggered the creation of similar southern roadside, candy-store chains, notably Horne's and Saxon's, who had their heyday in the 1960s. Stuckey's itself had 330 outlets in forty-four states in the early 1970s, and still 150 in 2000.⁵⁹ Stuckey's story illustrates how the

⁵⁸ Merrill Folsom, "Driving to Florida," *NYT*, 9 December 1951, sect. 11:4.

⁵⁹ Stuckey's competing chains include Horne and Saxon. Hollis, 21-27.

experience of the road changes culture: pecans, originally a southern delicacy, were popularized by Stuckey's in the North, including in Canada.⁶⁰

Most would say that the most visible roadside icon ever to come out of the South originated from Harland Sanders' fried chicken restaurant, motel and gas station opened during the 1930s in Corbin, Kentucky, along US 25, then the eastern leg of the Dixie Highway. As testimony to the Colonel's reliance on motorists, the opening of Interstate 75 in 1956, forced him to sell his Corbin outlet in favor of franchising. Sanders' success inspired competition: the 1940s and 1950s saw created Nashville's Minnie Pearl's Fried Chicken and Yogi Bear's Honey Fried Chicken; New Orleans' Popeye's Famous Fried Chicken, and Charlotte's Bojangles Fried Chicken. As Northerners grew to appreciate Southern cuisine, in Canada, a fried-chicken franchise started in Belleville, Ontario, in 1964, with the southernest of names: Dixie Lee. By the 1970s, fried chicken was regular fare in the North.⁶¹

The travel channels to Florida also spawned seafood chains such as Long John Silver (started in Lexington, KY, in 1969), Captain D's (Nashville, TN, 1969), and Red Lobster (Lakeland, FL, 1968) – between themselves, these three chains had over 2,500 locations by the year 2000. Fast food restaurants that sprang up en route included Krystal's (Chattanooga TN, since 1932, now 400 locations, all in the South); Burger King (Miami, 1953, national in scope since the late 1950s); Hardee's (Greenville NC, 1961, now nearly

⁶⁰ The United States then produced 80 percent of the world pecans, Americans ate 0,4 pound per year, had to import most of Mexico's crop, and exported approximately 4000 tons a year to Canada, its biggest international market; J. M. Lillywhite, E. Hadjigeorgalis, and E. Herrera, *Marketing Channels for Pecans*, guide Z-307, published by the College of Agriculture and Home Economics (Las Cruces, NM, September 2003), 7.

⁶¹Hollis, 30, 31; "The History of the Dixie Lee Chicken Franchise," www.websurfer.ca/dixielee/fr_history.htm (retrieved November 2005).

2,000 outlets); and Lum's (famous for its "hot dogs steamed in beer," Miami, 1957, now extinct).⁶²

Florida-bound roadscapes also nourished motel chains. In 1950, some of them still called themselves "motor courts," but the name "motel" had already caught on, and would become ubiquitous soon thereafter. Florida's archives are replete with brochures touting the cleanliness and comfort offered by the Quality Court-Quality Inn chain. It had been founded in 1939 as a referral service for a small number of Carolina motels –by the early 1990s it became Choice Hotels, parent company to ten different motel brands. In August 1952, Kemmons Wilson created the dominant postwar motel chain in Memphis with the name of Holiday Inn Hotel Court on an avenue where US highways 64, 70 and 79 merged. The reliance of the Holiday Inns on highway traffic was embodied in their "great sign," a 43-foot-high neon-lit panel with 836 feet of neon and 426 light bulbs.⁶³ As Holiday Inn came into existence, Howard Johnson's restaurant chain, which had earned its fame mostly along Northeastern turnpikes, went into the motel business in 1954, in Savannah – strategically on the way to Florida. By the 1960s, scores of HoJo restaurants and motels, heralded by their trademark orange roofs, had sprung up along Florida-bound roads, nearly a hundred in the Sunshine State itself.⁶⁴

As the chains diffused, a growing proportion of the roadscape became the work of big corporations, as documented by George Ritzer, Tim Hollis and others.⁶⁵ Small, family-owned, mom-and-pop motels, left in the shadows by such garish competition, responded

⁶² Hollis, 31, 32.

⁶³ Hollis, 32-34.

⁶⁴ Elias G. Carayannis and Christopher Ziemnowicz, "The Case of Howard Johnson's Restaurant Chain: Schumpeter's Creative Entrepreneurial Beginning and 'Innovation-less' Ending," in *Rediscovering Schumpeter* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Richard Kummerlöwe, "America's Landmark: Under the Orange Roof," www.highwayhost.org/Orangerooft/index.htm (Retrieved July 2007).

by dressing up their buildings and signs with escapist names and iconography evoking the South Seas and other exotic locales.⁶⁶ In other words, roadscape thrived on the Florida Dream, and popularized it.

Travelers were exposed to these images, brands, franchises and modes of consumption more along the road to Florida than at any other time and place in their lives. Some took home a taste for this kind of consumption, not only for pecans, fried chicken, and Whopper burgers, but also for parking their cars three feet from their motel room. Over time, the growing familiarity with the standardized roadscape eroded Florida's uniqueness, and hence the allure of its Dream. By 1984, a Florida marketing official candidly admitted during a Toronto sales pitch: "We're not really foreign. Canadians can feel at home [in Florida]. They feel safe. They can drink the water and eat familiar food. They know the major food franchisors."⁶⁷ And often scorned them. Inevitably, the excessive familiarity of the franchised roadscape to the South bred contempt, in a critique of consumer culture and of the traveler's relationship to it along the roads to Florida. For a Montréal journalist driving to the Sunshine State in the 1990s, the roadscape had become an,

Over-organized, over-caring concentration-camp world, where a whole segment of America likes to live on wheels, day or night, like others live in their living room. A world where a private Big Brother has put up oases, at regular intervals, with one or two brands where one can sleep, one or two brands where one can eat, one or two brands where one can fill up and pee. Always the same brands, from one end of the continent to the other.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Hollis; George Ritzer, *The McDonaldisation of Society*, New Century Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA, 2000); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, 1990); Jakle.

⁶⁶ One early theme in decorating and naming roadside motels was the Polynesian, started in California in the early 1950s. Hollis, 33, 36; Breslauer, 77; *La Presse*, 3 January 1970, 46; *La Presse*, 6 December 1980, V8; South Seas restaurant, started in Hollywood in 1933: Nixon Smiley, "A Trip to the South Seas," *On the Beat and Offbeat* (Miami, 1983), 94.

⁶⁷ Jill Wykes, "Florida Basks in Success of Tourist Industry," *FP*, 29 September 1984, S4.

⁶⁸ "un monde concentrationnaire, parfaitement organisé et prévenant, où toute une Amérique aime vivre, sur ses roues, jour et nuit, comme d'autres aiment vivre dans leur salon. Un univers où un Big Brother privé a

Daniel J. Boorstin has branded contemporary roadscares in similar terms⁶⁹.

While travelers fretted when the southward roadscape became too familiar, too much like everywhere else, and while it had always been chic in elite circles to scorn mass consumerism, almost everyone defined "going south" in terms of the mass-produced food and drink available en route. That was especially true for Canadians like poet David McFadden, who, when going to Disney World with his family in the 1970s, experienced national difference on the road South less as variations in "values" (of the sort emphasized by nationalist Canadians and despairing Americans) than as variations in consumables: Canadians knew they were truly in a foreign land when they encountered American beer (Pabst Blue Ribbon), American consumer icons ("The Real Thing"), 18-cent hamburgers, hominy grits, Louisiana shrimp, as well as "pastel neon signs & palm trees & \$4 motels built in the reconstruction period."⁷⁰

Thus, as southbound roadscares evolved, so did the mix of exotism and familiarity encountered by the traveler. Florida tourism was once built on a premise of exotism and authenticity – that the state, its habitat and its people were genuinely unique. They were *real* in a way that a plastic palm court in a New York or Montréal atrium never could be. And yet, as the chains spread and roadscares became generically "North American" in appearance and experience, the premise of the journey South changed in this postmodern age – it became less about the traveler's romantic gaze on the landscape (or the pilgrim's journey to the shrine) and more about the traveler's progress through a mostly familiar

aménagé des oasis, régulièrement, affichant une ou deux marques où coucher, une ou deux marques où manger, une ou deux marques où faire le plein/pipi. Toujours les mêmes marques, d'un bout à l'autre du continent": Réal Pelletier, "De Montréal à Bethléem, en passant par Melbourne," *La Presse*, 29 December 1990, G10.

⁶⁹ Boorstin, *The Exploring Spirit: America and the World Experience* (London, 1976).

⁷⁰ McFadden.

world. This cultural shift associated with the massification of tourism (most dramatically since the spread of roadside chains in the 1950s) has been depicted, in quite different terms, by historian Daniel Boorstin and anthropologist Dean MacCannell.

Boorstin interpreted modern tourism as a manifestation of the triumph of commodification and of images in contemporary society. In contrast to its noble predecessor, traveling, tourism he castigated as one of the many pseudo-events that punctuate modern lives, giving Americans a superficial *non-experience* of a staged, commercialized and degraded "other." For Boorstin, the traveler of times past was an amateur explorer, a pilgrim, a person reaching out of his cultural background in order to learn from the encounter of Otherness. Through travel, the traveler discovered herself. He opined: "Formerly, when the old-time traveler visited a country whatever he saw was apt to be what really went on there.... Today what [the tourist] sees is seldom the living culture, but usually specimens collected and embalmed especially for him, or attractions specifically staged for him."⁷¹ Boorstin explained:

The foreign country, like the celebrity, is the confirmation of a pseudo-event. Much of our interest comes from our curiosity about whether our impression resembles the images found in the newspapers, in movies, and on television.... Here again, the pseudo-event overshadows the spontaneous.... Planned tours, attractions, fairs, expositions "especially for tourists," and all their prefabricated adventures can be persuasively advertised in advance.... We go more and more where we expect to go.⁷²

To find the familiar. As Boorstin saw it, tourism is an aspect of what he called the "Republic of Technology": to wit, technology invents needs and fosters the consumer society, which together are preconditions of a tourist industry. Technology assimilates disparate individual experiences through the sharing of collective cultural rituals. In the

⁷¹ quoted by Shaul Kelner, "Narrative Construction of Authenticity in Pilgrimage Touring," Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (Anaheim, 2001), 2.

case of tourism, technology contributes to the creation of hegemonic versions of pleasure, leisure, and authenticity, through mass media and commercial entertainment. Technology separates the present from the past, making the latter irrelevant, provoking a longing for authenticity in putatively "primitive states," or in reconstructions of the past. Finally technology uproots because it decreases the relevance of distances, dilutes the meaning of specific places: "Perhaps we should call ours the Spaceless Age." Thus technology enhances people's capacity to travel, but by the same process fosters a longing for rootedness, in one's Self, in pilgrimage, in a "return to nature," in tourism.⁷³

MacCannell labels Boorstin's critique "touristic shame". It is "not based on being a tourist, but on not being a tourist enough, on a failure to see everything the way it "ought" to be seen."⁷⁴ To sociologist John Urry, Boorstin's perspective manifests the modern, middle-class "romantic gaze," to which the initial gaze upon the sought-after site is most important. This gaze fosters a lonely posture, a longing for pure and new emotions in the face of new sights – a longing for authenticity. Often, the romantic traveler is seeking a vicarious participation in an ideal community that is found wanting at home. Inauthentic people seeking the authentic, curmudgeons seeking community, all of them jostling locals aside as they struggle to be close to ... the locals, "It is no surprise, then, that the tourist enterprise has been an object of derision," Urry has said, given that "the presence of large numbers of other tourists [are] barriers to authentic encounters with foreign cultures."⁷⁵ Seen thus, the tourists' quest for authenticity is a zero-sum game: the more people participate in it, the more the romantic traveler is dissatisfied with the crowds and

⁷² Boorstin, "From Traveler to Tourist," in *Hidden History* (New York, 1987), 303, 304.

⁷³ Boorstin, "Epilogue: The Republic of Technology and the Limits of Prophecy," in *Hidden History*, 311-312; for the "Spaceless" quote, see Boorstin, "From Traveler to Tourist": 303.

⁷⁴ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1976), 11.

commercialism. Authenticity seems remote.⁷⁶ Anyone who has visited "Europe" at Epcot or "Africa" at Busch Gardens is tempted to buy into this critique, with the caveat – to the snobs – that authenticity can easily be overrated – if it comes with authentic amoebae, bacteria and flies.

However, a more telling rebuttal comes from MacCannell, who has written of tourism as the paradigm of life in modern, complex societies. It is a form of reconciliation, rather than of escape. Through tourism, the modern is uniquely able to find "unity through hindsight": the act of sightseeing enables to the tourist to come up with her own version of a "big picture." Sightseeing, MacCannell describes as a,

collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience.... The act of sightseeing is a kind of involvement with social appearances that helps the person to construct totalities from his disparate experiences. Thus, his life and his society can appear to him as an orderly series of formal representations, like snapshots in a family album.⁷⁷

This insight explains how southbound roads and Florida came to mean so much to so many people, even while they became too popular for comfort: going to Florida has remained a widely sought experience *because* it helps to make sense of the late (or post) modern reality for most North Americans. Anthropologists Bernard Arcand and Serge Bouchard thus see tourism in as a quest for truth.⁷⁸ It is a type of pilgrimage, a metaphor that Boorstin confined to romantic travelers of a bygone era. After all, to understand the ultimate meaning of consumerism – religion's replacement in many secularized homes – where better to go than to its high temples in Florida and Las Vegas?

⁷⁵ Kelner: 8; Sue Sutton, "On Tourists, Travellers and True Travellers," *Globe and Mail*, 22 March 1995, A22.

⁷⁶ Graburn, "The Anthropology of Tourism," 15; Urry, *Consuming Places* (London, 1995), 133, 138, 139.

⁷⁷ MacCannell, 14, 15.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-15; Arcand and Bouchard, "Le tourisme," in *Du p  t   chinois*, 73-75; Urry, 144.

MacCannell has written that late (or post) modern discontinuity flaunts itself along the Florida-bound roads and beaches as a jumble of shacks and corporate logos. Yet that complexity can be re-woven together by the tourist gaze. In recent decades (years), the tourist's world has had a beguiling simplicity and coherence that are increasingly difficult to find in "real" places. MacCannell explains: "As Spectator, voyeur, actor, and consumer, the tourist stands at the center, empowered by the all-encompassing tourist gaze not only to possess the tourist landscape but also to weave a totalizing narrative."⁷⁹ In sum, the tourist follows a journey with a known purpose, familiar signposts, and an expected outcome in an era when civilizational, national, and community narratives are losing their meaning and *telos*. A tourist even knows how to dress, better than most people: short pants and sleeves do nicely, even as officeworkers, having abandoned the blue suits, thin ties and white shirts of high modernism, lose themselves in a sartorial maze (with informal Friday, an especially disconcerting discontinuity, sufficient reason in itself for thanking God for the end of the work week).

With the postwar growth of a capitalism based on non-material productions, on the production of images, everybody becomes a tourist on most occasions. Because it is based on the consumption and production of images, social life becomes aestheticized. Tourism thus becomes one of the primary channels of the contemporary experience, one where individuals grapple with the notions of authenticity, of spectacle, and also one where they deal with signs -with their construction and their interpretation. As late modern fragments into postmodern, the most emerging post-modern individual looks at everything with a tourist's gaze, because everything is accessible through representations, because the world is multiple and fragmented, because this is a game to play, a pool of symbolic goods from

⁷⁹ Shaffer, 302.

which to drink. Photography, because of its accessibility, stands as a clear illustration of this phenomenon: it has informed tourists in the arts of amateur semiotics (understood as the study of signs, leading to the understanding of sign-systems, in this case the dominant codes of representation in postmodern life); it has provided travelers with a work ethic (each venue *demanding* a click of the shutter), and it has allowed them to symbolically appropriate the landscape, to frame – and construct – it according to their gaze. By means of sightseeing, tourists are empowered to construct their own meaning of the landscape, for tourism and the cultural productions experienced through tourism are "open texts," (to use the words of Umberto Eco and Lawrence Levine): that is, their meaning is defined by the participating public, by interpretative choices of the tourists themselves.⁸⁰

Thus the Florida-bound travelers have made sense of their journey, circumventing the intellectual's quest for authenticity with a refined ability to access the folklore of consumerism, to partake in it, and to (re)define it in the process. One of the most vivid illustrations of the ability of travelers to participate in road-bound cultural construction is the portable communication device called "Citizens Band," or CB radio. Introduced in 1958 in a format usable in motor vehicles, by the 1960s it was being widely used by trucking and taxi businesses. Its popularity grew especially rapidly after the first Oil Shock prodded the federal government to impose in 1974 a 55-mile-an-hour speed limit on Interstates to save fuel. This edict infuriated truck drivers, whose livelihood depended on the mileage driven per day. As celebrated by the song *Convoy*, released in 1975 by country singer C.W. McCall, they quickly formed convoys and used CBs on a systematic

⁸⁰ Eco is quoted by Lawrence W. Levine, "The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and its Audiences," in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Popular History* (New York, 1993), 298, 304, 312; Urry, 146-149; Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, 1990), 82, 83, 86, 87, 100, 102, 138-140.

scale to exchange information about police surveillance and speed traps. Truckers gave the CB its vocabulary; they identified themselves with nicknames called "handles" and used language and abbreviations (like Roger, ten-four) drawn from military radio parlance. As they adopted a southern slang and accent, it seemed that anyone using a CB had to speak "suthren."⁸¹ The rowdy, southern-rebel mood of the 1970s that sustained the CB culture, embodied in country music and trucking movies like *Smokey and the Bandit* (shot in Florida, released in 1977), subsided into the 1980s when fuel prices eased. Although the fad soon passed, southern folk culture had in the meantime acquired a mainstream aura, even enviability.⁸² CBs remained popular thereafter among recreational vehicle users; all experienced house-on-wheelers recommended them. The radios fitted perfectly with the Good Samaritan ethos practiced by RVers (to be discussed in Chapter 7).⁸³ As historians of the "consumption junction" (like Ruth Schwarz Cowan and Ronald Kline) would predict, CB technology was appropriated and redefined by its users, even as they navigated the Interstate Highways, a system with so much built-in momentum as to appear technologically deterministic to critics of the car culture.

The largest, most demanding system of all – the ensemble of state, local and federal governments – made CB use logical for any traveler who frequented or hurried over the southbound highways of the United States. Well before the federal government imposed a fifty-five mile speed limit on motor vehicles designed to cruise at seventy, some

⁸¹ Jim Martenhoff, "Breaking Into the CB Game?," *Miami Herald*, 4 January 1977, D1; Charles Whited, "Dr. Who: Handle Tells More Than you Think," *Miami Herald*, 11 January 1977, B1; Hunter, 70.

⁸² A number of similar films were released during the late 1970s, such as Sam Peckinpah's *Convoy* (1978), starring Kris Kristofferson. The most visible example of the mainstreaming of the good ol' boy, rebellious southern ethos is Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama" song (1974), written in response to the patronizing attitude of the Northern intelligentsia towards the Confederation South, and explicitly as a rebuttal of Neil Young's "Southern Man" (1970). Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies* (New York, 2001), 102-119; Robert Johnson, "MCA Stimulates Optimism in Orlando," *Florida Trend* 22 (March 1980): 28.

community police forces had earned a reputation for setting up unusually high enforcement standards on unusually low speed limits in order to tap into the revenue from passing tourist traffic. By the mid-1940s, northern chapters of the AAA and CAA were loudly complaining about the speed traps on southbound roads. The AAA initiated an inquiry into the sources of revenue of the various communities on the trailways south in order to identify and stigmatize those who derived more than 25 percent of their revenue from traffic fines. Predictably, these towns were rarely tourist destinations, but rather drive-pasts along major highways. In the 1950s, many of them sat astride federal highway 301 in Virginia and Georgia.⁸⁴ These speed traps infuriated Florida-bound northerners: a number of newspaper articles on such topics stirred readers to write to the editor of the *New York Times* that they too had been victims of the practice, merely because they were from out-of-state.⁸⁵ During the 1950s, the most infamous speed trap was found in

⁸³ Jurgen Hesse, *Mobile Retirement Handbook: A Complete Guide to Living and Traveling in an RV* (North Vancouver, 1987), 142; Rollande Dumais Masse, *Voyager à l'année: Un rêve accessible à tous* (Montréal, 1993), 56; Daniel Héraud, *Guide du Véhicule de Loisir* (Montréal, 1977), 17; Hunter.

⁸⁴ 1953: report about Weldon, Wilson, Franklinton, Lumberton, Norlina, Shallotte (NC); Ludowici, Hinesville, Brunswick, Kingsland, Pembroke (Ga.); Middletown and Colonial Heights (VA); later in '53: Lambertton, NC, Colonial Heights, VA, Ludowici, GA, Levy County (Cental FL, US Alt-27, US19-98), Hancock County (Miss, astride US90); 1957, in Virginia, Colonial Heights (on US1), Staunton, Mount Crawford, Greenfield and Fairfield (on US11 near the Blue Ridge Parkway); in Georgia: Alma (US1), Glenville, Ludowici, Nahunta (US301), Richmond Hill, Woodbine, Kingsford (US17); 1961: the section of US 301 between Glennville and Ludowici, GA, the stretch of I95 around Emporia, Va., near the NC line; all of US301 between Petersburg and the NC line; and Kenly NC, along US301 just southeast of Raleigh; a few weeks later in 1962: blatant traps in Ludowici, and Tatt nail Co., GA; Bedford, Crofton, Hanson, KY; Bay St. Louis, Miss., Emporia, VA; other strict enforcement areas in Georgia: Long County; Kentucky in Earlington and Slaughters; Mississippi: Alcorn, Benton, Chickasaw, Lee, Marshall, Prentiss, Tippah, Union counties and US49 south of Hattiesburg; North Carolina: Kenly; Virginia: US301 from Petersburg to North Carolina line; US 11 from Staunton to Lexington and Hillsville area; West Virginia around Chalestown and Valley Grove; 1957-58 AAA Black List: Tebeau Reseach Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami: Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Records, box 2: GMCC, 1965-66 *Annual Report* (Miami, 1966), 60; Charles Grutzner, "Dirty Work at the Crossroads," *NYT*, 1 February 1953, X17; Jack Westeyn, "Speed Traps," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, XX15; Claude Sitton, "Perils of U.S. 301," *NYT*, 14 January 1962, XX3; "Speed Traps on the Route South," *NYT*, 21 January 1962, 38.

⁸⁵ A number of letters from tourists and a few offended southerners followed the Charles Grutzner's article, "Dirty Work at the Crossroads," *NYT*, 1 February 1953, X17; reactions in Grutzner, "Reactions to Speed Traps," *NYT*, 29 March 1953, X16; Other letters in late 1959: arrested near Hilliard, Fla., on US1 and 301: Egon Pohoryles (New York City), "Speed Traps," *NYT*, 8 November 1959, X33; In Sebastian, FL: Mrs David L. Rosenstone (Passaic, NJ), "Trap Recalled," *NYT*, 11 October 1959, X30; Paul W. Buzzell (Fair

Ludowici, Georgia (population 1,300) located forty-five miles southwest of Savannah at the crossroads of US 25-301 and 82. It was rumored to have, on its main intersection, a traffic light that could be switched to red at will by hidden policemen. To appease the Georgia Motor Club and the AAA, the Ludowici city government replaced the maligned traffic light.⁸⁶

As a consequence of its reliance on tourists and pressure from the AAA, the Sunshine State itself had few tourist traps left by the early 1950s. One exception to the rule was Boulogne, the first Florida town encountered on US1, US 23, and US 301 north of Jacksonville. A mile-long strip of a community with no school, no important cross-traffic artery, and a permanent population of around fifty souls, it derived, as did its neighbors, most of its revenue from passing motorists. In early 1963, when the AAA discovered that the town derived 85 percent of its revenue from traffic fines, the Florida state legislature and Governor Farris Bryant revoked Boulogne's city charter in order to transfer its traffic enforcement powers to state and county police.⁸⁷

Lawn, NJ): "Action on Traps," *NYT*, 11 October 1959, x30; Georgia and North Carolina: William Gutterman (Brooklyn), "The Speed Traps," *NYT*, 27 September 1959, X33; all 1959 letters triggered by letter from Dr. Gordon S. Huffman, President of Eastern District of American Lutheran Church (Washington, DC), about his arrest in Ludowici, GA, "About Speed Traps," *NYT*, 20 September 1959, XX3.

⁸⁶ "AAA Warns Drivers of Rackets in the South," *NYT*, 18 November 1966, 40; Claude Sitton, "Speed Trap Spurs Georgia Inquiry," *NYT*, 3 July 1960, 34; Sitton, "Georgia Acts to Ease Speed-Trap Situation," *NYT*, 15 November 1959, XX1; "Maddox Threatens to Seize City After Crime Fighter is Fired On," *NYT*, 13 April 1970, 28; Sitton, "Perils of U.S. 301," *NYT*, 14 January 1962, XX3; *NYT*, 29 December 1961.

⁸⁷ Other Florida towns with strict enforcement were, *circa* 1957, Hialeah Gardens, Dade Co. on US27 (but these allegations were by early 1958 before a grand jury), and Melbourne, Micco, Sebastian (along US1), Manalapan, Gulfstream, and Golden Beach (A1A); *circa* 1960, Hilliard and Callahan, near Boulogne; 1966: Coleman, Sumter Co., on US 301 between Ocala and Tampa. After the election of a new police chief in December 1965, the first five months of 1966 saw 369 traffic arrests, 254 of them out-of-state drivers, and none from Coleman: "News and Noted From the Field of Travel," *NYT*, 17 July 1966, 319; *NYT*, 21 April 1963; "Strong letter," C. E. Wright, "On 'Speed Traps' in Florida," *NYT*, 30 April 1961, XX11; Wright, "Florida Wars on Speed Traps as Abuses Rise," *NYT*, 12 February 1961, X25.

The 1960s witnessed a concerted assault on the traps that imperiled travelers on the southbound "sucker trails" (as a guidebook called them).⁸⁸ Georgia, home of the worst offenders, began to remove its traps in 1960, the year in which it opened its first Welcome Station (at its northern border along US 301). Committed now to attracting tourists instead of fleecing them, the state phased out the "fee system" that had required local police officers to earn their wages by ticketing; in 1963 it bought police cooperation for a new Speed Trap Commission by banning the use of "radar and other electric timing devices." The state commission had the power to suspend the traffic-arrest authority of those city and county forces that abused it. By the mid-1960s, there were no blatant speed traps left anywhere in Georgia, as in the rest of the South, and only four areas still qualified as "strict enforcement" zones according to the AAA.⁸⁹ Around the same time, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce established counseling services to help traffic violators to know their rights and local customs – such as the fact that some communities offered trial by affidavit and walk-in traffic courts.⁹⁰

The speed-trap-clearing movement in the Deep South, from the 1950s to the mid-1960s, took place concomitantly with the most active phase of the civil rights movement. This timing might be a coincidence, but it is arguable that northern motorists, increasingly aware of the glass ceilings being burst open in the Deep South, tried to throw off the

⁸⁸ Cleo and Mesouf, 183; Peaceful Patricia, "Dig a Tunnel to Jacksonville," *Miami Herald*, 19 February 1955, 6A.

⁸⁹ Boston-based Automobile Legal Association, listed 22 speed traps in 1965, along US1, 17, 301, and I95 corridor: four in Virginia (from North to South: Waldorf, Ashland, Richmond, Emporia), 8 in North Carolina (Rocky Mount, Wilson, Kenly, Smithfield, Dunn, Fayetteville, Lumberton, New Bern (the latter at the jct. Of US17 and 70)), and 10 in Georgia (Glennville, Ludowici, Jesup, Nahunta, Folkston, Savannah, Midway, Darien, Woodbine, Kingsland). For the AAA, the four "strict enforcement" areas: Tattall (US25, 280, and 301), and Long Counties in Georgia, including Ludowici (US25, 84, 301), and small stretch of US 301 in Dinwiddie and Sussex counties south of Petersburg, where I95 is not completed, and Savona on US15, in Maryland; Gene Roberts, "AAA Disagrees on 'Speed Traps'," *NYT*, 8 November 1965).

⁹⁰ Chester Williams, "The Florida-Bound Driver," *NYT*, 8 December 1957, sect. 10:12; Georgia efforts: Claude Sitton, "Georgia Relaxes," *NYT*, 22 January 1961, XX4.

shackles of injustice that southern highway policemen used to clamp on the wheels of cars bearing northern license plates. In other words, it is likely that northern motorists, seeing on the news the injustice and mayhem condoned by southern cops, demanded and obtained their own version of color-blind justice – traffic cops blind to the color of their license plates.

But the South remained peculiar even in the brave new world of equality. Even though most of the traps were cleared in the 1960s, in the 1990s, the American Automobile Association issued repeated warnings about three Florida towns along thirty kilometers of US 301 near Gainesville – namely Waldo (population 1,100), Hampton (300), and Lawtey (300). In the mid-1990s, they were deriving 30, 59, and 73 percent, respectively, of their total revenue from traffic tickets, ninety percent of which had been issued to out-of-towners. When Toronto's *National Post* commissioned a journalist to test these busy traffic officers by purposefully speeding with two cars – one with Ontario license plates, the other with Florida plates and Gainesville bumper stickers – there was no way, not even by doing 70 miles per hour in a 45 zone, that he could entice these policemen to arrest the Florida car.⁹¹

Milking the motorist was not an exclusive police prerogative. A few service stations astride southbound roads attempted to simulate a mechanical failure in their patrons' automobile in order to charge for costly "repairs." One common practice was to puncture a tire and then offer to replace it. In 1977, Georgia's Office of consumer affairs deplored the number of "gypsy" service stations that operated on southbound roads. It cited the case of an Ontario family, heading to Florida along I75, who, after a gas station attendant had

purposefully deflated all four tires, had to pay \$430 for four replacements. In just one year (1977) Georgia's Department of Transportation received 321 formal complaints regarding service stations and towing services. Most came from out-of-state motorists traveling on I-75.⁹²

The heat line, pecan treats, fried-chicken restaurants, brassy billboards, towering corporate logos, CBs and speed traps – all these played an important part in the experience of driving to Florida. These bits and pieces came together to conjure a folklore of escape and of continental geography. Like the well-known folklore of westward journeys – about the Cumberland Gap, the Oregon Trail, the Okie's tramp, and Route 66 – a folklore of southern roads emerged in the Automobile Age. The various elements of the southern journey were experienced directly by a number of travelers, while collectively these stories were appropriated by travelers who told and retold them, adding their own twists to the story by telling of their own experiences, which were themselves attempts at evaluating, through their own tourist gaze, the truth or value of these Motor Age myths.

The folklore of southern roads developed into a diffuse yet coherent body of images and stories that travelers and Northerners could use to make sense of continental geography, regional differences and identities, of consumer culture, and of the meaning of "the good life." Like the southern cop, speeding trucks, and roadworks, the mildly menacing aura of many of these icons was central in their value to the Northern public, for they allowed fellow travelers of the roadscape to initiate conversations with strangers,

⁹¹ Charlie Gillis, "Slow Swamp Cops and Speeding Tickets: Two Florida Towns Get Most of Their Money From the Highway Patrol," *National Post*, 13 November 1999, B3; Kevin Sack, "For Speeders in Florida, 20 Miles of Bad Roads," *NYT*, 30 September 1995, 6; *NYT*, 26 November 1999, D1.

⁹² "Gypsy Stations Swindle Unsuspecting I-75 Drivers," *Miami Herald*, 3 March 1977, 4A; Wayne King, "I-75, Georgia : Trouble for Drivers," *NYT*, 6 May 1978, 49.

secure in the knowledge that their shared pilgrimage of Florida meant that they agreed enough on basic values to be able to give useful advice and warnings and to define themselves collectively in contradistinction to a folklorized *other*. As Steve Penfold suggested, a body of folklorized popular knowledge is more valuable for the social bridges and walls it constructs than for its truth: "as with folklore, the veracity of the claim is less important than the fact that the stories are told enough times to help shape or express an understanding, a "way of seeing" one's environment."⁹³

Southern roadscapes provided for northerners a range of icons, value judgments, and practical knowledge of the distant and exotic; it also fed their sense of superiority even as they admitted their need for southern comforts. It is significant that Canadians, English and French, participated in the construction of this mythology nearly as much as northeastern Americans did. The folk knowledge gained on the southbound roadscapes was meaningful, in other words, even for those living north of the long shadow of the Civil War.

In sum, MacCannell, Arcand and Bouchard are correct to associate tourism (to Florida, as elsewhere), even that devoted to consumerism, with pilgrimage.⁹⁴ The knowledge that was learned on Southern roadscapes, shared with other tourists along the route, at the destination, and with friends and family back home, was for North Americans a way to make sense, to find unity in the modern totality, by drawing mental maps of the places visited, and by experimenting with a holistic, nearly anthropological gaze upon the people and landscapes encountered away from home.

⁹³ Penfold, "'Eddie Shack Was no Tim Horton': Donuts and the Folklore of Mass Culture in Canada," in *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, eds. Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (New York, 2001), 54; on pop culture as folklore, Levine *et al.*, "AHR Forum, The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and its Audiences," *American Historical Review* 97 (December 1992).

⁹⁴ MacCannell, 13-15; Urry, 144.

3.5 Florida as the End of the Road

The automobile has framed the meaning of Florida to North Americans. This begs another question: how has this privileged relation evolved since 1945, as air transportation became increasingly accessible? First, it is obvious that commercial jets have gradually intensified competition for the tourist dollar from other Caribbean sunspots as competitors. Indeed the governments of Barbados, Bermuda, Mexico and Cuba have often outspent the Sunshine State on advertisements to entice northeasterners south. Florida has ceased to be the sole cheap, easily reachable sunspot for Northerners living east of the Mississippi River. As early as the 1950s, the Florida Development Commission fretted: "No longer is Florida the one and only warm winter resort practical for mid-west and eastern states people to reach." Mexico, for one, despite of the unfamiliarity of most North Americans with Latin America, and despite its reputation as unhealthy to northern digestive tracts, benefited handsomely as a cheaper, more authentic alternative to Florida.⁹⁵

Florida's tourist history is also durably connected to Cuba's, by geography and culture. Prior to the 1962 embargo, linkages and movement between Cuba and Florida were abundant. In the 1950s, Havana excursions from South Florida were "popular"; in the winter of 1950-51, a survey of visitors to Greater Miami found that fifteen percent of respondents either were planning on going to Havana or had already been there. Passenger ships (since the early 20th century) and Pan Am airplanes connected Miami, West Palm

⁹⁵ In Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida Development Commission, series 135, box 1: Speech from B. R. Fuller Jr., Executive Director of the FDC, 26 August 1960: "The Competition Florida Faces for Tourists"; FDC, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1959-1960* (Miami, 1960); *Autoclub* 56 (1977): 15; E.V.W. Jones, "Visitors Spread, Leave Some Gaps," *Miami Herald*, 14 February 1960, C1.

Beach, Tampa and Key West to Havana, with a dozen daily flights in the winter of 1950. Airfares were surprisingly low – \$23 per round trip in 1953, and \$36 in 1957. Meanwhile Cuba was the biggest source of Latin American visitors to Florida in the 1950s. Criminal networks connected the two cities: when gambling was curtailed in Miami Beach in the early 1950s, much of it moved to Cuba. Miami tourism suffered as a result: in the winter of 1958, local businessmen attributed the slow activity of the Beach to the "gambling build-up" in Havana. In 1964, a business publication noted that Key West leaders had undertaken the renovation of the Hemingway and Audubon houses to attract tourists back again after the 1959 Revolution had staunched the flow of Cuba-bound travelers through the Keys.⁹⁶

Hence, to an important number of wealthier travelers (not solely to the truly rich), Cuba was a complement to a South Florida vacation. To these vacationers, Cuba was irreplaceable since it offered pleasures that remained illicit in the United States – cheap ones too. Consequently, when Americans were deprived of access to Cuba, the ripple effect was felt throughout Florida's tourist industry. In compensation, in December 1966 cruise ships initiated a run to Nassau (and in the early 1980s, gambling cruises to

⁹⁶ V.W. Bennett and B.A. Westmoreland, *A Survey of the Winter Tourist Industry of Greater Miami* (Coral Gables, FL, 1951), 11; *NYT*, 15 March 1953, X17; C. E. Wright, "Florida Keeps Open," *NYT*, 14 June 1953, sect. 10:43; C. E. Wright, "Early Activity on the East Coast," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, sect. 10:17; *The Kiplinger Florida Letter* (Washington D.C., Kiplinger Washington Editors) (27 February 1964); on golf: Julie Dulude, *Toronto Star*, 7 October 2000, TR5; John D. Harbon, "Varadero Beach is Beckoning Again," *NYT*, 1 January 1977, 7A; Nixon Smiley, "He Wanted to Own it All," in *On the Beat and Offbeat* (Miami, 1983), 36; Gene Plowden, "Florida's Travel Tide Reaches Crest," *Miami Herald*, 27 February 1950, 3C; A. L. Himbert, "Florida Tourist Trade Still Growing," *NYT*, 18 October 1953, 2-28; W.E. Charles, "Gateway to the Sunny Isles," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, XX-13; Tampa-Key West cruise in the 1930s-1950s by the steamer *Florida*: Caption for a picture of the *Florida*, in Florida Photographic Collection, Florida Memory Project: www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection (retrieved September 2006); gambling: P.J.C. Friedlander, "High Season at Miami Beach," *NYT*, 4 February 1951, 2-17; "Winter Vacation Guide to Southern Resorts," *NYT*, 4 November 1956, XX21; "build-up": J.A. Loftus, "Old Joke, But True...", *NYT*, 11 February 1958, 2-1; When judge Amédée Monet and his family drives from Montréal to Miami, they go to Havana, and he buys cigars, says his daughter: Simonne Monet Chartrand, *Ma vie comme rivière*, vol. 1 (Montréal, 1981), 113.

"nowhere" – solely for the purpose of leaving state waters, in order to gamble legally). Gamblers deprived of action in Havana's casinos opted for Nevada, the Bahamas, and floating casinos.⁹⁷ As a way station, Florida snared some of the gamblers' money, but not until Broward County's Seminole tribe opened the state's first casino in 1979 did anyone in the Sunshine State legally receive the House's take.

As the Bahamas replaced Cuba as "Florida" attractions, and floating casinos and cruises to nowhere replaced cruises to somewhere, it has remained self-evident that Florida has never been the "end of the road" for the air- and sea-minded. But for most North Americans living east of the Mississippi, all roads heading south *literally* end in Key West, a resort town with a definite "land's end" feel to it; a Canadian journalist in 1970 wrote that in Key West "a rolling sea breaks on the horizon to the south, where no road leads. And you wish there were one." The entrepreneurs of Florida's tourism industry had more mixed emotions, some taking comfort in the observation of another Canadian, this time in 1993, that, "until Castro falls and Havana opens up, [South Florida] is going to be the place." In contrast, in the spring of 2001, the incoming President of Visit Florida, the public-private promotional agency, said he was looking forward to the "inevitable" opening of Cuba as an opportunity.⁹⁸ Possibly, but the opening of the Cuban beaches to direct, non-stop flights from Northern cities in the United States might push Florida past familiarity to contempt. Of course, much will depend on crime and prices in a post-revolutionary Cuba. While the future impact of Cuba on the Florida Dream remains

⁹⁷ "Rebirth of cruise industry" in the first Miami-Nassau cruise, on the M.S. Sunward, belonging to Ted Arison, in December 1966, in the "Miami Chronology, 1960-1980," edited by *Miami Herald*: www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/4069554.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp (retrieved April 2006); *The Kiplinger Florida Letter* (27 February 1964).

⁹⁸ *FP*, 28 November 1970, 39; Thomas Swick, "'FOBE' May Be the Next In-Spot," *The Gazette*, 25 September 1993, 16; "A Conversation With Austin Mott," *Forum* (Fla Humanities Council) (Spring 2001).

uncertain, this much can be said for certain: Had Cuba remained accessible from South Florida, the latter would have developed differently, as a jumping off point to Cuba.

Whether they flew *through* or *to* Florida, the experience of air travelers must have been different from that of the motor tourist. One can readily see that the air traveler experienced more artificiality and less empowerment in making sense of his southward journey. The growth of Florida-bound air transportation since the arrival of jets in 1959 has inevitably decreased the awareness of the South among Northeasterners, Midwesterners, and Canadians, especially those who kept to the confines of the least "Southern," most cosmopolitan beach strips. Inevitably, the elimination of way stops in Virginia, Kentucky and Georgia reduced Northern appreciation of Southern folkways at a fateful moment in US political history – the postwar shift of industry and population that created the "Red State" majority in Congress. Hence in the worst-case scenario, Northerners and Canadians have become less aware of the South, at a time when some knowledge would have helped them make sense of regional power shifts in North America. In any case, the Jet Age has somewhat decreased the power of Southbound roadscapes folklore.

Moreover, air travel to Florida, as elsewhere, cut the traveler off from human geography, as well as from the local climate and topography. Even those close enough to a window to see the snows recede, did so from 35,000 feet, an elevation that transformed the tourist gaze into Olympian detachment, with little of the former's attention to human geography, involvement of the five senses, and empowerment of the traveler to construct his own path-dependent narrative at every turn. Especially as airport security intensified, the most important shock of difference for many came not at the heat line but at the metal detectors where one left the "real world" for the artificial world of "airport land," a place

that looks much the same from one continent to the next. The story of air travel has become one of ever-growing alienation and disempowerment since the Havana-bound hijackings of the 1960s and deregulation during the Carter and Reagan presidencies; it has evolved into a process that gives North Americans a taste of life in a minimum-security jail, equipped in the twenty-first century with plastic knives and take-it-or-leave-it grub, where even minor concessions to individual autonomy – such as the adjustable nozzle of fresh air – are, like the passenger's dignity, being stripped away. Novel x-ray machines are literally peeling the clothes and personality off air travelers. To the extent that the traveler is still able to construct his or her own, exclusive meaning of the journey, it likely hinges on weather delays, lost luggage, and surly staff. That paradisiacal Florida is the destination of a hellish flight hardly defines the experience. Hence, the journey has become regressively less relevant to the meaning of the Florida Dream in the Jet Age. The romantic-minded traveler has chafed at this disempowerment; hence, economics are not the sole reason for the enduring popularity of going to Florida by car. Along the southbound roadscapes, it is still possible to cast a tourist gaze upon the continent and to partake of (and modify) the folklore of consumerism. The auto traveler is, at least, a consumer (however, distasteful that is to those who romanticize producers), unlike the late modern (post-modern) denizen of the air, who has less consumer choice than a first-grader. True, the horrors of air travel have become part of folklore. Like urban legends, they may even keep some people from venturing far enough from home to reach for the Florida Dream. Still, any comparison of the experiences of air and auto travelers vindicates the concepts of "the tourist gaze" and the "folklorization of experience" as pathways to comprehending late modern or postmodern culture – that is, the current era of North American culture, whatever its academic label.

To summarize what we have learned to this point, we have learned that Florida has been a popular tourist destination since the late nineteenth century because its natural assets have resonated with an ancient longing for escape from the ordinary routine of work and duty. Promoters have cleverly exploited this escapist repertoire since then to fashion a compelling Florida Dream. We have seen how Florida was made easily and cheaply accessible to millions of Northeasterners and Canadians; we have witnessed the consequent, durable and widespread use of the automobile by visitors from the North, in spite of the great distance.

We further learned that the experience of the journey to Florida, by whatever means, has been an important part of the whole Florida experience. Florida-bound journeys contributed to the worldviews of travelers, who in turn contributed to the folklore and folkways of geography, consumerism, Southernism, and leisure that North Americans developed. Travel to Florida folklorized the experience of consumerist modernity and its evolution into postmodernity. The question remains, however, as to the ways in which modernity was embraced, tamed, contested or transcended (to postmodernity) in the process. It's not an either-or proposition – all responses occurred. In other words, we will have to await a later chapter, indeed, the final one dealing with the snowbirds, before we weight both the contribution of Florida tourism to molding the late modern or postmodern sensibility and the plausibility of the claims that the experience of Florida's snowbirds have *nothing* or *everything* to tell us about our collective future. Simply put, are they best seen as passenger pigeons who will soon become extinct, or as albatrosses who will leave Florida with nary a drop to drink, or as canaries in the mine who can help North Americans to avert a toxic future. Even if the snowbird turns out to be an ornithological oddity, a hybrid mix, it is already becoming as obvious as the plumage of a Bird of

Paradise that Florida tourism matters to, is part of, the history of half a continent, indeed of the late modern (or postmodern) project itself. In Chapter 4, having followed the travelers on their southward journeys, we will examine their arrival and settlement in the Sunshine State.

CHAPTER 4

ROOSTING IN FLORIDA

As told by the Sunbelt and muckraking schools of Florida history, the Florida Dream that made Northerners take to the railroads, roads and airlines to enjoy the Good Life, has drawn tourists and migrants to the state. The impact of the Dreamers on the Dream was impressive: it is now time to look at their presence in Florida, at their impact on the state.

4.1 A Few Numbers

The annual influx of tourists, snowbirds, and the more permanent migrants, transformed, indeed *overwhelmed* Florida. The causal link between tourism and migration was obvious at least since the Carl Fisher days, as the tourist destination counties were also migrant magnets, for obvious reasons: many tourists became snowbirds or permanent migrants.¹ Between 1950 and 2000, Florida grew by about 700 new residents each day, and by more than 800 after 1970, as Florida's population leapt from the twentieth most important to the fourth position.² By 1990, only 30.5 percent of its population was born in-state (compared to a US average of around 60 percent. 59 percent of the domestic

¹ C.E. Wright, "Florida Relates Population Growth to Tourist Trade," *New York Times*, 4 May 1969, sect. 10:22.

² Raymond A. Mohl and Gary R. Mormino, "The Big Change in the Sunshine State: A Social History of Modern Florida," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville, 1996), 429-431. Historical data on Florida and counties found in US Census publications: "USA Counties 1998 Database," at www.census.gov/statab/www/county.html; and in "State & County QuickFacts," quickfacts.census.gov/qfd (Retrieved May 2004).

migrants came from the Northeast and Midwest³ in 1955-1960, 61% in 1965-70, and 68 percent in 1975-80.⁴ By then, New Yorkers had planted sugar maples and Big Apple trees amongst the palms: a tenth of Floridians had been born in New York State.⁵

Where migrants went, tourists and snowbirds went as well: in the 1990s, winter tourists and snowbirds added 620,000 persons to the state population, in season, a number equal to four percent of the permanent population. (As their actual number could be no more than an estimate, their share may have been even higher: as much as 7 percent according to a University of Florida study in 1993.) In tourist counties, their percentage was even higher – as much as twelve percent in Palm Beach County in season during the early 1990s.⁶

Chart 4.1 shows the time spent in Florida by visitors, as an equivalent in terms of 365-days-stays; in other words, if tourists stayed for short periods as individuals, their cumulative impact on the Sunshine State was equivalent to a million permanent residents (between six and twelve percent of the state's population), *each day of the year, every year* since the 1960s.⁷

³ Up to today, the US Census defines the Northeast as all the states east of Pennsylvania and north of New Jersey (both the New England and Middle Atlantic regions); the eastern Midwest, called East North Central, comprises Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, all states north of the Ohio river and westward from Ohio, all the way to the Mississippi River; the remainder of the Midwest, West North Central, goes westward from the Old Man River to the Dakotas, Kansas, and Nebraska inclusively.

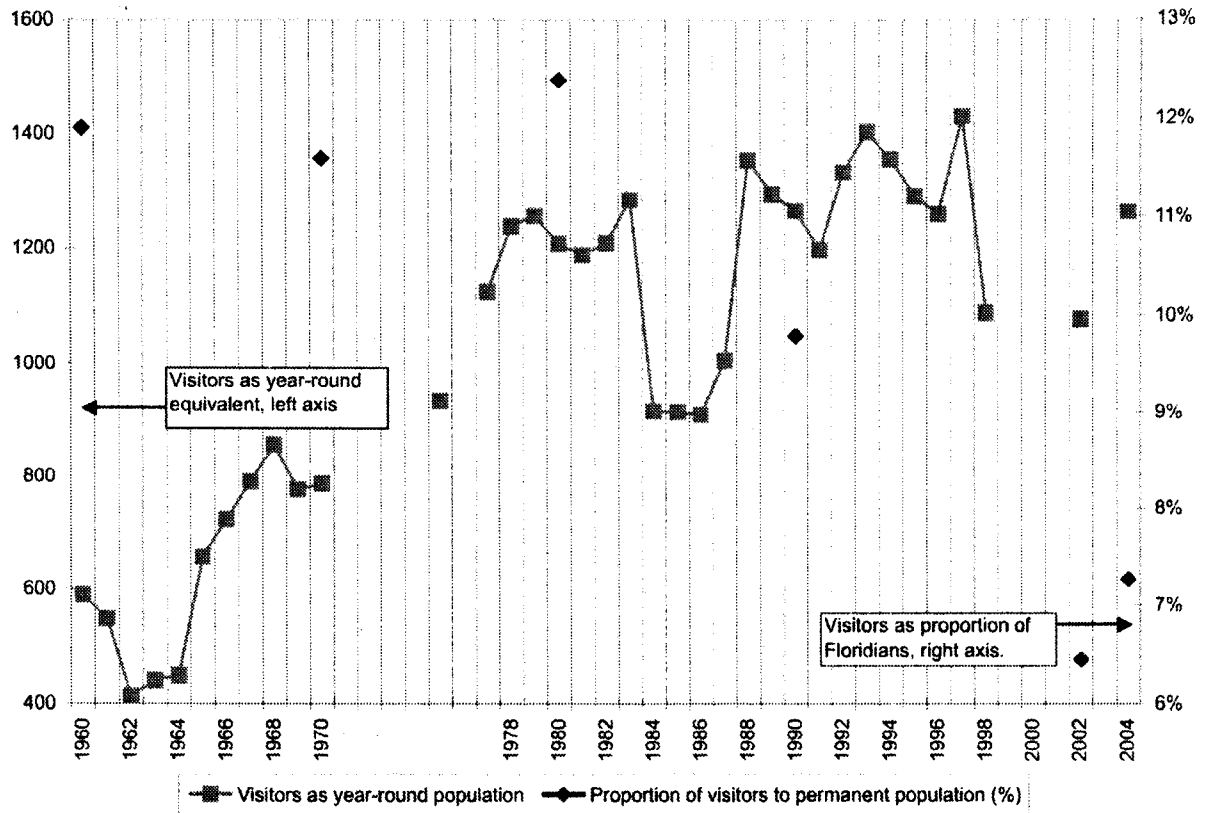
⁴ Leon F. Bouvier and Bob Weller, *Florida in the 21st Century: The Challenge of Population Growth* (Washington, DC, 1992), 20.

⁵ Between 1995-2000, Florida was the largest beneficiary of out-migration from Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. W. He and J.P. Schachter, *Census 2000 Special Report: Internal Migration of the Older Population: 1995 to 2000* (Washington, DC, 003), 4, in Census 2000 publications, www.census.gov (retrieved February 2004). Historical data on Florida and counties found in "USA Counties 1998 Database," and "State & County QuickFacts"; M.J. Perry, *Census 2000 Special Report: State-to-State Migration Flows: 1995 to 2000* (Washington, DC, August 2003), 3.

⁶ *NYT*, 13 July 1969, sect. 10:4.

⁷ Bouvier and Weller, 40; James MacGowan, "Profile of and Interview With Carl Hiaasen," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 2000, sect. C:18.

Chart 4.1: Tourism as Equivalent of Visitors in Year-round Population (thousands), and as a Proportion of Permanent Population (percent), 1960-2004.



Tourist spending meanwhile enabled Florida to remain among the seven states with no income tax; instead, sales taxes provided 57 percent of the state revenue in the late 1990s. In 2000, Florida got the second highest sales tax revenues among the 50 States. When population was taken into account, Florida's *per capita* receipts were the nation's highest, 30 percent more than California's.⁸

Fortunately, these millions of visitors did not all head to the same place. Mass tourism was a highly individualistic activity because of phenomena like targeted advertising, chain migration, word of mouth, and transportation networks. Even so, visitors did tend to sort themselves by region, with visitors from east a mid-point in Lake Ontario (Eastern Ontario, Québec and the Northeastern states) tending to head to the Gold

Coast on Florida's Atlantic side, and those living west of the mid-point (New York's Mohawk Valley, western Pennsylvania, the Midwest and the Ontario peninsula) to the Gulf of Mexico. This pattern was already visible by the 1950s even though attractions and accommodations were far more developed then on the Gold Coast than anywhere else in Florida. In the winter of 1950-51, for instance, 41.6 percent of the visitors to Miami Beach came from Greater New York City. Table 4.1 shows the origins of visitors in the Miami area in the mid-1950s:

Table 4.1: Origins of Hotel Guests to Miami Area and Miami Beach, 1953-55 (percent).⁹

Origin	Miami Beach	Greater Miami	Proportion of U.S. population
New England	6.7	7.1	6.1
Middle Atlantic	52.6	38.0	19.5
East North Central	21.7	27.5	20.2
West North Central	5.2	5.3	9.0
South Atlantic	5.6	12.0	14.3

Table 4.2 lists the largest tourist cohorts (by place of origin) who registered at the City of St. Petersburg information office for the 1958-60 seasons. Note the relative contribution of New York City to this Gulf Coast city's tourism: just 11 percent of their state's total and less than twice as many visitors as Grand Rapids, Michigan, a far smaller place. Similarly, more people visited St. Petersburg from Pittsburgh than Philadelphia. True, the data are flawed: given the reputation of the denizens of New York City, they were possibly too harried or disdainful to seek local advice. And any explanation based on geographic or technological determinism (based on linkages in the highway network) cannot account for the 4,529 Bay Staters counted by the information office. They "should have known" that they should be wintering at the southern end of Highway 1 (which ran from Maine

⁸ Source: US Census of Business; *NYT*, 13 July 1969, sect. 10:4.

⁹ R.W. Benner and R.P. Wolff, *Characteristics of Miami Beach Hotel Guests, 1954-1955* (Coral Gables, FL, 1955), 8; V.W. Bennett and B.A. Westmoreland, *A Survey of the Winter Tourist Industry of Greater Miami* (Coral Gables, 1951), 2.

through Boston to Key West) – that is, if geography and highways *dictated* migration patterns. Yet the Bay State provided more visitors to the Gulf Coast city than did more populous states, because of the tendency of migrants to move in chains, with the first migrant in a given social network to choose a lair in the South increasing the likelihood that other people in his or her network would choose the same destination. Hence, the individualistic tourists did tend to cluster by their region of origin when they reached Florida.

Table 4.2: Origins of Self-Reported Visitors to St. Petersburg, 1959 and 1960 Seasons, for the Biggest Cohorts¹⁰.

Origin	Number
New York	8,163
New York City	875
Rochester	601
Buffalo	438
Canada	7,085
Toronto	1,071
Pennsylvania	5,082
Pittsburgh	536
Philadelphia	530
Michigan	4,610
Detroit	762
Grand Rapids	449
Massachusetts	4,529
Illinois	4,326
Chicago	1,362
Ohio	3,913
Cleveland	412
New Jersey	2,906
Wisconsin	2,230
Milwaukee	558

For the years since 1960 the data on place of origin are surprisingly patchy; but the Florida Development Commission did determine, as best it could, the five most important

¹⁰ *St Petersburg, Florida, Tourist Registration by Cities and States, 1959-1960 Winter Season* (St. Petersburg, 1960).

Northern tributary areas (by state or country) for Florida's tourist cities. Their conclusions appear on Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Most Important Cohorts of Out-of-state Visitors to Selected Florida Destinations, by State or Country of Origin, First Quarter of 1975 (by Air and Automobile).

By air	1st cohort by origin, by air	2nd cohort by origin, by air	3rd	4th	5th
Orlando	NY	NJ	Foreign (excl. Canada)	GA	MI
Miami	NY	NJ	IL	OH	PA
Fort Lauderdale	NY	PA	GA	Canada	Foreign
Tampa/ St. Petersburg	NY	GA	NJ	PA	MA
By automobile	1st cohort of origin, by car	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Orlando	NY	OH	MI	Canada	PA
Tampa/ St. Petersburg	NY	MI	Canada	OH	NJ
Miami	NY	Canada	NJ	OH	MI
Fort Lauderdale	NY	PA	GA	Canada	Foreign

Source: Florida Development Commission, *1975 Annual Report* (Tallahassee, 1976).

The data reveal that New York State (and its New Jersey satellite) produced the most winter visitors to Florida during the 1970s, almost inevitably so, given the multi-millions living in the New York metropolis and its superior access (including budget airfares) to Florida and the world. New Yorkers showed up everywhere in superior numbers, but less populous New Jersey could not dominate every tourist town and its relative position in the cohorts – ranging from second place to a non-show – demonstrated that Northeasterners and Midwesterners tended to live apart in Florida.

When examining official tourism statistics from the Government of Florida – or one of the municipalities or counties –, one has to keep in mind the defects in the data: automobile tourists were perennially difficult to count. Although incoming highway traffic

was counted at the state border and at given points along highways, most data on auto visitors was extrapolated from questionnaires distributed at Florida's Welcome Stations. Inevitably, repeat visitors to Florida, especially the snowbirds, skirted these roadside information outlets for they needed less visitor information. How many state highway maps did one need? Consequently, automobile snowbirds were likely undercounted.

Late in the postwar period, some studies attempted to correct this defect. A University of Florida team estimated the snowbird (temporary winter resident) population in Florida in 1985-1987 as being "at least" at 600,000 persons, most of them from New York, followed by Massachusetts, Indiana and Illinois. In January 1993, a similar study put the count at 991,000 persons – 14.5 percent from New York, 10.6 percent from Michigan, and 10 percent from Canada. Further studies in 1997, 2004, and 2005 put the snowbird count between 920,000 and 970,000. By 2004, New Yorkers were an estimated 13.1 percent of all snowbirds; Michiganders, 7.4 percent; Ohioans, 6.7 percent; Pennsylvanians 5.8; and Canadians 5.5 percent.¹¹

Canadian visitors were the easiest to count. Because of the international character of their journey, the Canadian government gathered precise data on Canadian travel to the United States. However, there was no attempt, for most of the postwar period, to ascertain the destination of Canadians by state. Only in the 1980s did Statistics Canada begin counting visits to Florida. It calculated that Canadians spent 16 to 19 average nights per

¹¹ By 1993 study, 44% of snowbirds settled in Southwest Florida, 34 in the Southeast, 15 in Central Florida; a great majority of temporary residents were aged 55 and older, 80 percent owned their homes, 34 percent lived in mobile homes; 1985-1987 study: "Snowbirds Actually Flock Here to Work, Too," *Miami Herald*, 8 March 1988, 2D; 1991-93 survey of 13,183 persons, by C.L. McLarty and J. Galvet: John Maines, "Flock Of Snowbirds is Increasing in Size," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 7 January 1995, 21A; "Study 'Snowbird' Flocks Growing," *Miami Herald*, 7 January 1995, 5B; Sean Cavanagh, "The Great Migration," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 14 November 2000, 1E; C.E. Wright, "Florida in Focus," *NYT*, 21 June 1964, sect. 10:13; Wright, "Florida Analyzes Trends in Tourism," *NYT*, 10 September 1967, sect. 10:19; "L'hiver en Floride," *La Presse*, 22 November 2004; 2005 survey of Florida households on temporary residents: Stanley

stay (versus the 18 to 22 nights figured by the Florida Development Commission). These figures meant that Canadians more than doubled the average American stay in Florida – of one week. Thanks to the snowbirds, in the 1980s and 1990s, Florida was the place where Canadians spent *30 to 40 percent of their total nights in the United States*. In 2002 the average Canadian sojourn in Florida lasted *42 nights* during snowbird season. Meanwhile the total spending of Canadians in Florida was never less than 21.5 percent, and as high as 29 percent of all Canadian spending inside the United States.¹²

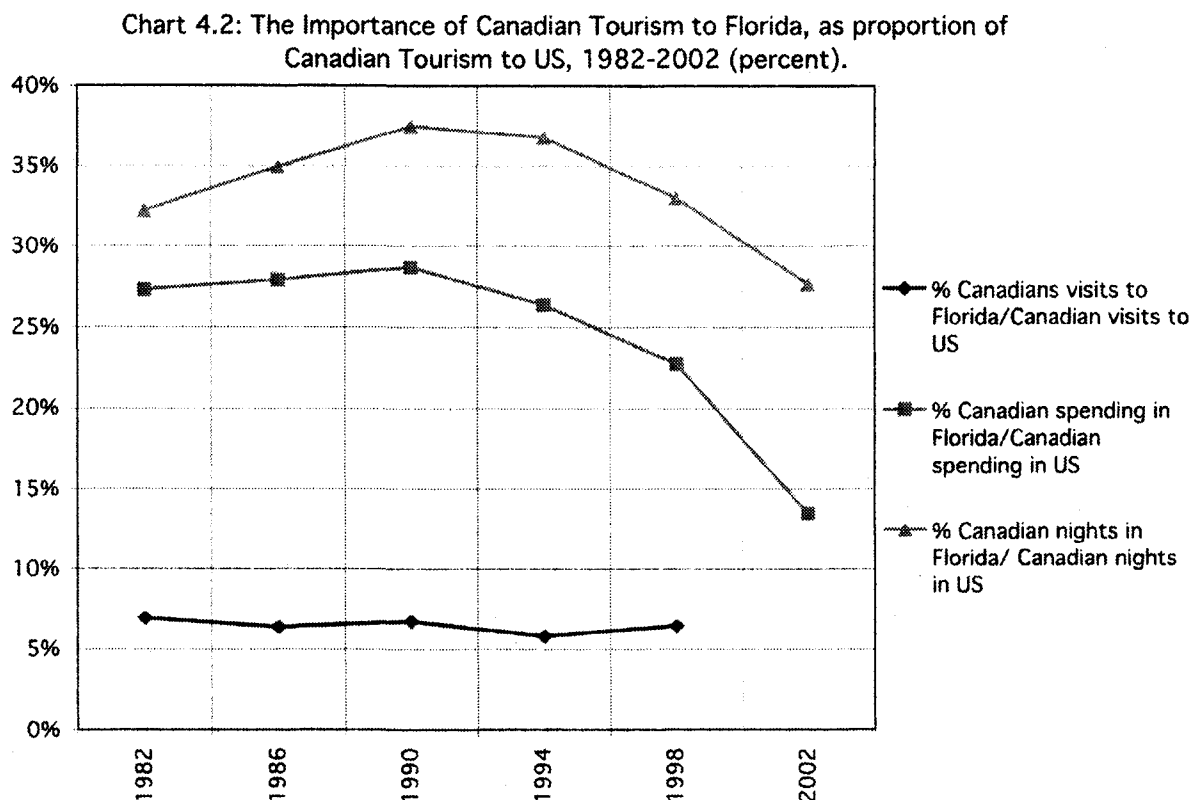
Proximity (everything is relative) and population (more than half the national total) made Ontarians and Québécois the largest Canadian cohorts in Florida. In 1972, Québécois and Ontarians were respectively 25 and 66 percent of all Canadian visitors to the South Atlantic region of the United States, from Delaware southward; Florida's share can only be extrapolated. Statistics Canada did not give a breakdown by state until the 1980s. The proportion in the South Atlantic region remained unchanged in 1999 for Québec, while falling to 59 percent for Ontario (thanks to the diffusion of charter airlines across Canada).¹³ In the 1980s, when Florida data became available, the number of Ontarians and Québécois going to Florida approximated, respectively, two and one million per year. By 2000, US inflation and Canadian dollar depreciation had reduced the number of visitors from Ontario to around a million, and 500,000 from Québec. Chart 4.2 presents the relative importance of Florida as a destination for Canadians traveling to the

K. Smith and Mark House, *Temporary Migration: A Case Study of Florida*, (Gainesville, March 2006), 9.

¹² Statistique Canada, *Voyages entre le Canada et les autres pays*, eds. 1972 to 1985 (Ottawa, 1973-1986), (Catalog no. 66-201); Traveldata, *Vacation Travel by Canadians in 1974, in the United States*, vol. 1 (Toronto, October 1975), 99; Statistique Canada, "Caractéristiques des voyageurs internationaux, deuxième trimestre de 2002," *Le Quotidien*, 27 November 2002, in www.statcan.ca/Daily/Francais/021127/q021127a.htm (Retrieved April 2004); "Caractéristiques des voyageurs internationaux, deuxième trimestre de 2003," *Le Quotidien*, 26 November 2003, in www.statcan.ca/Daily/Francais/031126/q031126c.htm (Retrieved April 2004).

¹³ *Travel Demand: Visitors and Tourists* (Tampa, July 2003), 7; Statistics Canada, *Tourism Statistical Digest*

United States. Long snowbird stays in the Sunshine State explain the high proportion of money (between 15 and 27 percent) and number of nights (30 to 37 percent) spent compared to the number of trips (around seven percent) during the 1980s and 1990s.



A 1986 survey led by Professor Richard Tucker found that English-speaking Canadian snowbirds favored Gulf Coast destinations: Pinellas (St. Petersburg), Polk (Lakeland and Winter Haven) and Charlotte counties mostly, along with Manatee (Bradenton), Lee (Fort Myers) and Collier (Naples). They behaved much like Midwestern snowbirds: in 1993, 44 percent chose Southwest Florida, meanwhile another 34 percent of snowbirds settled in the Southeast, and 15 percent in Central Florida. Québécois snowbirds settled elsewhere: they concentrated in Broward and Palm Beach counties,

especially around Hollywood in South Broward. Collectively, Canadian snowbirds fluctuated between 225,000 and 450,000, spending an average of five months per year in Florida. Three quarters of the Canadian snowbirds interviewed owned a residence in Florida. While numerous, the Canadians would not have stood out (had they spoken Webster's English) for they were, at most, eight percent of Florida's temporary residents in 2005, a temporary resident being defined as someone who stayed between four and six months – the typical snowbird season.¹⁴

As for American snowbirds, Florida was their first choice, as shown by 1977 data: while California sucked in the most travel money that year, Florida ranked first in expenditures per person-trip because its American visitors spent more nights there than visiting any other state. Thanks to the snowbirds, Florida excelled in capturing tourist dollars despite ranking seventh among the states in attracting American tourists – and despite having the lowest spending as well, when calculated *per diem*. Snowbirds, therefore, account for the paradoxes in Table 4.4.¹⁵

eds. 1986 to 1999 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1986-1999) (Catalog no. 66-201).

¹⁴ "Elder Canadians Favor 3 Counties," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 11 April 1987, 12A; "Canadians Favor Polk, Pinellas, Charlotte," *St. Petersburg Times*, 13 April 1987, 28E; Marshall and Tucker, "Canadian Seasonal Migrants: Boon or Burden?," *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 9 (December 1990): 421, 423; Longino *et al.*, "On the Nesting of Snowbirds: A Question About Seasonal and Permanent Migrants," *The Journal of Applied Gerontology* 10 (June 1991): 161; Tucker *et al.*, "Older Canadians in Florida: A Comparison of Anglophone and Francophone Seasonal Migrants," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 11 (fall 1992): 283, 287, 291, 292, 296; Tucker, Longino and Larry C. Mullins, "Older Anglophone Canadian Snowbirds in Florida: A Descriptive Profile," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 7 (fall 1988); Bob Hepburn, "Canadians Go Home," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1990, A2; Wilson-Smith and Deacon, "Bound for the South," *MacLean's* 106 (25 January 1993); Coates, Healy and Morrison, "Tracking the Snowbirds: Seasonal Migration from Canada to the U.S.A. and Mexico," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (Fall 2002): 433-435; 2005 data, see Smith and House, 12.

¹⁵ R.R. Schultz and W.B. Strange, *The Social and Economic Effects of the Florida Tourist Industry* (Boca Raton, FL, 1978), 21, 22; 1998 international travel expenditures estimated at \$16.7 billion in Florida, \$13 billion in California; travel-generated employment 232,000 in Fla, 170,000 in Ca.; travel-generated tax receipts \$2.65 billions in Fla, \$2.1 in Ca.: quoted in *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, DC, 1996), 265; *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, DC, 2000), 268, 270; for 1977: *Tourism's Top Twenty: Fast Facts on Travel and Tourism* (Washington, DC, and Boulder, Co, 1980), 62-68.

Table 4.4: Average Visitor Expenditure, Circa 1970 and 1978, Selected States.¹⁶

	Year of data	\$ Per day	\$ Per visit	Year	\$ Per day	\$ Per visit
Florida	1970	12.63	156.61	1979	34.23	474.15
Georgia	1971	n.a.	14.93	1977	50.70	89.66
Texas	1971	13.92	79.34	1979	21.78	243.27
California	1968	23.93	167.70	1977	53.52	146.44
Massachusetts	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1977	64.19	106.33
Illinois	1965	n.a.	23.46	1977	57.48	87.07

Frequently, journalists expressed amazement at the low average spending by Florida visitors. Their explanations included: they were more likely than elsewhere to stay with family and friends; or they were snowbirds with their own Florida residence, either one they owned or rented at a low long-term rate in an apartment building, a sublet, or a resort hotel. Snowbirds also resorted more to home cooking.¹⁷

These patchy data can be supplemented by looking at retirement migration, the permanent migration of elderly people to Florida, because the three types of migration to the Sunshine State – tourist, seasonal, and permanent – were closely related: snowbirds were former tourists, and many retired migrants were former snowbirds.

Florida was until very recently the first destination of migrating retirees in all fifty states. In a 1970s study, it is estimated that Florida drew 25 percent of all interstate elderly migrants from East of the Mississippi – six times more people than any other state. Most came from the Northeastern States (especially New York and New Jersey) and from Ohio, Illinois and Michigan. The Sunshine State held eleven of the nation's forty-six

¹⁶ Goeldner, Dicke, and Sletta, *Travel Trends in the United States and Canada* (Boulder, Co, 1973), 48.

¹⁷ survey by J. Richard Stevens, School of Business, FSU: C.E. Wright, "Florida Checks its Guests' Likes and Dislikes," *NYT*, 20 October 1957, sect. 10:31; survey of 298 snowbirds at January 1998 CanadaFest. This lifestyle closely matches the profile of Floribécinois snowbirds surveyed in February 1998. 38% of hotel dwellers spent less than \$3,000 per stay, while 66% of respondents stayed for three months and over, spending \$3000 spread over four months translated into \$25 per day. 56% of homeowners reported spending between \$3,000 and \$7,000 per stay; the author explained it by their longer stays: A.M. Voisard, "Sous les palmiers, la manne," *Le Soleil*, 3 April 1998, A1; Amy Alexander, "More Canadians Calling Broward Home

"retirement" counties in 1970, and sixteen of the fifty-two in 1980.¹⁸ Another study ascertained that Florida contained thirty-six of the sixty-four southeastern counties identified as *the* magnets for retirees during the entire postwar period. No county then had more attraction than Charlotte on the Gulf Coast between Sarasota and Fort Myers, in 1980 the county with the highest proportion of retired persons in the whole United States, its senior population (65 and over) then three times the national average. Charlotte's median age soared to 54 years old in 1990. Neighboring Sarasota County has also ranked since 1970 in the national top-five in its proportion of population aged 65 and older. Most of these "retirement" counties have in common a southerly location, cheap housing, water-based recreational amenities, and a nearby metropolis. In Florida, half of the counties are concentrated in just five Metropolitan areas.¹⁹ These counties are, by no coincidence, also those with the greatest numbers of mobile homes.²⁰

Thanks to the pulling power of the retirement counties, in 1965-70 and again in 1975-80, an estimated 50 percent of the net in-migration to Florida consisted of people aged 50 years and over. The influx wrinkled the state: in 1990, one in five Floridian was aged 65 and over, and ten years later there were thirteen counties with median ages superior to 41. Charlotte, with a median age of 54 was then the grayest county in the US,

for Longer Periods of Time," *Miami Herald*, 10 May 1993.

¹⁸ T.O. Graff and R.F. Wiseman, "Changing Pattern of Retirement Counties Since 1965," *The Geographical Review* 80 (July 1990): 239, 241, 245, 249; Northcott, *Changing Residence: the Geographic Mobility of Elderly Canadians* (Toronto, 1988), 81, 103; E.P. Stoller and C. Longino, "'Going Home' or 'Leaving Home'?" *Gerontologist* 41 (February 2001): 102; D. Gordon Bennett, "Implications of Retirement Development in High-Amenity Nonmetropolitan Coastal Areas," *The Journal of Applied Gerontology* 15 (September 1996): 348; Fournier, Rasmussen and Serow, "Elderly Migration: For Sun and Money," *Population Research and Policy Review* 7 (1988): 196; Serow, "Economic Implications of Retirement Migration," *The Journal of Applied Gerontology* 9 (December 1990): 455.

¹⁹ Mohl and Mormino, "The Big Change....," 420, 423.

²⁰ K. V. Pankhurst, "Migration Between Canada and the United States", *Annals of the American Association of Political Scientists* 367 (September 1966): 61; Graff and Wiseman, 241, 246; Serow, "Retirement Migration Counties in the Southeastern United States: Geographic, Demographic, and Economic

followed by the three contiguous counties north of Pinellas: Pasco, with a median age of 54.7; Citrus (Homosassa), 53.2; and Hernando (Brooksville, Weeki Wachee), 52.4; Sarasota county ranked fifth, at 49.2.²¹ As can be inferred from the high median ages in Table 4.5, many Florida communities harbored so many retired people that the elderly's clustering, even ghettoization, imprinted itself on the landscape, either at the county, city, or neighborhood level.

Correlates," *The Gerontologist* 41 (April 2001): 223, 225; Fournier, Rasmussen, Serow, "Elderly Migration as a Response to Economic Incentives", *Social Science Quarterly* 69 (June 1988): 246.

²¹ Alex Shoumatoff, *Florida Ramble* (New York, 1974), 37, 40; top-20: U.S. Census Bureau, *County and City Data Book*, table C-2: www.census.gov/statab/ccdb/cit2061r.txt (Retrieved September 2004); Bouvier and Weller, 28-30; Mark Howard, "The Florida Quiz," *Florida Trend* (May 1999); Cynthia Barnett, "How Many Retirees?," *Florida Trend* (September 2003).

Table 4.5: Median Age, Selected Florida Counties and Cities, Census Years, 1960-2000.

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
United States	25.9	28.1	30.0	32.9	35.3
Florida	31.1	32.4	34.7	38.7	38.7
Miami-Dade	33.4	34.2	34.7	34.2	35.6
Miami	37.4	37.4	–	–	37.7
Miami Beach	–	64.4	66	–	39
Sunny Isles	–	–	68.2	65.8	35.3
Surfside	–	60	63.1	52.9	–
Broward	33.9	37.7	39.2	37.6	37.8
Fort Lauderdale	36.5	39.6	–	–	39.3
Hollywood	43.4	39.6	–	–	39.2
Hallandale	32.4	51.4	64.9	64.1	52.7
Pompano	35.4	43.3	50.9	41	42.2
Charlotte	44.8	58.3	57.3	53.7	54.3
Port Charlotte	–	62.6	57.3	51.2	–
Punta Gorda	–	–	58.3	62.1	45.2
Citrus (Homossassa)	37.5	–	52.7	50.8	52.6
Hernando (Weeki Wachee)	31.5	–	47.7	49.4	49.5
Lee	34.1	39.3	41.7	42	43.6
Cape Coral	–	52.5	50.2	–	41.6
Manatee (Bradenton)	41.1	48.7	44.2	42.9	43.6
Palm Beach	34	35.5	40.2	39.8	41.8
West Palm Beach	37.9	40	–	–	36.7
Boynton Beach	33.4	42.3	53.4	42.5	41.8
Delray Beach	32.9	33.6	–	45.2	43.8
Boca Raton	–	42.1	–	41.1	42.9
Pasco (New Port Richey)	38.5	53.4	52.8	47.9	44.9
Pinellas	44.5	48.1	45.8	42.1	43
Clearwater	42	47.5	–	–	39.3
St. Petersburg	47.3	48.1	–	–	50.5
Dunedin	–	58.4	54.5	48.8	48.2
Sarasota	40.5	49.6	49.8	48.9	50.5
Naples (Collier County.)	–	48.7	57.4	60.6	–

Source: US Census.

As Table 4.5 indicates, retirement migration to Florida has slowed since the 1990s, at least as a factor in population growth. In recent years, retirees have lost some of their importance to Florida. Indeed, the biggest metropolises (Pinellas, Broward and Miami-Dade) have been so attractive to the young that their median age either decreased or held steady during the 1980s and 1990s. The age disparity from one county to a next in Table 4.4 also confirms the tendency of the older in-migrants to spatial segregation.

In part, snowbirds controlled their own settlement patterns: they congregated together because they chose their destinations through their social networks, because they looked for communities of kindred spirits and age-appropriate amenities. However, real estate developers also determined the location and availability of snowbird housing. What geographer Curtis C. Roseman has called migrants' "selective search spaces" were formed by prior knowledge of their Florida destination; they had previously visited, or had been told about a limited number of places. In a 1973 survey of Florida elderly migrants, 74 percent of the respondents said that they had moved where they had visited before. Other means of selecting a destination were social networks: tourists and snowbirds informed friends, family and colleagues about the desirability of the places they had visited. Social networking led to chain migration and to the clustering in given geographical areas of members in a same information network. For instance, George C. Hoyt found in the 1960s that 44 percent of households in the Bradenton Trailer Park already had friends in the Park when they had decided to move into it; 11 percent had kin.²² These phenomena, of information transmission through social networks and of chain migration, have been

²² Curtis C. Roseman, *Changing Migration Patterns, Within the U.S.* (Washington, DC, 1977), 5-8; Vance Packard, *A Nation of Strangers* (New York, 1972), 92, 93, 96, 101-103; Mike Vogel, "Melting Pot," *Florida Trend*, August 2003; Bob Lamendola, "Snowbirds in Season, Plentiful Trend is as Certain as Turkey Leftovers," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 25 November 1990, 1B; George Calvin Hoyt, *A Study of*

repeatedly observed by social science and historical researchers, throughout all types of migration.²³

Hoyt confirmed that Midwesterners established St. Petersburg as the snowbird Mecca of the Gulf Coast in the 1920s, and remained a majority as the city's snowbird population fanned out to surrounding areas. Hoyt's survey of the Bradenton Trailer Park just south of Tampa Bay found that nearly 76 percent of family heads hailed from the North Central states²⁴. In 1958, in another Bradenton-area trailer park, a neighborhood newsletter mentioned the origins of recently arrived tenants and snowbirds: more than half were from midwestern states, typically Ohio. In 1984, more than half of Northerners staying at the Colony Cove trailer park near Sarasota came from just three states – Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin.²⁵

Clustering by Northern origins was a constant feature in retirement communities: in 1965 and 1970, 57 percent of tenants in the Highland Trailer Park in Pinellas were from Midwestern states, 33 percent from the Northeast, and there were next to no Canadians. By contrast, only 28 percent of the tenants of nearby Wilder's Park were Midwesterners in 1978, as Northeasterners took 48 percent of the spaces, and Canadians, a noticeable 11 percent.²⁶ Similarly, when he visited retirement communities in 1972, Donn Pearce found a Michigan cluster in Zephyrhills (in Pasco County), and Northeastern clusters in

Retirement Problems (San Francisco, (1962) 1975), 65, 87, 93, 123; Ben Barber, "L'ogresse Florida," *L'actualité* 12 (January 1987): 50.

²³ Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York, 2001), 20-24, 319-322; A. Ross McCormack, "Networks Among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society: Winnipeg, 1900-1914," in *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Gerald Tulchinsky (Mississauga, On, 1994), 203-222; Robert F. Harney, "The Padrone System and Sojourners in the Canadian North, 1885-1920," in *Immigration in Canada* ed. Tulchinsky, 249-264.

²⁴ Hoyt, 76.

²⁵ Manatee park: *Trailer Estates News* 3 (1 April 1958); Capital Management Real Estate Company, *Colony Cove Breeze* (November 1984).

²⁶ From two lists of Highland Mobile Park residents, from December 7th, 1965 and December 1970, found in Wilder's Park records, box 2, Special Collections and Archives, USF, St. Petersburg.

retirement communities along the Gold Coast. *Le Soleil de la Floride* likewise found a cluster of residents from a single Montréal suburb (Terrebonne) at a condo complex in Pompano on the Gold Coast.²⁷

By the late 1980s, Québécois visitors so concentrated on Broward County that it hosted an estimated 350,000 Canadian visitors a year, with Canadians accounting for 65 percent of *all* tourists to the city of Hollywood. By 1998, the Canadian contingent in Broward rose to 445,000.²⁸ Were they tight with their quarters? Not exactly, during the 1987-1988 winter season, through confusion or artifice, visiting Canadians inserted more than \$9,000 in Canadian quarters into Hollywood's parking meters, a 400-pound harvest best used as paperweights since the banks refused to exchange them for greenbacks. In Broward County hotels and motels, during the winter seasons of the early 1990s, Canadians registrations ranked second to New Yorkers'.²⁹

²⁷ Donn Pearce, *Dying in the Sun* (New York, 1974), 18, 21; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (May 1998): a9.

²⁸ Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Marketing Plan, Fiscal Year 1991* (1990), 55, 56: origins of hotel-motel patrons, low season (May-November) Florida 10%; New York 10%; New Jersey 8.5%; Canada 7.8%; Georgia 7%; Illinois 5.8%; Ohio 5.7%; High season: N.Y. 10.5; Can 9.5; Fla. 8.4; NJ 8.2; Ill. 7; Penn. 6.3; Oh. 6; "Travel & Tourism," *Florida Trend* (June 2003); E.A. Torriero, "Snowbirds Called to Flock Out of Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 4 February 1996, 1A; K.F. McHugh and R.C. Mings, "On the Road Again: Seasonal Migration to a Sunbelt Metropolis," *Urban Geography* 12 (1991): 6, 7; In Seaquarium parking lot, on Sunday in mid-February 1977, sample of licence plates: Four Florida rental cars, 2 regular Florida, one New York, one Connecticut, 5 from Québec: Frederic Tasker and John Arnold, "By George! Snowbirds Are Roosting," *Miami Herald*, 22 February 1977, A1; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (October 1997): a13; Neely Tucker, "Bonjour! South Broward Says Hello to the Season's First Canadians," *Miami Herald*, 7 November 1988, 1BR; Lore Croghan, "Snowbirds Flocking Elsewhere," *Miami Herald*, 11 February 1993, 1c; Jennifer Babson, "Broward Banks On Canadian Influx," *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1999, 1BR; "Study Show Impact of Canadian Visitors," *Travel Barometer II* 6 (Spring 1987); loose change: Christopher Wellisz, "Strange Change," *Miami Herald*, 19 August 1988, 1A; "Pièces de monnaie de retour au pays," *La Presse*, 8 September 1988, A12.

²⁹ Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Marketing Plan, Fiscal Year 1991* (1990), 55, 56: origins of hotel-motel patrons, low season (May-November) Florida 10%; New York 10%; New Jersey 8.5%; Canada 7.8%; Georgia 7%; Illinois 5.8%; Ohio 5.7%; High season: N.Y. 10.5; Can 9.5; Fla. 8.4; NJ 8.2; Ill. 7; Penn. 6.3; Oh. 6; "Travel & Tourism," *Florida Trend* (June 2003); E.A. Torriero, "Snowbirds Called to Flock Out of Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 4 February 1996, 1A; K.F. McHugh and R.C. Mings, "On the Road Again: Seasonal Migration to a Sunbelt Metropolis," *Urban Geography* 12 (1991): 6, 7; In Seaquarium parking lot, on Sunday in mid-February 1977, sample of licence plates: Four Florida rental cars, 2 regular Florida, one New York, one Connecticut, 5 from Québec: Frederic Tasker and John Arnold, "By George! Snowbirds Are Roosting," *Miami Herald*, 22 February 1977, A1; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (October 1997): a13; Neely Tucker, "Bonjour! South Broward Says Hello to the Season's First Canadians,"

Such spectacular numbers beg the question of how accommodating all these people was done. The next section looks at the story of tourist accommodations in the Sunshine State, with an emphasis on snowbirds' favorite: a "free" stay with friends and relatives or a more expensive in money, but less dear in privacy, sojourn at a small hotel, condominium, or mobile home. Any analysis of "how it was done" will require an active rather than passive voice, for like the Florida Dream, it took agency on the part of both visitors and entrepreneurs to build snowbird communities.

4.2 Snowbird's Accommodations: Friends, Hotels, Motels, Mobile Homes and Condos

Many snowbirds and tourists shaped Florida by staying with friends and relatives, according to the Florida Development Commission. Their choice is somewhat unexpected because it runs contrary to the sun-and-fun mystique and frontier image of Florida. Vermont and Iowa, yes – those are sorts of states where families visit grandmother for Christmas. But Florida? With Florida's population so massively composed of recent migrants, one might expect family visits, in particular, to be homeward, northward bound? That is, if one ignored temperature gradients. The warm breezes beckoned in wintertime even to those too elderly, obese or freckled to go anywhere near a beach. Thus, a visit to friends or relatives was "the purpose of travel" for three-tenths of air and automobile visitors to the state, year in, year out, from the early 1960s to the late 1990s. Along the same lines, a survey of visitors to Florida found in 1988 that 38 percent of pleasure trips to Florida relied on friends and relatives for lodging arrangements, and another 19 percent on

Miami Herald, 7 November 1988, 1BR; Lore Croghan, "Snowbirds Flocking Elsewhere," *Miami Herald*, 11 February 1993, 1c; Jennifer Babson, "Broward Banks On Canadian Influx," *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1999, 1BR; "Study Show Impact of Canadian Visitors," *Travel Barometer II* 6 (Spring 1987); loose change: Christopher Wellisz, "Strange Change," *Miami Herald*, 19 August 1988, 1A; "Pièces de monnaie de retour au pays," *La Presse*, 8 September 1988, A12.

a mix of commercial accommodations and friends/ relatives. Visitors staying with friends and relatives were more likely to be older, less well-off, repeat visitors to Florida. They tended to stay longer, and to stay away from Central Florida. The Canadian Snowbirds Association estimated in the 1990s that each of its members would host about four northern visitors each winter. Meanwhile, 70 percent of Florida households hosted out-of-state visitors each year, well over the US average of 51 percent.³⁰ Such was the attractiveness of Florida that virtually anyone with permanent housing had to participate in the lodging industry.³¹

If the visitor was set on staying for weeks, locals might bring out a hotel directory, especially if they lived near the Gold Coast, for prior to opening of Disney World in the 1970s, the bulk of Florida's hotel rooms were found on or near Miami Beach. In 1953, Dade County held 26 percent of Florida's 31,600 accommodation businesses, rental apartment buildings included, and 37 percent of the state's hotel rooms. In the peak season, between mid-January and mid-March, the Gold Coast population swelled by 30 percent, while in Miami Beach the 46,000 permanent population hosted 125,000 tourists at full capacity. By the mid-1950s, a tourist industry specialist affirmed that *no other factor than tourism* supported the Beach's economy, accounting for as much as 98 cents of every dollar spent. In 1959, the Gold Coast attracted a quarter of all Florida's visitors.³² By

³⁰ In survey of "4000 typical American families," in 1949-50, 43% stayed with friends/family at destination: *Vacation Travel Market of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1950), 45; Mail survey of 9500 households, in-depth questionnaires to 18,037 respondents, those who travelled to Fla. in last three years stayed more than 3 nights in hotel, motel, or friends and relatives; Market Facts, *The Friends and Relatives Component of Florida Tourism* (Washington, DC, 1988), 2, 3; Canadian Snowbirds Association, *CSA Special Report*, (1999), 6, at www.snowbirds.org (Retrieved February 2003).

³¹ according to John Grogan, columnist: "Featherless Birds Have Been Sighted," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 November 1995, 1B.

³² Susan Burnside, "Beach Crowding: Building to a Crisis," *Miami Herald*, 4 January 1971, B1; no other: C. DeWitt, *Miami Beach Convention and Tourist Promotion* (Washington, DC, 1955); C.E.W., "Florida Counts the Gate," *NYT*, 11 October 1959, sect. 2:29.

1969, just before Disney, Dade County still held a world-record number of 65,000 rooms, with adjacent Broward the second-best result.³³

During the early postwar period, the Gold Coast was popular across all classes, but Miami Beach best fulfilled Carl Fisher's dream of an upper class resort. The history of the Beach, until the early 1960s, was a chronicle of big hotel construction. From 1945, the pace of hotel construction was rapid because of pent-up demand, pent-up savings and wage increases, and the improved accessibility of South Florida by road and air – factors that also made the Beach a middle-class haven, against Fisher wishes. Also driving the pace of hotel construction were hotel owners in the Catskills who hoped to diversify their sources of income between two high seasons and two geographical areas by selling "Miami Beach as a winter Catskills," no less, often to the same clientele.³⁴ This strategy was a factor in Miami Beach taking on the flavors of Jewish New York.

From the late 1940s to the late 1950s, a new major luxury hotel opened nearly every year in Miami Beach, starting in 1946 with nine new hotels, the most luxurious of which was the Martinique, the first big one to have central air-conditioning. The Sherry-Frontenac and the Casablanca opened in 1947 at 65th and 63rd streets respectively. In 1948, seventeen new hotels opened, including the Saxony. The Monte Carlo followed at 64th street in 1951. The most famous of the Miami Beach hotels, the spectacular

³³ Merzer and Fesperman, "South Florida Tourism Withers in Sunshine," *Miami Herald*, 18 September 1982, 1A; *NYT*, 5 January 1953, 78; *NYT*, 2 August 1959, 51; Agnes Ash, "Florida is A-O.K.," *NYT*, 2 August 1959, sect. 10:3; *NYT*, 13 July 1969, sect. 10:4; Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States: A Social and Cultural History of Florida, 1950-2000," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Summer 2002): 17; Richard E. Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando* (New Haven 2001), 3; "Drop in Tourism Hits Miami Beach," *NYT*, 29 August 1971, 51; "Miami's Tourism Hopes High Despite Rain and Cold," *NYT*, 15 February 1981, 34; Raloy, Plolansky and Millas, *Old Miami Beach: A Case Study in Historical Preservation: July 1976-July 1980* (Miami Beach, 1994).

³⁴ Catskills: e.g. Paul Grossinger buys the Pancoast; in 1951, the Levinsons, owners of the Tamarack Lodge, open the Algiers, corner Collins and 26th St.: Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York, 1994), 32, 33.

Fontainebleau, opened in 1954; Eden Roc, its ritzy competitor next door, the following year.³⁵

Both hotels stood on land once occupied by the Firestone rubber barons. When Catskills hotelman Ben Novak bought the Firestone estate in 1952, he had to lay siege on the zoning board for two years before obtaining permission to build a hotel, due to the united opposition from owners of the remaining beachfront estates and the owners of existing hotels. For 7,000 feet northward of the Eden Roc, 400 to 500 feet deep, from 44th to 62nd street, stood the remnant of "Millionaires Row," estates platted in the 1920s by Carl Fisher himself, along the most coveted shore in the United States. They fought the city ordinance in the courts until the early 1960s when the Florida Supreme Court finally upheld rezoning for hotel construction. By then the wave of luxury hotel construction had already subsided, and the land was taken over by apartment buildings and condominium towers, turning that stretch of Collins Avenue into "Condo Canyon."³⁶

Meanwhile, "Glitter Gulch" of marquee hotels had leapt *beyond* the disputed land, to Bal Harbor, where the Americana Hotel was opened in 1956 by a New Jersey family of resort operators, who had commissioned Fontainebleau architect Morris Lapidus to design it. In 1957 the Carillon also opened in Bal Harbor, followed there by the Deauville in

³⁵ P.J.C.F., "More Plushy Hotel Rooms for Miami Beach," *NYT*, 2 December 1956, sect. 10:7; "Florida Hospitality - Is Its Tune Timely?," *Florida Trend* (August 1968): 14; Raloy, Plolansky and Millas; Jack Zink and Sean Piccoli, "The Diplomat: Guys, Dolls, Swells, Stars," *Ft Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 19 April 1998, 1D; Cathy Grossman Keller, "24 Hours in the Life of a Tourist," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1977, 3K; Wayne Curtis, "When More Was More," *NYT*, 25 November 2001, tr5; Carolyn Klepser, *90 Years of North Beach* (Miami Beach, June 2001), 7.

³⁶ expected rezoning of beachfront area between 44th and 58th St. (1.5 mile): Herbert Koshetz, "Miami Becoming All-Year Resort," *Miami Herald*, 25 January 1953, f7; A.L. Himbert, "Gold Coast Rezoning," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, sect. 10:3; R.P. Wolff, "Florida's Tourism: A Business Analysis," *NYT*, 13 September 1953, sect. 2:21.

1958. Later that year the ritzy stretch of big hotels reached Hollywood in Broward County with the opening of the Diplomat.³⁷

After 1958, the stretch of ritzy openings nearly stopped as a growing proportion of visitors to Florida was middle class and unable to afford such palatial accommodations. This transformation coincided with the launch of the Boeing 707: Florida was suddenly facing more competition as a tourist destination, and the upper crust of society were the first to take advantage of the wider travel horizons made possible by the Jet Age. The slowdown in hotel construction was also a sign of declining profits due to a surplus of hotel rooms in Miami Beach. It is telling that by 1957, the Sherry-Frontenac was charging only \$7 per night, ten years after making headlines as the luxury hotel of the year. In 1962, when the luxurious Doral Beach opened north of the Eden Roc at the corner of 48th street, it was the first big hotel opening in four years. By then, large Miami Beach hotels were in a consolidation phase. Associated Hotels, owner of seven major hotels³⁸, chose to concentrate its live cabaret entertainment at its Deauville flagship. Similarly the Fontainebleau abandoned in 1961 its guests-only policy in the hotel's two cabarets. When the popularity of the Beach decreased, the Diplomat, the northernmost big hotel on the Beach, was the last to offer big-name cabaret entertainment in the early 1980s. Soon the Diplomat closed. The Caribbean, Vegas and television had outmoded the ritzy Beach.³⁹ A

³⁷ Ann Armbruster, *The Life and Times of Miami Beach* (New York, 1995), 154; Walter Jacobs was the builder of the Dipomat. He owned the Lake Tartleton Club in Pike, NH, and formerly owned the Lord Tartleton Hotel, Miami Beach: Lary Solloway, "Gold Coast Neighbors Have Struck it Rich," *NYT*, 10 January 1960, sect. 2:27; D.D. Moore, 33, 34; C. G. Keller, "24 Hours..."; Jack Zink and Sean Piccoli, "The Diplomat: Guys, Dolls, Swells, Stars," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 19 April 1998, 1D; P.J.C.F., "More Plushy Hotel Rooms for Miami Beach," *NYT*, 2 December 1956, sect. 10:7; Ralph Blumenthal, "Miami Beach Fights to Regain Its Superstar Billing," *NYT*, 17 June 1979; Raloy, Plolansky and Millas; Agnes Ash, "Florida is A-O.K."; "Florida's Hosting Industry," *Florida Trend* (June 1965), 24; Kaylene Hughes, *Florida's Lodging Industry, The First 75 Years* (Tallahassee, 1987), 60.

³⁸ The Deauville, Sans Souci, Sherry Frontenac, Versailles, and Casablanca. It had recently bought the Crown and Saxony.

³⁹ Ann Armbruster, *The Life and Times of Miami Beach* (New York, 1995), 154; Walter Jacobs was the

few years later, in the 1990s, the spectacular architectural style of the post-1945 Beach hotels entered the art history books, under the "Miami Modern" brand.

Already in the mid-1960s, the Beach was off-putting to many potential visitors: it was too urban, its beaches and walks too crowded, its traffic gridlocked, its visitors too elderly.⁴⁰ Some visitors found it too Jewish: a 1950 postcard mailed in Miami Beach to Southern Illinois deplored that "Jews have taken over this place like all nice resorts."⁴¹ The Beach's decline was also associated with its aging population: by the 1960 Census the median age in Miami Beach was 53 years old; and in 1967 it reached 60. By 1978, 49 percent of its population was aged 65 and older. Moreover, the prevalence of high-rise housing was seen as off-putting to young families. In February 1967, Rabbi Irving Lehroman wrote a letter to the *Miami Herald*, voicing concern over Miami Beach's future. Its zoning code, he said, had been repeatedly violated by developers and watered down by zoning variances. The Beach, now short of undeveloped space, was associated in the public mind with poor, elderly, Jewish snowbirds and permanent residents.⁴²

builder of the Dipomat. He owned the Lake Tartleton Club in Pike, NH, and formerly owned the Lord Tartleton Hotel, Miami Beach: Lary Solloway, "Gold Coast Neighbors Have Struck it Rich," *NYT*, 10 January 1960, sect. 2:27; D.D. Moore, 33, 34; C. G. Keller, "24 Hours..."; Jack Zink and Sean Piccoli, "The Diplomat: Guys, Dolls, Swells, Stars," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 19 April 1998, 1D; P.J.C.F., "More Plushy Hotel Rooms for Miami Beach," *NYT*, 2 December 1956, sect. 10:7; Ralph Blumenthal, "Miami Beach Fights to Regain Its Superstar Billing," *NYT*, 17 June 1979; Raloy, Plolansky and Millas; Agnes Ash, "Florida is A-O.K."; "Florida's Hosting Industry," *Florida Trend* (June 1965), 24; Kaylene Hughes, *Florida's Lodging Industry, The First 75 Years* (Tallahassee, 1987), 60.

⁴⁰ Susan Burnside, "Beach Crowding: Building to a Crisis," *Miami Herald*, 4 January 1971, B1; D.D. Moore, 46, 60-62, 67.

⁴¹ Postcard mailed on December 8, 1950, to Nokomis (Ill.). Another locale mentioned is Paoli (?) (Ill.). Found in postcard collection of the Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami; Jeffrey Schmalz, "Jews Leaving a City, And a Piece of History," *NYT*, 27 November 1989, 15; Jodi Rodgers, "400 From Brooklyn Reunite in Tamarac," *Miami Herald*, 30 January 1994, 6BCW; Thomas Swick, "Small Worlds," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 May 1991, 1J; Ken Kaye, "County Jewish Population Emerges," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 23 December 1997, 1A; Lawrence Dame, "Palm Beach in Transition," *NYT*, 6 February 1966, XX5; Lena Lencek and Gideon Bosker, *The Beach: A History of Paradise on Earth* (New York, 1998), 243.

⁴² John Nordheimer, "Is This Future Miami Beach?," *Miami Herald*, 5 March 1967, K1; Shoumatoff, 37, 40; Martin Merzer, "Hotel Manager: 'Somebody Put a Curse on Miami'," *Miami Herald*, 22 February 1981, 20A; John Koenig, "The Invasion Continues," *Florida Trend* 35 (March 1993): 77.

The Jewish presence in Miami Beach dated from the early 20th century. There were the usual factors in their migration – weather, transportation links, and social networks – but also a unique one: Miami Beach actually welcomed this normally excluded group – unlike the more desirable Palm Beach area, whose gentry clubs were determined to remain gentile as well.⁴³ Anti-Semitism was also rampant in middle class resorts. Four Florida motels of the Quality Court chain boasted of being "restricted" in a chain-wide brochure issued in 1952.⁴⁴ By that time, pressure from civil rights organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League had successfully ended much of the discrimination, although the ADL still labeled Fort Lauderdale and Delray Beach as *restricted* – being conveniently located across the county line from Miami Beach. In the early 1950s, over 80 per cent of resorts still displayed discriminatory signs in Fort Lauderdale; by 1960, this proportion still hovered at 60 per cent even though the state legislature had banned discriminatory advertising based on religion five years previously.⁴⁵

As the rest of Florida gradually rethought its attitude towards Jews, the ageing South Beach area of Miami Beach gradually developed the look of Methuselah: in 1957, most of

⁴³ Such as the Everglades Club, the Bath and Tennis Club, the Surf Club, the Miami Beach Rod and Reel Club. Still in 2001, the 450-member Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club had only one Jewish member, and not a single African American. A comment on antisemitism at the Royal Palm Club from columnist Rob Borsellino drew fierce, sometimes anti-Semitic commentary from a couple of readers. Rob Borsellino, "Key Words that Open those Angry Floodgates," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 15 March 2001, 1B; Jeffrey Schmalz, "Jews Leaving a City, And a Piece of History," *NYT*, 27 November 1989, 15; Thomas Swick, "Small Worlds," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 May 1991, 1J; Lena Lencek and Gideon Bosker, *The Beach: A History of Paradise on Earth* (New York, 1998), 243.

⁴⁴ However, a motel guide published by state authorities in 1951 made no such promises. Four "Restricted" motels over a total of 87 in Florida. They are the Coconut Grove Motel, 2900 4th St. N. in St. Petersburg; Sea Castle, on A1A road in Pompano; Amber Tides Motel, 3040 N. Ocean Dr. in Fort Lauderdale; Perry's Ocean-Edge Court, 2209 S. Atlantic Hwy., Daytona: *Quality Courts Free Guide*, Fall 1952, found in the brochure collection of the Tebeau Research Center, Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami. Statewide guide: *A Guide to Florida Motor Courts, 1951-1952*, Compiled by the Florida State Advertising Commission, Tallahassee, found in Tebeau Research Center; Haulover Beach: "Miami Chronology: 1940-1960" on the *Miami Herald* website:

www.ledger-enquirer.com/mld/miamiherald/news/special_packages/archive/4069515.htm (Retrieved October 2003).

⁴⁵ Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* (Gainesville, 2005), 97.

the cheap hotel rooms in the resort town were south of Lincoln Road. Renting for six to twelve dollars per day, these hotels were small, lacked modern amenities, and had been poorly maintained. A 1964 guidebook described South Beach as an "elderly ghetto," as the 1970 census confirmed: its 90,000 permanent residents had a median age over 65; they were 85 percent Jewish (including 20,000 Russian immigrants).⁴⁶ Steady inflation after the war had impoverished many of them, their South Beach neighborhood occasionally decried as a "slum."⁴⁷

In an era when urban renewal was leveling one low-income neighborhood after another across the land, the elderly's housing was at risk of *rejuvenation*: in 1956 several businesspeople from Washington Avenue petitioned the municipal government for a "modernization program" for South Beach. Surprisingly, the city fathers elected rehabilitation over replacement; that year, in a rare outburst of genius, city fathers approved the transformation of the Lincoln Road shopping strip into a pedestrian mall, under the direction of Morris Lapidus, thus guaranteeing its long-term survival.⁴⁸ In retrospect, the Lincoln Mall renovation was a pioneer in the movement for the restoration of deteriorating downtowns through the creation of privately sponsored leisure districts, such as the South Street Seaport in Manhattan, and the Quincy Market in Boston.⁴⁹

The decision to pedestrianize Lincoln Road did not settle South Beach's fate. The commercial-civic elites still contested its vocation as a retirement haven; in the mid-1960s

⁴⁶ Lary Solloway, "Holiday for the Budget Minded," *NYT*, 13 January 1957, sect. 10:3; June Cleo and Hank Mesouf, *Florida: Polluted Paradise* (Philadelphia, 1964), 133; Armbruster, 177, 178.

⁴⁷ Blumenthal, "Miami Beach"; Pearce, 3; Robert Turnbull, "Miami Beached?...", *Globe and Mail*, 15 July 1978, 10; B. Drummond Ayres, Jr., "Miami Beach," *NYT*, 17 March 1975, 57; "Miami Beach Searches for Identity," *Florida Trend* 22 (April 1980); Armbruster, 177-179.

⁴⁸ Lary Solloway, "A Switch in Tourist Housing; Lincoln Road to Become a Mall," *NYT*, 24 January 1960, sect. 11:3; L. S., *NYT*, 4 June 1961, sect. 10:25; Wayne Curtis, "When More Was More," *NYT*, 25 November 2001, tr5; Washington Avenue: P.J.C.F., "More Plushy Hotel Rooms for Miami Beach," *NYT*, 2 December 1956, sect. 10:7.

they secured a comprehensive urban renewal program. It too was contested: Mayor Elliott Roosevelt, the President's son, doubted its economic feasibility because replacement housing for the displaced elderly would be costly to the city, as they lived on incomes lower than \$2000 a year, and paid very low rents for a resort city – in the vicinity of \$50 per month. When the redevelopment plan was elaborated in the late 1960s, it implied the demolition of a great part of the 250 acres that were South Beach, and the relocation of 6,000 to 8,000 people.⁵⁰ By then, federal money for urban renewal was drying up because of a backlash against its abuse of the underprivileged, and so nothing was done during the 1970s. As one observer noted that decade, city fathers and business leaders had grown indifferent to "their" elderly problem, sometimes mildly contemptuous, and still looked forward to any redevelopment, in a piecemeal or comprehensive fashion. They awaited the elders' departure – through disease, death or displacement.⁵¹ Meanwhile, South Beach, under a building moratorium from 1974 to 1983, crumbled like a nonagenarian deprived of calcium. The moratorium ended two years after renewal projects were abandoned for lack of financing and voter appeal.⁵² It turned out that the residents of South Beach were difficult to expel because their community was well organized, with 15,000 enrolled in its clubs and associations. In lieu of displacement, they obtained rent control, a community center, and a 200-unit low-cost housing project, in construction by the mid-1970s.⁵³ Even

⁴⁹ Boyer, "Cities for Sale: Merchandising History at South Street Seaport», in *Variations on a Theme Park* ed. Michael Sorkin (New York, 1992), 181-204, especially 192-194.

⁵⁰ "Miami Beach Searches for Identity": 56; "Miami Beach Changes Image," *Florida Trend* 16 (December 1973): 74; Jon Nordheimer, "Is This Future Miami Beach?," *Miami Herald*, 5 March 1967, K1-2; C.G. Keller, "24 Hours...,"; Pearce, 11.

⁵¹ Marvin Surkin, "Too Old to Work, Too Young to Die," *Social Policy* 7 (Nov.-Dec. 1976): 63.

⁵² Blumenthal; S. Faludi, "'Resort City' is Suffering Worst Slump," *Miami Herald*, 18 September 1982, 14A; Pearce, 3; Robert Turnbull, "Miami Beached?..."; B. Drummond Ayres, Jr.; "Miami's Tourism Hopes High Despite Rain and Cold," *NYT*, 15 February 1981, 34; "Florida's Defeat on Gambling Seen as Measure of Maturity," *NYT*, 18 November 1978, 8; "Miami Beach Searches for Identity," *Florida Trend*; Armbruster, 177-179.

⁵³ Surkin, 64, 70.

so, the elderly, whether permanent nesters or snowbirds, had gotten the message: Miami Beach was not for them. Both groups drifted away, joining the white flight from Miami-Dade to Broward and Palm Beach counties. By the 1980s, Miami Beach was so empty that it was ripe for piecemeal, private redevelopment as an international hangout for cosmopolitans.

But for decades, it was a haven for elderly snowbirds. As the appeal of Miami Beach's hotels to upscale tourists declined, older hotels were either demolished or converted into apartment complexes for older people. The first big hotel to be converted into retirement apartments was South Beach's Boulevard Hotel (350 rooms) in 1955; the first to be demolished was the Flamingo Hotel, built by Carl Fisher in 1920. Its successor was a 1,200-unit apartment complex. In November 1962, owners of the Coronet hotel announced its conversion. Between 1968 and 1973, twelve older hotels were demolished. In 1973, two of the postwar palaces, the Sherry-Frontenac and the Casablanca, were converted into apartments, as five others awaited demolition. The stars of the Beach, the Eden Roc and Fontainebleau, closed for renovations *during high season* in a bid to stave off bankruptcy, which came anyway in 1975 and 1977 respectively. The debt and décor revamped, they limped into the 1980s with new owners, as did the landmark Biltmore, in Coral Gables. Closed in 1969, it was sold a couple of times during the 1970s, was nearly transformed into condos, and reopened in the 1980s.⁵⁴ Table 4.6 reveals the decline of

⁵⁴ Expected redevelopment also demolished the streamlined New Yorker hotel and the Miami Beach Kennel Club, the greyhound racetrack that had opened for its 52nd season in the winter of 1980. The upper class retreated to Palm Beach: the Breakers added 600 rooms in 1969. Hampton Dunn, *Palm Beach Post*, 16 February 1977; Turnbull, "Miami Beached?..."; Jim Malone, "South Beach - Can it Be Born Again?," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1977, 1E; *NYT*, 11 May 1975, sect. 10:5; "Miami Beach Changes Image"; Dorothy Wordsell, *Gulfshore Life* (April 1980); "Monument to a Vanished Race," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1981, B1.

hotel room numbers, and the rapid rise of apartment units in Beach municipalities between 1966 and 1972.⁵⁵

Table 4.6: Comparative Importance of Transient Lodgings in Three Miami Beachfront Communities, 1966 and 1972, from South to North.⁵⁶

	1966			1972		
1966	Miami Beach	Surfside	Sunny Isles	Miami Beach	Surfside	Sunny Isles
Population	80,000	4,320	625	90,000	3,626	4,200
Hotel units	31,579	782	n.a.	28,792*	628	n.a.
Apartment units	37,551	1,910	n.a.	48,464	2,000	8,100
Motel units	n.a.	n.a.	9,888	n.a.	n.a.	8,500

* By 1976, this number had dropped to 27,000; Source: Ralph Blumenthal, "Miami Beach Fights to Regain Its Superstar Billing," *NYT*, 17 June 1979.

Although the media and local leaders during the 1960s associated these transformations with decline, the forces of "creative destruction" were at work. As Joseph Schumpeter pointed out, capitalism in a relatively unregulated economy (like Florida's) destroys companies, jobs and neighborhoods in order to create new ones. Hence, Beach hotels, big and small, were torn down or converted to make way for an "invasion" – as the Chicago School sociologists termed it – of apartments and their long-term residents. As elsewhere in North America, rent control, first as specter than as reality (in Miami Beach as of 1974), almost guaranteed that the apartment boom would soon be superseded by a boom in condominiums along the entire Gold Coast. The various processes were intermingled: the collapse of Miami Beach's classic hotels took place *concomitantly* with the construction of the last of the great hotels at the north end of the Beach. Indeed, given Miami Beach's declining appeal to upper-class travelers, the new hotels were bound to suck the vitality of the old. In the 1960s and 1970s, optimists might point to the new, high-end hotels, but pessimists would object that, overall, hotel capacity was declining in

⁵⁵ "Miami Beach Changes Image," *Florida Trend*: 75, 108; Blumenthal.

Miami Beach and Surfside and that the two communities were filling up with low-income retirees. Social scientists were less judgmental: they regarded the conversions to retirement housing as being part of *a process of geographic layering* that transferred the wealthier, transient clientele of the Beach northward, while older hotels to the south adapted to the needs of snowbirds and permanent residents. Thus the Beach became layered spatially between 1950 and 1980, its buildings and tenants ageing southward.⁵⁷

Those with investments and livelihoods at stake were less sanguine about "processes." The Miami Beach Resort Hotel Association declared: "Retirement hotels are monsters in disguise. They stifle our economy." It wanted them to be "regulated." But most Beach hotelmen were more fatalistic; by the early 1970s, they admitted that their resort was far past its heyday. One of them could muster just enough optimism to admit: "these things run in cycles."⁵⁸

A cycle? Not quite, if a cycle is seen as a natural process requiring little or no human agency. Had the bulldozers been set loose when the daemons of urban renewal reveled in destruction and removal, the stark modernism and gigantism of 1950s-1960s architecture might have prolonged and deepened Miami Beach's decline. But the town got lucky: a combination of hard times, slow decay, and the protracted defeat of grandiose schemes for urban redevelopment eventually facilitated the rehabilitation of the South Beach neighborhood. Once it had been abandoned by "big-time" developers, it could be

⁵⁶ *Miami Beach Florida: Let's Look at the Facts* (Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, February 1967), 4; *Facts and Figures* (Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, 1973), 4.

⁵⁷ Robert Peterson, "Retirement Hotels Lauded by Oldsters," *Miami Herald*, 21 February 1960, 3F; Agnes Ash, "Florida is A-O.K."; Boulevard: L.S. "Aging Gracefully in the Sun," *NYT*, 10 April 1960, sect. 10:11; Coronet: Tebeau Research Center, HMSF: Catherine Rodgers Collection, box 1, "Miami Tourism" folder: "Portfolio; Art Deco Historic Distric"; box 2, folder 1, "Miami Hotels and Tourism".

⁵⁸ "Miami Beach Changes Image," *Florida Trend*: 75, 108; Blumenthal; Hampton Dunn, *Palm Beach Post*, 16 February 1977; Turnbull, "Miami Beached?"; Jim Malone, "South Beach - Can it Be Born Again?," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1977, 1E; *NYT*, 11 May 1975, sect. 10:5.

redefined by another, more modest leadership. In May 1979, after a campaign led by an art historian, Barbara Baer Capitman, the Art Deco District of South Beach was written into the National Register of Historic Places. The District covered the Atlantic side of the island between 6th and 23rd streets. Capitman prevailed over an opposition of city commissioners and local business leaders – hotel owners, mostly – who still longed for large-scale redevelopment – also known as leveling the site. Once investors realized that the Art Deco District was not slated for demolition, through careful renovation and pastel paint, they took advantage of a boom in international migration and a newfound Latin flavor to profit handsomely from the restoration of South Beach. The population of Miami Beach consequently stopped ageing: indeed, between 1980 and 1985 its median age actually dropped from 65 to 54. In 1986, Tony Goldman, a prominent agent in SoHo's revival in New York City, opened a trendy outdoor café on Ocean Drive, and reopened the Park Central hotel the following year. Over the next ten years, businesses on Ocean Drive increased their revenues 36-fold. By then, South Beach had become SoBe, and 60 percent of its tourists now came from abroad.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ In a similar fashion, Coconut Grove residents resisted redevelopment in early 1980s, when drug trafficking was infamous. The Grove was "cleaned" by increased drug enforcement, the decline of the Medellín Cartel, and thereafter assumed the upper-end vocation it had been designed for in the 1920s. Here again, rehabilitation of a run-down downtown through historically themed rebranding and landscaping was much like Boston's Quincy Market and New York's South Street Seaport. To the Beach's credit, rehabilitation revalued the city's already-built landscape, without the complete redrawing of historical symbols and landscapes that took place in lower Manhattan. See Christine Boyer, "Cities for Sale," 199; Barry Klein, "Sacrifices Made for Art Deco," *St. Petersburg Times*, 17 January 1988, 1B; Armbruster, 181; L.S., *NYT*, 4 June 1961, sect. 10:25; Tebeau Research Center, HMSF, Miami, Brochure Collection: promotional brochure from Miami Beach CVB, "The Electric Island Miami Beach"; Herbert L. Hiller, "How to Save Florida Tourism," *Florida Trend* (March 1996); Goldman: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (February 2000): a5; topless proposal: Charles Whited, "Protesters Want to Shut the Lid on Topless Plan," *Miami Herald*, 3 February 1977, B1; Jo Thomas, "Miami Beach Conflict Pits Developers Against Lovers of Art Deco," *NYT*, 26 February 1981, 14; "Troubled Miami Smiles for Tourism Gathering," *Miami Herald*, 23 May 1994, A10; resistance of local leaders to Deco District: Rothchild, *Up for Grabs* (New York, 1985), 210; *Tampa Tribune*, June 7, 1975; *Miami Herald*, 28 October 1981; *Miami Herald*, 8 May 1981; redevelopment: "Miami Beach Searches for Identity," 56; "Miami Beach Changes Image," 74; Ben Barber, "Le Paris de Miami," *L'actualité* 11 (February 1986): 110, 111.

The recovery of the beach drive went along with the gentrification of South Beach's side and back streets, completing a process (or reaching a new apogee of the cycle?) by which the ageing hotels that once welcomed snowbirds were supplanted by apartment buildings, condos, and Art Deco townhouses, which put Miami Beach beyond the economic means and tastes of most snowbirds. While eating a meal at a sidewalk café while a Spanish-language tele-novella was being filmed appealed to short-term tourists, it could be alienating to snowbirds looking for a milieu with as much English – or French – as back home.

Where did the displaced Miami Beach snowbirds go? Most of them moved north, following the general white flight that took place in Miami-Dade during the 1970s and 1980s. They mostly settled in the condo developments of Broward and Palm Beach counties, but those middle-class snowbirds who had more money than time to spend in Florida checked into one the ornate resort motels built between 1954-1965 for them in North Beach (the northern end of Miami Beach), or northward in Surfside, and Sunny Isles. As they proliferated, they produced a landscape that a journalist summed as "Miles of Motels."⁶⁰

These motels emphasized the exotic, as they bid for the patronage of people who no longer found the Florida Dream in Miami Beach. A 1960 *New York Times* article deemed their architectural themes "bizarre, to say the least, ...both in design and decor.... And the names of the inns seem to reflect their creator's fanciful thinking. In keeping with their structural theme, the motels bear such identifications as Thunderbird, Chateau, Sahara,

⁶⁰ Pierre Luc, a Québécois snowbird, wrote a number of texts on the history of his community, and drew up a list of Sunny Isles hotels, in their order of appearance from North to South: the list is about sixty names long. Pierre Luc, "Plus de 60 motels," (April 2005): planete.qc.ca/floride/miamibeachpqremerciements/archive.html (Retrieved August 2006)

Aztec, Tangiers, Beachcomber, Dunes."⁶¹ Each hammered home its theme: the Sahara thus was "marked by two stuffed camels and the figure of an Arab in full flowing robes," while the Suez featured a Sphinx-like sculpture. The *Times* continued: "The Thunderbird has a southwestern motif; the Desert Inn sports concrete horses and a wagon while the Chateau has a two-part roof, white steeply pitched on one half and half-timbered pink stucco on the other."⁶²

In contrast with the big hotels, these structures were generally no more than three floors high. Most of them were in the shape of a capital "U," a capital "H," or two capital "I"s (*i.e.*, "II"), with an open end on the Ocean side built around a patio and a swimming pool. Most of them had between 150 and 500 units, many with kitchenettes⁶³. These efficiency units made resort motels suitable for snowbird housing. Indeed, in Chapter 7,

⁶¹ Names from Greater Miami Beach Motel Association, *Official Guide, Miami Beach Oceanfront Motels, 1979 Summer and Fall Rates*, found in Brochure Collection, Tebeau Research Center, HMSF, Miami: Sahara; Blue Mist; Château-by-the-Sea; Chez Paree; Colonial Inn; Coral Seas; Driftwood; Golden Nugget; Suez; others: Castaways, 172 units, "Balinese-inspired, pagoda-temple design"; Dunes, 200 rooms, 170th St., opened December 1955; 4 penthouses; 29 3-rooms apts.; Aztec; Thunderbird; Colonial Inn; Sun City, 386 u.; Golden Gate, opened 1954, 150 units on Ocean, 500 more west of Collins; Broadmoor, near 74th; Blue Waters Motel, near 74th St.; Balmoral, 268 rooms, opened 1954; Chateau, 170 rooms, 191st St.; Singapore, 250 u., Bal Harbour near Americana; Montmartre, North of Fontainebleau, 300 u.; Beachharbour Resort Motel, 18925 Collins, 175 units; Best Western Sahara Motel, 183rd St., 144 u.; Blue Mist Hotel, 191st St., 70 u.; Château-by-the-Sea Resort Motel, 191st St., 162 u.; Chez Paree Resort Motel, 17475 Collins, 66 u.; Colonial Inn Motel, 18101 Collins, 300 u.; Coral Seas Motel, 162nd st, 52 u. (Guy Levesque, co-owner-manager); Driftwood Resort Motel, 171st St., 118 u.; Golden Nugget Resort, 18555 Collins, 120 u.; Heathwood Resort, 18671 Collins, 100 u.; Malibu Hotel on the Bay, 16100 Collins, 32 u.; Ocean Roc Resort Motel, 195th st., 100 u.; Ocean Shore 186th St., 60 u., Pan Am Resort Motel, 17875 Collins, 146 u.; Sandy Shores Motel, 16251 Collins, 55 u.; Suez Resort Motel, 182nd st., 194 u. (wats line), Sun City Resort Motel, 174th st., 104 u.; Whispering Palms Resort, 18901 Collins, 62 u.; 1962-63 Guide: Aztec, 15901 Collins, 200 u.; Blue Grass, 18325 Collins, 80 u.; Caravan, 19101 Collins, 72 u.; Monaco, 17501 Collins, 175th St., 114 u.; Shoreham Norman, 535 Ocean Dr., 200 u.; Singapore, 9601 Collins, 240 u.; Thunderbird, 18401 Collins, 165 u.; Attache and Aristocrat: Lary Solloway, "Gold Coast Neighbors Have Struck it Rich," *NYT*, 10 January 1960, sect. 2:27; L.S., "Miles of Motels," *NYT*, 22 March 1959, XX3; L.S., "Sun Over Miami," *NYT*, 7 December 1958, sect. 11:3; "New Florida Motels," *NYT*, 11 December 1955, sect. 10:11; P.J.C.F., "Pleasure Palaces," *NYT*, 12 December 1954, sect. 10-9; M. Ouellette-Michalska, "Une odeur de fêtes au lard en Floride," *Le Devoir*, 19 March 1982, sect. 2:11.

⁶² Helen Hill, "The Collins Avenue Story," on the "Absolutely Florida" website: www.abfla.com/1toct/allgosf/mbf/collinsave.html (Retrieved November 2005).

⁶³ In 1976 guide of oceanfront motels in Greater Miami, all 29 motels listed offered kitchenettes. In 1981 guide of Sunny Isles resort motels, 81 percent boasted "efficiency" units. 1986 version of same guide had 91% featuring efficiencies. Greater Miami Beach Motel Association, *Official Guide, Miami Beach Ocean*

we will see that they were hugely popular from the 1960s to the 1980s with Québécois tourists and snowbirds. Illustration 4.1 is a bird'-eye view, from the 1950s, of the motels of Sunny Isles. Illustration 4.2 is a diagram showing the location, concentration, and exotic names of Sunny Isles resort motels; it also shows the "pressures" against these motels during the 1990s, as some of them were demolished to be replaced by condominium towers.



Illustration 4.1: A Bird's-eye View of Sunny Isles Resort Motels, Late 1950s or Early 1960s. Source: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Tebeau Research Room, photographic collection.

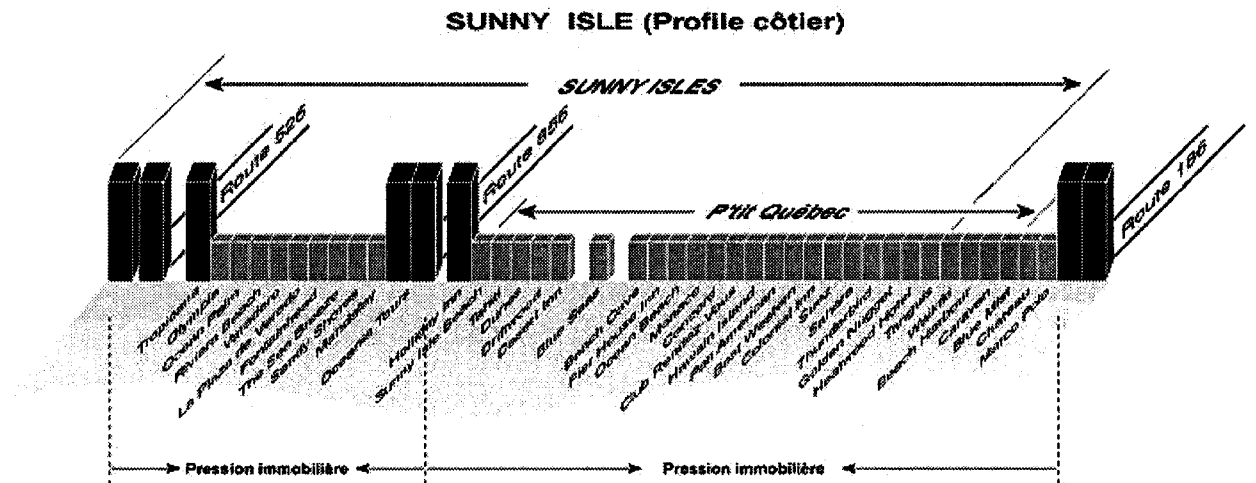


Illustration 4.2: A Schematic Representation of Beach Resort Motels in Sunny Isles, 1994. Source: L. Dupont, A. Gilbert, D. Louder, *Les Floribécois dans le contexte de la Floride du sud* (1994). www.cefan.ulaval.ca/franco/ (retrieved August 2006)

The development of "Miles of Motels" in Sunny Isles, Surfside and North Beach, took place at the same as time as the great hotel construction boom from the mid-1950s onward. Both phenomena – along with the conversion of hotels into retirement apartments – were part of a process of market and spatial segmentation – or layering – designed to accommodate the growing diversity of Florida tourists. The middle-class resort motels represented a small revolution in the business because of their size and luxury, their specialization in longer stays, and entertainment programs that a New York journalist likened to those of the fading Catskills resorts. Their entertainment programs offered bingo, bus tours, outdoor barbecues, movies, weekly dancing and live music, and a cocktail party each Saturday night. In the 1976 guide of Miami Beach motels, sixteen of the twenty-nine offered on-site entertainment (in 1986, twelve out of twenty-two).⁶⁴

The music did not last. By the 1990s, business was declining as local land values and taxes rose, and white tourists headed farther north to newer establishments. A growing number of the low-rise resort motels were demolished to make way for condo towers.⁶⁵ The cost of coastal land was soaring as Florida's population surged ahead by the millions, and cheap tourist accommodations and snowbird housing increasingly was unable to compete for a prime beachfront location. As a result, retired migrants and snowbirds increasingly had to choose between two starkly different housing types – a higher-end condo if they had a higher-end income – and a lower-end mobile home for the rest.

As the cheap hotels and motels of the 1950s-1960s became outmoded or outbid for space, snowbirds *and* Florida gradually have become associated with the condo and the mobile home. Both these housing types reduced land costs by fitting more units on an

⁶⁴ See note 63.

acre. To further reduce rents, mobile homes were placed on the urban fringe. Both types appealed to retired migrants, snowbird and developers, because they necessitated less upkeep than other types and because of their social homogeneity. Both gathered like-minded people of similar financial means and background, who quickly formed self-contained small communities. Alike in their potential for community, these two housing types were opposites in prestige: condos epitomized (as symbol if not always in fact) luxurious, beachfront living, while mobile homes retained the underclass image of the gypsy caravan. As snowbirds had a wide variety of incomes and backgrounds, Florida's developers offered them more than one option for those who sought a segregated community of their "own kind."

Table 4.7 compares the postwar growth of condos and mobile homes in Florida and the United States. The data also counter the notion that everyone in Florida lives in a detached, single-family bungalow. Indeed, even in 1950, Florida had a normal number of people living in multi-family structures thanks to the numerous apartment buildings of Miami and St. Petersburg.⁶⁵ Both condos and mobile homes boomed from the 1960s onwards, as snowbirds adopted them. The condo boom abated during the 1980s and 1990s because the new, international immigration both accelerated white flight to suburban, single-family housing and increased the number of young families seeking single-family housing. Yet condos remained an important part of the housing mix across all age groups in an increasingly urbanized state.

⁶⁵ Among others, the Castaways, Sea Breeze, and Heathwood were demolished in the early to mid 1990s: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (September 1995): A11; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (April 2000): a19.

⁶⁶ Apartments in St. Petersburg and Miami Beach were patronized by snowbirds: in St. Pete during the 1960s there was a city-operated clearinghouse for matching lodgers with incoming snowbirds. R.T. Allen, "Florida, Canada's Hottest Province," *MacLean's*, 8 October 1960, 71.

Table 4.7: Proportion of Housing Units that are Mobile Homes, of Housing Units in Structures With Five Units and More, and Ownership Rate of These Units, Florida and United States, Census Years, 1950-2000 (percent).

	Proportion of mobile homes		Housing units in structures with 5 units and more		Ownership rate of units in 5+ structures	
	US	Florida	US	Florida	US	Florida
1950	0.7	2.1	11.0	8.7	4.1	6.6
1960	1.3	3.7	10.7	8.8	4.6	9.3
1970	3.1	6.9	14.5	15.3	5.2	19.4
1980	5.1	9.8	17.8	23.7	10.2	33.3
1990	7.2	12.5	17.7	23.7	9.6	30.5
2000	7.6	11.6	17.3	22.9	11.1	32.4

Source: U.S. Census of Housing.

Condominium housing (the ownership of an apartment unit in a multi-unit building), became associated with Florida in the late 1960s and 1970s. Arguably, Florida condos contributed to the popularity of this type of housing in the rest of North America: it is in Florida that these properties took on the aura of luxury and leisure associated with the beachfront lifestyle. On Florida's Gold Coast by the early 1960s, urban and beachfront land had become scarce and costly, and an important part of the population had migrated from big northeastern cities, where they were already familiar with multi-family housing. Florida's first condos probably sprang up in Boca Raton in 1960 and in Daytona Beach in 1962. Their diffusion was facilitated by their eligibility, after 1961, for Federal Housing Administration mortgage insurance, and by a regulating state law voted in 1963. Furthermore, in 1967, a Florida Supreme Court decision made condos eligible for the "homestead" exemption on property taxes for permanent residents.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Luther J. Carter, *The Florida Experience: Land and Water Policy in a Growth State* (Baltimore, 1974), 31-34; J.S. Matthews, *Sarasota: Journey to Centennial* (Tulsa, Ok, 1985), 158; Pinellas County Planning Department, *Pinellas County: Historical Background* (St. Petersburg, April 1995), 75; Wayne Markham, "Happy Birthday Dear Condo," *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1982, 1H; Cleo and Mesouf, 146; "Condominiums - A New Life-style," *Florida Trend* 13 (October 1970), 26.

The condo boom also owed to the realization on the part of real estate developers that condos were – and remain – more profitable than multi-unit rental apartments. Real estate agents agreed: condos greatly increased the number of properties for sale, and single apartments came onto the market much more frequently than an entire building. Realtors accordingly touted them. In Florida, the condo boom preceded rent control, which spawned them in northern cities, and only Miami (1973) and Miami Beach (1974) implemented controls (which suppressed the value of apartment buildings along with their rents)⁶⁸. These controls never really affected the housing market, when implemented: repeatedly overturned in its diverse versions by court challenges, Miami's law died on the books when the state legislature forbade all rent controls in 1977. Also of limited import was the growth-control ordinance voted by Boca Raton in November 1972 to blunt the threat of multi-family condos to property values in the upscale community. Largely circumvented in the 1970s, by 1982 it had been superseded by a downtown redevelopment plan.⁶⁹

The appeal of condos was stunning: during the 1960s, two-thirds of new housing units on the Gold Coast were in multi-family buildings. By 1970, there were already 1250 condo complexes with 50,000 units on the Gold Coast; in 1973, a peak of 7,300 new units appeared on the market per month. Because of the frenzy of construction, the 1974 recession hit Florida harder than any of the other postwar economic slowdowns, as 50,000 to 60,000 housing units awaited resale at one point, two-thirds of them on the Gold Coast

⁶⁸ "Miami Beach City Council on Dec 19 Unanimously Votes for Rent-Control," *New York Times Abstracts*, 26 December 1973: 14; Joseph P. Fried, "Spread of Rent Controls Spurs New Controversy," *New York Times*, 7 March 1976; "Landlords Take the Offensive in Battle Over Rent Control," *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 November 1980; State of Florida, "166.043 Ordinances and rules imposing price controls; findings required; procedures," *1999 Florida Statutes* (Tallahassee, 2006), taxlaw.state.fl.us (retrieved June 2007).

⁶⁹ Susanna McBee, "Planners Warned on No-Growth Zoning," *The Washington Post* 18 September 1973; City of Boca Raton, "Downtown Redevelopment" (Boca Raton, 2007), www.ci.boca-raton.fl.us (retrieved

– a quantity equivalent to 18 to 36 months of pre-recession supply. However, the continued influx of Northerners had by 1975 absorbed this surplus, and by 1980, one out of every four residents of the state and four out of ten in South Florida lived in condominiums.⁷⁰ Not all of them lived in a condo newly built. Starting in the 1960s, rental apartments were converted into condos to suit the first of the baby boomers, who, fed up with paying rent to a *landlord* in an era otherwise lord-free, were looking for the equivalent of their current apartment (including a similar location) in which to build equity. Doing the conversion were investors familiar with the northern practice of reviving the value of multi-family housing through minor renovation and major relabeling. Conversions became so frequent in Dade and Broward counties that in just one year, 1980, they transformed the legal status of 16,000 units, some of them in swank 1950s hotels such as the Versailles and Carillon.⁷¹

Condo living represented a departure from the tradition of the single-family home in North America. Florida condos became famous for their feuds that developed between co-owners who could no longer fence their neighbors out. Buildings without feuds achieved relative peace through self-regulation. Outsiders found the formalization of neighborliness in condo settings quite zealous and exotic; they were depicted as a mildly absurd social world of status-conscious, watchful, individualistic tenants. A *New York Times* article of the late 1980s playfully outlined a distinctive vocabulary of condo-lingo, while the

June 2007).

⁷⁰ *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1981; Blumenthal, "Florida Condos: A Buyer's Market," *NYT*, 8 January 1983, sect. R8:1; D. Drummond Ayres, "Condominium Prices Cut in Florida," *NYT*, 1 December 1975, 61; Brown L. Whatley, "Condominium in Florida," *Florida Trend* 5 (September 1962): 21; Thomas E. Mullaney, "Florida's Comeback Trail," *NYT*, 21 March 1976, F17; Wayne Markham, "Retiree Growth, Florida's Clean Industry," *Miami Herald*, 13 March 1977, 31H; James Russell, "Casinos Could Double Miami Tourists," *Miami Herald*, 8 March 1977, 5B.

⁷¹ Markham, "Happy Birthday Dear Condo"; "Miami Beach Changes Image," *Florida Trend*; Faludi, "'Resort City' is Suffering Worst Slump" *Miami Herald*, 18 September 1982, 14A.

Seinfeld sitcom put the parents of Jerry and George in the Del Boca Vista condos, where they became deeply embroiled in Byzantine, status-conscious communal politics.⁷²

Relations with condo managers were harder for unit owners to regulate, demanding more than goodwill and self-regulation, especially when managers were the developers themselves. Florida condo developers earned within a few years an infamous record of consumer "service." As early as 1970, consumer advocates persuaded Governor Reubin O. Askew to appoint a special commission on condominium regulation whose condo-consumer law the state legislature enacted in 1974 to protect buyers against misrepresentation, building defects, and inflationary maintenance fees.⁷³

Table 4.8 shows the relative importance of multi-family housing in Florida, resulting from years of apartment and condo building. It confirms that the condo revolution is not yet over in either Florida or the United States. Florida led in the condo revolution because its highly urbanized tourist regions attracted snowbirds, the ideal buyer. Counties with an abundance of condos tended to be retirement counties, with high proportions of elderly residents: Broward, Palm Beach, Pinellas, Collier (Naples), and Sarasota.

This rule – of condo correlation – requires some refinement. First, the rule worked best in counties whose condos had no one at home when the U.S. Census did its count on April 1st. By then the snowbirds had flown back to their northern nests, which meant that any county reporting an abundance of vacant condos to census-takers was a snowbird and

⁷² condo vocabulary and in-house regulations: Carol Cott Gross, "Condo Spoken Here," *NYT*, 16 October 1988, s39; *Seinfeld's* episodes featuring Florida condo politics and generational conflict: the 20th episode, "The Pen," aired October 1991; "The Shower Head," 1996; "The Money," 1997. Found in Wikipedia's "List of *Seinfeld's* episodes," available on answers.com (Retrieved August 2006).

⁷³ The first important condo advocate was Ernest Samuels, chairman of Point East, North Miami; other consumer advocates: David Osterer, Joseph D'Apice, George Sipkin; The chairman of the condo commission was Brown L. Whatley, chairman of a mortgage bank and former head of Arvida. Whatley appointed Russell McCaughan, legal counsel to the commission. The latter was the counsel who set up the

retiree haven. Conversely, a relative absence of condos, occupied or empty, usually denoted a county with little allure to either snowbirds or retirees, for example, Orange (Orlando) and Hillsborough (Tampa). However, this aspect of the rule came with a caveat: condo correlation tended to break down as the population density increased. Certainly, the rule did not explain Pinellas (St. Petersburg). It contained relatively few condos for a retirement county, accommodating its elderly migrants in small, cottage-like houses and mobile homes instead. While it did contain an abundance of apartment buildings, they tended to be filled with working-age families unable, because of the county's high population density (the highest in Florida) and attendant land costs, Another exception was Miami-Dade, by 1990 no longer a retirement county despite its large stock of condos; and Broward is becoming an exception to the rule of condo correlation. Its recent condo boom reflects not so much a growing appeal to retirees and snowbirds, but rather sky high land prices brought on by a rapidly growing population in the context of a scarcity of undeveloped land. Recent condo projects in Broward have been asking \$200,000 for a unit with the wrong prospect and elevation, while the median price of existing housing units has leapt to \$240,000 – or more than most snowbirds can afford for a second home. It is a daunting sum, as well, for retirees from the Midwest, Canada or the smaller Northeastern cities whose housing prices, dampened by de-industrialization, have not been as red hot as those of Florida and the Sunbelt.⁷⁴

legal frame for Atlantic Cloisters, one of Florida's first condos: Markham, "Happy Birthday Dear Condo"; Jack Holeman, "Ernie Samuels Still Going Strong," *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1982, 8H.

⁷⁴ David Villano, "Southeast: Building Block," *Florida Trend* (April 2005).

Table 4.8: Proportion of Housing Units in Buildings With 20 Units and More, Proportion of Those Units that Are Vacant as of April 1st, with Proportion of Population Aged 65 and Over, United States, Florida, and Selected Counties, 1990 and 2000 (percent).

	1990		2000			
	% Of housing in buildings with 20 and more	% Of units in buildings with 20 and more that are vacant*	% Aged 65 and over	% Units in bldgs with 20 or more	% Of 20+ vacant*	% Aged 65+
United States	8.2	13.2	12.6	8.6	10.3	12.4
Florida	12.7	27.5	18.3	12.9	24.1	17.6
Broward	29.1	25.8	20.8	27.5	21.0	16.1
Collier	17.5	59.9	22.7	18.2	53.5	24.5
Hillsborough	6.9	16.1	12.2	9.0	11.9	12.0
Lee	9.4	53.3	24.8	9.3	44.2	25.4
Manatee	7.4	27.9	28.1	8.4	28.9	24.9
Miami-Dade	27.2	18.7	14.0	27.5	17.5	13.3
Monroe	4.9	47.5	16.0	6.6	43.3	14.6
Orange	7.6	15.4	10.6	8.9	10.0	10.0
Palm Beach	18.9	33.0	24.3	18.1	28.2	23.2
Pinellas	14.0	28.6	26.0	15.8	25.2	22.5
Sarasota	10.3	44.2	32.2	11.5	41.3	31.5
Volusia	8.4	41.7	22.8	9.8	40.3	22.1

* Vacant at the time of Census, April 1st. Source: U.S. Census (May 2003).

On the Gold Coast, the condo boom created condo districts and condo towns, and a number of vertical snowbird communities. In Hallandale, in south Broward, 10,000 units sprang up along a 4,400-foot stretch of the A1A in just a few years, boosting the population from 10,000 to 40,000 between 1960 and 1973. These condos were popular with snowbirds: in 1990, an estimated one-quarter of condos sold in Hallandale were second homes.⁷⁵ There, as elsewhere, condos represented the subdivision of much-coveted Florida urban and waterfront land in the third dimension, the selling of "vertical" housing after the depletion of undeveloped land filled up the "horizontal" dimension.

⁷⁵ "Problems of High Rises Straining Florida Resort," *NYT*, 22 April 1973, 44; X.F. Alvarez-Alfonso, "Nesting Snowbirds Keep Sales of Condos Percolating Nicely," *Miami Herald*, 23 November 1990, 2H.

Florida developers next proceeded to subdivide the fourth dimension, by selling timeshares. Myth has it that timeshares had their origin in memberships in several resort hotels in the French Alps in the 1970s. In the United States, timeshares came that same decade to Florida when the glut of unsold condos took longer than expected to unload. If turned into timeshares, these condos suddenly became a lot cheaper, hence easier to sell. Suddenly, one apartment could be legitimately sold to 26 different owners.⁷⁶ By buying timeshare, buyers acquired lifetime access to a Florida apartment for one or two weeks a year (and, as concept spread, access as well to an international network of timeshares through which two weeks in Orlando could be traded for a week in Nice). Another selling argument was that a timeshare buyer could enjoy yearly vacations shielded from inflation. In reality, *maintenance fees* became inflationary, if only because timeshare dwellers were transients, precluding in-house domestic cleaning. Most timeshares charged *weekly* maintenance fees of \$120 to \$300 in 1981, and \$250 to \$500 in 1990.⁷⁷

Timeshares became infamous for the hard sell, often to innocents reeled in by offers of a free drink, meal or overnight stay at a hotel. Second thoughts were many, endangering the business sufficiently for the Florida legislature to exempt timeshare sales from the mandatory ten-day, cooling-off period for closing real estate sales. This curtailment of regulation was unseemly enough that legislators reversed themselves in 1983, whereupon timeshare sales went into recession. In July 1989, a new state law required timeshare sales staff and businesses to have a real estate license; by mid-1990, an amendment further required timeshare sellers to state in their advertisements that a timeshare should not be

⁷⁶ "Multipropriété pour vacanciers," *Le consommateur canadien* 13 (February 1983): 11; Ellen Roseman, "Timesharing: A Home for the Holidays," *Globe and Mail*, 4 March 1982, T1; Wayne Markham, "Time Sharing," *Miami Herald*, 4 January 1981, H1.

⁷⁷ See previous note.

considered an investment. This warning was necessary, legislators concluded, because timeshares were proving difficult to resell.⁷⁸ Indeed, in the entire state only Captiva Island had a vibrant resell market in the mid-1990s. Why the exception? Because of scarcity – "there's not a lot of new development there." Neither its defect as an investment vehicle, nor the mandated warning could kill the timeshare industry. Indeed, some hotel chains (Marriott, Hyatt, Hilton, Radisson and Embassy Suites among them) started carving their rooms into twenty-six slices in the 1990s. Disney also offered timeshares – at Vero Beach and its Orlando-area resorts. Florida thus remained *the* timeshare state: as of the mid-1980s it contained half of the units sold in the U.S. In 2003, the state still led with 366 time-shared resorts and 27,000 units.⁷⁹

Timeshares fairly brimmed with upscale pretensions; but those with better economic sense opted for the lowly mobile home. While a used, machine-made home did not attract a high price, ease of upkeep and low rent on the plot of land where the house stood usually turned out to have greater value than a share of time. Since the 1950s mobile homes have been emblematic of Florida. This form of housing has thrived because of the housing needs of the military during the Second World War, and because of the state's many unincorporated areas where regulations and zoning were lenient at best. The soaring population and real estate values of the years since 1945 heightened the need for cheap housing, where snowbirds and other modest households looked for (1) a way to offset inflation through ownership; (2) for communities of like-minded persons – to the point of informal segregation; (3) for a suburban-like lifestyle – arguably an exurban, cottage-like

⁷⁸ Jody Brott, "Owners Call New Florida Law Unfair," *NYT*, 10 June 1990, sect. 10:9.

⁷⁹ well over California's 125 resorts and 11,900 units; Diane Sears, "Timeshare Fortune," *Florida Trend* (September 2004); Lewis M. Goodkin, "Bright Prospects," *Florida Trend* (August 1996); editors at *Le Soleil de la Floride* doubt the timeshare concept: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (March 1996), a11; 13 (December 1995), a14.

one too; (4) and for easier upkeep. In the late teens or early 1920s, they probably used the campgrounds that many American towns, believing that motor tourists were rich, set aside for them; but as towns realized that the grounds were attracting more caravans than Cadillacs, these gradually closed. But, as Depression-era finances encouraged the middle class to cut costs by traveling with their own hotel, private entrepreneurs saw an opportunity: the Bradenton Trailer Park was opened in 1936 under the auspices of the local Kiwanis Club; in the late 1940s it was reputedly the state's largest with more than 1000 lots. By then its 22 shuffleboard courts and eight horseshoe lots were catering to retired persons. By 1954, its success produced an "overflow" of 62 other parks in an eight-mile radius, while neighboring Sarasota, seeing that caravaners were now more likely to be senior citizens than Okies, had opened a city-owned, 1,800-lot park. These overflow parks attracted the elderly as well: by the mid-1970s, more than two-thirds of mobile home tenants in Manatee county were aged 65 and over. Consequently, from the early 1950s the environs of Tampa Bay were considered *the* area where retired persons should look for a trailer park.⁸⁰

It was not inevitable that trailer parks would be advertised as *exclusively* catering to retired persons, but park developers were determined to rid trailer living of its gypsy, lower-class stigma. In 1956, following the example set by St. Petersburg landlords, a mobile home park opened in Pinellas County restricted to retired persons. Four years later

⁸⁰ Trailers parks in Florida, December 1954. R.F.W., "Home in a Park," *NYT*, 12 December 1954, XX15; R.F.W., "Western Florida," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, XX20; Lee Irby, "Taking Out the Trailer Trash," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 79 (Fall 2000): 186; Eleanor Hart, "Mobile Home or a Condominium?," *Miami Herald*, 5 February 1967, 8E; A.J. Despagni, "At Home in a Trailer," *NYT*, 10 December 1950, sect. 10:3; Rick Barry, *Tampa Tribune*, 17 November 1972; Thomas Collins, "The Golden Years," *Miami Herald*, 20 March 1955, 6F; best trailer parks on Gulf Coast: George and Jane Dusenbury, *How to Retire in Florida* (New York, 1952), 180.

Dell Webb started building a retirement community, Sun City, south of Tampa. During the 1960s, the Bradenton Trailer Park adopted a similarly age-exclusive policy.⁸¹

Between 1959 and 1964, the number of mobile home parks in the Sunshine State increased from 1,732 to 2,300; the number of spaces from 73,025 to 99,061. By 1971, there were 231,000 mobile homes in Florida, 77 percent of their inhabitants, retired. In 1998 the median age of mobile home dwellers in the Tampa-St. Petersburg metro area was 62 years old. In the Miami-Fort Lauderdale metropolis, in 2002, after years of white flight, the median age of trailer dwellers was 50 years old.⁸²

Table 4.9 shows the importance of mobile homes in Florida and in selected counties. It reveals that mobile homes lost ground in Florida in the 1990s. During this decade, in response to destructive hurricanes, local governments tightened their regulations for mobile homes, thereby raising their cost. Also, Florida's rapid population growth and real estate speculation were increasing land values, which meant that mobile homes parks were sold so that their land could be put to more profitable uses.

⁸¹ Hart, "Mobile Home or a Condominium?"; Barry, *Tampa Tribune*.

⁸² US Census Bureau and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), *American Housing Survey for the Tampa-St. Petersburg Metropolitan Area: 1998* Washington, DC, November 2000, cat. H170/98-621998), table 2.9:20; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area in 1995* (September 1997, cat. H170/95-28), table 2.9:19; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area: 2002* (2004, cat. h170-02-28), t. 3.9:63; "Trailer Sales Up," *Florida Trend* 8 (August 1965): 14; John A. Ford, "Mobile Home Picture Bright," *Miami Herald*, 10 January 1971, 24K; *The Manatee Plan*, Plan Elements, Draft 1, (1978-79), 66, 67, found in Manatee County Public Library, Bradenton; Carter, *The Florida Experience*, 31-34.

Table 4.9: Proportion of All Housing Units that Are Mobile Homes, Proportion of Vacant Mobile Homes as of April 1st, and of Population Over 65, United States, Florida, and Selected Counties, 1990 and 2000 (percent).

	1990			2000		
	% Of housing units that are mobile homes	% Of mobile homes that are vacant*	% Aged 65 and over	% Mobile homes	% Of vacant* mobile homes	% Aged 65+
United States	7.2	17.1	12.6	7.6	15.9	12.4
Florida	12.5	24.6	18.3	11.6	23.0	17.6
Broward	4.5	28.4	20.8	3.6	27.4	16.1
Charlotte	15.8	40.8	33.8	14.6	35.6	34.7
Collier	10.8	32.8	22.7	7.5	28.7	24.5
Hernando	24.6	23.0	30.7	21.4	20.3	30.9
Hillsborough	11.4	18.5	12.2	9.9	16.6	12.0
Lake	35.5	22.7	27.5	29.7	23.1	26.4
Lee	17.5	36.1	24.8	15.5	34.5	25.4
Manatee	22.8	35.4	28.1	20.2	35.9	24.9
Miami-Dade	2.4	17.2	14.0	1.8	12.1	13.3
Monroe	21.9	31.8	16.0	19.0	34.7	14.6
Orange	7.1	11.1	10.6	5.6	10.0	10.0
Osceola	20.0	19.1	13.9	15.2	20.0	11.4
Palm Beach	4.7	26.2	24.3	3.6	20.9	23.2
Pinellas	11.6	30.9	26.0	10.4	29.7	22.5
Sarasota	13.6	30.3	32.2	11.1	31.2	31.5
Volusia	12.1	20.8	22.8	11.5	18.4	22.1

* Vacant at the time of Census, April 1st. Source: U.S. Census (May 2003).

Table 4.9 also shows which counties had a high proportion of vacant mobile homes on April 1st, the census count. As with empty condos, these had generally been occupied by snowbirds during the winter season. Counties with a large proportion of vacant mobile homes were peri-urban, quiet places that snowbirds found ideal for a winter nest; foremost among them were Charlotte, Lake, Lee, Manatee, and Sarasota. Some counties had high numbers of snowbirds, but relatively few mobile homes; those areas were more urban, housed a more diverse population mix, with higher population densities and land prices: namely Palm Beach, Pinellas (St. Petersburg), Collier (Naples), and Broward. Yet mobile homes even in these counties showed a high vacancy rate, consistent with their having a

significant snowbird population. By contrast, some highly urbanized counties (the homes of Orlando, Tampa and Miami) clearly were attracting relatively few snowbirds, for they had relatively few mobile homes, few of which were vacant. Their mobile homes catered to the needs of lower-income households, priced out of tornado-repellent housing by Florida's speculative environment.⁸³

With a few exceptions (notably Monroe and Osceola counties⁸⁴), mobile homes have been a sure sign that snowbirds and retirees abound in a county. Hernando, Lake, Lee, Manatee, and Charlotte counties were especially stocked with retirees and their rolling lairs. Indeed, Charlotte had the highest concentration of elders of any American county. All but one of these trailer-park-and-elderly strongholds were in exurban areas on the Gulf of Mexico, while all were in exurban areas.

Table 4.10 illustrates the exurban location of mobile homes as well as the fact that metropolitan areas with many amenities attracted large numbers of mobile homes, even if these typically constituted only a small percentage of their housing stock. Most of Florida's mobile homes have settled down either in tourist-heavy counties (like Pinellas, Broward, Sarasota, and Palm Beach) or in exurban areas.⁸⁵

⁸³ Hernando county is an exception: it boasts numerous mobile homes, yet its vacancy rate is low; this indicates, in our view, the higher number of year-round retired residents, persons who have been Florida snowbirds long enough to settle permanently, long enough to have moved north from Tampa-St. Petersburg. In 1972, Vance Packard noticed 73 exclusive mobile home parks in Zephyrhills. Packard, *A Nation of Strangers*, 92.

⁸⁴ In Monroe (the Keys), hurricanes contribute to making mobile homes expensive, and land costs are outrageous. Osceola is a fast-growth Central Florida county which houses a great number of low-wage workers from the tourist industry.

⁸⁵ R.I. Wolfe, "Recreational Travel: The New Migration," *The Canadian Geographer* 10 (1966): 3; "Drop in Tourism Hits Miami Beach," *NYT*, 29 August 1971, 51; "Spurt in Business Cheers Miamians," *NYT*, 14 February 1954, 67; Market Research Department of the Miami Herald and the Miami News, *The Other Side of the Sun* (Miami, 1969-70).

Table 4.10: Top Mobile Home Counties in Florida, with Proportion of Population Aged 65 and Over, 1969, 1990, and 2000.⁸⁶

2000			1990		1969	
Top mobile home counties	Mobile homes in 2000	% Of residents aged 65 and over in 2000	Top mobile home counties	Mobile homes 1990	Top mobile home counties	Mobile homes 1969
Polk	65,235	18.3	Pinellas	53,324	Pinellas	27,436
Pinellas	50,264	22.5	Polk	51,155	Broward	11,972
Pasco	43,700	26.8	Hillsborough	41,905	Manatee	10,482
Hillsborough	42,063	12.0	Pasco	40,435	Miami-Dade	9,736
Lee	38,084	25.4	Lee	33,035	Hillsborough	8,920
Marion	34,455	24.5	Marion	28,873	Sarasota	7,859
Lake	30,549	26.4	Broward	28,552	Brevard	7,229
Manatee	27,891	24.9	Lake	26,877	Polk	6,397
Broward	26,834	16.1	Manatee	26,305	Palm Beach	5,859
Volusia	24,272	22.1	Duval	21,889		
Brevard	24,092	19.9	Palm Beach	21,859		
Duval	22,485	10.5	Volusia	21,834		
Sarasota	20,226	31.5	Brevard	21,686		
Palm Beach	20,083	23.2	Sarasota	21,294		
Orange	20,068	10.0	Orange	19,933		

A comparison of Tables 4.9 and 4.10 leads to this conclusion: although mobile homes have grown in absolute number, even in the 1990s, they are in relative decline, their percentage of Florida's housing stock drifting downward as a consequence of Florida's urbanization. Indeed, metropolitan counties have had either stagnant or declining populations of mobile homes. In Pinellas, Florida's most urbanized county, the absolute number of mobile homes peaked in the early 1980s.⁸⁷ These trends suggest that big cities did not cherish their little homes.

Houses on wheels and temporary dwellings have long been deemed as undesirable, unhealthy, and immoral, because of their use as crisis housing (after, for example, a

⁸⁶ Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000; and *Manatee County Plan: Mobile Homes* (Bradenton, 1971), in Manatee County Public Library.

⁸⁷ Another measure of the decline of mobile home housing in Florida came when, in 1998, Florida fell to fourth in the number of new mobile homes placed, after Texas, North Carolina and Georgia. *Florida Statistical Abstract 2000* (Gainesville, Fla, 2000), 367; Sean Cavanagh, "Help For Mobile Home Owners," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 31 March 2001, 1B; Pinellas County Planning Department, *Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan*, vol. 15 "Housing" (St. Petersburg, adopted 8 August 1989, amended 16 April 1991),

hurricane) and their association with poor people, migrant workers, the military, and "gypsies" (some of them dark-skinned Roma). In 1940, the U.S. Census counted trailers in the same housing category as "railroad cars, tents, and shacks." In Florida, their lower-class origins and illicit reputation caused the State Board of Health to begin regulating trailer parks in the 1920s, in order to maintain and enforce community health standards. To improve their reputation, a trailerite association was founded in Tampa in 1920; it called itself the Tin Can Tourists of the World. They had joined together, according to a 1940s guidebook, to "spread the gospel of cleanliness ... and [to] help enforce the rules governing all public camp grounds."⁸⁸ This quest for respectability in the face of disrepute became central to trailer life, according to Harold Berube's analysis of trailer park society.⁸⁹

The original mobility and disrepute of trailers may have been the reason why the majority of them huddled together in segregated trailer neighborhoods. Trailer dwellers sought safety in numbers, and host communities were less hostile if they parked out of sight on a secondary road – typically on a campground set up by an entrepreneur, with more hope than money, for transients and tourists. Trailer parks sprang up as a matter of convenience: their dwellers needed access to collective services such as laundry, bathrooms, and legal waste disposal. The small size of trailers and their origins in camping also warranted the existence of "leisure rooms"; most parks by the 1950s had a central building for sociable events and club activities. Yet what started as pragmatic option eventually became a government mandate: in the 1970s, three-fourths of municipalities in

37, 38; Pinellas County Planning Dept., *Pinellas County Housing Study* (St. Petersburg, 1980), 31; Mike Schneider, "Trailer Owners Cut a Widening Swath," *Miami Herald*, 26 May 2002, 7B.

⁸⁸ R.M. French and J.K. Hadden, "An Analysis of the Distribution and Characteristics of Mobile Homes in America," *Land Economics* 41 (May 1965): 132; George and Jane Dusenbury, 179.

Florida restricted mobile homes to trailer parks. These regulations were uncontroversial since suburban development and hence housing types were tract-based. Besides, a large segment of mobile home dwellers were snowbirds, retirees, and low-income families who preferred to keep a distance from the clamor and prejudice of the suburbs.⁹⁰ Formal and informal segregation encouraged among trailer dwellers a neighborly, self-contained sociability and propinquity, a fact that was convenient to the retirement lifestyle.

Immediately following the Second World War, population growth, geographic mobility, and housing shortages fostered the use of trailers as permanent housing; consequently, trailer neighborhoods that had sprung up in the South and West as temporary housing for military families in the late 1940s assumed a permanence. To assuage opposition, the trailer industry advertised the trailers as just another housing option, while offering bigger, more comfortable units. In the early 1950s, new mobile homes were never wider than eight or longer than 34 feet; by 1970, a new unit typically measured twelve by 60 feet. The ten-wide – in industry parlance – had been introduced in the early 1950s, the twelve-wide in the early 1960s, and the doublewide, two units assembled together on-site, in 1962. The doublewide offered floor space similar to a small suburban house, in the vicinity of 1400 square feet, albeit without a basement. As they widened, they became more stationary until they had, like a tom turkey, become so bloated they could scarcely move at all. They also refurbished their reputation through renaming – from trailers to mobile homes in the early 1960s, to manufactured homes by the 1980s. It turned out that that both of these were a more expensive abode than a new

⁸⁹ Harold Bérubé with Florence Bérubé, "Sunset Trailer Park," in *White Trash: Race and Class in America*, eds. Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz (New York, 1997), 19-26.

⁹⁰ "Mobile Home vs. House: How Costs Compare," *Miami Herald*, 7 February 1971, 6K; Arthur D. Bernhardt, *Building Tomorrow: The Mobile/ Manufactured Housing Industry* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), 357, 372; Irby, 185, 192, 195-197, 199.

trailer, which sold for \$1,800 to \$2,300 in the early 1960s. A "mobile home" cost around \$6000 in 1970 and a doublewide "manufactured home," about \$46,700 in 1998.⁹¹

As their prices and pretensions grew, trailers evolved into "real" homes. True, they did not have a basement, but in South Florida, the lack of a basement was less of a shortcoming than in other states because the swampy soil prevented most single-family homes from having one. And they had elbow room: in 1998, the median floor size of mobile homes in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale and Tampa-St. Petersburg areas was slightly in excess of 800 square feet, while 75 percent of new mobile homes being sold in Florida were doublewides. The difference between the average mobile home and the size of the new units indicates that the mobile home landscape in Florida comprehended a fair number of old trailer parks, alongside with newer communities, with the bigger, late models – the wealth and age of tenants varied accordingly between these different neighborhoods; Chapter 5 analyzes this spatial segmentation. In size, manufactured homes had entered the housing mainstream, yet they remained far cheaper than the average single-family home. For instance, in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area, the median value of mobile homes had a median value of \$18,100 in 2002 while the average housing unit cost \$136,800. In Tampa-St. Petersburg, the gap was narrower: \$19,000 versus \$81,500.⁹²

Despite the still gaping gap, there is little doubt that mobile homes had joined the housing mainstream. Neither a hobo nor a gypsy did one have to be to dwell in them.

⁹¹ Hart, "Mobile Home or a Condominium?"; George and Jane Dusenberry, 176, 177; "Mobile Home vs. House: How Costs Compare," *Miami Herald*, 7 February 1971, 6K; *The Manatee Plan*, "Plan Elements, Draft 1" (1978-79), 68; *Florida Statistical Abstract 2000*, 367; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area in 1995*, t. 1.3:3; *American Housing Survey for the Tampa-St. Petersburg Metropolitan Area, 1998*, t. 1.7:8; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area: 2002*, t. 1.7:10.

⁹² *The Manatee Plan*, "Plan Elements, Draft 1" (1978-79), 68; *Florida Statistical Abstract 2000*, 367; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area in 1995*, t. 1.3:3; *American*

Thanks to "inflation, tight money and soaring building costs" lower-income Americans were finding it increasingly difficult from the 1960s onward to afford a wood-frame (or cinder-block) house; trailers met their need for cheap, family housing. The entry of the mobile home into the housing mainstream was facilitated by the 1969 Federal Housing Act, which authorized the Federal Housing Administration to insure mortgages for mobile homes. In September 1973, President Nixon sent to Congress a set of bills as part of his new housing policy, including measures to facilitate the purchase of mobile homes.⁹³

FHA insurance spurred investment and activity in the sectors of mobile-home production and park development. A 1970 article confirmed that many major developers had now gone into the mobile home business, either by buying manufacturers or by developing large parks. For instance, Gulf American Corporation was then building a 6,000-unit park in Micco, Brevard County. Meanwhile, the General Development was taking a vertically-integrated approach to the now federally-approved business: its parent company purchased the third-largest mobile home manufacturer in the United States, while GDC itself included a mobile home park in its sprawling Port Charlotte and Port Malabar developments in Charlotte and Brevard counties respectively. Deltona Corporation took a similar approach, buying mobile home manufacturer to outfit a 9,000-unit trailer park near St. Augustine in North Florida.⁹⁴

Swarming had the usual outcome: by the early 1990s, real estate people were predicting the impending end of mobile home housing, the mode made obsolescent by rising land values in Florida's most urbanized areas. How could one justify parking a

Housing Survey for the Tampa-St. Petersburg Metropolitan Area, 1998, t. 1.7:8; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area: 2002*, t. 1.7:10.

⁹³ Hart, "Mobile Home or a Condominium?"; George and Jane Dusenberry, 176, 177; "Mobile Home vs. House: How Costs Compare," *Miami Herald*, 7 February 1971, 6K.

⁹⁴ *Florida Trend* 12 (February 1970): 16.

\$15,000 house on a \$200,000 lot? Doomsayers pointed out that the number of mobile home parks had already peaked in Broward, at 180 in 1984. Also, many mobile home parks in the Gold and Gulf Coasts were sold in the 1990s, their tenants evicted and the land put to more profitable use.⁹⁵ In other urban, rapidly growing counties like Hillsborough (Tampa) and Orange (Orlando), the growth in mobile home numbers was woefully inadequate to satisfy the demand for low-cost housing.⁹⁶ Mobile homes, even in these brave new surroundings, were seen by the real estate industry as passé. After decades of striking improvement, mobile home technology had stagnated; real estate developers and agencies wanted something more "Century 21" to sell. Fascinated with novelty – with every aspect of housing ideally "new and improved" – the real estate industry tended to overstate the reports of the demise of the motor home sector when the force of the contrast dulled. Mobile homes numbers were stable in most of Florida, for they remained useful as cheap housing for snowbirds and the retired and working poor. Hence, Florida's most densely settled county, Pinellas, remained a mobile home county in spite of unfavorable land economics. Snowbirds and retirees were not prepared to bend to every economic gust that came their way; they had, in other words, sufficient *agency* to keep mobile homes rooted in the Florida soil regardless of whether those with three-car garages and three-bathroom mansions wished that "tacky" low income housing would be blown away by the next gale. Chapter 5 further develops this theme.

This obduracy of mobile home settlement, in the face of the United States' greatest bull market, can be considered a proxy for the overall settlement pattern of retirees and

⁹⁵ Reasons for this: hurricanes, regulations, rising costs, increasing land values. Villano; Louise Gendron, "Sur la piste des Floribécois," *L'actualité* 18 (15 March 1993): 36; Dale K. Dupont, "Trailer Parks At Risk As Land Prices Soar," *Miami Herald*, 11 December 2000, 6G; Schneider, "Trailer Owners Cut a Widening Swath"; Deborah O'Neil, "Clinging to a Vanishing Lifestyle," *St. Petersburg Times*, 19 December 2001, 3; Claude Vaillancourt, "La Floride boude les "snowbirds", " *Le Soleil*, 19 April 2003, A3.

snowbirds. Although snowbirds rarely settled permanently in Florida, preferring to migrate across half a continent with the seasons, they did not tend to wander when they reached Florida. Once a nesting colony had been established, it reproduced itself year after year, decade after decade. Miami-Dade was probably the major exception to this rule as its deteriorating infrastructure and dramatic racial-linguistic transformation after 1960 caused flocks of snowbirds, as well as retirees, to join the "white flight" northward into Broward County. And, as we have seen, it was possible to uproot snowbirds when land prices soared in the most heavily populated urban areas.

But the emphasis should be on the stability of snowbird settlement patterns. Retirement hotels, resort motels and mobile homes remained occupied by snowbirds and retired migrants for long periods, and more often than not they successfully withstood external pressures to vacate and relocate to make way for the new development – the ever new development – that greased the cylinders of Florida's growth machine. Even so, their purchases kept the machine humming. In the remaining chapters, we shall see that northern snowbirds and retirees, by resisting and subsisting, wrote their stories indelibly into Florida's history since 1945. Indeed, it cannot be told without due reference to their search for Eden, their submission and challenge to the myth of sun-and-fun, and the "carnivals" they both attended and mounted.

But what was it actually like to be a Florida snowbird (or retiree, for that matter)? Did her lifestyle change over time? Was life in a small hotel markedly different than life in a snowbird condo complex or trailer park? Did a snowbird have as much say – or agency – in his daily life as in the basic decision of where to sojourn? Chapter 5 addresses these questions, and others, in an effort to understand why snowbirds returned year after

⁹⁶ Orange County's housing crisis is well documented by Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse*.

year to the same southern nesting areas and why some of them put down permanent roots in Southern Florida's soggy soil.

CHAPTER 5

FROM EDEN TO BABEL

Populous, rapidly-growing Florida was more like Babel than Eden. Speedy growth has meant that transplanted migrants have been entrusted with the future of the state. Everybody in Florida is from someplace else, as the saying goes, a fact that has made the Sunshine State a caricature of the American Babylon. The consequent anomie, social fragmentation, loss of community, and the accompanying struggle to rebuild a communitarian sense of belonging out of this congregation of unattached individuals, makes Florida an interesting object for social inquiry, in a modern context where fears abound that community is the tradeoff for material "progress." Florida's extreme fragmentation may provide insights into our common future. Will we all be strangers, the world a hotel? Or is there hope for reconnection as we alight in one community after another before building our final nest in a snowbird haven like Florida?

This chapter evaluates Florida community-making through the experience of snowbirds and retired migrants. This analysis will adopt two different standpoints. First, the standpoint of the host community. How did its members react to social fragmentation? Specifically how did they react to one of the most anomic aspect of life in Florida – the tourist and snowbird presence? Although Florida must rank as one of the most anomic states of the US, the reaction of Floridians to their leisurely invaders will indicate to what extent the longing for community remains strong in late modern (or postmodern) conditions, and will show how relevant solutions can arise to such a problem. Chapter 6

will look at the snowbird clusters, to learn whether snowbirds either sought or built community, eventually indicating how it can be done in a fragmented, consumerist, late (post)modern context

5.1 Community Lost

The feeling is pervasive in postwar Florida, especially since the 1960s – that the state is an abnormally fragmented society, incapable of coming together, deprived of the set of feelings, practices and institutions that make a community coherent. This fragmentation has been blamed on in-migration; racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity; economic inequality; employment and housing markets segmented by age, class, race, and ethnicity; and consequent spatial segregation and isolation. Some Floridians also blame tourism.

After more than a century of boosterist image-making, after decades of cheerful promotion of leisure and the good life, after Florida dreaming since the sixteenth century, members of the intelligentsia and the Florida elites have in recent years been voicing, with growing urgency, their doubts about the wisdom of depending on tourism to grow the state. They have fretted that true community is being lost in Florida because the geography of the state has been riven by multi-layered segregation and sprawl. There are too many newcomers content to remain strangers, they say, because "Most of the people who move to Florida don't think of this as "home,"¹ a journalist lamented in 1991. James Driscoll, of the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, wondered in 1994 how anyone could covet

¹ Thomas Swick, "Small Worlds," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 May 1991, 1J.

the Governor's seat in such a "crazy-quilt" state.² *St. Petersburg Times'* Robert Friedman opined in 1990 that longtime Floridians wondered

...how we can re-establish a sense of community and common purpose capable of embracing 12-million comparative strangers who have little in common beyond the color of their license plates. Governor Bob Graham called it the "Cincinnati Factor," referring to folks who moved to Florida but still subscribed to the Cincinnati paper, rooted for the Bengals instead of the Bucs or the Dolphins, and planned to go back home to Ohio to spend their last years around family and friends and be buried there.³

More recently, Governor Lawton Chiles defined the population of Florida as a *throng* rather than a community.⁴ And historian Gary Mormino has suggested that the anomie of Broward County had shielded six of the September 11, 2001 terrorists prior to the attacks – they went unnoticed in condoland, rubbing elbows with snowbirds and taking flight lessons.⁵ As the rooting of new residents in Florida was mediated by the real estate industry, Floridians seemed to rely on their piece of property and their immediate neighborhoods to define themselves. A 1988 article lamented the Florida brand of social fragmentation:

Children riding their tricycles on pleasant suburban streets don't automatically symbolize community, sociologists say. Sprawling South Florida virtually forces people to abandon traditional ideas of a community as a geographic area in which to live, work, play and worship. Instead, "people parcel out bits of their lives in different settings," sociologist Lynn Appleton of Florida Atlantic University said. Home buyers shop for houses within tolerable driving distance of their jobs. Often they buy homes in "recreational communities," enclosed developments that offer parks, athletic facilities and security – amenities traditionally provided by cities. The new developments even have their own governments. Instead of going to local politicians or city hall, homeowners are

² James G. Driscoll, "It's A Crazy-Quilt State, So What Does That Make People Who Want To Run It?," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, August 10, 1994, p. 12A.

³ Robert Friedman, "Editorial: Twelve-million Relative Strangers," *St. Petersburg Times*, September 11, 1990, p. 16A.

⁴ Lynda Keever, "Hometown, Fla.," *Florida Trend* (September 1999).

⁵ Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville, 2005), 24.

likely to turn for help with problems to their homeowner or condo association first.⁶

Whether such associations built community for their members is a question for Chapter 6; here it seems reasonable to hypothesize that the associations, by acting as gatekeepers, kept retirees, snowbirds and tourists apart from "their neighbors." Moreover, associations and walled enclosures arguably have made residents indifferent to issues beyond the borders of their park or plat, thereby compounding the difficulty of coming together to cope with the ill effects of growth.

Public concern over the effects of growth first emerged in the 1950s, as Florida newspapers and magazines reported the concern of the elites over the eroding natural beauty of their state. Fast growth and development had produced – at least along the Gold Coast – an ugly urban landscape antithetic to the Edenic image of the state, which had lured tourists in the first place. In 1954, a *New York Times* article described the Miami Beach's aspect as "conspicuous waste."⁷

By the 1960s, Miami Beach was, according to *Holiday* magazine, a place of "too much to pay ... loud clothes ... loud talk."⁸ In 1967, Columnist Charles Whited wrote that "'Arriving in Greater Miami' ... surely must rank as one of the truly great disappointments of American travel." Southbound on the Sunshine State Parkway, oneself was "snapped back to reality" at the Golden Glades interchange, through the "most bewildering mass of concrete spaghetti south of Washington D.C." Eastbound on 167th Street was worse: "[T]hat multi-laned commercial strip fights its way toward the sea through hot-dog stands, gas stations and paint stores." Southbound, the North-South Expressway was "about as

⁶ Ann Bradley, "County Demographics in Transition," *Miami Herald*, 28 February 1988, 10BK.

⁷ "Spurt in Business Cheers Miamians," *New York Times*, 14 February 1954, 67.

⁸ Market Research Department of the *Miami Herald* and the *Miami News*, *The Other Side of the Sun* (Miami, 1969-70).

scenic as an airport runway." To Whited, older highways US1 and A1A were even worse: the former being, "as we all know, an ugly corridor of billboards, roadhouses and used car lots – commercial strip-zoning at its worst – and A1A south of the Broward line cuts through the tawdry garishness of Motel Row." Similarly a *Miami Herald* editorial deplored that "too much of South Florida's lush tropical growth has fallen to the bulldozers, to the asphalt pavers, and to real estate developers who have piled up great clumps of concrete without thought or concern about the natural amenities that brought them consumers from less favored cities."⁹

The Floridians most dissatisfied with the assault on the state's environment were the Florida-born and long-time residents, if only because they had witnessed more change than newcomers. In a 1978 novel, Pennsylvania-born John D. MacDonald attributed Florida's degradation to the rootlessness of its people:

Florida can never really come to grips with saving the environment because a very large percentage of the population at any given time just got there. So why should they fight to turn the clock back? It looks great to them the way it is. Two years later, as they are beginning to feel uneasy, a few thousand more people are just discovering it all for the first time and wouldn't change a thing. And meanwhile the people who knew what it was like twenty years ago are an ever-dwindling minority, a voice too faint to be heard.¹⁰

MacDonald's definition of "Floridian" implied a rather short stay in the Sunshine State. In 1989, Orlando-born poet Eugenie Nable narrated a trip to her hometown, where she saw the primitively-enchanted Florida she once knew being covered by a layer of generic suburban landscape:

I do not recognize the straight cut roads
tough I know these shopping centers

⁹ Whited, "Scenic Approach Not Scenic at All," *Miami Herald*, 29 March 1967, B1; "Land of Sunshine Needs Parks," *Miami Herald*, 6 March 1967, 6A.

¹⁰ from *The Empty Copper Sea*, 1978; found in Gray Watson's list of MacDonald quotations: http://256.com/gray/quotes/john_macdonald/ (retrieved August 2006).

and neon beef palaces in other places
 Here their stiff squares smirk and crouch
 stifle the low breath of the swamp
 to cover its mounds and memory with asphalt
 Soon even this cemetery will be real estate¹¹

Along the same lines, a 1995 poll by a Broward newspaper found that people who had lived in Florida for a lengthy time were the most likely to express dissatisfaction at what the Sunshine State had become.¹²

Even some tourists felt unease over the environmental damage. The contradiction of development with tourism was not lost on the writers of business-oriented *Florida Trend* magazine in the 1990s. They deplored that Florida was turning into "Anywhere, U.S.A.," at a time where the most lucrative tourist segments – ecotourism, for instance – thrived on pristine nature, exoticism, local character, and historical or archaeological sightseeing. It quoted a *New York Times* editorial: "If the Florida that was unique destroys what made it unique, doesn't Florida also become as extinct as the dinosaur? Oh sure, it will still be a geographical site at which people can arrive by air, rent automobiles ... And so what? ... Florida becomes every place else, and every place else becomes Florida."¹³ *Florida Trend* added:

Florida tourism is also losing market share because consumers around the globe increasingly prefer destinations that evoke a strong and unique sense of place. In the face of this trend, Florida continues to squander its natural and cultural assets, to the point that its image is now increasingly that of a non-place — a land of generic attractions and condo canyons, surrounded by featureless sprawl that might as well be anywhere.¹⁴

¹¹ Eugenie Nable, "Flight 318 to Orlando" (1989), in *Florida in Poetry: A History of the Imagination*, eds. J. Anderson Jones and M. O'Sullivan (Sarasota, 1995), 150.

¹² James G. Driscoll, "As Florida's Makeover Continues, so do Mixed Feelings About its Pleasures," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 16 April 1995, 5G.

¹³ Russell Baker, "Road to Extinction," *New York Times Magazine*, 3 April 1983, 18.

¹⁴ H.L. Hiller, "Marketing the Real Florida," *Florida Trend* (March 1996): 44.

It might be a particularly ugly part of my hometown, wrote columnist Pierre Foglia, who likened the stretch of US1 highway in the Florida Keys to a proverbially ugly commercial strip in suburban Montréal. Another writer found it "very depressing" to see so many signs of over-development; he concluded that Florida was doomed to become "nothing but subdivisions, tourist traps, and a few beleaguered nature reserves." Many commentators expressed their own displeasure with the state's artificiality by recommending "real Florida" attractions to their readers (away from the malls, golf courses and suburban landscapes) – places such as "The Florida Isle Developers Missed" or the place where "the strip malls are left behind," or "one of Florida's best-kept secrets." Herbert Hiller, a Floridian since 1958 and former cruise line executive, said he worried whether the state could survive tourism, but took comfort in the happy coincidence that "the only way to save Florida tourism is to save Florida itself," by fighting environmental damage and urban sprawl.¹⁵

In these comments, the Jeremiahs and Cassandras ignored the almighty climate. They no longer deemed it a sufficient attraction – and not because the winters of Central Canada and the American Northeast were mellowing (through global warming or a favorable breeze). Rather Florida's climate simply looked less unique as other sun-and-fun destinations became accessible. This – the decreased advantage of climate – has been a fundamental problem for Florida tourism in this late modern era.

¹⁵ Pierre Foglia, "Plus il y a de gens quelque part...", *La Presse*, 24 April 1995, A5; along similar lines: Lysiane Gagnon, "De Gordon à Dompierre," *La Presse*, 17 November 1994, B3; Robert Turnbull, "Gulf's Great Arc: Big Sky for Snowbirds," *Globe and Mail*, 13 December 1975, 40; Daniel LeSourd, "De l'autre côté de la plage," *Touring* 62 (Nov-Dec 1984): 37-40; Rod Currie, "The Florida Too Few Canadians See: Florida, Eh?," *National Post*, 30 November 2002, PT7; H.L. Hiller: 45, 48; Joey Slinger, "Retreat of the Birds," *Saturday Night* 104 (April 1989): 80; Marianne B. Scott, "Paradise Lost on Route 19," *Globe and Mail*, 11 March 1996, D6; Nancy Lyon, "Florida's Nature Coast," *Montreal Gazette*, 25 September 1993, 11; Wilf List, "The Florida Isle Developers Missed," *Globe and Mail*, 30 October 1993, F3; Guy Deshaies, "Une Floride de bon goût et à bon marché," *Le Devoir*, 7 November 1980, 11; and Deshaies, "Du côté de Tampa, une nouvelle Floride," *Le Devoir*, 13 November 1981, 7.

As climate became less relevant, tourists stopped sunning themselves to take in their surroundings. Since the 1960s-1970s, Florida tourism has paid a price for the dullness of its developed landscape. Neither jungle nor Eden is conjured up by a Jiffylube outlet blocking the view of the beach. And the tourists were even easier to sniff at than the streetscapes – both were depressingly plebeian. Anything "mass" has always offended those with "class." Some parts of the intelligentsia and international set deemed Florida objectionable because of its very accessibility and popularity. *Mass* tourism was, they openly said or intuitively felt, a debased consumer version of the ancient quest for revelation through travel and pilgrimage. Marco Polo at the court of the Great Khan – the Pilgrim at Santiago de Compostella – Zebulon Pike on a mountaintop – bloated everyman baking on a Florida beach – one of these was a modern abomination. Like Daniel Boorstin, these critics of Florida believed "tourism" a base corruption of "travel," a loss as profound as the loss of community, for travel was noble, adventurous, romantic and enlightening (and dangerous). Attempting to keep both scoops affixed to a Florida ice cream cone while walking back to a beach towel had nothing in common with Scott of the Antarctic except ice. In denigrating tourism to affordable places, some of these critics were simply setting up barriers of good taste against the masses. Like Henry James, the Brahmin novelist, they commented on tourism – even when it was by the wealthy in his case (he described Palm Beach as "vanity fair in full blast"¹⁶) – to put the parvenus in their

¹⁶ quote from Henry James in Start B. McIver, "Titusville to Fort Lauderdale," in *The Book Lover's Guide to Florida*, ed. Kevin M. McCarthy (Sarasota, 1992), 186, 187; Veblen, "Conspicuous Consumption," in *The Consumer Society Reader*, ed. Martyn J. Lee (Oxford, 2000), 39, 40, 43; Gareth Shaw and Allan M. Williams, *Critical Issues in Tourism: A Geographical Perspective* (Oxford, 1994), 11; Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York, 2001), 93, 215, 216; Richard Kraus, *Leisure in a Changing America: Trends and Issues for the 21st Century*, Second ed. (Boston, 2000), 266; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and national Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, 2001), 315-318; Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Tourism: The Sacred Journey," in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, ed. V. L. Smith (Philadelphia, 1989) 41, 42; Urry, *Consuming Places*

place. Sure, they could afford a Florida vacation; but would anyone with good taste go there? For tourism to be used as a marker of good taste and social distinction, the self-appointed elite, the intelligentsia, had to differentiate the "in" places and visitors from those that were "out." Naturally, anyone who knew where the "best people" lived by the "best" of regimes wanted to keep the riffraff out. Hence, some of Florida's critics hoped if they badmouthed the state enough, the tourist masses would stay away, thereby preserving their own simulacrum of Eden.

Some of the "better" tourist destinations acted to keep out the unwanted, unscented masses. Coral Gables, for example, was planned as an upper-end reserve, with expensive, tropical landscaping and large home lots. Palm Beach kept day-trippers away by restricting access to its beach, and Delray Beach tried to sell itself in the 1960s "as an island of distinctive resort life, purposely avoiding mass exploitation and its accompanying ornateness."¹⁷

By resisting development and searching like noble Ponce de Leon for the "real Florida," some writers were building and sharing elitist standards by broadcasting their distinctive tastes. So powerful was this ecology of distinctive leisure that some went as far as to enforce secrecy about their bit of paradise. In January 1981 a *New York Times* reader complained that a recent article by travel writer Michael Sterne had exposed the unknown beauty of Sanibel and Captiva islands. Yvonne Freund hoped that journalist Michael Sterne and family would return to the islands to see the results of this publicity: "I hope ...

(London, 1995), 142; Normand Cazalais, "L'espace touristique québécois contemporain," in *L'espace touristique*, eds. Normand Cazalais, Roger Nadeau, Gérard Beaudet (Sillery, 1999), 24, 25, 48-51.

¹⁷ Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce, "Delray Beach Visitor's Map" (Delray Beach, late 1960s).

they'll find the islands infested with tourists. Then he'll know why those of us who could write about such places, don't."¹⁸

But snobbery or elitism are not sufficient explanations for the alarm expressed by so many over the disfigurement of paradise. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that every critic of Florida was auditioning for life in the Hamptons or the Ivy League, for most Floridians have never considered good taste a necessary social asset. After all, as long as New York-based media (or Montréal, as we shall see) remain *the* arbiters of good taste, Florida sees no point in playing a game it cannot win. Hence most Floridians have wisely decided to "be themselves." Hence snobbery, while instinctively appealing as the ultimate origin of the sneers from upper-middle-class academics and columnists, is not an adequate explanation for the declensional trope in Florida dreaming. Floridians increasingly have adopted this trope because they have genuinely experienced community decline in their own lifetime, and they concur on the culpability of the growth machine. As Chapter 1 discussed, declensionism has been a staple of the muckraking and historical literature pertaining to contemporary Florida, as it has been in American social commentary and letters since the first European settlements.¹⁹

It would be foolish to deny Florida's social fragmentation. It is too obvious to deny, the loss of a community more than an inherited literary conceit. The rapid population growth and spatial segregation must be having an impact. Even if community somehow endured through the transformation of Puritans into Yankees, of farm villages into mill towns, of rural *Canadiens* into urban *Québécois*, and a five-year Civil War, it is far from

¹⁸ Yvonne Freund, New York: *NYT*, 25 January 1981, sect. 10:28; R.F. Warner, "Western Florida," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, 20XX.

¹⁹ Bender's sentences comes from his *Community and Social Change* book (p. 46), and has been repeatedly quoted, here by Kenneth Kusmer, "The Concept of "Community" in American History," *Reviews in American History* 7 (September 1979): 320; see also Harry S. Stout's contribution to "Forum: The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies," *Religion and American Culture* 6 (Summer 1996), 116.

obvious that it can survive the transition of Florida from agora to outlet mall. It would be worrisome if Floridians didn't worry. But was it fair (or logical) to blame tourists, retired migrants and snowbirds for community decline? Any answer must start with a survey of the motives and activities of those Floridians who have endeavored since the 1960s to slow or stop Florida's transition to anomie.

5.2 Slow-Growth Schemes

Since the 1950s, jeremiads aside, members of Florida's elites and intelligentsia have conceived fantasies of no-growth, where they exaggerated the dangers of Florida, likening life in the Sunshine State to a Faustian bargain in which most residents and visitors risked death at the hands of a sort of Florida *fatum* they had illegitimately tried to avoid. This body of writing has grown into what historian Gary Mormino and film critic Roger Ebert have called the "Florida Noir" style, wherein Florida is depicted as "a lost Utopia, a dystopian, overdeveloped land" where wilderness is both tourist magnet and menace.²⁰ Crime novelist John D. MacDonald has written a number of these fantasies of "Death by Retribution in Paradise" – including a 1957 novel that inspired two movies entitled *Cape Fear*, where the family of a womanizing lawyer is stalked by a man imprisoned for fourteen years by the former's negligence. Moral corruption became more financial in *A Flash of Green* (1962) about a corrupt, development-minded county commissioner; in 1984 it was turned into a movie and shot in Fort Myers by independent filmmaker Victor Nunez.²¹ Since the 1960s crime novelist Elmore Leonard has also plotted stories of greed,

²⁰ Gary Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States: A Social and Cultural History of Florida, 1950-2000," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Summer 2002):18, 20.

²¹ *The Executioner*, published 1957, set in Florida except for the final scene in the houseboat that takes place in North Carolina. It inspired a first *Cape Fear* movie in 1962 –shot in Savannah-, then Martin Scorsese's

scams and *Retribution in Florida*, arguably with less moralistic endings. The first of his to be adapted to the screen was *Stick* (published in 1983); it starred Burt Reynolds as an ex-convict trying to bury the ghosts of his past.²² More recently, in 2001, independent filmmaker John Sayles directed *Sunshine State*, a Florida story where the past haunts the characters – including beachfront developers – in multiple and unexpected ways.

In Florida Noir stories, nature is often a threatening character of divine beauty and might. Thus John MacDonald wrote in 1959:

The breeze died. The high white sun leaned its tropic weight on the gaudy vacation strip of Florida's East Coast, so that it lay sunstruck, lazy and humid and garish, like a long brown sweaty woman stretched out in sequins and costume jewelry.... The sun turned road tar to goo, overheated the filtered water in the big swimming pools of the rich and the algaed pools of the do-it-yourself clan, blazed on white roofs, strained air conditioners, turned parked cars into tin ovens, and blistered the unwary. A million empty roadside beer cans twinkled in the bright glare. The burning heat dropped a predictable number of people onto stone sidewalks, of which a predictable number died, drove the unstable into the ugly wastes of their madness ... and sent a billion billion salty trickles to flowing on sin-darkened skins.²³

One of the favorite ways to plot and play out a Florida no-growth fantasy has been to ponder the effects of the next "big one" hurricane. Writers have imagined how nature would one day, like Mephistopheles, come back to exact its due from foolish humans. MacDonald wrote in the mid-1970s how the storm surge was "going to have real fun with the made land, with the sea walls and packed shells and the thin topsoil... then the local segment of that peculiar aberration called the human race is going to pick itself up, whistle

remake in 1991. *A Flash of Green* (1962) was shot in Fort Myers by indie director Victor Nunez in 1984. Imdb.com (retrieved June 2007).

²² Leonard's novels at least partly set in Florida include *The Big Bounce* (published in 1969, adapted to screen in 1969 and 2004), *Gold Coast* (published in 1980, adapted into a TV movie in 1997), *Stick* (published 1983, film released 1985); *Cat Chaser* (1982, film in 1989); *Get Shorty* (1990; film in 1995), *Rum Punch* (1992, inspired Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*, released 1997; the film was set in California), *Pronto* (book in 1993, TV movie in 1997); *Out of Sight* (published 1996, made into a movie by Steven Soderbergh, released 1998).

²³ Quote from *The Beach Girls*, 1959. Jonathan Yardley, "'Condominium': MacDonald's Dreadful Lemon Skyline," *Tropic* (6 March 1977): 10.

for the dredges, and start it all over again."²⁴ In 1977, MacDonald unleashed his "big one" on Florida's literary corpus in *Condominium*, a novel in which Hurricane Ella returns to nature a barrier island (Fiddler Key) similar to Siesta Key, where he lived. Ella brutally exposed the shoddy building practices of the entrepreneurs behind the Golden Sands condo complex, as its tenants were finding out about its inflationary maintenance fees, and insolent management.

He was not the only author in Florida anticipating a day of reckoning.²⁵ When hurricane Andrew ravaged South Miami-Dade in August 1992, muckraker Carl Hiaasen interpreted it as warning, both providential ("a brushback pitch from God") and existential – "There's nothing wrong with South Florida that a good Category Five hurricane couldn't fix."²⁶ Was there a wrathful deity glaring at Florida? Maybe, maybe not, but the state certainly had its share of angry demiurges, not least of them Hiaasen, whose first novel in 1986 featured a journalist who murdered tourists and Chamber of Commerce people in order to scare them away from the Sunshine State. The book was unsubtly titled *Tourist Season* in reference to hunting. In a 1993 interview, he said:

I favour immigration controls for Florida. Florida should be treated as a foreign country. With visas. Tourists should get a two-week visa to go to Disney World, and South Beach and the Keys if they must, and then get out. And they should have to sign a promise that they won't buy any property, that they won't move here.²⁷

Granted, this statement was fantasy, but it was grounded in dead-serious angst, and in an ethos that was fostering growth controls, that is, concrete revision of the legal environment. This ambiguity between fantasy and actual policy was seminal to the

²⁴ Yardley: 9.

²⁵ Gregory Jaynes, "As Florida Grows...", *NYT*, 7 July 1982, A17; Marianne B. Scott, "Paradise Lost on Route 19," *Globe and Mail*, 11 March 1996, D6.

²⁶ MacGowan, "Profile of and Interview With Carl Hiaasen," *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March 2000, C18; Similar thought at the prospect of a hurricane: Marianne B. Scott.

²⁷ MacGowan.

legitimacy of the Florida Noir author: it allowed environmentally-minded (or urban planning-minded) readers to identify with the sentiment if not the agenda, whether it was murder or zoning controls. Similarly, a South Florida columnist knew that there was no risk of Floridians heeding his advice about broadcasting a rare case of malaria in 1996 even if they, as hoped, nodded their head in wry accord: "So, c'mon South Florida, shout it out, say it loud: We're malarial and proud! If it means one less beachfront condo, one less shopper in the checkout line, one less laggard with his left blinker on, it will all be worthwhile."²⁸ These fantasies were ways for these authors to build a community of readers who shared their despair over what Florida had become. Ironically, fantasy born of despair had a creative potential, for it could be turned into political action, into growth controls and environmentalist statutes since the 1960s.

What of Floridians beyond the intelligentsia? How did those without the time or skills to pen fantasies of killing off developers and scaring off every last tourist express their opposition to paving paradise and calling it the one-millionth parking lot? How did average Floridians indulge their fear and loathing? With *humor* and loathing, as we see next.

5.3 Blaming the Tourist

Tourists and retired migrants were easy to blame for Florida's growth-induced problems. As non-resident outsiders, as transients who often did not vote and had their loyalties up north, they clearly stood "outside" of the sought-after community of Floridians. As white "Anglo-Saxons," they could be acceptably blamed for pretty much

²⁸ Grogan, "A Pinch Of Malaria...," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 28 July 1996, 1B; on Hiaasen: Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States...": 19.

anything negative about Florida without arousing suspicions of racism. Snowbirds and tourists thus became benign, acceptable scapegoats for venting outrage at overcrowding. This scapegoating functioned, ironically, as a community-building folklore through which Floridians sought to voice and share a common meaning of what it meant to be a Floridian amidst conditions of fragmentation and gridlock. Snowbird bashing unified Floridians. It was popular – and "wacky"²⁹ – enough to be endorsed by a few journalists and columnists.³⁰

The birth of tourist-bashing in Florida happened at around the same time as the rise of environmentalism. Indeed, both social movements were linked by concern over looming scarcity. In December 1973, South Florida faced fuel shortages due to the first Oil Shock. Local boosters were blamed for issuing emergency advertisements saying to Northern tourists that gas was plentiful. They had been proven wrong. In that context, Florida newspapers reported that Floridians were adopting a "Yankee-go-home" attitude.³¹ In 1974, Floridians blamed tourists for gas shortages, but also for tighter access to mortgage money, and for causing "commercial overbuild" in Florida, *i.e.* a glut of retail and service outlets, which made the ongoing recession even worse. The same year, these complaints were expressed, in South Florida, through a "Yankee Go Home" bumper sticker.³² Thus tourist-bashing drew upon the Southern Rebel repertoire of attitudes, as part of a folkloric, audience-building attempt at a collective conversation over what it

²⁹ John Grogan, "Snowbirds Are Back, Ready For Plucking," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 5 December 1993, 1B.

³⁰ Don MacPherson, "Tourists," *The Gazette*, 21 January 1993, B3; David Grimes, *Tourists, Retirees, and Other Reasons to Stay in Bed* (Sarasota, 2000), 3-5, 61-63; Gary Stein, "Identify Snowbirds By Their Chirping," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 November 1990, 1B.

³¹ *NYT*, 5 February 1974, 20; Mormino, "1973: Florida's Year of Reckoning," *Forum* (Winter 2003); *NYT*, 2 February 1974, f15; Jean Danard, "Going South?," *Financial Post*, 11 May 1974, C4; B. Drummond Ayres Jr., "End of Oil Embargo Arrives Too Late...," *NYT*, 22 March 1974, 23; Larry Birger, "Visit Florida: We Have Gas, Ads Say," *Miami News*, 9 January 1974.

³² Jeffrey Tucker, "Florida Tourism: Shadows of an Economic Eclipse," *Florida Trend* 17 (November 1974): 38, 39.

meant to be Floridian amidst a flood of unwanted Northerners. Thereafter it was socially acceptable to publicly blame tourists for Florida's growth problems. In 1977, asked by the *Miami Herald* "what bugged them," a substantial number of readers complained about tourists and northern migrants. A self-identified Florida "cracker" from Hollywood lamented that South Florida had become "like a New York suburb with rude, crude, aggressive, unfriendly ignoramuses who have moved down here and changed our environment rather than adapting." Most complaints deplored traffic gridlock; many denounced the careless driving habits of non-Floridians, and a comment on driving through the Keys outlined the difficulty of passing a slow-moving recreational vehicle. Some did more than talk: in November 1993, a Florida driver shot a .357 bullet at the vehicle of two Québécois tourists; a few years later, many Québécois snowbirds could still remember being the targets of aggressive gestures on Florida roads.³³

One columnist, David Grimes of Sarasota, made disparaging Canadian newcomers his trademark: he poked fun at their taciturnity, at the look of Canadian currency, at their northern pallor, their smugness over their Welfare State, their sensitivity to patronizing blunders by Americans, as well as "the way they drive, their funny accents, and their odd way of dressing." Many others accused Canadians of being poor tippers, a belief that Grimes took up. The joke went: "What's the difference between a Canadian and a canoe? Canoes tip." Again, these rants and jokes were ways to express the stresses of the tourist season: Canadians were stand-ins for the archetypal "Tourist." More conveniently, they were the ideal outsiders, more than New Yorkers could ever be.³⁴

³³ "What Bugs You," *Miami Herald*, 20 March 1977, 8G; James Shinlever, aged 42, had already been condemned for stabbing a man in a fit of road rage in 1981: "Coup de feu contre un automobiliste Québécois en Floride," *La Presse*, 11 November 1993, A3 ; A.M. Voisard, "L'illusion de la sécurité," *Le Soleil*, 5 April 1998, b2.

³⁴ Narsis Donoas, in Boca Raton, remarks that anti-snowbird remarks are more acceptable when aimed at

Behind Grimes' "Canadians" stood the real Florida scapegoats – the tourist species as a whole, regardless of the subspecies, whether the brash New Yorker, the friendly Midwesterner, or the Canadian errant.³⁵ Faced with a number of complaints from Canadian snowbirds, Grimes wryly tried to appease them by writing about his "real" targets – tourists. One column explained how to differentiate tourists from love bugs, since, he claimed, they could easily be mistaken for one another as, "both like to hover, virtually motionless, around our local roads and, during peak swarming periods, you can hardly smile without getting one stuck in your teeth." Many other tourist-bashing comments followed the same lines, likening tourists to a flood, an invasion, a necessary evil, an exodus, "exotic pests" or the migrations of birds or lemmings.³⁶

Typical complaints about tourists read like a catalogue of life's stresses in contemporary Florida. In Grimes' words, tourists meant "abundance." They overcrowded restaurants, beaches, movie theatres, doctor offices, banks, and golf courses. By coming in such numbers, they could be blamed for the State's growth problems. The backlash against

Canadians: "Why Not Tax the More Numerous New Yorkers?," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 19 February 1995, 6G; When readers of the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* react with outrage to a column, Grimes reacts by playing down any insulting meaning. Grimes, 6-8, 10-12, 26, 28, 75; on a query from *St. Petersburg Times* to its readers about the impact of tourists: Bill Adair, "Traffic that Drives Them up the Wall," *St. Petersburg Times*, 6 March 1994, 1B; Andrew Phillips, "Flocking Together: Homesick Canadian 'Snowbirds' Rally in the Sun," *Maclean's* 110 (10 February 1997): 24; Bob Hepburn, "Canadians Go Home," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1990, A2; canoe joke: John Koening, "What IS Causing Canadian Money to Flee Florida?," *Florida Trend* (May 1985): 60.

³⁵ Don MacPherson, "Tourists," *The Gazette*, 21 January 1993, B3.

³⁶ Grimes, 26, 28; Frances D. Williams, "Invasion of the Tourist People," *Fort Myers News-Press*, 26 February 1978; Julie Eagle, "Annual Migration Bears Profit, Problems," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 14 December 1986, 1B; Scott A. Zamost, "The Lesson for Locals," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 17 November 1986, B6; Jeffrey Taylor, "Season to Snarl Roadways," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 13 November 1986, 3; Bob Lamendola, "Snowbirds in Season," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 25 November 1990, 1B; "Image is a Problem as Season Arrives," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 3 November 1993, 1D; John Grogan, "A Pinch of Malaria for All That Ails Us," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 28 July 1996, 1B; John Tanasychuk, "Migration Elation," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 1 June 2000, 1E; Bill Adair, "Calling Cards of the Season," *St. Petersburg Times*, 2 January 1995, 1B; Jeremy Thayer, Clearwater Beach, letter to the editor, *St. Petersburg Times*, 15 March 1988, 2; Gary R. Knuth "Guest Column: Be Kind to Florida's Tourists....," *St. Petersburg Times*, 18 October 1990, P2; Julie D. Coutts, Holiday, "Letters: Should Tourists be Required to Pay More Taxes?," *St. Petersburg Times*, 15 November 1991, 19A; Cleo and Mesouf, *Florida: Polluted Paradise* (Philadelphia, 1964), 59; "How Can You Tell The Snowbirds Are Back?" *Miami Herald*, 27 November 1988, 3bne.

tourism was already underway in 1973, before the Oil Embargo, when a State Senator and the director of the State tourism division justified a raise in promotional spending by suggesting, debatably, that "tourists don't stay," and hence brought revenue to the state without straining its infrastructure.³⁷

As the stresses of rapid growth accumulated, so did the complaints. Thus, seventeen of the twenty-eight county administrators surveyed in 1983 about snowbirds' impact on their communities, blamed them for road congestion. Not surprisingly, in 1990, economic researchers found that road congestion was the most common complaint against tourists in Florida.³⁸ As Grimes himself acknowledged, it was pure scapegoating to blame tourists alone for the state's traffic problems, its being "much easier to simply blame all of our overcrowding problems on the tourists, who don't know any better."

On the other hand, tourists maybe deserved the opprobrium if they drove as unpredictably and slowly as some harried commuters alleged. Since the Model T chugged its way through the state, tourists have been accused of "exceeding the speed limit by only five or ten m.p.h.," suggested Grimes, when every native of the state knew that car racing was practically a Southern invention. Canadian tourists have also been blamed for keeping their headlights on in broad daylight³⁹ (when a Southern rebel would have saved money by finding a way to disconnect the wiring mandated by the Canadian government) and all of them were accused of keeping their turn signals on for too long, or indicating the wrong

³⁷ Christina Evans, "Tourism Budget to Get \$1.4 Million Increase," *Orlando Sentinel*, 3 June 1973.

³⁸ L.S. Rose and H.L. Kingma, "Seasonal Migration of Retired Persons," *Journal of Economic and Social Measurement* 15 (1989): 101; "Miami Still a Paradise?," *Miami Herald*, 25 January 1971, 16C; Tucker, "Florida Tourism": 38, 39; M.C. Burritt and D.R. Williams, "Tourism," in *The Economy of Florida*, eds. Denslow, Pierce, Shermeyan (Gainesville, 1990), 263; "Readers' Viewpoint: Florida has Already too Many People," *Miami Herald*, 10 February 1971, 6A.

³⁹ John Grogan, "Let the Hunt Begin for Pale-Bellies," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 13 November 1994, 1B; Grogan, "Featherless Birds Have Been Sighted," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 November 1995, 1B.

direction, or unnecessarily.⁴⁰ A traffic column in the *Miami Herald* was scolding its assessment of tourists' driving habits. Its author, a self-appointed "Lane Ranger," wrote in 1991 that snowbirds "plug up our roads and drive with the skill of dropouts from the Lunar School of Driving and Philately." Lane Ranger quoted a local truck driver as telling him, "I would die happy if I didn't see another license plate from Quebec" and a bumper sticker as saying, "Someday, I'm going to summer in New York and pay them all back."⁴¹ Were tourists the only dropouts from the Lunar School? Not likely in the home state of the lunar missions. But the tourist was, like Br'er Fox, a convenient character in moral tales designed to educate *all* of the state's drivers on how to cope with a new era, in this case, the New Gridlocked South.⁴²

Tourists were also accused of poor taste in dress and attire. Grimes put it thus: "tourists dress funny and that's all there is to it ...ladies in gold, fruit-laden sandals ... men in deerskin shoes, polyester slacks and white vinyl belts." Were such people to be despised? No more than Carmen Miranda, the dynamo in the tutti-frutti hat, or Rodney Dangerfield, the sympathetic boor in the movie *Caddyshack*, or, suggested Grimes, most Floridians, who considered that "a shirt and shoes" were dressed-up enough for a "formal" social event. However, on occasion, lampooning the appearance of tourists took a more nasty turn. During the 1992 and 1993 winters, the Fort Lauderdale weekly *XS* published on its front page ugly photographs of big-bellied, obese Québécois snowbirds in tiny

⁴⁰ Bob Lamendola, "Canadian Snowbirds Descending on S. Florida Coming Down," *Ft Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 1 November 1991, 1B.

⁴¹ The Lane Ranger, "Snowbirds Drive You Crazy?...", *Miami Herald*, 1 April 1991, 1br; Cynthia Barnett, "How Many Retirees? How Floridians Feel," *Florida Trend* (September 2003); The Lane Ranger, "Snowbird Drivers Just Like the Rest of Us?," *Miami Herald*, 2 April 1991, 1BR.

⁴² The ethic of good driving is a widespread and useful as a means of creating and transmitting a folk knowledge of road security and proper driving techniques. Even academia does not refrain from rants about bad drivers, as can be seen in John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), 141.

swimsuits. The 1992 headline read: "They're Back! For Locals, French Canadians Represent the Season's Annual Harvest of Shame." The following year, the words were meaner: "Ribbit, Ribbit, the Frogs (They're Back!) Return with the New Crop from the Harvest of Shame." The message could not be plainer: unashamed tourists were deemed shameful by their hosts. The dress of Québécois snowbirds and tourists, especially their beach wear, was deemed to be their most offensive behavior; commenting on the controversy, *Miami Herald* columnist Fred Grimm sniped: "they slip pale 230-pound bodies into swimwear designed for 19-year-old anorexic Brazilians." This was *the* unpardonable sin – to worship the sun when they were no longer young – but Québécois snowbirds were also charged by XS and Grimm with the usual peccadilloes of tourists: they drove badly and too slowly; they acted "as if they own the place"; and were poor tippers. XS also blamed Québécois for their ignorance of English, interpreting it as a headstrong refusal to mingle with Floridians.⁴³

The discourse about the tourists' dress or undress was, in part, an objection to their flaunting of their leisure status. They "dress funny" mainly because they were not dressed for the world of nine-to-five and had the money to spend on ensembles that could only be worn at a (forgiving) resort. In this guise, tourists and snowbirds were the perfect outsiders, embodiments of a carefree life for Floridians angered about the daily-life

⁴³ David Johnston, "Florida Newspaper Calls Quebecers 'Fat, Cheap'," *Montreal Gazette*, 16 January 1993), A6; N.J. MacPhail, "Fair Weather Folly," *Report on Business Magazine* 10 (December 1993): 33; Monique Giguère, "L'invasion des Québécois prend des airs d'occupation," *Le Soleil*, 24 February 1993, A2; R.T. Allen, "Florida, Canada's Hottest Province," *MacLean's* (8 October 1960): 71; William Lowther, "Business: Canada's Loss is Florida's Gain," *MacLean's* (17 April 1978): 68; "The Fat's in the Fire," *Toronto Star*, 15 January 1992, A10; Bob Hepburn, "Canadians Go Home," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1990, A2; Marie Tison, "Le *Sun Sentinel* s'excuse auprès des Québécois," *La Presse*, 22 January 1993, A1; Gilles Paquin, "L'éditeur du *Sun Sentinel* s'étonne de la réaction des Québécois," *La Presse*, 16 January 1993, A3; Eric Trottier, "Reportage haineux sur les Québécois publié en Floride," *La Presse*, 15 January 1993, A1; "Une campagne radiophonique anti-francophone tourne court, en Floride," *La Presse*, 6 April 1990, A5; A. Wilson-Smith and J. Deacon, "Bound for the South," *MacLean's* 106 (25 January 1993): 38; Jarvis, "Florida's Forgotten Ethnic Culture: Patterns of Canadian Immigration, Tourism and Investment Since 1920," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Fall 2002): 193.

vexations associated with work and commuting. One bumper sticker in the 1980s and 1990s thus stated: "Not ALL of us are on vacation!" This resentment, because it was also plainly xenophobic, expressed as well the anger that many Floridians felt at the unassimilable migrants of South Florida; Québécois tourists and snowbirds were, like the Cubans, easily identifiable targets for this anger, but unlike the Cubans, also an *acceptable* target since they were assumed to be politically defenseless foreigners. Naturally, Floridians did not limit their scapegoating to French Canadians: every tourist group was sooner or later accused of arrogance, of rudeness; tourists as a species were accused of arrogantly and rudely and constantly comparing Florida with "how we do it up north." Many Floridians blamed tourists for their rude, big-city manners; the worst offenders, it seemed, were "know-it-all New Yorkers."⁴⁴

At work was a shared, ethical folklore. The utility of discussions about the manners of outsiders depended not on the veracity of these statements, but rather their assist to identity-defining, a community-building strategy. In other words, many "native" Floridians (and Southerners, no doubt) asserted, stated and shared their commonalities by poking fun, or venting impatience at prejudiced Yankees. By talking about rude tourists, they were setting the values of their moral economy. The artificiality of this sectional vocabulary, in a state where most residents had northern roots but had rapidly embraced

⁴⁴ Grimes, 29-31; Edith Hamilton, "Law, Those Yankees Talk Funny," *Miami Herald*, 3 January 1981, 1C; Gary Stein, "A Letter To Snowbirds: No Excuse for Rudeness," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 19 March 1990, 1B; Grogan, "Featherless Birds Have Been Sighted," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 November 1995, 1B; one New Yorker, an 81-year-old snowbird, complained about Florida, in a letter to the editor: Al Zuckerman, "Older Visitor Doesn't Want to be a Snowbird," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 14 January 1995, 14A; Steve Mitchell recalls of a Florida cracker complaining about New Yorkers trying to remake the Sunshine State in their image, and of a New Yorker calling him "fairly intelligent for a Southerner" –recalls also petition circulated by Jacqueline Shapiro, condo dweller in WPB, to change the name of Dixie Highway, "because she feels the name projects a poor image to her Northern friends": *West Palm Beach Post*, 30 October 1981; Virginia Boddien, in Tampa, a Florida native who deplores Yankeeification by the coming of professional ice hockey to Florida: "Hockey is Final Blow of 'Yankeeification'," *St. Petersburg Times*, 10 June 1990, 10C.

the cracker identity (as John D. MacDonald understood⁴⁵), outlines the necessity behind it: to share a set of values about what it means to be Floridian, to affirm and stabilize a Florida polity and community amidst rapid demographic change. By paying close attention to the ethical discourse of native and "naturalized" Floridians, the state's permanent migrants were able to assume a Florida identity quickly. James Driscoll concluded in the 1990s that a newcomer could be considered semi-native after living in the state for ten years. Indeed surveys have found that newcomers quickly called themselves Floridians.⁴⁶

Bumper stickers have displayed Florida's values for residents and visitors alike. In the Automobile Age, streets have supplemented – even supplanted – the central plaza and marketplace as a public forum for discussion and debate. Anger vented at tourists through bumper stickers carried nativist messages directly to visitors and fellow Floridians where they were most likely to be found – in the very arena of their most unpleasant encounters, the road network. In the winter of 1974, gas shortages pushed many residents to sport "Yankee Go Home" stickers, to the consternation of the tourist industry. One of the most popular stickers during the 1980s simply identified the driver as a "Florida Native."⁴⁷ Table 5.1 displays some of the put-downs for tourists and retirees found on bumper stickers in the 1980s and 1990s.

⁴⁵ See quote above from *The Empty Copper Sea*, 1978; found in Gray Watson's list of MacDonald quotations: http://256.com/gray/quotes/john_macdonald/ (retrieved August 2006).

⁴⁶ The accelerated rate of "naturalization" of interstate migrants has been observed as well in the West John M. Faragher, cf Donald J. Pisani, "The New West History Comes of Age," *Reviews in American History* 21 (March 1993): 169; Crackers kept on recruiting for reasons other than rapid assimilation: by 1998, there were more Floridians aged 0 to 18 years old than over 60. James G. Driscoll, "It's A Crazy-Quilt State, So What Does That Make People Who Want To Run It?," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, August 10, 1994, p. 12A; Lynda Keever, "Hometown, Fla.," *Florida Trend* (September 1999); Robert N. Jenkins, "Ups and Downs," *Florida Trend* (June 1998); Mark R. Howard, "A New Baby Boom Approaches," *Florida Trend* (June 1998).

⁴⁷ Wayne Markham, "Tourism's Outlook is Dismal," *Miami Herald*, 17 November 1974; B. Drummond Ayres Jr., "End of Oil Embargo Arrives Too Late....," *NYT*, 22 March 1974, 23.

Table 5.1: Florida Bumper Stickers, 1980s-1990s.⁴⁸**On tourism and migration**

Keep Florida green; stay home and send money.
 If It's Tourist Season, Why Can't We Kill Them?
 If it's tourist season... Why can't we shoot 'em?
 It's tourist season. Have you bagged your quota?
 Don't shoot! I'm a local
 Welcome to Florida! Now go home!
 Welcome to our beaches. Now go home.
 Beautify Florida! Put a Yankee on a bus.
 Save Florida! When you leave take someone with you.
 Happiness is a Canadian headed north with a Michigander under each arm.
 Happiness is 100,000 Canadians going home with a braying New Yorker under each arm.
 We don't care how you do it up North!!
 If you love NY, take I-95 north.
 If everything was better up North, why don't you go back?
 Florida Native
 100% Cracker
 (A picture of a shark, saying:) "Got Snowbirds?"
 (A picture of a shark, saying:) "Send more snowbirds, the last ones tasted great"
 So many snowbirds... so little freezer space
 Snowbird
 Dig a moat at the border, stock it with Florida's gators, use the dirt to raise New Orleans
 Florida. I wasn't born here, but I got here as fast as I could

On traffic conditions

Florida, the "No Blinker" State
 Turn signals! What a concept!
 When I Grow Old, I'm Going North and Driving Slow.
 Pray for Me, I drive Highway 19.
 Workers left lane, tourists right!
 Not ALL of us are on vacation!
 Some of us have to get to WORK.
 This isn't road rage. This is righteous anger.

⁴⁸ Phillips, "Flocking Together": 24; "Reverse Migration: Going Home," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 10 May 1997, 16F; Bob Swift, "Florida Switched on AC, Became Hot Property," *Miami Herald*, 17 May 1990, 2F; Keever; Mormino, "Eden to Empire: Florida's Shifting Dreamscape," *Forum* 24 (Spring 2001): 10; Slinger: 80; Kathy English, "Florida Prospers on Canadian Dollard," *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1986, A12; bumper stickers web pages (retrieved September 2002 where not specified): www.yuckles.com/flbump.htm; www.send4fun.com/floridasignsp.htm; Boca Jeff, "The Top-Ten Palmy Paradise Bumper Stickers," mywebpages.comcast.net/bocajeff/pages/bocajeff.html; uptowncity.com/comedy/BSticker/Regional/region.htm; "young at heart" submitted by E. Kriengkraipetch, Ithaca (NY), November 1998: jokepost.com/bumper-18.html; submitted by Shirley D. Kennedy, Florida, July 1993: humor.catweasel.org/Site1/Digests/H9307070.php#Joke2 (all former retrieved September 2002); see also the Cafepress.com website, in the marketplace section, where a search for "Florida" bumper stickers turned up more than 8000 designs (Retrieved September 2006).

A bumper sticker was better than a bump on the head. The sticker, like a letter to an editor or graffiti, was a way to let off steam; as Floridians like Grimes and Hiaasen have remarked, the ritualistic mocking of out-of-state drivers had a cathartic and defensive nature, even as it helped the permanent residents of a state with such multiple and elusive identities as Florida to find common ground by denigrating visitors and snowbirds.⁴⁹ In sum, the discourse about the visitors was always as much, if not more, a comment about their hosts. Consider this observation by Carl Hiaasen about snowbird and tourist drivers:

...most of these folks are perfectly decent people of normal intelligence who are launched into traffic with little more than a crude map (generously provided by the rental car company) that shows how to get out of the airport parking lot, and that's all. Distractions abound, particularly in South Florida – construction detours, high-speed police chases, roads mysteriously renamed after felons, bankers and politicians. No wonder tourist drivers get confused!⁵⁰

Were befuddled visitors the biggest problem in South Florida? Maybe, maybe they could be blamed for the "construction detours" (as a human epitome for the growth ethic) but crime ("high-speed police chases") corruption ("roads mysteriously renamed after felons") and unaccountable elites ("bankers and politicians") were difficult to pin on tourists and snowbirds – even if they did drive like donkeys.

5.4 Environmental Protection as a Slower-Growth Strategy

Floridians did more than vent. They took action. And the community-building that they did through such means as tourist-bashing made *legislative* action possible. Coalitions formed to enact laws to mitigate the environmental damage being done by rapid growth. Environmentalism became a popular cause. Florida's environmental

⁴⁹ Peter Sleight, "This Resident Enjoys Season Over on the Other Side of Town," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 March 1986, 2SE.

⁵⁰ Hiaasen, "Look Out! That Guy in the Rental Car' ...Smash," *Miami Herald*, 7 January 1991, 1B.

movement had its origins in the 1920s, when a citizens' committee, the Tropic Everglades National Park Association, demanded the protection of the Everglades; Congress voted the Everglades Bill in 1934, but it took another thirteen years to purchase the land. In 1947, one of the committee's members, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, published *The Everglades: River of Grass*. Reprinted many times since, the shockwaves sent by this book still stir the national environmental movement. The Association and Douglas' cause was taken up by *Miami Herald's*, John D. Pennekamp and in December 1947 President Harry S. Truman inaugurated the Everglades National Park, the first in the US to be justified by the protection of biological attributes. In one sense, the victory had come quickly – a mere five years between the Association's formation and the vote in Congress – but in fact it had taken three decades to fashion, in great part to appease Monroe County leaders, who resented the disappearance of all this taxable land. Such delays would be norm in Florida, for damaging development practices had become firmly embedded in the civic and political cultures of the state by the 1920s.

However, those cultures contained a tourist exception that environmentalists could use to advantage: the broadcasters of the Florida Dream had to save some natural beauty to stay in business. Conservation could become serious policy if defined as essential for tourism. For that reason, the Palm Beach area received sanitary sewers in the early 1950s, to rid Lake Worth, the salty lagoon between the beach and the mainland, of pollution. A concern with profitable beauty helped foster the creation of the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park in December 1960 to protect the coral reefs off Key Largo; most of the park was underwater.⁵¹ Similarly a project for restoring eroded beaches on Virginia Key

⁵¹ C.E. Wright, "Palm Beach Marina," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, XX13; Pennekamp State Park: 96,000 acres (75 square miles), 92,000 of them underwater; Luther J. Carter, *The Florida Experience: Land and Water*

and Key Biscayne, south of Miami Beach, with sand dredged from the bottom of Biscayne Bay, was blocked in February 1967 when conservationists warned of threats to recreational fishing.⁵²

Environmentalism was gaining potency (or at least plausibility) because many of Florida's natural resources were being depleted to the verge of contradicting the Edenic version of the Florida Dream. Lost Eden definitely loomed as a theme when water shortages happened, and water rationing became necessary in South Florida. Years of draining its marshes having lowered the water table, wells were spurting out brackish water. Water shortages and rationing became a regular happening from the early 1960s onwards, and a permanent feature by the mid-1980s in Pinellas County (St. Petersburg). In response to the water crisis, by early 1967 marshland drainage had ended in south Dade County⁵³ and by 1970 had been curtailed throughout South Florida. In the spring of 1971, a drought, caused by a combination of overpopulation, water mismanagement, and the seasonal coincidence of the tourist and dry seasons, sparked widespread fires in the Everglades, sending clouds of smoke over Miami. As most Americans confused the Everglades with its southern lagoons, the grass fires were almost as damaging to Florida's image as the burning Cuyahoga River was to Cleveland's. In addition, the 1971 drought

Policy in a Growth State (Baltimore, 1974), 161; Archbold, "Battleground," *Miami Herald*, 6 February 1977, 1B.

⁵² Archbold, "Metro Sticks to Guns," *Miami Herald*, 8 February 1967, 18A; J. Clarke, "Key Biscayne Retrieves Beach From the Ocean," *NYT*, 7 December 1969, sect. 10:3; "Sport Fishing is Fun," *Florida Trend* 9 (July 1966): 34.

⁵³ In 1967, environmentalists prevented the removal of a plug on a levee in South Dade: Charles Whited, "Conservationists Keep Fighting," *Miami Herald*, 7 March 1967, B1; Nordheimer, "Development Boom in Southeast Florida Megalopolis," *NYT*, 22 April 1973, 44; R. Bruce Stephenson, *Visions of Eden: Environmentalism, Urban Planning, and City Building in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1900-1995* (Columbus, 1997), 7; Jan Tuckwood, *Our Century: Featuring The Palm Beach Post 100* (West Palm Beach, 1999), 65-69; Leon F. Bouvier and Bob Weller, *Florida in the 21st Century: The Challenge of Population Growth* (Washington, DC, 1992), 147-150, 152; Carter, 26; Nixon Smiley, "After 4 Decades, Hoover Dike Nearly Done," *Miami Herald*, 12 March 1967, 5M; Pennekamp, "New Salt Danger to Park," *Miami Herald*, 8 February 1967, 7A; Cleo and Mesouf, 89, 92, 93; Pinellas County Planning Department, *Pinellas County: Historical Background* (St. Petersburg, 1995), 65, 87.

accelerated saltwater intrusion into Pinellas and Miami wells, impelling water rationing along the Gold Coast and Tampa Bay.⁵⁴

As in many other places at the time, oil also became a matter for environmental concern. In 1962, as Miami leaders weighed the creation of Seadade, an oil refinery and deep-water port in southern Biscayne Bay, thirteen local landowners created the City of Islandia, to cash in on the project. In response, Miami Beach authorities asked the federal Department of the Interior in 1963 to protect their stake in the Bay by designating part of it as a national monument; they also, sued Dade County to prevent the construction of the refinery, as it would constitute a "public nuisance." In 1964 Hardy Matheson was elected Metro Commissioner (for Dade County) on a conservationist platform, with the editorial support of the *Miami Herald* and financial support of vacuum cleaner magnate Herbert W. Hoover, Jr. Soon thereafter, Seadade was killed by Metro Commissioners.⁵⁵

The next debate came in 1965 when developers planned luxury developments for the southern tip of Key Biscayne and, further south, for Elliot Key in the paper town of Islandia. John Pennekamp and his colleague Bill Baggs at the *Miami News* sought to block them by seeking state and federal protection for the two areas, on the grounds that there were few other pristine, public beaches left in Miami-Dade. The state government responded in the spring of 1966 by purchasing land for a state park on Cape Florida, while Miami-area voters countered the developers' machinations by electing Florida's first Republican governor since Reconstruction, Claude R. Kirk, Jr., on a conservationist

⁵⁴ Stephenson, 7; Tuckwood, 65-69; Bouvier and Weller, 147-150, 152; Carter, 26.

⁵⁵ Clarke Ash, "Miami Beach Worries About Shoreline," *NYT*, 19 May 1963; Carter, 161.

platform. The US Congress responded in turn in 1968 by creating the Biscayne Bay National Monument.⁵⁶

This battle won, more or less, nuclear power triggered the next chain reaction. In the late 1960s the Florida Power and Light Company built a nuclear power plant at Turkey Point on Biscayne Bay at the site of a conventional power station. By 1970 the plant had attracted critical public, state, and federal scrutiny for dumping excessive amounts of hot water in the Bay, killing marine flora and fauna. An airport became the next environmental issue, when protests in 1971 stopped the construction of a large airport west of Miami in the Big Cypress Swamp.⁵⁷

In October 1972, John B. Orr, Jr., the mayor of Miami-Dade, newly elected by clinging to the coattails of the conservationist movement, promoted a countywide Master Plan. Although the new plan intentionally slowed population growth by charging the costs of infrastructural construction to developers and aimed at preserving agricultural land, swamps and other wetlands,⁵⁸ it did not satisfy environmentalists, who objected that it applied only to unincorporated areas and left intact pro-growth, local zoning ordinances.

At the state level, Governors Claude Kirk and Reubin Askew both espied the political benefits of environmental protection, the latter convening the South Florida Water Management Conference in September 1971. In his 1972 opening address to the Florida legislature, Askew said that "Florida, like California, is in great danger of becoming a 'paradise lost'." The same year, the legislature, taking heed, enacted four major

⁵⁶ C.E. Wright, "Florida Acquires New Lands for State Parks," *NYT*, 20 November 1966, xx4; Mansfield, "Privateering Public Land?," *Miami Herald*, 6 February 1967, 6A; John Pennekamp, "Scenic Islandia Highway," *Miami Herald*, 9 March 1967, 6A; Pennekamp, "Stand for Oceanfront Drive Strikes Home," *Miami Herald*, 11 March 1967, 6A.

⁵⁷ George C. Wilson, "U.S. Threatens Fla. Firm With Pollution Suit," *The Washington Post*, 25 February 1970, a3; Archbold, "Battleground," *Miami Herald*, 6 February 1977, 1B.

⁵⁸ Carter, 175-177.

environmental statutes: the Environmental Land and Water Management Act, the Water Resources Act, the Land Conservation Act, and the Comprehensive Planning Act.⁵⁹ In the following months, voters approved a \$240 million bond issue to finance the purchase of land needed for these conservation measures.⁶⁰ After conservation proved its political value by reelecting Askew, the legislature approved in 1975 the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act, requiring all local governments to establish a planning agency to draw up – as the title said – a comprehensive plan. Each plan had to address a list of mandatory issues, and had to be drawn up after a minimum of two public hearings, in conformity with the state plan. By 1984, every county government had the requisite plan⁶¹. While many commentators saw the environmental reforms as toothless, their passage nonetheless pointed out a major shift in Florida's civic and political cultures.⁶²

Hence as the environmental movement grew, a peculiar and contested policy emerged to preserve Florida nature: "growth management," if not growth control. Florida's fragile ecosystems needed growth control as Canada's wilderness needed logging management. The growth management initiatives in Tallahassee, pioneering as they were in the state of the Great Land Boom, were mirrored at the local level. The campaign to preserve Florida, its community life and ecology, from the perils of growth began, predictably, in the Gold Coast areas most threatened by over-development. In the early 1970s, several communities have sought to preserve themselves by adopting slow- or anti-

⁵⁹ Carter, 117, 143, 144; Hubert B. Stroud, *The Promise of Paradise: Recreational and Retirement Communities in the United States since 1950* (Baltimore, 1995), 145, 146; "Paradise lost" quote: J.M. DeGrove, *Land, Growth, and Politics* (Washington, DC, 1984), 106-111.

⁶⁰ The first "area of critical state concern" was the Big Cypress Swamp, northwest of the Everglades, coveted by developers. It was soon followed by the Keys. Carter, 125, 132; Robert A. Caitlin, *Land Use Planning, Environmental Protection and Growth Management: The Florida Experience*, Chelsea, Mi, 1997), 41-44; Stroud, 149, 150; Nordheimer, "Florida Seeks to Curb Runaway Growth," *NYT*, 19 November 1973, 41.

⁶¹ Jerry Weitz, "From Quiet Revolution to Smart Growth: State Growth Management Programs, 1960 to 1999," CPL Bibliography 355-357, *Journal of Planning Literature* 14 (November 1999): 284, 288.

⁶² Caitlin, 1-3, 50-56, 58, 60; A.L. Himbert, "Gold Coast Rezoning," *NYT*, 11 January 1953, sect. 10:3; "Florida Debates Managing Growth," *NYT*, 6 January 1985, 21.

growth policies. One particularly famous move was Boca Raton's 1972 cap on housing units, accompanied by a restriction in new building permits. In 1973, Hollywood set a limit to the density of multi-family dwellings, to preserve its small-town atmosphere (in sharp contrast with neighboring Hallandale, which was becoming the state capital of condo towers).⁶³ In the spring of 1974, Dunedin (Pinellas County), then in the process of drawing up a comprehensive plan, imposed a month-long moratorium on all building permits and a six-month moratorium on zoning changes. In May 1975 the city government won a referendum authorizing it to charge the cost of building new infrastructure to developers of new subdivisions (the so-called "impact fees"). Meanwhile Stuart, fifty miles north of Miami, initiated a four-story limit on new construction, impact fees on developers, and a formal approval process for building projects. Many jurisdictions followed Stuart's example.⁶⁴

As impediments to growth developed, so too did opposition from impacted developers. Slow-growth battles in the Florida Keys were numerous and infamous. Victory was uncertain. In 1990, for example, pro-growth sentiment prevailed, voting down a proposal in Monroe County to charge a 50-cents-per-car toll on the highway leading to the Keys to fund the protection of marine wildlife.⁶⁵ By contrast, fear of growth won out when, in the fall of 1996, county authorities proposed to widen highway US1 to four lanes between Florida City and Key Largo, allegedly to facilitate emergency

⁶³ "3 Small Florida Cities Put Brake on Growth," *The Washington Post*, 7 April 1973; Boca: *Miami Herald*, 17 December 1972; R.D. Shaw, Jr., "Will Disney Success Spoil Orlando Area?," *Miami Herald*, September 1971; Wellisz, "Character of Beach is at Stake," *Miami Herald*, 4 December 1988, 1A; Teresa Mears, "Hollywood (the Other One) Gets a Makeover," *NYT*, 3 May 1998, sect. 11:7; Lisa J. Huriash, "Canadian Winter: The Best Way to Spend it is in South Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, C1; John Tanasychuk, "Au Revoir?," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 April 2001, 1E.

⁶⁴ Gregory Jaynes, "As Florida Grows, So Does Concern About Saving Sun-and-Sand Good Life," *NYT*, 7 July 1982, A17; *Dunedin* (Charlotte, NC, 1978), 131; Villano, "The Paradise Paradox," *Florida Trend* (February 2000).

⁶⁵ Hiaasen (26 November 1990), in *Paradise Screwed*, ed. Diane Stevenson (New York, 2001), 56.

evacuation in case of a hurricane. A majority opposed the proposed widening as a misrepresented, pro-growth measure that threatened the tourist value of the Keys. Carl Hiaasen explained the furor: "What's always made the Keys so special, and so alluring to visitors, was how different it was from Miami, Fort Lauderdale and the rest of urban Florida." Victory over the forces of growth was, however, temporary. The Army Corps of Engineers finally approved the plan in 2004, during a record-breaking hurricane season. Still fighting, the following year, a coalition of Keys residents sued the state government to stop works on that stretch of road.⁶⁶ The final outcome is as yet unknown.

In 1999, residents of the Keys upheld a county ordinance banning the rental of homes for periods of less than a month (28 days), in hopes of walling off residential neighborhoods from partying tourists. In the fall of that same year, anti-growth activists started a campaign to end the county's campaign to promote tourism in the Keys because it had been "too successful." They argued that the islands' growing popularity had pushed up rents by an oppressive 14 percent a year since 1970. Moreover, who needed more tourists? There were quite enough of them already – an average of 50,000 a day descending on a permanent population of 81,000. As a fateful sign of overcrowding, in 1999, Key West beaches had to be closed for a few days when the sewage treatment plant overflowed.⁶⁷

However piecemeal or local, growth controls were an unsettling innovation to those who profited from the bull market in Florida realty. Indeed, Boca Raton's growth controls had been branded as "un-American" by a real estate agent.⁶⁸ By the 1980s, such attitudes

⁶⁶ Hiaasen (6 October 1996), in *Paradise Screwed*, 400; David Villano, "Around The State: Miami/Dade - Southeast," *Florida Trend* (October 2004); Villano, "Southeast: Building Block," *Florida Trend* (April 2005).

⁶⁷ Villano, "The Paradise Paradox."

⁶⁸ un-American: *Miami Herald*, 17 December 1972.

struck most commentators and a significant part of the electorate as bizarre, given the mounting evidence (like a garbage pile) of environmental damage wreaked by Florida's passion for rapid growth. *Miami Herald* columnist Al Burt lamented: "Unmanaged growth did not do all of [the environmental damage], but it accelerated a process that need not have been inevitable. Unplanned, dollar-following growth guided by a treadmill philosophy and a myopic, 19th Century belief in no limits made it worse."⁶⁹

By the 1980s, a significant part of Florida's elites, and most of its intelligentsia, had embraced growth controls.⁷⁰ Tallahassee legislators enshrined growth controls with the Growth Management Act in 1985. Not only did it compel recalcitrant communities to draw up a growth plan, it also gave the state a veto power over local development projects. As well, it promoted the practice of charging to developers the costs of new road construction. In the Keys, Hillsborough and Collier Counties, the powers granted under the Growth Management Act were used to limit residential development to incorporated areas and core cities. In 1986, a citizens' watchdog group, the "1000 Friends of Florida," emerged to make sure the state held firm to controls.⁷¹

The 1000 Friends have had to be ever-vigilant, for growth controls remain a hot-button issue in Florida to this day. However, environmentalists are still pushing ahead: in 2004, growth-control advocates initiated a petition drive to put a growth-control referendum on the state ballot; the measure proposed that significant amendments to the

⁶⁹ Al Burt, "The Invasion Of Florida," *Miami Herald*, 10 February 1991, 1C; Michael Posner, "Miami's New Lease on Life," *MacLean's* (30 May 1983): 7; early manifestation of slow-growth talk, from Jack Orr, mayor of Miami-Dade county: Jon Nordheimer, "Development Boom in Southeast Florida Megalopolis....," *NYT*, 22 April 1973, 44; Nordheimer, "Florida Lawmakers Face Growth Issues," *NYT*, 3 April 1985, 16.

⁷⁰ among others, see "The Last Days of Florida Bay," columns published in the *Miami Herald* between June 1986 and February 1997, in *Paradise Screwed*, 48-65; Cynthia Barnett, "Coastal Waters: A Pattern of Distress," *Florida Trend* (June 2003); Villano, "The Paradise Paradox"; Tom Buckley, "Pollution Beginning to Blight Even the Florida Keys," *NYT*, 2 August 1970, sect. 10:3; Rory O'Connor, "It's Grow or Die for Small Tourist Attractions," *Florida Trend* 20 (November 1977): 81.

⁷¹ Tim O'Reiley, "Florida Law Begins to Influence Development," *NYT*, 27 August 1989, sect. 10:3; Julie Hauserman, "Bush Plans Looser Guide for Growth," *St. Petersburg Times*, 25 October 1999.

municipal and county plans would have to be approved by local voters. Petitions have been circulating to put the measure on the state ballot at the 2008 general election.⁷²

5.5 Community Regained?

Even as Floridians strove to strengthen the public control over growth, they also sought to reinforce their Florida identity in order to build a polity for the permanent residents. Some idea of the magnitude of this task can be gleaned from the story of the Festival of States. Since 1913 the snowbirds of St. Petersburg, their Florida capital, had been putting on this annual festival. It evolved into the Gulf Coast's most important communitarian celebration. The festival climaxed with the coronation of a beauty queen and a parade. The Queen was chosen among girls elected by the state societies, and the parade was a Parade of the States, one of which, from 1913 onward, was Canada. In the 1950s the festival's program even included the election of a Miss Canada.⁷³

The reverence in which Florida visitors were held, helped create the most important yearly local event in St. Petersburg – a celebration of the visitors' origins! Imagine: a city with so little sense of its own self that its premier community event featured *outsiders* – the local equivalent of firing off rockets on the 4th of July to celebrate the country's "British" roots. Eventually, local leaders felt uneasy with St. Petersburg's self-abasement. As the Festival outgrew the capacities of the Chamber of Commerce staff, a group of 50 business leaders, calling themselves the Suncoasters, took over the festival's operation in 1958. They promptly changed the name of the event to the Sunshine Festival to re-root the

⁷² Joe Newman, "Growth Control Bogs Down in Disputes," *Orlando Sentinel*, 30 May 2004; "Land-use Campaign Submits Signatures," *Ocala Star Banner*, 1 July 2004; "Questions and Answers" section of the "Hometown Democracy" initiative: www.flidahometowndemocracy.com (retrieved June 2007).

⁷³ Allen, "Florida, Canada's Hottest Province": 69.

event more firmly in local soil. While organizers retained a great part of the former schedule, they transformed the beauty pageant, which used to be a parade of 48 state queens, into the coronation ball of a Sun Goddess, chosen through a beauty pageant, among candidates from Florida colleges and universities. A Mr. Sun was chosen from among outstanding local leaders.⁷⁴

The same civic urge that transformed the Festival of States into an event for the entire community also brought one particularly colorful effort to redefine St. Petersburg in favor of its permanent population. In 1961, the city's publicity department announced that the 1950s had seen a rejuvenation of the population, and a group of local leaders set up a "Project 61" image-remaking campaign. Their first action was highly symbolic: the city government repainted the 4,000 green benches, their color closely associated in the public mind with the retired crowd, in more modern pastel. Initially, the original dark green was banned, but some retailers, breaking ranks, repainted their benches in snowbird green. The municipality relenting, a city ordinance in 1962 authorized all colors, even green.⁷⁵

St. Petersburg's struggle to define itself as more than a giant hotel *cum* rest home had its counterpart, sooner or later, in virtually every Florida community. Miami Beach spent the 1970s trying to rejuvenate its image and its clientele⁷⁶. In the 1990s, Hollywood

⁷⁴ C. Winn Upchurch, "Sunny Pageantry," *NYT*, 8 March 1959, sect. 10:25; Stephen J. Flynn, *Florida: Land of Fortune* (Washington, DC, 1962), 205, 206.

⁷⁵ John Durant, "A Brighter, Younger Look for St. Petersburg," *NYT*, 19 November 1961; John Durant, "A Face-Lifting....," *NYT*, 10 November 1963, sect. 10:13.

⁷⁶ "Miami Beach Changes Image," *Florida Trend* 16 (December 1973): 74; "Miami Beach Searches for Identity," *Florida Trend* 22 (April 1980); Nordheimer, "New Florida Countdown: Disney World is Opening," *NYT*, 1 October 1971, 26; Kleinberg, "Dade Tourist Industry too Sick for Cure," *Miami News*, 23 November 1978; "Slow Start Doesn't Worry Tourist Seekers," *Miami Herald*, 23 January 1977, 19K; Dan Fesperman, "'Mouse' Drains Business from S. Florida," *Miami Herald*, 18 September 1982, 14A; Robert A. Liff, "Tourism on Skids in Miami," *Orlando Sentinel*, 18 July 1983, C1; Johnson, "Florida Resorts," *Florida Trend* 18 (March 1976): 56; Martin Baron, "Industry Debated Central Florida's New 'Iron Wall'," *Miami Herald*, 9 July 1978, 6F; Mason, "Miami Beach Empty," *Miami News*, 24 June 1977; R.D. Shaw, Jr., *Miami Herald*, 19 September 1971; Elisabeth Wilson, "A Sunny Outlook for Tourism," *Florida Trend Yearbook 1986*, 152; Wayne Markham, "Tourism's Outlook is Dismal," *Miami Herald*, 17 November 1974; Robert

debated whether its small beachfront motels and mobile home communities were truly in the public interest. Their critics accused the city government of failing the permanent population by authorizing development that made the town look like a cheap, lower-class resort.⁷⁷

Whatever the strategy adopted, whether community re-branding, slow-growth policies, environmentalism or tourist-bashing, Floridians have evinced a growing need since 1960 to find a way to seal the fissiparous effects of mass tourism in order to build (or rebuild) genuine community. Floridians increasingly defined the tourist business as detrimental to the creation of a coherent, free-standing, autonomous and vital polity rooted in local soil. The goal was a state that provided work for its own citizens, and not simply surcease for outsiders. The jibes at tourists and snowbirds by Floridians therefore expressed their desire to build a state worthy of their young. America as a whole had not been a gerontocracy since Thomas Jefferson refused to wear a white wig, and it was high time for Florida to empower its working-age residents.

The most visible medium of Floridians' attempts to redefine their home was through the construction of folklore about the perils of allowing snowbirds and tourists on the state's byways. Floridians drove around with admonitory bumper sticks warning of gridlock, mendacious signal lights, and dangerously slow drivers in the same way that the State Highway Department posted signs advising of construction and lane-narrowing ahead. Another potent way to define Florida away from tourism was to have the state's intelligentsia broadcast fantasies of no-growth where visitors and boosters alike were

Turnbull, "Miami Beached?...", *Globe and Mail*, 15 July 1978, 10; Cathy Grossman Keller, "24 Hours in the Life of a Tourist," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1977, 3K.

⁷⁷ Samuel Grafton, "New Boom, New Blueprint, for Florida," *New York Times Magazine* (20 September 1959): 13.

punished by a fateful Retribution for their sins. Because the tourist industry had defiled Nature, natural forces were often the vectors of punishment in these fantasies. The advocates of planning and environmental controls used such fantasies – Florida Noir – for more than deterring potential tourists; they built a regulatory context for the eventual emancipation of Florida from the ravages of its addiction to mass tourism.

By these means, Florida in the era after World War II was increasingly being defined as an autonomous community in its own right, and less as a Sun and Fun fantasyland. Meanwhile, migration was also pushing Florida to evolve into something more than a tourist haven. As Florida has become younger, urban, and more Latin since the 1970s, it has been out-growing its Edenic, carnivalesque, sun-and-fun past, out-growing tourism as a central economic activity, as the essence of the Florida Dream. In a Florida where an increasing proportion of residents and visitors have become less loyal, even indifferent to their Northern roots, less likely to define Florida as merely an outpost of New York, Montréal, or Cleveland, the prospects of a locally rooted identity and polity have improved. Indeed, by the 1980s the newfound cosmopolitan, big-city atmosphere in Miami and Tampa had become a tourist attraction in itself by the 1980s.⁷⁸

One might say that the sub-tropical sun was hot enough to fuel a melting pot that was molding a Florida community. Ironically, the glass by which Floridians kindled their communal melting pot was the distorted lens through which tourists had long viewed their state. Community was being built through the discovery of a shared aversion to having

⁷⁸ Mike Donnelly is the leader of the CABA: Doreen Hemlock, "Florida & Nafta 5 Years Later," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 7 July 1999, 1D; Business & Industry Study Group, *Leadership Broward 1983-1984 initiative: "Has Broward County Been Mickey-Moused?,"* (Fort Lauderdale, 1983), 37; David Rieff, "Miami's Vice: Living in Illusion," *NYT*, 20 January 1989, 31; Laurie Hollman, "Champ of the Southeast," *St. Petersburg Times*, 1 November 1987, 1E; Allan Fotheringham, "Where the Dead Vote and Skaters Go Topless," *MacLean's* 111 (23 March 1998): 68; Sam Jacobs, "The Latin Touch," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1977, 27K; Coconut Grove, as a cosmopolitan Florida: Ben Barber, "Le Paris de Miami," *L'actualité* 11 (February 1986): 110, 111.

Florida defined primarily by tourism. Florida was more than a place to visit; by 2006 eighteen million people actually lived there, or more than all but three of the states.

As Floridians defined tourists, snowbirds and in-migrants as "the other" in order to define *themselves*, the question inevitably arose: were these three groups – especially the most problematic group, the snowbirds who occupied the most liminal position in Florida society – actually part of the community being built by Floridians? Most would answer by saying that tourists merely flitted through Florida; they made no pretense of wanting to belong there. In sharp contrast, most of the migrants who became permanent residents clearly hoped to fit into the community being built, even if they occasionally irked native-born Floridians by talking about how things were done in the North. But what about snowbirds? What exactly was their relationship to the community of Floridians? Did these sojourners behave more like tourists or more like settlers? Would they ever truly belong in a "normal" state in which most people did not directly benefit from tourism? In other words, will Florida community-building have to include or exclude the snowbirds? An answer is found in Chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 6

SNOWBIRDS IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY

It figures that snowbirds sought community. Most people do – even if it's the transient community of fellow travelers on a cruise ship, airport shuttle, or cross-country train. But did this quest bring them the grail, whether defined as friends with whom to hoist a cup or as an extended family? And did their search for community of snowbirds come at the expense of their rapport with Florida's community writ large? In other words, did snowbirds living in seniors-only condos, resort motels and trailer parks cement their own relationships by further fragmenting Florida's society?

Any discussion of the snowbirds' community-building must start with a discussion of their *flocking instinct*. First we must understand why they sought each other out once they arrived "in the land of gentle breezes" (outside of hurricane season) "where the peaceful waters flow?"¹ Anne Murray's snowbird was a loner, but not Florida's gregarious variety. This chapter is an inquiry into the reasons for, and manner of, their congregation. It will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of sojourning in flocks. Their gregarious exclusivity is, as the chapter shows, an oxymoron that strikes at Florida's dilemma in the twenty-first century, for it raises the ultimate question – Can a people prone to self-segregation play a role (other than as foil) for the reintegration of Florida? The proper place for attempting an answer to an *ultimate* question is clearly the *ultimate* chapter. The

¹ The quote is from "Snowbird," a song interpreted by Anne Murray, written by Gene MacLellan. www.seeklyrics.com (retrieved July 2007).

present one focuses exclusively on the snowbird clusters. It argues that these sought to create social cohesion among themselves through the usual devices of community-building: geographical clustering, affinity-based sociability, and cultural displays and performance.

6.1 Congregating by Affinity

In Chapter 4 we learned that geography, search spaces, chain migration, and the agency of snowbirds' hosts all help to explain snowbirds congregations. This chapter focuses on another factor, sociality, which is the tendency to form communities and societies, as the explanation of snowbird flocking. Vance Packard noted in the 1950s that retired persons moved because their sociability, and their ties to their reference group, decayed following retirement. They no longer socialized within their workplaces; their children had left home; and their families had been dispersed by career moves. Packard accordingly depicted their decision to move into retirement communities as a refuge from loneliness and from the opprobrium of no longer working amidst a civic culture devoted to hard work. It was difficult, to be a contented drone in a hive of busy bees; sociologist George Calvin Hoyt thus concluded in 1962 that a happy retirement depended on a communitarian environment capable of "supporting and reaffirming retirement and leisure roles."² In sum, retirement migration was closely linked to given life-cycle events.

A 1970s guidebook on retirement in Florida echoed Hoyt when justifying a move to Florida:

There's no sense staying in the place where you'd been in your prime, slowly fading out of the picture and becoming a shadow of your former self. Not

² Packard, *A Nation of Strangers* (New York, 1972), 92, 93, 96, 101-103; George Calvin Hoyt, *A Study of Retirement Problems* (1962) (San Francisco, 1975), 65, 87, 93, 123.

when you can pack up and head for Florida, where thousands of people like yourself are living on small but adequate fixed incomes.³

The guide assumed that retired persons and snowbirds, shorn from their lifetime roles as parents and workers, looked to retirement communities for belonging and *friendship*. Indeed, Hoyt's snowbird respondents, tenants of the Bradenton Trailer Park at the close of the 1950s, asserted that they enjoyed their neighborhood because of its sociability (55 percent) and social activities (15 percent). According to social critics like Vance Packard and Frances FitzGerald and snowbirds like Jacques and Marie-Rose Samoisette of Montréal, for decades now snowbirds have been seeking – and finding – communities with a vibrant sociability.⁴

"Seek and ye shall find" was the message from South Florida's promoters. By the 1950s they were advertising their projects as "retirement communities"⁵, as though a made-to-order, small-town, leisurely, and front-porch sociability awaited the elderly in Florida. As enticement, some snowbird developments included amenities likely to foster social intercourse, such as a laundry room, game room, shuffleboard lanes, a community hall and swimming pool.⁶

By seeking out well-equipped parks, buildings and resorts, snowbirds hoped to build community, but did they? Could the gathering of retired persons from a wide variety of horizons actually *achieve* community, when so many people find it so difficult in late modern society even to *conceive* of it? Judging from the findings of anthropologist Dean

³ Quoted by Alex Shoumatoff, *Florida Ramble* (New York, 1974), 37.

⁴ Curtis C. Roseman, *Changing Migration Patterns Within the U.S.* (Washington, DC, 1977), 5-8; Deborah H. Sullivan and Sylvia A. Stevens, "Snowbirds: Seasonal Migrants to the Sunbelt," *Research on Aging* 4 (June 1982): 166, 170.

⁵ A keyword search in the *New York Times* historical database found the term emerging in the late 1950s. It already then referred to Florida.

⁶ A. LaGreca, G.F. Streib, W.E. Folts, "Retirement Communities and Their Life Stages," *Journal of Gerontology* 40 (1985): 212, 213.

MacCannell, too much money could be a curse, the retiree condemned like Citizen Kane to wander in soul-crushing solitude amidst ice cold statuary and even colder servants. Snowbirds, by contrast, have generally dwelt in densely-populated condominium developments, campgrounds and mobile home parks. Spatial propinquity created a physical closeness that fostered relationships between neighbors, high levels of interaction, and a social closeness evocative of Emile Durkheim's "moral density."⁷

He conceived of "moral density" as a phenomenon that takes place in modernizing societies, whose population concentrations have fostered the division of labor. Retirement communities were a few steps further along in modernity that Durkheim lived to see. But they conformed to his general hypothesis: that the modern division of labor was creating specialized, social categories (and why not the "retired") who congregated by affinity. And a particularly strong affinity was to have given up work in a modern society, whose structural solidarity depended on differentiating groups and incorporating them into the social hierarchy built around the division of labor – or the ownership of the means of production. As status, class and identity have become a function of the "right" answer to the question "What do you do for a living?," those who no longer work (who have thereby dropped out of the grid), have felt the need to re-congregate in smaller, relatively undifferentiated social cells composed of people sharing a similar alienation from work.

"Moral density" has a special meaning in retirement communities because their members have so much in common⁸: their uprooting from the spheres of family and work, their concern for health and security, their leisurely lifestyle, their similar housing and

⁷ Quoted in MacCannell, "New Urbanism and Its Discontents," in *Giving Ground: The Politics of Propinquity*, eds. Michael Sorkin and Joan Copjec (New York, 1999), 109, 110.

⁸ In the words of social psychologist Muzafer Sherif, quoted by Greider and Krannich, "Neighbouring Patterns, Social Support, and Rapid Growth," *Sociological Perspectives* 28 (January 1985): 68.

financial resources.⁹ The uniformity of snowbird communities could, of course, become oppressive. Uniformity could foster exclusion: thus, one condo community in South Florida dominated by retirees who had taken up permanent residence sought to keep out newcomers (always potentially disruptive), snowbirds (mere sojourners), and widows (a threat to wedded bliss) in order to maximize its social homogeneity¹⁰.

It was not only physical propinquity and socio-economic homogeneity that prompted snowbirds to interact, as anyone who had ridden a high-rise elevator can attest. MacCannell has also argued that snowbird community-building has had a foundation in the shared weaknesses and insecurities of retired persons. He thus wrote: "deep unity at the group level can only be based on shared *lack*" – or "shared predicament" (in the words of social psychologist Muzafer Sherif).¹¹ Some of the "lacks" associated with retirement have been powerful social adhesives. The predicament of old age has fashioned strong bonds between retired persons – as poverty, loneliness, ill health and the need for security have always been a powerful glue for bringing and keeping a group together. Even those not yet poor, not yet enfeebled, feared (as youth fear know not) these afflictions and so appreciated the wisdom of "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you." An example of this "lack-based" congregation was the tendency for widows and divorcees to preserve their ties to a snowbird or retiree community. *Circa* 1960, Hoyt noted that widowed females occupied a fifth of the trailers in the Bradenton Trailer Park. St. Petersburg's Highland Mobile Park meanwhile had 26 percent of its units occupied by single females and eight percent by single males. Late in 1978, Wilder's Park, opened in

⁹ MacCannell, 122, 123.

¹⁰ Deborah Kestin Van Den Hoonaard, "Life on the Margins of a Florida Retirement Community," *Research On Aging* 24 (January 2002): 63.

¹¹ MacCannell, 125.

1954 in the South side of St. Petersburg, was literally nearing the end of a natural life-cycle: 41 percent of its units were occupied by single females, who were intensely immersed in the park's sociability. In the late 1990s, another study estimated that between 15 and 18 percent of year-round recreational-vehicle dwellers were unattached adults, widows mostly. In 2000, the Century Village retirement community, near West Palm Beach, had more than 62 percent of its population composed of females, and 65 percent of its households were made of unattached persons. In retirement communities – or in package tours to Florida (as reported by an Ottawa newspaper) – lonely female snowbirds could find help, understanding, and like-minded friends of their own sex. Male companions were much scarcer in a state where only twelve percent of the men aged over sixty-five had lost their spouse, as opposed to 44 percent of the women (1995 data).¹²

If "shared lack" was a factor of community-building, one of these lacks originated in the very process of *moving away* from a distant, northern home. As we saw in Chapter 3, the shared experience of the southbound journey was a formative one for travelers: when they arrived in Florida, travelers easily recognized people with similar Northern roots, and often the first thing they had in common was the trip itself. Many a friendship was probably forged by a common love of Stuckey's pecans or mutual loathing of Georgia speed traps. Their first instinct was to seek the community of people from their own state: hence their first affinity groups in St. Petersburg were state societies; these were soon

¹² Century Village in Palm Beach County had a population of 7,200, with a median age of 77.7. Ottawa paper: Manon Lanthier, "Pour qui déteste les hivers d'enfer de l'Outaouais...", *Le Droit*, 4 January 1993, 20; Trish Valenti, "La Floride comme paradis du troisième âge," *La Presse*, 1 April 1995, H9; Hoyt, 65; Dorothy A. Counts and David R. Counts, *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America* (Peterborough 1996), 82; Sara Rimer, "For Aged, Dating Game is Numbers Game," *New York Times*, 23 December 1998, A1; Wilder's (770 32nd Ave. S., St. Pete) and Highland Mobile Park (3663 56th Ave. N., St. Peterburg): Special Collections and Archives, USF St. Petersburg, Wilder's Park records, box 2, folder II; Lee Irby, "Taking Out the Trailer Trash," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 79 (fall 2000): 189.

joined by scores of other associations organized around the North's social geography.¹³ As a case in point, Century Village in West Palm Beach in 2005 boasted 309 clubs and associations, including Greater Philadelphia, Brooklyn and Queens clubs, a chapter of retired New York City transit employees, as well as Irish, Italian-American, and Latino clubs.¹⁴

In the 1950s, one New Yorker found out that fellow residents of the Empire State were, while in Florida, more anxious to socialize with him than they might be back home, because of sharing a common stock: "[T]here are congenial waves of the hand from persons in other New York cars whom I have never seen before, evidencing a camaraderie that is both heart-warming and slightly embarrassing to a shy soul like myself."¹⁵ According to geographers Mings and McHugh, North American snowbirds practiced a social "insidedness" that produced a neighborhood networking and distinctive subculture that both the migrants themselves and the neighboring permanent residents have long regarded as the central defining feature of the snowbird lifestyle¹⁶.

For decades now, snowbird life has been a social whirlwind. Clubs and associations have been numerous and active, mostly in the organization of shuffleboard and dart leagues, card games, dancing evenings, potlucks, and the like. Because these events were designed to socialize the uprooted, they were inclusive – open to participants from beyond the host club membership and from beyond the retirement community where the event

¹³ Rhonda J. Miller, "Clubs Reunite Old Friends," *Fort. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 8 March 2002, C1.

¹⁴ Website of the United Community Organizations, of Century Village in West Palm Beach: www.centuryvillagewpb.org/organizations.htm (retrieved August 2006).

¹⁵ Other types of conversation: wistful (from a man who moved from NY to Fla, years ago), meteorological (from a person asking about the "snow up there," coincidental (from another man from Westchester, same street); garrulous (is it true that in New York these things happen?), booster (Florida can't be beat), Neighborly (other New Yorkers, inviting for dinner), sarcastic ("Hi, smart money!"): Theodore Pratt, "A New Yorker in Florida," *New York Times*, 17 March 1957, sect. 10:5.

¹⁶ Point forcefully asserted in McHugh and Ming's observation of Phoenix area RV parks: Kevin E. McHugh and Robert C. Mings, "The Circle of Migration: Attachment to Place in Aging," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86 (September 1996): 541.

was being held. Hence, geographic affinity by northern origins was often a way to reach out to snowbirds from anywhere, as well as a way to look for like-minded souls. Thus, trailer dwellers in Punta Gorda boasted to a 1952 guidebook about the weekly dances in their park's hall.¹⁷ In 1984 the Colony Cove trailer park near Bradenton had Canadian, Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts clubs, who held popular monthly picnics; and during the 1980s and 1990s, the Suncoast Michigan Club gathered 300 to 400 guests to its meetings.¹⁸

How does word of such a gathering circulate beyond the host club or park? To some degree, through banners, posters, and the roadside signs of retirement communities – and through the grapevine as well. But also through the pages of "snowbirds periodicals" such as the Colony Cove park newsletter, the *Wilder Park News*, the *Canada News* and *Le Soleil de la Floride*. By tradition, these have accepted no charge for advertising the meetings and parties of the clubs and associations. They have also regularly published photographs and accounts of the events attended by local snowbirds, with their names and geographical origins. Some have even published the names and origins of all newcomers to the community, thereby making it easier for fellow snowbirds to greet them by name.¹⁹

Often, club and associational memberships reflected a "shared lack": so many people wanted to join the 50-strong volunteer security patrol of Sun City Center (on the

¹⁷ George and Jane Dusenbury, *How to Retire in Florida* (New York, 1952), 180.

¹⁸ John A. Cutter, "Rebound Retirees Reverse the Normal Migration Patterns," *St. Petersburg Times*, 26 July 1994, 12G; *Colony Cove Breeze*, by Capital Management Real Estate Company, November 1984; James F. Lynch, "Florida Luring Jerseyans," *NYT*, 2 May 1982, sect. 11:14; William E. Geist, "Allure of Florida Palms," *NYT*, 18 January 1983, b2.

¹⁹ *Floride Française* and *Wilder's Park News*, the latter like most mobile home park newsletters named and located newcomers in the Wilder's Park Collection, in the Archives and Special Collections at the St. Petersburg Campus of the University of South Florida.

southern outskirts of Tampa) that it actually had to turn down applicants.²⁰ This patrol was, according to Frances Fitzgerald, an instance of community re-foundation in reaction to America's social fragmentation, and a way to counter it. Volunteer patrols were a feature commonly found in mobile home parks catering to snowbirds and retired persons, but were rare in condo communities, because the parks had a more intense sociability and mutualism.

While snowbirds were bonding in trailer parks while patrolling their perimeter, in condo buildings, the tenants' association usually was the prime agent of community formation. As a Miami journalist observed in 1982,

Condominium and community associations establish and preserve a community pattern – a residential neighborhood that cannot be changed by gradual deterioration. Even when moving to an entirely new locality, people can experience a feeling of "community" surrounded by neighbors of common background or interest.²¹

Despite his dubious claim that a condominium association could defy entropy, the journalist correctly perceived that common condition of co-ownership made necessary an association to handle common business, but which, once formed, could also share and transmit common values. The neighborhood associations of Northern cities had always had a similar duality: they brought people together not only to socialize but also to preserve property values by keeping out unwanted Others. Condos were the North American norm: their community was built *more through segregation and exclusion*

²⁰ Sun City Center was developed in 1960 by Dell Webb: 4 sq. miles, population 9,200 in 1986, 16,300 in 2000; Leland Hawes, *Tampa Tribune*, 18 January 1986; *Tampa Tribune*, 20 November 1995; the first Century Village opened in 1968, in West Palm Beach. The fourth sprang up in Pembroke Pines, for total expected occupancy of 60,000; at Census 2000, there were 7,200 persons living in the West Palm Beach sector, median age 77.7; Michele Cohen, "Century Village is 'Way of Life'," *Broward in the 80s: A Progress Report* (Fort Lauderdale, 1985), 15; FitzGerald, *Cities on a Hill: A Journey Through Contemporary American Cultures* (New York, 1986), 390, 414, 415; "Century Village Florida, Detailed Profile": www.city-data.com/city/Century-Village-Florida.html (retrieved June 2005).

²¹ Jack Holeman, "Condo's Living Secret: Learning to Live Together," *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1982, 8H.

(what social science calls the "bonding" type of social capital; by race or religion in one, by age or geographic origins in the other) rather than *through integration and inclusion* (the "bridging" type).²²

Beyond the formal settings of ownership, clubs, and associations, it was standard practice in snowbird and retirement communities to greet (desirable) newcomers and visitors, in order to accelerate their integration into the community. Anthropologists Dorothy and David Counts both remarked on the widespread practice of greeting newcomers, offering advice, help, food, drink, and information upon their arrival in recreational vehicle parks. This practice was ubiquitous in "snowbirds periodicals" as well.²³ Through such informalities, snowbird and retirement communities encouraged newcomers to socialize with their near neighbors.

Can any generalizations be made about the nature and quality of that socializing? Would it suit everyone or did one have to be a particular sort of person to enjoy it? For an answer, we must turn to the best-studied snowbird locale – the trailer park. Academic fascination with mobile homes seems limitless, either because a trailer park is a nicely contained object for study, its world typically delimited by a barrier fence; or possibly, trailers simply transfix academics, like a mongoose looking at a snake, by the horrifying, yet intriguing thought of someone actually living in a metal box. Trailer parks also stimulate sociological and anthropological inquiry because they seem like more plausible places to look for vestiges of community than in high-rise condos or cheap motels. Many

²² The affinity of mobile home communities with informal segregation is identified by many commentators, including G.C. Hoyt and Morton Rubin, in his review of Sheila K. Johnson's participant observation of a California mobile home retirement community, titled *Idle Haven*: in *Contemporary Sociology* 2 (July 1973): 415.

²³ *Floride Française* and *Wilder's Park News*, the latter like most mobile home park newsletters named and located newcomers in the Wilder's Park Collection, in the Archives and Special Collections at the St. Petersburg Campus of the University of South Florida.

of the parks are sufficiently large, isolated, and suburban to develop community – at least, that has been the working hypothesis. It may also be that researchers knew that they would receive a warmer welcome at trailer parks. Why study the "fierce people" when, "Trailerites are gregarious, conversational and friendly, or they wouldn't be trailerites,"²⁴ as a guidebook on retirement in Florida observed in the 1950s.

By 1951 already, trailers were famous for being patronized by retired persons: "most trailer people are at an age that prefers sunning and canasta to skiing," said one account. The Bradenton Trailer Park had a recreational hall with room for 1,200 persons, twenty-two shuffleboard courts, and eight horseshoe lots to promote sociability.²⁵ Bradenton was not unique: most mobile home parks offered a congenial setting for neighborhood sociability by virtue of what an author called their "suburban appearance, recreational lifestyle, and small town atmosphere." The parks encouraged a dense, informal, neighborly sociability centered on small talk, and the sharing of food and drink. When asked, snowbirds declared the community feeling in mobile home parks to be superior to condo buildings; the parks were more tightly knit, more family-like, their dwellers more eager to help.²⁶ The small-town metaphor meant more than a convenient image for trailer dwellers: many of the denizens of mobile home and recreational vehicle parks hailed from

²⁴ Hoyt, 69; George and Jane Dusenbury, *How to Retire in Florida* (New York, 1952), 178; Sullivan and Stevens: 170, 173.

²⁵ Irby: 186; R.F.W., "Home in a Park," *NYT*, 12 December 1954, XX15; R.F.W., "Western Florida," *NYT*, 1 November 1953, 20XX; Rick Barry, *Tampa Tribune*, 17 November 1972; Thomas Collins, "The Golden Years," *Miami Herald*, 20 March 1955, 6F; Pinellas had 6700 mobile home spaces around 1960; In 1965: 280 parks, 19,000 units; 24,000 spaces in 1972. 1980, 300 parks, 53,035 mobile homes; 1988, 47,000 units; Pinellas County Health Department, *Annual Report*, 1952, 1965; Pinellas County Planning Department, *Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan*, vol. 15: "Housing," adopted 8 August 1989, amended 16 April 1991, 37, 38; Pinellas County Planning Dept., *Pinellas County Housing Study* (Clearwater, 1980), 31; Manatee County Planning Agency, *The Manatee Plan: A Management System for Manatee County*, "Plan Elements, Draft 1" (Bradenton, ca. 1978), 10.

²⁶ Elaine A. Ellis, "Going Mobile," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 22 April 1990, PB6; Exerpts from the "Mobile Home Status Report: An Analysis of Existing Mobile Home Conditions in Manatee County" in Manatee County Planning and Development Department, *The Manatee Plan*, "Plan Elements, Draft 1," 72, 73.

small-town backgrounds. For example, nearly 65 percent of the Bradenton Trailer Park's residents in the early 1960s came from communities with populations smaller than 100,000; 24 percent of them, from towns of less than 5,000 souls.²⁷

Sociability in mobile home parks was encouraged by their self-containment (often within a wall) small lot sizes, the physical closeness of units, and by the small amount of traffic on the lanes inside the parks²⁸. Even those who did more motoring than walking had frequent encounters, because mobile home parks had only or two entrances, their developers trying to keep costs down by reducing to a minimum the street mileage they would have to build and maintain within the park.²⁹

Illustrations 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 show the closeness of mobile homes between each other, and the self-contained layout of mobile home parks in the Hollywood and St. Petersburg areas at the turn of the twenty-first century.

²⁷ Sainte Madeleine, near Saint-Hyacinthe along Highway 20, is the most notorious of the 138 private campgrounds in Québec, more than half of which are within an 80 km radius from Montréal; Domaine de Rouville, near the former, hosts each summer 1500 to 1700 families, within the town of Sain-Jean-Baptiste-de-Rouville: G.-H. Germain, "Maîtres chez nous!," *L'actualité* 8 (October 1983): 78; André Boucher, *Guide des Véhicules récréatifs* (Montréal, 1989), 19, 42; Hoyt, 76, 126; a history of the "Noel du campeur" in Rouville: "Le Noël du campeur au Domaine de Rouville," www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Noel/franc/rouvil.htm. (retrieved September 2006).

²⁸ A fact that encourages neighbourly relations, as is pretty well known. See for instance W. H. Whyte's *Organization Man* (Garden City, NY, 1957), 372-386.

²⁹ This capacity for self-contained sociability is illustrated by the fact that most nudist resorts in Florida were mobile home parks: in 1973 opened the Seminole Health Club mobile home park, in West Broward. It was the fourth biggest nudist camp in the United States. In the late 1980s, the biggest nudist resort in North America was a mobile home resort called Cypress Cove, Florida. Victor Janoff, "Travelling Light," *Saturday Night* 104 (June 1989): 42; John Platero, "Floridians who Live in the State of Undress," *Orlando Sentinel*, 11 May 1981.



Illustration 6.1: Mobile Home Fronts, Hollywood Area, 2002. Source: Author's collection.

Illustration 6.2: Self-Contained Layout and Density (compare with "normal" single-family homes to the left) of Broward County Mobile Home Parks, Hallandale Beach Boulevard. Source: TerraServer USA database of aerial photography, sponsored by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and MSN. <http://terraserver-usa.com/> (Picture from 1998, retrieved May 2006)

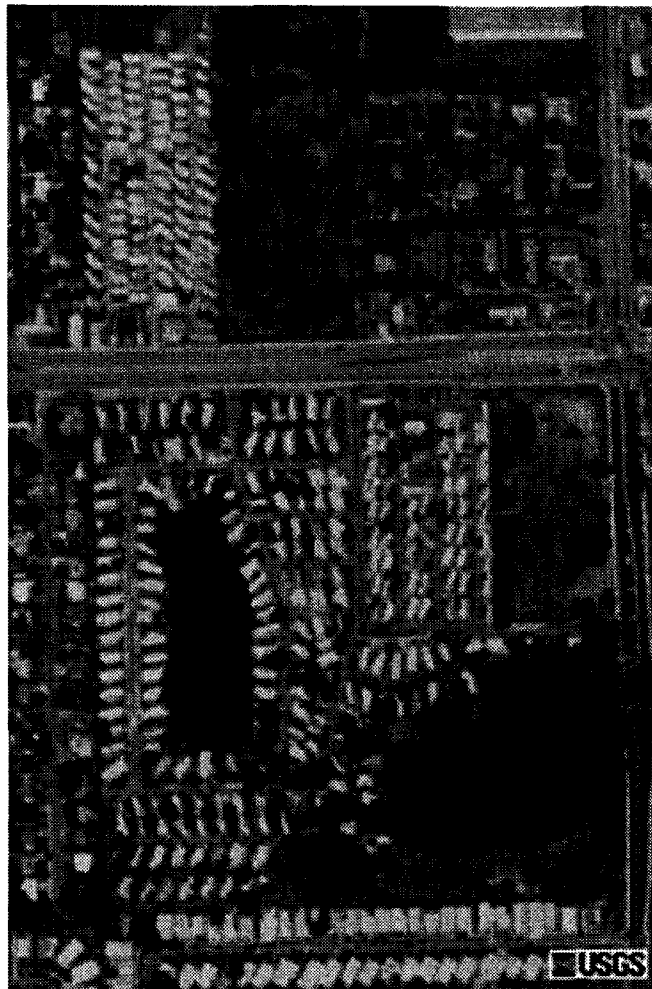




Illustration 6.3: Self-Contained and Dense Mobile Home Parks of the St. Petersburg Area, Pinellas Park, Corner of Gandy Bd. and US 19. Source: TerraServer USA (Picture from 1998, retrieved 2006).

As Illustration 6.3 shows, sociability in Pinellas Park revolved around a central common area featuring a large clubhouse or recreational hall located at the center or entrance of the park where affinity groups could meet. Given its importance to social life, it is important to know whether most trailer parks had such a center. According to a retirement community guide published by Woodall's in 1980, nearly 90 percent of South Florida's retirement communities, a majority of them mobile-home parks, had a

recreational hall and a schedule of recreational activities. But this statistic may have been misleading even for 1980, because Woodall's was mainly interested in the high end of the retirement market, and "community centers" were a must in the more expensive parks (in nearly every case of the ninety-eight mobile home parks posh enough to be a 2006 list for Central and South Florida.³⁰ But what of the ruder sort? A 1985 list published by the Florida Chamber of Commerce indicated that only 14 percent of mobile-home parks contained a clubhouse. Possibly some clubhouses went unreported, but many parks were either too small or too miserly, or their tenants too few and poor, to pay for such a facility.³¹

Outside the clubhouse, mobile home parks (and condo developments) sought to promote congeniality and propinquity by the careful siting of homes in relation to each other and to footpaths, sidewalks, roads, and common areas facilities. Snowbirds, in other words, became the beneficiaries of urban planning theory, which held that the physical layout of a neighborhood influenced the extent of its residents' sociability and belonging. Both could be enhanced by planners, according to scholars as diverse as William H. Whyte, who analyzed neighborly interactions in 1950s suburbs in *Organization Man*, and feminist scholar Dolores Hayden, who has advocated a revolution in neighborhood design and regional planning in order to combat old-school suburbanization, which has produced

³⁰ Listing of 98 mobile home communities by the Florida Manufactured Housing Association: www.fmha.org (retrieved August 2006).

³¹ Retirement condominium and subdivisions were more endowed: 31 percent had a central meeting place. The areas we considered in the State list were the Tampa Bay Area and the Gulf Coast southward of Tampa, the Ocean shore south of Daytona, and Central Florida in the Orlando-Kissimmee-Lakeland area: Florida Chamber of Commerce, *Retirement Opportunity in Florida* (Tallahassee, 1985); For Woodall's the areas considered were Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Ft. Myers-Naples, Sarasota-Venice: *Woodall's Florida and Southern States Retirement and Resort Communities*, 5th edition (New York, 1980); "Village People," *Florida Trend* (September 2001).

a legacy of economic segregation and social fragmentation that weighed most heavily on suburban mothers.³²

Most recreational vehicle (RV) resorts would benefit from consultation with an urban planner, for their byways seem to have followed a catnip-besotted feline stumbling from one handout to another. Even so, RV users have always been famously congenial neighbors – like the Gornicke family in the 2006 movie *RV*, so extraordinarily sociable that a normal family (that is, a normally uptight urban family), misreading their motives, actually fled from the proffered community of the road. Because of their mobility, because some retired persons chose to live year-round in their vehicles, and because of the dangers of the road, RVers have developed a strongly communitarian ethos and lifestyle. They have been keen on welcoming newcomers and on helping stranded RVs (a custom promoted since 1966 by the "Good Sam's" RV club, its name derived from the parable of the Good Samaritan).³³

When not on the road, RVers have achieved solidarity and sociability in the informal environment and outdoor lifestyle of campgrounds: through greeting newcomers, through the "exchange of personal histories," the sharing of food and information, as well as informal entertainment in the shape of songs, stories and dances.³⁴ As a form of identification – and enticement to conversation – to fellow travelers, many RVers have displayed their names and hometown on their vehicle; and many RVers have held or

³² Eric Kleinberg, "Review: Bourgeois Dystopias," *The Nation* (28 June 2004); Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, Ma, 1981); Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life* (New York, 1984); Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960* (Toronto, 2004), 40, 41, 44, 45, 162, 162.

³³ Good Sam Clubs now claims a million members. www.goodsamclub.com (retrieved September 2006).

³⁴ Counts and Counts, "They're My Family Now: The Creation of Community Among RVers," *Anthropologica* 34 (1992), 162-164; *Canadian Trailers, Mobile Homes and Campers* (April 1968): 5; John Ferri, "Welcome to.. the Wheel World," *St. Petersburg Times*, 8 May 1994; "RVers. Who Are They?" and "Togetherness Is Driving RV Sales," statements from the GoRVing association: www.gorving.ca/mediasection/press/rvers.html (retrieved August 2006).

participated in "home state events" where they could socialize with people from back home³⁵. As with mobile homes, the leisurely lifestyle of dwellers, combined with the small sizes of units, resulted in the execution of many daily activities outside of the dwellings (or "rigs," in RV parlance). Moreover, the fact that snowbird RVers stayed for long periods in the same campground, that RVs were placed close to one another along small lanes with minimal traffic in an enclosed campground with collective amenities, all fostered neighborly interaction. Newcomers to a campground knew how to make contact with neighbors: by cooking and eating meals outside, by sharing food and drink, or merely by opening the engine hood of their vehicle, for someone was bound to inquire whether help was needed; and that someone was the ideal person for an RVer to meet.³⁶

One does not have to own an RV lifestyle or mobile home to recognize and appreciate the lifestyle. Cottage life had much the same flavor in the North. It is probable that a high percentage of mobile home and RV dwellers learned, prior to migrating to Florida, the joys of leisurely living in a small dwelling, and of spending most of the day outdoors in close hailing distance of their neighbors. In other words, snowbirds – at least those who favored mobile homes and RVs – had likely learned much of their folklore before they ever wintered in Florida. As they grew wealthier and older, cottagers with time on their hands took to the roads in RVs. Northern cottages provided a large potential pool of snowbirds – when surveyed in 1995 about their summer vacation, fifteen percent of Ontarian respondents said they had been to a cottage, while another twelve percent had made "an outdoors trip"; in Québec, it was eleven and sixteen percent. In the 1990s,

³⁵ Robert C. Mings and Kevin E. McHugh, "The RV Resort Landscape," *Journal of Urban Geography* 10 (Winter 1989): 47, 48.

³⁶ This possibility was evoked in a discussion on the Woodall's online forum: www.woodalls.com/cforum/index.cfm (retrieved August 2006).

surveys of Canadian and American snowbirds in Florida revealed that a high proportion of them owned a cottage in the North, sometimes as much as half of respondents.³⁷

The upward leap in RV numbers in North America from two million in 1970 to ten million in 2000 also assures the future of Florida's RV resorts. In 2002, thirteen percent of Canadian households owned one of the 1.5 million units; in the United States, ten percent of the households had purchased 7.2 million vehicles. The percentages, while not statistically conclusive, might indicate that Canadians are the more ardent campers. Canadian historian W.L. Morton has identified the size and popularity of cottage country as illustrative of the durable influence of the Northern frontier on the Canadian mind: the "alternate penetration of the wilderness and return to civilization is the basic rhythm of Canadian life, and form the basic elements of Canadian character."³⁸ Thoreau's lifestyle, whether mobile or immobile, is therefore as much a Northern export to Florida as civil disobedience and pro football.³⁹ Florida has embraced the RV: by 1989 it had 56,000

³⁷ In 1997, 19 percent of Canadians vacationing inside their province of residence had been to cottages, while another eleven percent had been to campgrounds. Other cottage-owning snowbirds in a 1500-strong Minnesota sample: Timothy D. Hogan and Donald N. Steignes, "Toward an Understanding of Elderly Seasonal Migration Using Origin-Based Household Data," *Research on Aging* 16, 4 (December 1994), 470; Jean Stafford and Marcel Samson, "L'industrie touristique québécoise: entre le passé et l'avenir," in *Les pratiques culturelles des Québécois: Une autre image de nous-mêmes* ed. Jean-Paul Baillargeon (Québec 1986), 295; survey of 3356 Canadians aged 15 and over, conducted in September and October 1995; Canadian Tourism Commission and Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, *Domestic Tourism Market Research Study, "Ontario Report"* (Toronto, 1996), 10; Statistics Canada, Tourism Statistics Program, *Tourism Statistical Digest* (Ottawa, 1999, # cat. 87-403), 114; Tucker *et al.*, "Older Canadians in Florida: A Comparison of Anglophone and Francophone Seasonal Migrants," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 11 (Fall 1992): 283, 287, 291, 292, 296; Tucker, Longino, and Larry C. Mullins, "Older Anglophone Canadian Snowbirds in Florida: A Descriptive Profile," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 7 (Fall 1988); Marshall *et al.* are quoted in H. C. Northcott, *Changing Residence: the Geographic Mobility of Elderly Canadians* (Toronto, 1988), 24; E.G. Moore and D.L. McGuinness, "Geographic Dimensions of Aging," in *Migration and Restructuring in the United States: A Geographic Perspective*, eds. K. Pandit and S. Withers (Lanham, Md, 1999) 142, 153, 161; Jean Stafford and Marcel Samson, "L'industrie touristique québécoise: entre le passé et l'avenir," in *Les pratiques culturelles des Québécois: Une autre image de nous-mêmes* ed. Jean-Paul Baillargeon (Québec, 1986), 295.

³⁸ W.L. Morton is quoted by Harris, "Conclusion," in *Recreational Land Use: Perspectives on its Evolution in Canada*, eds. Geoffrey Wall and John Marsh (Ottawa, 1982), 420.

³⁹ Since the 1940s, the states with the highest proportion of vacation cottages were overwhelmingly northern; In 2000, the 12 states with proportions of cottages over 5% were all northern, except Florida, Arizona, Hawaii, and Delaware. Since the 1980 census, Florida is the state with the most vacation homes, in

camping spaces for them, the highest of any state, and RV parks were larger than elsewhere, the statewide average being 432 spaces per park. The most mammoth establishments were opened mostly in Central Florida around Orlando, and on the Gulf Coast between Tampa Bay and Fort Myers.⁴⁰

Considering the likely background of the residents of Florida's RV and mobile home parks, it is logical to conclude that their congenial and informal atmosphere is in large part explained by a *pre-existing* taste for community. The people who moved into these parks knew community, and were not willing to forfeit it as they moved south. Appropriately, studies done in Arizona discovered that *snowbirds* who sojourned in a RV or mobile home were more likely to be from a small town than were those who decided to move to the state permanently.⁴¹ It is logical that this was true in Florida as well (judging from Hoyt's findings in Bradenton) and, thus, to come to the conclusion that a RV or mobile home was a cost-efficient vacation mode for those unwilling to forsake their community in the north for more than a few months a year, yet so craved the community experience that they could not dispense with it even for the sake of Florida's fun and sun.

absolute numbers, after its numbers exploded during the 1970s, from 84,900 to 304,600. US Census of Housing, *Historical Census of Housing Tables - Vacation Homes*, www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/vacation.html (retrieved June 2007).

⁴⁰ Robert L. Janiskee, "Resort Camping in America," *Annals of Tourism Research* 17 (1990): 390, 391, 397, 398; *Canadian Trailers, Mobile Homes and Campers* (April 1968): 5; John Ferri, "Welcome to.. the Wheel World," *St. Petersburg Times*, 8 May 1994; Data on seasonal trailer parks in Québec and Ontario, in the searchable databases of provincial campgrounds associations: www.campgrounds.org and www.campingquebec.com (retrieved August 2006); yearly shipment statistics on the website of the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA): www.rvia.org/Media/ShipmentsData.htm (retrieved April 2005); "Rvers. Who Are They?" and "Togetherness Is Driving RV Sales," statements from the GoRVing association: www.gorving.ca/mediasection/press/rvers.html (retrieved April 2005).

⁴¹ A participant study and survey of Arizona trailer dwellers (both mobile home and RVs), found that the latter were more small-town than mobile home dwellers: Sullivan and Stevens: 166; Sullivan, "The Ties that Bind," *Research on Aging* 7 (June 1985): 241; Hoyt, 76, 126.

6.2 Self-Segregation

Snowbirds so gregarious that they instinctively build communities wherever they alight – it's a more appealing image than the loner gunman, the cowboy president, or single-room occupancy. Attending neighborhood evenings, inviting people to your campfire and rescuing stranded co-snowbirds – all the aforementioned practices conjure a rosy picture of the snowbird lifestyle. Alas, their bit of Eden also housed a snake. Its name was segregation. Snowbirds built community by cutting themselves off from outsiders. The segregation could be either deliberate and self-imposed or the inadvertent product of the housing market. In 1956, Guernesey City opened in St. Petersburg as Florida's first mobile-home park solely for retired persons; its exclusionary policy was soon adopted in other parks (including the Bradenton Trailer Park shortly after Hoyt studied it in the late 1950s). Self-contained lifestyle-based sociability, when crafted for retired persons, could translate into formal exclusionary practices: many mobile home (and condo) communities set minimum ages for tenants and either excluded children outright or, like the Maple Leaf Estates mobile-home park in Charlotte County, limited the duration and number of visits of children to their grandparents.⁴² Besides age restrictions, many retirement communities offered a secluded neighborhood in the shape of a gated, fenced area, accessible only through a guarded gate. Visitors, while welcome, had to justify their visit and were given a visitor tag to wear on premises, as though they were visiting a military base or prison. A statistical snapshot of the big picture can be found in a 1985 list of retirement

⁴² Example of other rules: no more than two persons per mobile home, no child under 18 can live permanently there, children can visit for a maximum of 15 consecutive days, and 30 days per year; no child under 18 is allowed to use saunas, whirlpool baths or billiard rooms; no pets, motorbikes, scooters, skateboards. Bob Hepburn, "Retirement Roost Big on Rules," *Toronto Star*, 19 March 1990, A16. Pinellas County Health Department, *Annual Report* (St. Petersburg, 1952, 1965); Pinellas County Planning Department, *Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan*, vol. 15: "Housing," 37, 38; Pinellas County Planning Dept., *Pinellas County Housing Study*, 31.

communities: a mere six out of 358 retirement communities of South and Central Florida accepted children as tenants; half of the 217 mobile-home parks had a security guard, as did a fifth of the 141 condominium and single-family developments.⁴³

The premium placed on exclusivity also surfaced in Woodall's retirement-community guidebook. Woodall's rated retirement facilities by such criteria as public amenities, security, community services, business history, and the screening of tenants. Only around 300 South Florida properties passed this elaborate rating process in 1980; most were mobile-home parks. These communities formed the upper end of the retirement market. More than three-quarters vetted by Woodall's had some form of age restriction. Moreover, more than a third had on-site security, in the shape of either a community patrol (norm in mobile-home parks) or private security guards (for nearly all condo and apartment complexes, and some mobile home parks). Another quarter (all of them mobile home parks) had "physical" security features like locked gates or separate parking areas for visitors. At Maple Leaf Estates no guests could be admitted unless their hosts had put them on the guest list or called the security guard. In 1992, the Dale Village mobile home park in Broward County actually put a guardhouse on the *public* street to control ingress after a series of burglaries.⁴⁴ Thanks in part to snowbirds and retirees, Florida led the other U.S. states at the end of the 20th century in the number of gated communities.⁴⁵

⁴³ The areas considered in the State list were the Tampa Bay Area and the Gulf Coast southward, the Ocean shore south of Daytona, and Central Florida in the Orlando-Kissimmee-Lakeland area: Florida Chamber of Commerce, *Retirement Opportunity in Florida*; For Woodall's the areas considered were Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Ft. Myers-Naples, Sarasota-Venice: *Woodall's Florida and Southern States Retirement and Resort Communities*, 1980.

⁴⁴ Brent Mitchell, "Dania Puts Up Banners to Hail Historic District," *Miami Herald*, 5 November 1992, 2BSE; Mitchell, "Mobile Home Residents Want a Guardhouse," *Miami Herald*, 5 April 1992, 3BSE.

⁴⁵ Kellie Patrick, "Separation Issues: Gated Communities Spark Talks on Trend," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 15 February 1998, 1A.

The decision to close the gates to children is, intuitively, the most perplexing, given that the elderly often credit children with keeping them young in heart. The laugh of a small child is so infectious that it can even affect curmudgeons. Or so one assumed before the North American baby bust in the late 1960s. In the early 1970s, Vance Packard noticed this exclusion of children from retirement communities in his seminal study *A Nation of Strangers*. To him it came as a surprise, given the youthfulness of society in that decade. He concluded that the "generation gulf is not created simply by the new scornful attitudes of youth toward elders, as often assumed."⁴⁶ Some elders, he held, did not seem to want the young anywhere within earshot. When confronted with youthful exuberance, they reacted very negatively, as a Florida high school student observed in 2003: "Where I live in Port St. Lucie, there [are] a whole bunch of seniors or retired people who just sit outside and yell, 'Hey you! Get out of here you troublemakers, hooligans' and so on at the kids that go by."⁴⁷

Exclusionary attitudes and practices are likely to *continue*, given the number of retired migrants to Florida, and the competition between the higher-end retirement communities. But they may not *flourish*, given the recent demographic evolution of South Florida towards ethnic diversity, relative youth, and urbanization. Indeed, it has become more difficult to keep mobile home housing segregated by age, as demand for low-cost housing has grown across all stages of the life-cycle. Thanks to these demographic and economic pressures, by 2005 the proportion of mobile-home parks with age restrictions

⁴⁶ Packard, 99.

⁴⁷ Cynthia Barnett, "How Many Retirees? How Floridians Feel," *Florida Trend* (September 2003); Mike Schneider, "Trailer Owners Cut A Widening Swath," *Miami Herald*, 26 May 2002, 7B.

had settled at 22 to 32 percent, depending on the region, according to the Florida Manufactured Housing Association.⁴⁸

Age segregation was important enough to retired persons that they lobbied to keep it legal. Florida's Federation of Manufactured Home Owners successfully lobbied against the provisions of the 1968 Civil Rights Act that would have prohibited discrimination against families with children in the sale or rental of housing. When discrimination against children was finally outlawed in the 1988 amendments to the Fair Housing Act, retirement communities obtained an explicit exemption.⁴⁹

The militancy of mobile home dwellers, starting in the 1950s, was a constant – if overlooked – feature of postwar Florida. Like everyone else, they could be stirred to action by the menace of increased taxation. In Florida as in most states, because of their "mobility," trailers were not subject to property taxes, but were licensed instead by the state Department of Public Roads as vehicles. Local governments, dependent on property taxes, resented this arrangement despite the fact that they could tax the land on which the mobile homes stood. This peculiar status was a controversial issue in local politics from the 1950s onwards, as mobile home owners and park operators fought attempts by local governments to expand their tax base. In 1960, a bid by Dade county Commissioners to

⁴⁸ Least segregated: 22% of parks restricted in southern-central area (Lakeland, Winter Haven and Sebring). Most segregated: 32% in southwest Florida, southward from Sarasota-Bradenton. Southeast Florida (southward of the Melbourne-Titusville-Cocoa area): 22.7% of 97 listed parks mention age restrictions, 12 unspecified; Tampa-St. Petersburg area, 26% of 131 parks with restrictions, 22 not specified; South-Central (Lakeland-Winter Haven) had 9 nonspecified over total of 58 parks; Southwest Florida had 8 nonspecified over a total of 59 parks listed. The FMHA "Communityfinder" list can be consulted on the Association's website: www.fmha.org/communityfinder.html (retrieved April 2006).

⁴⁹ Retirement housing could exclude families with children if "HUD has determined that the dwelling is specifically designed for and occupied by elderly persons under a Federal, State or local government program or; It is occupied solely by persons who are 62 or older or; It houses at least one person who is 55 or older in at least 80 percent of the occupied units, and adheres to a policy that demonstrates intent to house persons who are 55 or older," information in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/seniors/index.cfm (retrieved April 2006); FMHO boasting in the "Legislative Accomplishments" section of their website: www.fmo.org/fmo_home/about_legislation.asp (retrieved March 2005).

license mobile home parks (as a way of taxing them) was challenged by park operators, and settled in their favor by the State Supreme Court. As historian Lee Irby noticed, from 1961 to 1963, a St. Petersburg city commissioner sought to find a way to tax mobile homes as real property, but to no avail. Partly as a reaction to these threats, the Federation of Mobile Home Owners (FMHO) was formed in the early 1960s. A brief setback came in 1965 when the Florida Supreme Court ruled that trailers were taxable "housing accommodations," but mobile home owners and builders immediately proposed a constitutional amendment to restore the vehicular status of mobile homes. The amendment carried a state ballot in November 1965. As a reaction to the non-taxability of mobile homes, Pinellas and Manatee counties chose in the 1960s to tax the cabanas, porches and awnings attached to trailers.⁵⁰

In the early 1970s, the non-taxability of mobile homes in a period of assured growth led Dade county authorities to put a moratorium on new parks, which meant that development moved to neighboring Broward and Palm Beach Counties, which soon had bigger, better-designed parks than the Miami area – most of them age-segregated.⁵¹ In

⁵⁰ Still in 2003, the FMHO boasted to have resisted a legislative attempt to tax mobile homes as real property. John Pennekamp, "Explosive Issue: Trailer Taxation," *Miami Herald*, 4 January 1960, 6A; Pennekamp, "Mobile Home Tax Debate On Again," *Miami Herald*, 20 January 1960, 6A; "Mobile Home vs. House: How Costs Compare," *Miami Herald*, 7 February 1971, 6K; Irby: 185, 192, 195-197, 199; Arthur D. Bernhardt, *Building Tomorrow: The Mobile/Manufactured Housing Industry* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), 357, 372; Ford, "Mobile Home Picture Bright," *Miami Herald*, 10 January 1971, 24K; *The Manatee Plan*, Plan Elements, Draft 1 (Bradenton, 1978-79), 67; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area in 1995* (Washington, DC, 1997) table 1.6, p. 7; *American Housing Survey for the Tampa-St. Petersburg Metropolitan Area, 1998* (Washington DC, 2000) table 1.6, p. 6.

⁵¹ Some bigger-better parks in PB County, all opened between 1968 and 1971: Arrowhead, 6255 Lawrence, Lake Worth, opened 1968, 120 occupied, 700 proposed, adults only; Environs Palm Beach, 8220 Military Trail, opened 1971, 484 proposed, separate adult-family sections; Holiday Lakes, 4300 Blue Heron, Riviera Beach, opened 1970, 700 occupied, 1406 proposed, separate adult-family; Lake Worth Village, 4153 Logan, opened 1970, 300 occupied, 700 proposed; Meadowbrook, 1531 Drexel, WPB, opened 1968, 435 proposed, separate adult-family; Palm Beach Riviera, Indiantown Rd., Jupiter, 1080 proposed, adult-family separated; Holiday Country Club and Lakes, 1405 spaces; Jamaica Bay (South Military Trail, west of Boynton) 1001 (separate family-adult sections); Lantana Cascade, Congress Ave, opened 1971, 463, separate adult-family; Pickwick Park, 10th ave N., Greenacres, 800 proposed, separate adult-family, 691; Sand and Sea, Congress Ave, Boynton, 2200 proposed, adult-family separated; Tavares Cove 384; West Lakes at Boca,

towns in which mobile homes congregated, their owners formed a constituency not to be treated lightly. In the late 1990s, Québécois snowbirds successfully pressured the city commissioners of Pembroke Park to permit mobile home owners to make minor improvements to their own units, instead of having to use licensed contractors. There was no concern expressed at the time that this amateur home improvement might translate into code violations and lower building standards, because, for city administrators, snowbirds did not fit the trailer trash stereotype. Far from it, they were thought to have "a different concept of what mobile home living is."⁵²

The communitarian strength of mobile home owners also led them to resist evictions. In a fast-growth state like Florida, the risk of eviction was palpable, as developable land became scarce and costlier, and as suburbanization intruded into the exurban areas where mobile home parks were located. During the 1980s and 1990s, faced with the threat of eviction, some communities formed tenant cooperatives to buy the land on which their trailers stood with the result that there were 200 tenant-owned parks in the state by 1990 (675 by 2006),⁵³ among them Dale Village (in Broward), Park Lake Estates (in Hallandale), and Boynton Beach's La Paloma. In 2000, an estimated one-third of Pinellas County's 350 mobile-home parks was owned by tenant co-ops. Pinellas led the state in tenant-owned parks because, with the highest population density of all 67 Florida counties, it endured especially heavy pressure from developers. In the late 1980s and

Boca Raton West Rd., 498 separate adult section; Colonial Coach Estates 1051; Mobile American Golf and Sail 2998; headed by Roy George, 2100 sites; and Melvin Greenberg, court challenged, west of Boca, 4550; "Mobile Home vs. House: How Costs Compare," *Miami Herald*, 7 February 1971, 6K; Pennekamp, "Explosive Issue: Trailer Taxation"; Bernhardt, 357, 372; Irby, 185, 192, 195-197, 199; Martha Musgrove, "PB County: Mobile Home Capital," *Miami Herald*, 28 March 1971, 30K.

⁵² Thomas Monnay, "Town Asked to Ease Rules," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 22 April 1998, C1; Nesreen Khashan, "Snowbirds Getting Attention," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 13 January 1999, C1.

⁵³ Avis Thomas-Lester, "Affordable But Unwelcome," *The Washington Post*, 7 October 1990; Len Bonifield, "Community Conversions: With Success, Less Stress," *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 February 2007.

1990s, Pinellas mobile home dwellers persuaded county commissioners formally to encourage the formation of tenant cooperatives, through the ParkSaver Loan Program, created in the 1990s. The program offered small, no-interest mortgage loans to co-ops and low-income households – snowbirds included, as long as they resided more than six months per year in Florida (which effectively excluded the Canadians who had to live 183 days a year in their home country to keep their government health insurance). The Commissioners even contemplated establishing a nonprofit finance corporation, financed with tax-exempt bond money, to underwrite the cooperative buyout of mobile home parks.⁵⁴

At the state level, mobile-home dwellers fought eviction by having the FMHO sponsor a Manufactured Home Owners' Bill of Rights to regulate plot rents, mobile home leases, and the eviction of tenants; it became law in 1976. In 1978, when a Circuit Court judge deemed unconstitutional rent control in mobile home parks, the State Attorney General stepped in, at the behest of mobile home owners, and persuaded the Supreme Court to uphold it. During the 1990s, faced with a growing number of park closures and eviction of tenants, mobile home owners lobbied the state legislature to regulate wholesale evictions. In 2001, a "Mobile Home Act," endorsed by the FMHO, formally established a Relocation Corporation, dominated by representatives of mobile-home owners and park

⁵⁴ Louis S. St. Laurent III, "Griffin Lakes et Highland Park Fermés," *Le Soleil de la Floride* (November 2002): 5; Deborah O'Neil, "Clinging to a Vanishing Lifestyle," *St. Petersburg Times*, 19 December 2001, 3; eviction for condos, more than 100 tenants of Tradewinds Marina and Mobile Home Park in Homosassa, Citrus County: Bridget Hall Grumet, "Evicted Residents Leave Homes Behind," *St. Petersburg Times*, 8 July 2001, CT1; possible rezoning of Cypress Pointe RV Resort in Palm Harbour, North Pinellas, to make way for big retail outlets: "RV Resort Rezoning Would be a Tragedy," *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 May 2001, 2; Paul Roy, "Plus de 100000 Québécois," *La Presse*, 21 February 1987, A1; Gilles Ménard and André Robert, "Les mésaventures des locataires du parc Candlelight," *Le Soleil de la Floride* 18 (January 2001): a4, a6; Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, "Report on the Recommendations of the Manufactured Home Task Force" (2 April 2002), on the Pinellas County website www.pinellascounty.org (retrieved March 2005); presentation of the ParkSaver loan program, on the Pinellas County website: www.pinellascounty.org/community/CD-ParkSaver.htm (retrieved April 2006).

managers, to compensate evicted tenants financially. The mobile home owners' clout had some limits as, by 2007, mobile home park tenants had a right of first refusal, in case their park was sold, only for solicited offers. Unsolicited sales, the kind involving rapacious developers, were not covered by state law, and left mobile home owners vulnerable to private redevelopment triggered by soaring real estate values. Attempts to obtain a right of first refusal for all sales repeatedly failed at the State Legislature and Senate. And in mid-2007, Governor Charlie Crist vetoed funding for a modest – \$15 million – program subsidizing the retrofitting of mobile homes to withstand storm winds.⁵⁵

Not even government help could prevent some park closures and evictions, given the primary agency of the real estate industry in making America's urban landscape. In 1998 a housing development replaced St. Petersburg's Snug Harbour Park; and tenants of the Candlelight mobile home park in Broward lost out to a casino in 2000. In 2002, Griffin Lakes and Highland Park (near Fort Lauderdale) were shut down; and in Aventura (just north of Miami-Dade) Coe's Trailer Park and Lone Pine Mobile Village were emptied in 2002 to make way for a shopping mall. By the FMHO's estimates, in 2006, between 14 and 27 mobile home spaces were "lost" each day in Florida; that amounted to a park per week, over the 3,600 parks in the state. Some parks could not be saved because, like their

⁵⁵ Al Burt, "Tin-Can Tourists?," *Tropic (Miami Herald)* (27 February 1979): 46; C.E.W., "Trailerites' Haven," *NYT*, 13 January 1952, sect. 10:9; "Mobile Home Reform OK'd by Askew," *Miami Herald*, 10 June 1976; "Law Defended," *Miami News*, 15 March 1978, 2A; "Trailer Park Board Law Rules Unconstitutional," *Miami Herald*, 28 December 1977, 21A; *The Manatee Plan*, Plan Elements, Draft 1, 1978-79, 67; *American Housing Survey for the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Metropolitan Area in 1995*, table 1.7, p. 9; "Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2D; Mobile Home Bill, HR411, and late success in 2003, boasted by the FMO, on their website's "Legislative Accomplishments" section: www.fmo.org/fmo_home/about_legislation.asp (retrieved May 2006); see also FMRHC web site: www.fmhrc.org (retrieved September 2006); Charlie Gallagher (FMHO president), "Opinion: Mobile-Home Repair Program Not Controversial; Veto Is," *The Palm Beach Post*, 16 July 2007, 13A; Christopher O'Donnell, "Residents Waiting for 'The Ax to Fall'," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, 20 April 2007, BM1

tenants, retirement communities have had a "life cycle"⁵⁶ of variable duration. Developed and sold as an exclusive, made-to-order lifestyle choice, the parks' first cohort of tenants might be the only generation ever to inhabit the place. It was built for them and aged with them. As both tenants and park were becoming debilitated, surrounding neighborhoods were changing in a way that made the retirement community look out of place, either irrelevant to the surrounding population and landscape, or uninviting to a new cohort of somewhat younger tenants. By the time the pioneer generation died off, lost their money, or moved into nursing homes or, despite their lengthy attachment to Florida, returned North to spend their final days closer to kin, there was little demand for the newly available – but little advertised – housing.

By the 1980s and 1990s, many retirement communities were on the edge of tenancy turnovers, including Leisureville (Pompano Beach), a community with a median age of 72; the Ocean Breeze mobile home park in Martin County founded in the 1950s; and the King's Point condo development in Palm Beach County, already plagued by an outbound movement of very old tenants after just fifteen years in service.⁵⁷ For these communities, aged beyond economic viability, there could come a time to turn the page on the retirement vocation, and to admit a radically different cohort. Illustration 6.4, taken in 1998, of a western suburb of Fort Lauderdale, shows the progressive replacement of mobile home parks by regular single-family housing in a neighborhood blessed by canal-front property. The older (as testified by the small size of units), smaller park to the far left probably owed its survival to its small size and to the adjacent highway and warehouses.

⁵⁶ Estimates: Todd Lewan, "Lake Shore Mobile Home Park," *AP Newswire*, 8 July 2006. Life-cycle notion has been suggested by A. LaGreca, G.F. Streib, W.E. Folts, "Retirement Communities and Their Life Stages," *Journal of Gerontology* 40 (1985).

⁵⁷ Alicia Caldwell, "Retirees Come Together to Create Pockets of Loneliness," *St. Petersburg Times*, 24 June 2001; A. LaGreca, G.F. Streib, W.E. Folts: 215.

At the center, one can see two small parks, bordered to the east by a single-family housing development that has likely sprung up on the site of a former mobile home park. At the far right, stands a cleared mobile home park, awaiting redevelopment.

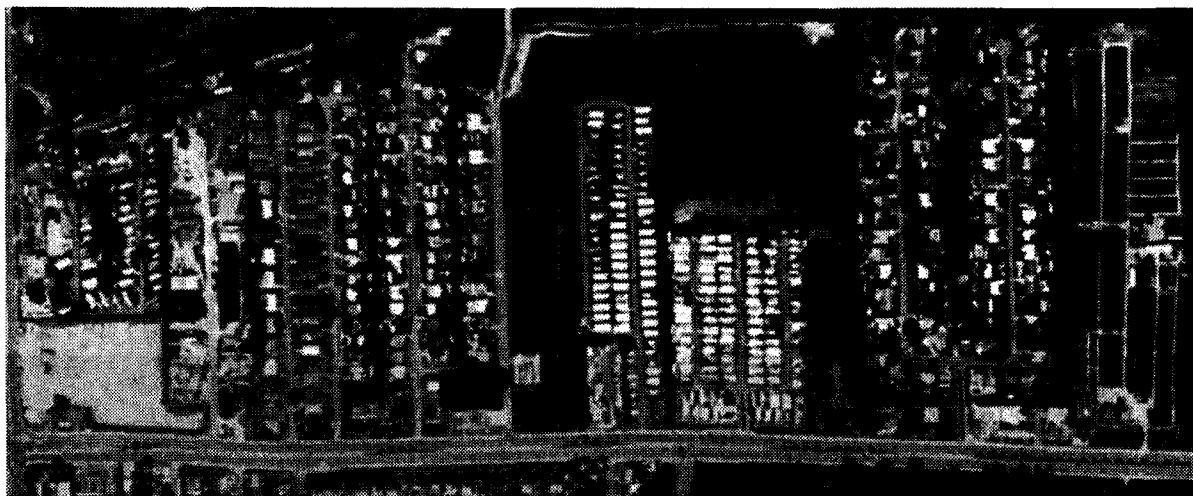


Illustration 6.4: Mobile Home and Single-Family Neighborhoods Along Griffin Road, in Dania, Broward County. Source: TerraServer USA, USGS (picture from 1998, retrieved May 2006).

The vitality of snowbird, retirement communities could not outlast their own life-cycle. Because these communities had no children and little generational diversity, many of their tenants could not call them home and moved away in times of crisis – back to their kin and hometown, back to superior Northern hospitals, back to their primary health plans (especially for Canadians). In the early 1980s, the often sad reality of the last flight northward was vividly illustrated by a 97-year-old woman, an elderly migrant to Florida, who found herself so socially isolated that she had to be hospitalized for dehydration, arthritis, and bedsores. As her pension was insufficient to pay for a nursing home, her niece brought her back to Illinois, where Medicaid outlays were more generous than in Florida. While most of the elderly migrants never became so desperate, they moved back nonetheless: nine percent of retired persons leaving Palm Beach County between 1975 and 1980 moved either to New York or New Jersey, while ten percent of the retiree migration from Broward County went to Pennsylvania, and New York. In consequence, not only

was South Florida losing its oldest residents through out-migration, but places like New York City were seeing their "very old" population increase. During the 1980s, the number of people in the city aged 85 or over increased by 33 percent. And in 1997 Frankenmuth Independence Village, a retirement community, near Detroit was signing 20-30 percent of its leases with retirees returning from Florida.⁵⁸

Most of the snowbirds and retired migrants who hung on to their Florida life to the bitter end showed their true northern colors after death by being buried back "home." As a result, South Florida airports have been handling a higher-than-average number of human remains; it has even been alleged that the heavy coffin traffic from South Florida temporarily averted Eastern Airline's bankruptcy in the late 1980s.⁵⁹ In the mid-1990s, the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood airport handled the highest number of corpses in the United States, with Tampa a close second.⁶⁰

Death eluded the community found in retirement. Sickness, poverty, social isolation, and death had always challenged communities, which have responded through time with coping mechanisms such as extended family networks, multi-generational solidarity, front-porch and town-square sociability, and – more recently – with income redistribution and socialized care and medicine. Snowbird and retirement communities could rely on most of these responses; indeed, the timing of their emergence in North American society is largely explainable by the birth of socialized care, as it reduced the importance of

⁵⁸ Robert McClure, "Many Re-Retire to County from Broward, Dade," *Palm Beach County: Growing Toward 1990* (Fort Lauderdale, 1985), 5; Michele Cohen, "Many Retirees Flee County's Crime, Crowds" and Cohen, "'Old-Old' is Fastest-Growing Group," *Broward in the 80s: A Progress Report* (Fort Lauderdale, 1985), 5, 6, 14; "Reverse Migration: Going Home," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 10 May 1997, 16F; John A. Cutter: 12G.

⁵⁹ Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville, 2005), 125.

⁶⁰ Ken Kaye, "Company's Crates Guard South Florida's Dead on the Last Airplane Ride," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 17 June 1997, 1e.

staying close to kinfolk. And snowbirds and retirees compensated for their lack of a local family network by developing a strong ethos of mutual help and by with increased front-porch and town-square interactions. More than most Floridians they could be found in what sociologist Ray Oldenburg has called the "thirdspaces of community life."⁶¹ Thanks to these two compensations, snowbirds formed more than mere aggregations; they formed *communities*, albeit ones that stretched traditional definition of community by developing alternative, if imperfect, strategies of mutual care and help.

The phrase – traditional definition of community – misleadingly implies that there is a consensus in the social and historical sciences as to meaning of this concept. In fact there is not. In 1955, George A. Hillery Jr. found ninety-five different definitions, which he thought, however, could be grouped into three broad analytical categories: "commonality among people, social interaction, and common land."⁶² Similarly, Geographer Rémy Tremblay defined community in terms of social and cultural interactions; the spatial bases of organization and display of the community; and the member's felt attachment to the group, from which he or she drew an identity.⁶³ In their analysis of the definitions of community, Steven High and John Walsh came up with a historical conceptualization, substituting process for space: "community as interaction,

⁶¹ Thirdspaces -such as churches, pubs, "hangouts," and community centers- are the places that nurture community, after the First place of Family, and the Second place of Work. Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day* (New York, 1991). see also quotes and a biography of Oldenburg on the "Project for Public Spaces" website: www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/placemakers/oldenburg (retrieved August 2006).

⁶² Quoted by Catherine Rockandel, *The Road from Resource Dependency to Community Sustainability: The Case of Kimberle, British Columbia: 1966-2001*, MA Diss. (Simon Fraser University, 2005), 30. consulted at Simon Fraser's Institutional Repository web page: <http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/handle/1892/112> (retrieved August 2006).

⁶³ Remy Tremblay, "Research Note: Géographie, espace social et communauté Floribécoise," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 13 (2004): 370

community as imagined reality, and community as process"⁶⁴. Indeed there seems to be a consensus on some triadic categorization.

So how did snowbirds build communities? This chapter has demonstrated how "commonality," "interaction," and "common land" were the most visible parts of this endeavor. The first factor, commonality, somewhat departed from of the traditional definition of community, first because it was centered on lifestyle – leisurely, geographically mobile, and retired lifestyle. Second, snowbirds differed in "commonality" from the small-town archetype, because the "retired" or "snowbird" categories were such recent historical creations that the words provided little or no sense of identity. Hence, more elaborate, ancient categories such as "traveler," "cottager," or even "gypsy" were employed by auto travelers, RVers, and mobile home dwellers to foster stronger community bonds.

The second element of the triadic definition of community, "interaction," stands out as the most visible, readily understandable of the three; it has been richly illustrated in Chapter 6 and will be in Chapter 7. As for the third leg of the conceptual triad – "common land" – snowbirds and retired migrants were quite innovative, proving that it could, like grandfather's plot of land in Woody Allen's *Love and Death* (1975), even be portable. It could also soar thirty floors above the earth or be a measure of time, as condos and time-shares proved.

In the horizontal dimension, Florida snowbirds and retirees usually retained their loyalty to their northern origins. They ambiguously reconciled the North with Florida by maintaining links with the former, and by congregating with people of the same origins.

⁶⁴ J.C. Walsh and Steven High, "Rethinking the Concept of Community," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 64 (November 1999): 255, 257, 272.

Therefore, the community they helped build was their own; isolated, they never quite participated in creating the homegrown Florida community that Floridians increasingly craved after the 1960s. Dual spatial loyalties made it difficult, if not impossible, for snowbirds and retired migrants to embrace the new "imagined reality" that Floridians strove to create. Some might argue that snowbirds have had their own "imagined community" based on a Sun and Fun version of Florida that has grown increasingly irrelevant to working Floridians. Snowbirds, in sum, have, as Robert Harney interpreted it, been building "ethnic" enclaves, *exurban* (or *semi-urban* in the case of condos) *villages*, much like the "urban villages" and barrios built by America's immigrants. While their segregation has meant that they are starting to drift away from the main channel of historical development in Florida, they cannot be said to have been left behind in an eddy, for one of the principal currents in the history of any state – even one that once thought of itself as Edenic and, therefore, without history – is the assimilation of its many sub-communities into the whole. In this sense, snowbird's mobility did not depart radically from the North American model of community formation, as every community study has shown that mobility is a primary condition in the life of these communities.

If dual loyalties, enclaves and return migration were not all that unusual in North America, the migratory experiences of snowbirds and retirees also resembled those of international migrants in that transformation into an Italian-American, Ukrainian-Canadian or Florida sojourner commenced well before arrival at the land of imagined riches or freedom, and continued as some migrants returned home periodically or permanently. The *process* of community-building – of sharing information and folklore and realizing common bonds and destiny – began on the road, in an airport lounge, on

board ship, and was arguably recursively influencing the homeland communities, as Chapter 8 will argue.

As for time, it ruled snowbird and retiree communities more savagely after World War II than it did most of the industrial West. Both knew their time in the community was brief, but in that respect they differed little from most of the world's people, who also knew that their stay in the community had definite, finite limits. How could it be otherwise, given the repeated rampages of the four horses of the Apocalypse? Thus the one point on which snowbirds and retired migrants really departed from the community-building in postwar North America, was the heightened prospect of death. In some sense, people in God's waiting room resemble those in the trenches – powerful attachments quickly created because of the reality of death.

Rarer – at least for adults – was the decision to build community around a lifestyle, in this case a lifestyle of leisure. In their attention to labeling, in their innovative jargon, in their liminality relative to identity-defining categories of work and family, snowbirds had to come up with an elaborate, empowered, self-conscious, idiosyncratic and exclusive way of defining themselves, often in sharp contrast with the surrounding society. In this sense, South Florida has long resembled a high school, one riven by a multitude of lifestyle subcommunities, defined by their activities and inactivities (like potheads, goths, jocks and emos), yet quite capable of coming together as a community at a pep rally – like St. Petersburg's Festival of States or Hollywood's CanadaFest. The lifestyle of seasonal and retired migrants – casual, hedonist, leisurely, conversational, self-segregated yet competitive when it came to "sports" like shuffleboard and square dancing – was conducive to community, for it was the lifestyle of the typical high schools, and there are millions of North Americans who recall high school as the only "real" community they

have ever experienced, the only community worth commemorating one decade after another.

Yet there are many who remember their high school years with horror, many social researchers among them, and one must not overlook the lacks and predicaments that create bonding amongst those too young or too old to be full-time members of the capitalist labor force: relative poverty, the petty squabbles of the powerless, contempt from elites, social isolation from working-age adults, and a tragic sense of the inequity, celerity and unpredictability of the ageing process. Hence, the young and the elderly have tended to build their communities as "havens in a heartless world." The result can be increasing alienation from the "real" citizenry, who find bizarre their appearance and folkways, but for most of the young the estrangement ends or becomes attenuated when they enter the paid labor force. This is not an option for most retirees, although white-haired supermarket baggers, hamburger flippers, and store greeters have possibly found a way to reintegrate. As for the work-free, they risk becoming permanent strangers in a strange land as South Florida moves away from a tourist-based economy.

But this is not the primary message of the snowbirds, far too gregarious and warm a people to accept such a gloomy assessment of Florida's prospects for community. In a state where everybody is from someplace else, snowbirds have offered – like a cold brew to a newcomer at a RV campground – their own answers to the state's exceptional social and geographic fragmentation – even as they reinforced it by radical self-segregation. The snowbird model of community reinvention is particularly evident in the case of recreational vehicle owners. They certainly are successfully, if idiosyncratically, assuaging the existential tensions, as Warren Belasco recognized, between "community, freedom and comfort." RVers, he wrote, are "both loners and joiners simultaneously...."

Better than any artifact of our civilization these hybrids [have embodied] both our solitary and our gregarious ways, our desire to be free and on the roads yet take our homes along with us."⁶⁵ Belasco has further suggested that RVers and mobile home dwellers have evoked many American cultural traits – to which we can add a couple more: the dream of pastoral harmony, the cooperative democracy of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier people, the organic solidarity of W.L. Morton's Northerners, community-building through leisure, the ingenuity of vernacular design, and the unfinished, slipshod look of American-made artifacts and technology.⁶⁶ With their enthusiastic practice of greeting newcomers, of offering help, of sharing food and drink, of organizing and attending social events, of club membership, and of clustering together like the ensembles in *State Fair, Oklahoma!*, and Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, snowbirds and retired persons have demonstrated how contemporary social atomization – and anomie – might be assuaged for even the most peripatetic participants in late modernity. For all their defects, snowbird communities functioned better than the fantasized community of Disney's Main Street, better than the small-mindedness of Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* in small-town Minnesota in 1920, and far better than the riot-torn, bigoted cities of the United States and Canada of 1840-1870. This finding, when combined with the roadscape folklore of Chapter 3, the importance of visits to family and friends of Chapter 4, and the network migration and geographical clustering found in this chapter (6), all conjure a picture of travel and tourism which departs from the "exotic" place it has taken in social sciences and humanities. Tourism has

⁶⁵ As suggested by Warren Belasco and Michael A. Rockland, Review of *Homes on Wheels*, by M. A. Rockland, *Technology and Culture* 23 (October 1982): 683.

⁶⁶ In the order they are mentioned (all quoted by Belasco, except Morton's interpretation; see previous note): pastoral harmony has been described by Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden*; the frontier people by Frederick Jackson Turner; community-building through leisure was heralded by Daniel Boorstin and Frances FitzGerald, among others; vernacular design was described by John Kouwenhoven; the unfinished look of American technology was outlined by Eugene S. Ferguson, "The American-Ness of American Technology," *Technology and Culture* 20 (January 1979): 3-24.

often been defined as unique, because it eludes the "normal" social worlds of work and (traditional) family, standing as a marginal, carnivalesque element in modern life. But the types of travel and tourism we have observed thus far very often serves a purpose for the social bonding, the networking of distant relatives and friends. The intense social bonding and bridging taking place in snowbird and retirement communities point out to a much more central social function played by travel and tourism, that is the role they play in "social life at-a-distance," between friends and relatives living far apart, in re-creating and reinforcing social networks with face-to-face interaction, between people living in different spatial regions. Thereby travel and tourism can be understood as part of the great community-building endeavor of modern life⁶⁷.

And yet, the exclusivity of snowbird communities was another instance of spatial segregation in the American city. This exclusivity was a version of the white flight from the crowded, poor, decaying, cosmopolitan, historic core of American cities, including Miami, after World War II. In Florida, snowbirds further fragmented the metropolis by seeking out gated and fenced communities, by refusing to pay taxes, and by flaunting their "otherness." This reality did not elude social scientists studying retirement communities, who identified segregation and community-building as an essential dialectic of retiree living⁶⁸. In these ways, they courted the contempt of Floridians, and often found it, as we have seen in Chapter 5.

It takes a fine brush to paint the plumage of the snowbird colonies and the textures of their surroundings. This chapter has been painting the snowbird communities with

⁶⁷ Jonas Larsen, John Urry and Kay W. Axhausen, "Networks and Tourism: Mobile Social Life," *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (2007): 244-262.

⁶⁸ Kevin E. McHugh and Elizabeth M. Larson-Keagy, "These White Walls: The Dialectic of Retirement Communities," *Journal of Aging Studies* 19 (2005): 241-256.

broad brush strokes. Chapter 7 will, however, add detail, especially at the focal point of this dissertation: the point where community reinvention and community isolation – inclusion through exclusion – take place.

As the nationality of Canadian snowbirds has made them more self-conscious and noteworthy in both countries, they will be – despite their characteristic reticence – pushed into the limelight in the next chapter. While their expatriate status arguably made them marginally more likely than American snowbirds to huddle together in Florida, it is easy to overstate the importance of the international border, both because of Canadian diffidence (many of them preferring not to stand out) and the deep cultural divide between North and South since the founding settlements. As Florida's population has become more diverse, the cultural shock has lessened, but many Yankee snowbirds once felt as out of place in a Southern state as did their close cultural cousins, English-Canadians. That is to say, the Civil War divide has likely been a rationale for American snowbird congregations. Besides, the process of community-building – the complex of spatial settings, institutions, greetings, group leisure and like-mindedness that existed in snowbird gatherings – clearly bore down on almost anyone who nested amongst snowbirds. For the English-speaking, nationality was at best a minor variable, which makes the Canadian case study in Chapter 7 and 8 salient to the larger snowbird population.

As language may have made French Canadians a special case, the language barrier making them more prone than English Canadians to huddle together in South Florida, the coming discussion of the Canadian snowbirds will distinguish, where useful or necessary, between the community-building efforts of Francophones and Anglophones. It cannot be assumed *a priori* that the Québécois experienced Florida *tout comme les autres* – that they never looked like a cygnet among ducklings.

CHAPTER 7

FROM BABEL TO THE CLUBHOUSE: A CANADIAN SNOWBIRD CASE STUDY

What do Canadians have to teach Americans about their own country? As much – if not more – than any migrant group. Like every other newcomer and sojourner, immigrants are "American sovereign[s] in [their] probationary state," in the words of Ambrose Bierce; later, Oscar Handlin concluded that "immigrants are America." Canadians, like New York Jews and Yankees or Cuba's émigrés, have been self-conscious about their differences with Florida's host culture and eager to make fine distinctions. As foreign nationals rather than exiles, they have been anxious to announce their primal loyalties – not generally, as we have seen, through finding fault, but rather by reminding everyone of their citizenship. While the Québécois have little option to be "Canadian" – their tongues announcing their foreignness as thoroughly as an unfurled fleur-de-lys (or maple leaf flag) – English-speaking and bilingual Canadians can, despite the occasional "oot and about," generally *pass* as "I can't quite place your accent" Midwesterners (as U.S. newscasters like Peter Jennings have demonstrated); thanks to their essential liminality, Canadians – neither "domestic" nor "overseas" visitors in the eyes of Florida tourist authorities – have been ideally situated to be commentators on the American and Floridian dream experiments.

Even more to the point of this chapter, since Canadian snowbirds crossed an international frontier they weighed more heavily in the consciousness of governments, elites and social commentators – if only because they affected the exchange rate of the

two dollars. Their congregations in Florida were more newsworthy than comparable gatherings of Midwesterners and New Englanders; hence there is more information on written record about Canadian than about American snowbirds. Consequently, to understand snowbird life in Florida, Canadians provide the most complete case study, with the usual translation in the social science literature – from the American to the Canadian experience – being in this unusual instance reversed. To understand American snowbirds, we must extrapolate from the Canadian sample. That the extrapolation is possible is obvious to anyone who realizes that New Yorkers, Chicagoans and Bostonians are as likely to huddle together in the South because of the English and American Civil Wars or the Leo Frank lynching than Canadians do because of the American Revolution or War of 1812. Clio has been whispering at the ears of North Americans, historians and commoners alike, for some time now, giving every one of them some understanding of distinctions in regionalism, ethnicity, ideas and customs.

7.1 A Show of Wings

To understand the geography of Canadian snowbirds, let us proceed historically from the first head count, in 1925. By then, Canadians were the largest foreign-born cohort among residents of Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, as well as in Orange (Orlando) and Pinellas (St. Petersburg).¹ By 1960, there were so many Canadians wintering in Miami Beach that the manager of the posh Sans Souci hotel calculated that half of his winter clients were Canadians. A critical mass had been reached for fission: in

¹ Jarvis, "Florida's Forgotten Ethnic Culture: Patterns of Canadian Immigration, Tourism and Investment since 1920," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Fall 2002): 187.

1964 a Miami newspaper found that most English Canadians preferred Fort Lauderdale and Pompano Beach, while the French chose Sunny Isles and Surfside.²

The clustering of French Canadians and Franco-Americans around Miami was already well underway at mid-century. From 1954 to 1957, this cluster was large enough to sustain a small monthly newspaper, the *Floride Française*. The clustering of French speakers in Florida was always a consequence of language: Francophones *needed*, more than Anglophones, to congregate for mutual support and access to services in their mother tongue. A high proportion of the advertisements in *La Floride Française* were for businesses located in Woonsocket, Detroit, Lowell, Lewiston, and other places where Franco-Americans lived: in other words, many French Floridians, possibly a majority still, were visiting from the northern states, and had come to Florida from New England. Although the data are patchy, Franco-Americans seemed more likely than the Québécois to move permanently to the Sunshine State, both because of nationality and because they had a parent or grandparent from Québec or the Maritime provinces who had made an even more ambitious move to a New England milltown. Those whose ancestors had stayed in Canada despite Conquest, deportation, and scarcity were more likely to come to Florida as tourists and snowbirds than as settlers. Even so, Franco-Americans welcomed their French Canadian "cousins et *cousines*": in 1956, *Floride Française* enthusiastically published a picture of Louis St. Laurent, the second francophone to be Prime Minister of Canada, taken at a marina in Fort Lauderdale where he had gone deep-sea fishing. On

² R.T. Allen, "Florida, Canada's Hottest Province," *MacLean's* (8 October 1960): 72; Jack Kassewitz, "Canada's Week in the Sun," *Miami News*, 2 March 1964.

another occasion the paper reported lavishly on a party hosted by two Montrealers in Miami for stars of the Montréal Canadiens hockey team.³

In the 1960s, as research by Québec-based geographers Louis Dupont and Rémy Tremblay has established, the permanent French-speaking community in Surfside and Sunny Isles started to cater to tourists and snowbirds from Québec. Because the latter required services in French (many of them not having a working understanding of English) Franco-Americans and French-Canadian expatriates built and sustained a linguistic community by catering to French-Canadian snowbirds and tourists. In other words, the French language remained healthy and vibrant in South Florida through an annual transfusion of unilingual snowbirds. Floribécois, as Dupont called those from French Canadians who regrouped in and around the destinations and businesses catering to French-speaking snowbirds and tourists north of Miami, focused on accommodations, restaurants, retail, and real estate in the North Dade and South Broward areas.⁴

Dupont noted that the number of tourists, snowbirds and migrants from Québec increased rapidly during the 1960s at the resort motels north of Miami Beach, mostly in Sunny Isles, Surfside, and Bal Harbour. In these beachfront, resort motels built in the 1950s visitors found efficiency apartments (with kitchenettes) and on-site entertainment programs: dancing, bingo, live entertainment, and guided tours of the area. Many of these

³ Lucien Boutet, owner of the "Lingerie du Jour" in Montréal, hosts Bernard Geoffrion, Maurice Richard, Doug Harvey, Émile "Butch" Bouchard, Jean Béliveau and their spouses, late in April 1955: "Les étoiles du Nord visitent le Sud," *La Floride Française* 1 (May 1955): 1; P.M. St. Laurent, his sons (Jean-Paul and Renault St.-Laurent), and Miss Hugh O'Donnell, at Bahia Mar Marina: "M. Louis St. Laurent, à Fort Lauderdale," *La Floride Française* 2 (December 1956): 1.

⁴ Louis Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride ou l'Amérique comme un possible*, MA diss., University of Ottawa, 1985, 33, 41, 42, 49; Dupont and Marie Dussault, "La présence francophone en Floride: un portrait," *Vie française* 36 (October-December 1980): 8-11.

motels flew a maple leaf flag.⁵ Some of them advertised in Northern and local media their toll-free phone line "from Canada," their French-speaking staff, even a Canadian management. For example, in 1955, Bal Harbour's Tahiti Motel was advertising its French-speaking desk clerks in Montréal's *La Presse*; and the Coral Seas Motel in Sunny Isles was promoting its French Canadian co-owner, and adding "Bienvenue Canadiens" to a local tourist brochure.⁶ By 1968, a Québécois expatriate published a *Guide touristique* for French Canadians vacationing in the Miami area. And in 1971, the owner of the Sunny Isles Suez motel hired a recent migrant from Montréal to act as traveling salesperson, delivering literature and lecturing about the Suez's packages to travel agencies, local clubs and regional fairs in Québec.⁷ In a 1981 listing of thirty-one Sunny Isles resort motels, three claimed to have French-speaking staff. In the 1986 version, six of the twenty-two listed offered such bilingualism, and six had toll-free telephone lines to Canada.⁸

⁵ L.S., "Miles of Motels," *New York Times*, 22 March 1959, sect. XX:3; L.S., "Sun Over Miami," *NYT*, 7 December 1958, sect. 11:3; M. Ouellette-Michalska, "Une odeur de fèves au lard en Floride," *Le Devoir*, 19 March 1982, sect. 2:11; *Id.*, "Bienvenidos, shalom, welcome to Miami," *L'actualité* 5 (December 1980): 24; A. Wilson-Smith et J. Deacon, "Bound for the South," *MacLean's* 106 (25 January 1993): 36; John Grogan, "Canadian Boycott of Florida? Non," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 3 November 1996, 1B; Liz Doup, "Yo! Canada," *Miami Herald*, 10 March 1993, 1E; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (September 1995): A11; french ad from the Shoreman-Northam hotel: *Globe and Mail*, 3 December 1955, 16; *La Presse*, 4 January 1975, f6; 3 January 1970, 48; 23 January 1960, 21; *Autoclub* 50, (January-February 1971): 20.

⁶ Motel Tahiti, 16901 Collins Ave., Bal Harbor; Shoreham-Norman Hotel (your host Roland Lamontagne): *La Presse*, 8 January 1955, 49; 15 January 1955, 39; 3 December 1955, 77; 2 January 1960, 10.

⁷ Thunderbird Resort Motel; Hawaian Isle ("your host Roger Laferrière"); Monaco Motel, Beachharbour Hotel (manager Carmen Landrevile); Château and Suez motels, in *Autoclub "La Floride"* 1 (fall 1982): 3; Riviera Ocean Villas, 6757 Collins Av., Miami Beach (French Canadian management); Mount Royal Manor, 61st St., Miami Beach ("your host Ernest Paradis"); Atlantis, 27th St., Miami Beach ("on parle français"); Daisy Motel, 1291 South US1, Hollywood, (owner André Pinet, from Montréal); Langlois Motel ("ancien Québécois"), 821 NW 37th Ave., Miami; Regent Palace (manager Georges Boullisset); these and others in *La Presse*, 6 December 1980, V8; 4 January 1975, f6; 18 January 1975, d8; 3 January 1970, 48; 23 January 1960, 21; Ouellette-Michalska, "Une odeur de fèves au lard en Floride"; Elizabeth Morgan, "Canadians Find Place in the Sun," *Miami Herald*, 2 January 1981, 20g; the travelling salesperson is Huguette Martineau, who moved to Sunny Isles in 1971 to become a motel manager: Pierre Luc, "Entrevue avec Huguette Martineau," in *Miami Beach, P.Q.*, a memorial of Floribec: planete.qc.ca/floride/miamibeachpqbatisseurs/miamibeachpqbatisseurs-432006-101661.html (retrieved September 2006).

⁸ Tebeau Research Center, HMSF, Miami, in Brochure Collection: Greater Miami Beach Motel Association, *Official Guide, Miami Beach Oceanfront Motels, "1979, Summer and Fall Rates"*; other ads in Greater

As a result of these targeted efforts, Québécois snowbirds and tourists clustered in the motels on the Gold Coast between Miami Beach and Fort Lauderdale. In 1989, three-fifths of Surfside's motel rooms were sheltering a Canadian. The town, despite having a small permanent population, hosted a French Canadian Club, and sponsored a "Salute to Canada" festival at the beginning of March, from 1963 until 1989 (and perhaps beyond – the written record is unclear). Moreover Surfside's government spent a third of its advertising budget in Canada in the early 1980s.⁹

As with other tourist and snowbird clienteles, French Canadians in Miami were a loyal crowd, a French Canadian Club was active there as late as 1983, organizing dances, card games and potlucks.¹⁰ And the small Betty Palm motel on Harding Street in Miami Beach was almost exclusively occupied by Québécois snowbirds until late into the 1990s.¹¹ In spite of their loyalty, during the 1970s and 1980s, the center of the French-speaking district followed the white flight out of Miami and its beach communities, slowly moving northward to Hallandale, Hollywood, and Dania, in Broward County. Snowbirds there found a new nest once again in beachfront motels, albeit smaller than Sunny Isles'

Miami Beach Motel Association, *Official Guide, Miami Beach Ocean Front Motels, 1976 Summer and Fall*; Sunny Isles Resort Association, *Summer and Fall 1981 Rate Guide*, and *Summer and Fall 1986 Rate Guide*.

⁹ Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 27-30, 33, 41; Dupont and Dussault, "La présence francophone en Floride," 8-11; "Florida Stages Canadian Events," *Financial Post Magazine*, 22 November 1969, 49; "Trade Ice for Sun in Miami," *Financial Post*, 23 January 1965, 32; P.-M. Lapointe, "Miami en trois heures," *Le Magazine Maclean* (January 1968): 27; "The High Bright World of Miami," *The Montrealer* 40 (March 1966): 32; Jay Clarke, "A Florida Salute to Canada," *NYT*, 3 March 1968, sect. 10:7; Clarke, "Foreign Flavor," *NYT*, 4 September 1966, D26; *Miami Herald*, 12 March 1971, 2d; Jack Kassewitz, "Canada's Week in the Sun," *Miami News*, 2 March 1964; Ann Simmons, "Surfside Welcomes Northern Neighbors for a Week of Fun," *Miami Herald*, 8 March 1989, 1B.

¹⁰ Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 27-30, 33, 41, 42, 49; Dupont and Dussault, "La présence francophone en Floride: un portrait": 8-11.

¹¹ *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (March 1998): a4.

but still offering similar amenities and kitchenettes. Illustration 7.1 shows one of the Hollywood Beach motels advertising its French-speaking staff and television.¹²



Illustration 7.1: Hollywood Beach Motel Catering to Québécois Snowbirds, 2002.

Source: Author's collection.

The locus of the migrating cluster of French Canadians on the Gold Coast can be plotted through the geography of French-language newspaper distribution. In 1975, Montréal's daily *La Presse* advertised the places where it was sold in Florida: 38 percent of these outlets were in Surfside and neighboring communities north of Miami Beach. Two outlets were in Miami proper, and 28 percent in Hallandale-Hollywood-Dania. This pattern confirms that the center of Floribec was still near Surfside's resort motels, but that the northward movement had already started. In 2002, most of *La Presse's* retailers were

¹² Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 33, 41, 42, 49; Dupont and Dussault: 8-11; Paul Roy, "La route de la Floride," *La Presse*, 6 February 1988, D1; "Fleur-de-Lys Banners and French Ride High in 'Le Petit Quebec'," *Toronto Star*, 18 March 1990, A16; Don MacPherson, "Tourists," *Montreal Gazette*, 21 January

in Hallandale, Hollywood, and Fort Lauderdale, although a few outlets survived in Sunny Isles. Similarly, the retailers of Hallandale-Hollywood-Dania-Fort Lauderdale raised their share of statewide sales for *Le Soleil de la Floride* from 47 to 66 percent between 1993 and 2000.¹³

During the 1980s and 1990s, Québécois snowbirds moved *en masse* to the mobile home parks of Hallandale, Hollywood, Dania and Pembroke Park. In the latter town, during the mid-1990s, the population ballooned each winter from 5,000 to 12,000. Understandably, sales of *Le Soleil de Floride* in the mobile home parks of South Broward County quintupled between 1993 and 2002. Broward was not the final stopping point for the northward migration of Floribécois: by 1990 their northern frontier had reached the mobile home parks then being built along the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach County.¹⁴ On the inland lake, mobile home park developers could still find the cheap land that had become nonexistent near the Atlantic.

The most durable nesting places of French Canadians in Florida, the resort motels and mobile home parks north of Miami, were still being patronized by them at century's end, in spite of booming land values and land-use turnover. Some snowbird havens even

1993, B3; Lisa J. Huriash, "Canadian Winter: The Best Way to Spend it is in South Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, C1.

¹³ "L'édition du jour de *La Presse*, disponible en Floride," *La Presse*, 16 March 2002, D20; "Floride," *La Presse*, 27 January 1975, E17; "Où se le procurer," *Le Soleil de la Floride* 11 (December 1993): b32; "Liste des endroits," *Le Soleil de la Floride* (November 2002): dv22; "Florida Stages Canadian Events," *Financial Post Magazine* (22 November 1969): 49; "Salute": Jay Clarke, "A Florida Salute to Canada," *NYT*, 3 March 1968, sect. 10:7; in Brochure Collection, Tebeau Research Center, HMSF, Miami: Brochure from Rodney Ocean Suites, late 1980s, 9365 Collins, 94th st. (call toll free us/Canada); in postcard collection, HMSF, Miami: Late 1980s postcard from the Golden Sands, with toll-free 1-800 number from Canada; in Sunny Isles motels Castaways, Dunes, Hawaiian Isles: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (September 1996): a5; Salute: *Canada News*, 6 March 1987, 26; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 19 (November 2000): b8; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (September 1996): a5; Suez, Desert Inn, Beach Harbour, Golden Nugget, Sahara, Pier House, Blue Seas, Blue Grass, Driftwood, Thunderbird, Monaco, Tangiers, Marco Polo.

¹⁴ Okeechobee parks are the Oasis, Heritage Village, Palm Lake Ranch: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 11 (February 1994): a19; and *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (October 1997): a13; André Robert, *Le Soleil de la Floride* 11 (December 1993): a19; Louise Gendron, "Sur la piste des Floribécois," *L'actualité* 18 (15 March 1993): 36; Marsha Halper, "Snowbird City," *Miami Herald*, 9 January 1994, 1BSE.

resisted white flight: in the mid-1980s, Québécois snowbirds were still nesting in two small mobile home parks, Bell Haven and Tropical Park, that had been engulfed by the growing African-American ghetto and Little Haiti. Meanwhile the Highland Village park, farther from the ghetto and closer to the Biscayne Bay shore, also weathered Miami's interracial hurricanes: in 1996, a small number of its 200 units were still occupied by Québécois snowbirds, while its thousand-strong population included 200 Hispanics and 150 African Americans.¹⁵

This sort of mixing was, however, unusual, for Floribec was, like most migrant neighborhoods, a self-segregating ethnic community bound together by language and by its business of catering to tourists and snowbirds from Québec. At the time Louis Dupont made his research trip to Florida in the early 1980s, he estimated the Québécois diaspora in South Florida at anywhere between 20,000 to 50,000 permanent residents, most of them residents of the Gold Coast. By then, the number of Québécois visitors each year to Florida stood at 400,000, of whom 60,000 were snowbirds. In 1993, the number of Québécois in Florida peaked at an estimated 550,000 tourists, 150,000 snowbirds, and 50,000 permanent residents.¹⁶

¹⁵ Bell Haven, 3200 NW 79th Street: Dupont and Dussault, "La Présence Francophone en Floride": 15; Raymond Gervais, "Les "Floribécois" n'ont pas peur," *La Presse*, 28 February 1981, A4; Park Lake, in Pembroke Park: "À Park Lake," *Le Soleil de la Floride* 10 (March 1993): C26, 27; at Dale Village, Hallandale, over 3/4 of tenants are Québécois: Paul Roy, "Plus de 100000 Québécois," *La Presse*, 21 February 1987, A1; Paul Brinkley-Rogers, "Canadian Snowbirds Flock to Pembroke Park," *Miami Herald*, 22 November 1998, 1BR; "Seminole Tribe Plans Gambling, Resort Complex for Hollywood," *Gaming Magazine*, web edition, July 6, 2000: gamingmagazine.com/searchMagazine.asp (retrieved June 2004); Maurice Girard, "Recensement," *La Presse*, 26 March 1990, C11; Stephanie Nolen, "La Floride, c'est comme chez nous," *Globe and Mail*, 15 March 1999; in Boynton, La Paloma park; in Hypoluxo, Waterside Village; Shorewalk Vacation Resort in Bradenton (Gulf Coast's most Francophone); Isla Gold, in Naranja (South Miami-Dade), *Le Soleil de la Floride* 12 (June 1995): c4.

¹⁶ Incidentally, Haitian migration and the Québécois diaspora made, by 2000, Florida the second most French state in North America after Québec. Graeme Hamilton, "Sunshine State Overtakes Ontario in Number of Francophones," *National Post*, 15 October 2003: A2; Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 27-30, 33, 41, 42, 49; Dupont and Dussault, "La présence francophone en Floride: un portrait": 8-11; Paul Roy, "La route de la Floride," *La Presse*, 6 February 1988, D1; "Fleur-de-Lys Banners and French Ride High in 'Le Petit Quebec'," *Toronto Star*, 18 March 1990, A16; Don MacPherson, "Tourists," *Montreal Gazette*, 21

The constellation of French-speaking businesses and snowbirds was more durable than its English-speaking equivalents, by virtue of its ethnic and linguistic cohesiveness. English Canadians and American snowbirds, less constrained to socialize within a small linguistic group, have settled in more dispersed patterns, thus fostering the need for a more formal, institutional sociability (as we shall see). In a similar fashion, some bilingual Québécois snowbirds and migrants, at ease in an English-speaking context, have adopted Canadian and American snowbirds' settlement patterns, moving into Anglophone communities (especially to the north and west of Hollywood)¹⁷ and added a tourtiere or maple sugar pie to the already crammed buffet table of affinity clubs along the Gulf Coast. French Canadians opened a social club in St. Petersburg in the 1950s, and another two in Sarasota and Port Charlotte during the 1990s.¹⁸ However, their integration into the snowbird mainstream was obscured by the visibility and distinctiveness of Floribec; thus most Floridians believed the Québécois an exotic and insular (sub)species of snowbird.

As for English-Canadian snowbirds, they commingled with the American varieties along the Gulf of Mexico, fanning out from Clearwater, Dunedin and St. Petersburg, a snowbird haven since the 1920s. By the 1960s they had a marked preference for the Gulf Coast, as did American snowbirds from both the Northeast and Midwest, as English-speaking snowbirds, less attached to the Gold Coast by linguistic chains, could express their growing distaste for the urbanization and pauperization of the Greater Miami area.¹⁹

January 1993, B3; Lisa J. Huriash, "Canadian Winter: The Best Way to Spend it is in South Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, C1; Wilson-Smith and Deacon: 38; Jarvis: 194.

¹⁷ Sallie James, "French Canadians Push North, West for Winter," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 20 January 1998, 1B; John Tanasychuk, "Au Revoir?," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 April 2001, 1E.

¹⁸ 300-member French club in St. Petersburg: *Floride Française* 1 (May 1955): 5; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (October 1997): a13; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (April 1997): a10.

¹⁹ List of residents and their origins in two Pinellas county mobile home parks: no Canadian in 1965, nor in 1970 in the Highland Park mobile home park, but 22 in 1978 in Wilder's Mobile Home Park. in Wilder's Park Collection, box 2, folder 2, Special Collections and Archives, USF St. Petersburg; M. Ouellette-

At the end of the 1980s, a team of sociologists and gerontologists conducted two questionnaire-based surveys of English-Canadian and Québécois snowbirds. By then, most English-Canadian respondents (of whom a plurality came from Ontario²⁰) lived near the Gulf Coast – in Pinellas, Manatee, Polk and Charlotte counties – while the Québécois concentrated in Broward and Palm Beach counties, especially around Hollywood.²¹ The record is silent on the settlement patterns of French-Canadians from outside of Québec – *Acadiens* and *Franco Ontariens* mostly, but the safest guess is that the adoption of the Québécois/ Floribécois *taxa*, and the abandonment of the *Canadien Français* one by the late 1970s, indicate that these cousins from Atlantic Canada and Ontario did not seek the company of Québécois in Floribec. Not only did English- and French-speaking Canadians maintain two solitudes in South Florida, they also differed in housing accommodations: as of the late 1980s, Gerontologists Tucker and Longino estimated that a significantly higher percentage of francophone snowbirds lived in mobile homes – 75 versus 56 percent. A late-1990s estimate hiked the Québécois proportion to 90 percent.²²

For English Canadian snowbirds the emblematic mobile home park was Maple Leaf Estates in Port Charlotte. Founded *circa* 1976 by a Canadian company, by 1985 almost

Michalska, "Bienvenidos, shalom...": 24; two Drummondville couples left Miami for Melbourne, near Cape Canaveral: Réal Pelletier, "De Montréal à Bethléem," *La Presse*, 29 December 1990, G10.

²⁰ A 1986 survey by Market Facts of Canada Inc., in 6 cities, of 1004 former winter vacationers, including 250 travel agents. In Eastern Canada, 60% chose Florida, 30% Mexico, 29% Hawaii, 23% Caribbean Islands, 21% Jamaica and Bahamas, 20% Barbados; 72% of respondents aged 55 and older say Florida, followed by Hawaii 23%; 44% of interviewed choose Florida as *next* destination: "Canadians favor Polk, Pinellas, Charlotte," *St. Petersburg Times*, 13 April 1987, 28E; *Tourism Industry Report* 6 (21 January 1987): 1.

²¹ "Canadians favor Polk, Pinellas, Charlotte," *St. Petersburg Times*, 13 April 1987, 28E; Marshall and Tucker, "Canadian Seasonal Migrants: Boon or Burden?," *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 9 (December 1990): 421, 423; Longino *et al.*, "On the Nesting of Snowbirds: A Question About Seasonal and Permanent Migrants," *The Journal of Applied Gerontology* 10 (June 1991): 161; Tucker *et al.*, "Older Canadians in Florida: A Comparison of Anglophone and Francophone Seasonal Migrants," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 11 (fall 1992): 283, 287, 291, 292, 296; Tucker, Longino, and Larry C. Mullins, "Older Anglophone Canadian Snowbirds in Florida: A Descriptive Profile," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 7 (fall 1988); Bob Hepburn, "Canadians Go Home," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1990, A2; Wilson-Smith and Deacon; Coates, Healy and Morrison, "Tracking the Snowbirds: Seasonal Migration from Canada to the U.S.A. and Mexico," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (Fall 2002): 433-435.

three quarters of its 1,100 units were being occupied by Canadians. The managers specifically targeted Canadians by promoting the park in Canadian media, and named its streets after Ontarian toponym – The Queensway, Niagara, York, Muskoka, and Trillium. During the 1980s and 1990s, some other notable clusters of English-Canadian snowbirds could be found in the town of Largo in Pinellas County (7,500 Canadian mobile home dwellers over a total of 25,000 such homes), Victoria Estates in Port Charlotte, the Moorings of Manatee, Casa Loma Estates in Bradenton, Blue Jays Estates in Dunedin, and at the Silver Lake Mobile Resort in St. Petersburg.²³

Overall, snowbirds have helped to make Canadians the largest foreign tourist presence since the 1930s. By 1980, the annual number of Canadian visits to Florida reached the million mark. The 1980s were banner years for Canadian snowbirds: in 1987, one estimate put the Canadian snowbird total at more than 300,000 in all of Florida²⁴. Canadian tourist counts in Florida ballooned as well, to 2.5 million in the early 1990s, then decreased to 1.7 million in 1999, under the repeated blows of rising health insurance costs, high-profile crime against tourists in the Miami area, and a worsening exchange rate between the Canadian and American currencies. In the late 1990s, the Canadian

²² Stephanie Nolen, "La Floride, c'est comme chez nous," *Globe and Mail*, 15 March 1999.

²³ Other "canadian" parks in Haines City (Polk county); in Spring Hill (Hernando county), Sun'n'Lake Estates in Lake Placid (Highlands county); Lehigh Acres (near Ft. Myers); Sarasota Mobile Home Park; Indian Creek Park (near Ft. Myers); Traveler's Rest, near Tampa, for Airstream trailers: *Canada News*, 9 March 1984, 8; 16 March 1984, 5; 24 February 1984, 8; 27 January 1984, 3; 11 January 1985, 15; 11 April 1986, 17; 13 December 1985, 18; 20 December 1987, 18; 26 February 1988, 22, 24; Tucker, Marshall, Longino, Mullins, "Older Anglophone Canadian Snowbirds in Florida": 165; "Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2D; Wilson-Smith and Deacon: 39; Bob Hepburn, "Retirement Rooost Big on Rules," *Toronto Star*, 19 March 1990, A16; "Dunedin Has Many Reasons to Cheer Jays," *Toronto Star*, 14 February 1994, A12; Deirdre McMurdy, "Chasing the Snowbirds," *Maclean's* 105 (17 February 1992): 36; Kathy English, "Florida Prospers on Canadian Dollars," *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1986, A12; Bob Hepburn, "Canadians Go Home," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1990, A2; Canadian Snowbirds Association, *CSA News* 22 (June 1997): 8; *CSA News* 19 (October 1996): 54; *CSA News* 14 (October 1995): 21; *CSA News* 6 (May 1994): 27; *Canada News*, 24 January 1986, 4; "Canadian Calendar 2005/06," *CSA News* 56 (Fall 2005); Sharon Tubbs, "Exchange Rate May Keep Visitors Away," *St. Petersburg Times*, 12 December 1999, 1.

Snowbirds Association estimated the number of Canadian snowbirds in South Florida at between 150,000 and 200,000.²⁵ Canadian patronage of Florida then increased again, to 2.1 million in 2005, a good year for Florida tourism. With these sorts of numbers, English-speaking and bilingual Canadians had a lot of choice when they came to Florida – blend in, stand out, congregate, disperse – and it stood to reason that their snowbird communities were very much an artifact of their own devising.

7.2 Canadian Snowbirds: Canadians or Not?

Since snowbirds chose Florida because of its climate, community-building typically began with a discourse on winter. A great deal of their sociability was founded on the exchange of information and gossip about the awful winter weather that they were avoiding.²⁶ Weather, always a favorite point of departure for conversations, was used by snowbirds according to their own escapist viewpoint: Canadians – and other Northerners, no doubt – reveled in the joy of being warm during winter. Their display surpassed mere words, according to a Floridian witness who informed a Canadian writer in the 1970s,

They come here sort of frantic, it always seems to me. I've had them undress right in the parking lot and go straight into the ocean. They get here at noon, by three o'clock they're sunburned and by four o'clock they have colds. I've always thought they act irrational, like people who are running away from something.²⁷

²⁴ Jon Nordheimer, "Canadians Who Find a Winter Haven in Florida Bring Separatism Along," *NYT*, 8 April 1987, A20.

²⁵ Lisa J. Huriash, "Canadian Winter: The Best Way to Spend it is in South Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, C1; Wilson-Smith and Deacon: 38; Jarvis: 194.

²⁶ *La Presse*, 23 January 1960, 20; Anne Gilbert, "La nature comme légitimation," in *Dislocation et Permanence: L'invention du Canada au quotidien*, ed. Caroline Andrew (Ottawa, 1999), 56; Wayne Markham, "Tourism's Outlook is Dismal," *Miami Herald*, 17 November 1974; Scott Young, "You All Should Be In Florida Too," *Saturday Night* (23 February 1952); 80% of about 980 persons surveyed by the *St. Petersburg Times* mentioned weather as a factor in choosing Florida: John A. Cutter, "Ah, those golden years," *St. Petersburg Times*, 29 June 1995, 1A.

²⁷ Scott Young, "Galoshes!," *Globe and Mail*, 24 March 1972, quoted in *The Canadian Style*, ed. Raymond A. Reid (Toronto, 1973), 144.

Later, a woman spending her winters along the Gold Coast penned a poem that was all about the great warm outdoors in the dead of winter:

It's time to go!!	Arching back
How do I know	TIME TO PACK!!
It's time to go??	Hop a plane for the Sunshine State
Outside nothing but ice and snow	With a little luck, I'll soon feel great.
Wind chill factor is 10 Below	No vigor or vim?
The sun -a memory, a "no show"	I'll go for a swim!!
Sky overcast with a yellowish glow.	Need to move my butt?
Life has become a terrible bore	I'll get out and putt!!
I'm scared to death to go out the door	I'll dig my toes in the cool, white sand
Suppose I slip?	Pick up shells -and come back tanned.
Break my hip!!	Should I feel the need for Vitamin C
Caught in the throes	I'll pick an orange off a tree.
Of Winter Woes	Tired of feeling weary and worn
Heavy clothes	That is how a SNOW BIRD is born! ²⁸
A runny nose Skin-cracked and dry	
A watery eye	

In their daily activities and socializing, snowbirds used their flight from winter as a bonding mechanism. In a modern world of uncertain values, where even understandings of liberty, equality, and property as well as peace, order and good government had lost their mutuality, they enjoyed a comfort zone of knowing that they agreed with their fellow snowbirds and most Floridians, who included a large number of recent émigrés from the frost belt, on at least one core value – on the right to pursue happiness. There was little risk, as there always was back home, of being chastised for shirking their duties by basking in the sun or being told, amazingly, that a co-worker was actually looking forward to a frost hard enough to freeze an outdoor rink or to a blizzard that would admittedly kill a shoveling neighbor or two, but provide wondrous opportunities for cross-country skiing. In Florida, host and guest could immediately connect when they discussed the weather. No one was going to make a case for hurricanes – anyway few snowbirds stayed in

Florida during hurricane season. Indeed, whenever Florida's permanent residents compared their current life with their previous one back North, the Northern winter was likely to come up.²⁹ It was a positive reinforcement, considering the bleaker realities of life in the Sunshine State (as discussed in Chapter 6). A South Florida newspaperman explained in 1955: "I tramped through the slush in Pottsville [Pennsylvania] selling ads four years ago, then I read every ad in *Editor & Publisher*, looking for the job nearest the Equator."³⁰ At the end of a long career managing a Sunny Isles motel, a Montréal-born woman recalled that Québec's April 1971 "Blizzard of the Century" had settled her decision to migrate to the Gold Coast.³¹ Another neo-Floridian explained:

I despise being cold.... I grew up in Michigan, and I certainly spent my fair share of time romping in the snow.... The older I got, the more I hated cold weather. The outside wasn't for play anymore. It was for going somewhere – to school or work or on errands. For all of those things, cold weather is the worst. It freezes your face, you've got to scrape the windshield, the car won't start, the whole world has turned to slush and on and on it goes. And then there are those first few seconds when you settle into the seat of a car that's been outside all night in 5-degree weather. What a feeling.³²

All travelers and migrants to Florida shared basic values, and used the topic of northern winters to justify their move, and to reach out to others, as a "handshake" with co-travelers and co-migrants.

²⁸ Charlotte Weisberg (Fort Lauderdale), "A Snowbird's Ode to Life Without Winter's Strife," *Miami Herald*, 18 February 1990, 12SW.

²⁹ In 1980, according to the U.S. Census, no less than 40% of the population in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area was born either in Northeastern or North Central US. Meanwhile the same proportion for the Gold Coast was similar, and for the Sun Coast (all Gulf counties between Hillsborough and Monroe) was hovering around 55%. Morton D. Winsberg, "Population," in *Atlas of Florida*, eds. Edward A. Fernald and Elisabeth D. Purdum (Gainesville, 1992), 143; Bonny Shonkwiler, "Encounters of the Cold Kind," *Miami Herald*, 31 January 1988, 4BNE.

³⁰ William L. Rivers, "Florida: The State With the Two-Way Stretch," *Harper's Magazine* 210 (February 1955): 34.

³¹ Pierre Luc, "Entrevue avec Huguette Martineau," in *Miami Beach, P.Q.*, a memorial of Floribec: planete.qc.ca/floride/miamibeachpqbatisseurs/miamibeachpqbatisseurs-432006-101661.html (retrieved September 2006).

³² David Meek, "For This Rolling Stone: Gimme Swelter," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 4 June 2000, 1E.

Some intellectuals have deemed it un-Canadian to flee winter. They found profoundly unsettling the idea that any Canadian, with blood thickened like axle grease by the bitter winters of youth, could actually prefer Florida's un-winter. A toque, mitts and parka being as Canadian as Tim Horton's coffee and rye whiskey, could one really sustain a Canadian identity with a polar bear swim in warm water? Ironically, it was an American immigrant to Canada, historian Robert Harney, who best expressed his nation's fear that Florida posed a potential threat to Canadian identity as an autonomous, distinctive North American nation:

If the greatest threat to Canadian sovereignty and cultural uniqueness is the American Babylon to the south, then annual dosages of Americanism administered in a beguiling vacation atmosphere must rank with the invasion of American television as one of the chief impediments to the emergence of a Canadian people.³³

The definition of Florida as *threat* begs the question: What about snowbirds themselves? Did they see Florida as a threat to their Canadian identity? Did they wave or hide the Canadian flag down South? Answers to these questions are of interest not only to Canadian nationalists, but also to anyone fearful of creeping cultural uniformity. Are they right? In a context of late modernity, does the pursuit of Florida's mass-produced, homogenized version of pleasure, leisure, and the Good Life mean that everyone – Canadians, Americans or "Kazakhs" like Borat – has surrendered to a single, hegemonic definition of "Fun"? Is the popularity of Florida a sign of the surrender of local meanings of pleasure and place to the maw of globalization?

³³ Harney, "The Palmetto and the Maple Leaf: Patterns of Canadian Migration to Florida," in *Shades of the Sunbelt: Essays on Ethnicity, Race, and the Urban South*, eds. R.M. Miller and G.E. Pozzetta (Boca Raton, 1989), 32; similar opinion: "extreme enemies of the state": Andy Nulman, "Shooting Down the Snowbirds," *Montreal Gazette*, 14 November 1999, C5.

The answer is that Canadian snowbirds seem to have remained faithfully Canadian, even when larking about in Florida. An Orillia snowbird declared in 1986 "If there was a place in Canada with this climate, most of us would be there. We're Canadians and we don't want to forget it, but we're in heaven down here."³⁴ In 1999, a report of the Canadian Snowbird Association trumpeted the attachment of its members to their nationality:

Snowbirds have been around for a long time, and are exceptionally proud to be Canadian.... We know how to work and how to play and are willing to fight for the wonderful country we have helped build. We may be retired from our professions, but not from our love of Canada and all it stands for.³⁵

Sure, talk was cheap during the patriotic 1990s. But obviously, wintering in Florida does not require a complete repression of one's Canadian – or Northern – identity. Yet something changes during the sojourn, albeit slightly.

In the 1980s, Robert Harney suggested that Canadian snowbirds in Florida experience, not so much a demise, but a *regression* of their Canadian identity. As they become less Canadian, they become more "hyphenated," more ethnically characterized. Thus Ontarians seem more Anglo-Celtic: they introduce lawn bowling in Florida and members of the Canadian Club of the Palm Beaches drink tea at four o'clock. Similarly Québécois have become more French Canadian when down South: they play a French version of lawn bowling called *pétanque*, they patronize restaurants and retailers that offer traditional Québécois dishes and staples, they exhibit a *joie de vivre* and a noticeable lack of inhibition in dress and beach behavior.³⁶ This regression is also illustrated – and encouraged – by the relative lack of contact between the two linguistic groups, English

³⁴ Kathy English, "Florida Prospers on Canadian Dollars," *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1986, A12.

³⁵ "Snowbird Profile," *CSA Special Report 1999*. Found on the CSA website snowbirds.org (retrieved May 2005).

³⁶ Christine Evans, "Take a Walk on the Broadwalk," *Tropic -Miami Herald* (29 December 1991): 18; Beth Feinstein-Bartl, "No Snow and Plenty of Petanque," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 7 March 1997, C1; Jean Laurac quotes Mara Giuliani, mayor of Hollywood: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (April 1996): a4.

and French, when in Florida. In 1990, a Toronto journalist noted that "the French and English Canadians seldom mix except for watching NHL games on huge screens in places such as the Penalty Box in Fort Lauderdale. ... 'We see Anglos at the flea markets We sure don't see them in our neighborhoods'," commented a French-speaking snowbird.³⁷

The geographic clustering of snowbirds by region of origin is a likely cause of ethnic regression: in the process of finding and joining snowbird communities through social networks and north-south roads one is likely to seek and find kindred spirits, reinforcing ethnic traits in the process. Snowbirds, and the people catering to them, are agents in their own clustering, by displaying signs of their regional and ethnic identity. Hence the display and assertion of one's mores and origins become a useful way to identify and join a group, thereby creating communitarian bonds and asserting inter-communitarian *distinctions*. The need for friendship and belonging while spending the winter in Florida commanded a hyphen, an overstatement of one's background and peculiarities. While the flag-waving of the Canadian Snowbirds Association played a part in their clustering, it did not mean a strengthening of their Canadian nationalism.

Atavistic hyphenation was a coping strategy already known to Floridians, for New York Jews had become more ethnically Jewish after they reached Miami Beach (or the Catskills, as testified by the "Borscht Belt" comedy circuit, which participated in the coming of age of such geniuses – many of them Miami Beach regulars – as Danny Kaye, Milton Berle, Rodney Dangerfield, Woody Allen, and Jackie Mason). Meanwhile, other Americans had joined snowbird affinity groups that had effectively created a state or

³⁷ Harney: 25-31; "Fleur-de-Lys Banners and French Ride High in 'Le Petit Quebec'," *Toronto Star*, 18 March 1990, A16; Penalty Box opens in 1978 in Fort Lauderdale, owner-managers are Rosaire Paiement and Jocelyn Guèvremont, retired NHL players. Moved to Pompano in 1996: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (October 1996): A8; Robert Douglas, "Great White North Warms Florida Economy," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-*

regional "ethnicity" for them. Consequently, Canadians were both typical in becoming simultaneously more hyphenated, while standing out as they paraded their "Canadian" identity (after all, everyone has multiple identities). All the snowbirds "put their roots on display"; Canadians mounted distinctive displays as they built distinctive communities in Florida.

7.3 Snowbird Lifestyle on Display

Ethnic distinctiveness and cultural displays were central to the formation of Floribec. They were the *raison d'être* for the businesses catering to French speakers that formed the heart of Floribec, that were its most visible feature, and that embodied its vitality to most observers. Motels advertised their French-language staff, and offered Québécois cuisine and Montréal newspapers; moreover, motels in Surfside and Sunny Isles have scheduled live appearances of Québécois performers since the 1960s. Ballrooms in Broward County have hosted French Canadian evenings since the 1970s; once during the 1990s, there were three of them at the same time.³⁸ By 1979, Québécois businesspeople and professionals in Broward were numerous enough to form a local branch of the Richelieu Club, a Rotary for the Québécois middle class. By the 1990s, the club was sponsoring weekly picnics in Pembroke Park (themed by regions of the Province of Québec) to pay tribute to the diverse origins of Québec snowbirds. The club is still

Sentinel, 20 April 1987, b8; *Canada News*, 26 December 1986, 22; "Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2D.

³⁸ Luigi's Ballroom (corner US1 and Hallandale Blv.); René Godin at the Diplomat Mall, Hallandale; Monday evenings at La Paloma Mobile Home Park, Boynton Beach; Thursdays at the Hillcrest residential centre; every two weeks in Dale Village and Park City mobile home parks; on Fridays at the Club canadien (formerly "La Québécoise"), on 21st St., south of Hallandale Blv., by Henri Lessard; Wednesdays at the Italian-American Club (formerly Club Canadien), 700 Dixie Hwy., Hollywood; also at the Club Canadien of the Somerset condos, Lauderhill Lakes: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (March 2000): b4-b6; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (January 1997): a8; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (January 1996): b18-19.

active. From 1990 onwards there was also a French-Canadian Can-Am Optimist Club in Hollywood.³⁹ The congregation of French-Canadian professionals and small businesses around Hollywood fostered the opening of Québec-based banks: in the fall of 1992, the Caisse Populaire Desjardins opened a branch in Hallandale, followed in 1994 by a Banque Nationale branch in Pompano.

On the Hollywood beach "Broadwalk,"⁴⁰ the businesses have long been using French-language signs to advertise their services for Québécois. Three cabaret-restaurants – the *12 O'Clock High*, *Starting Point* and *Frenchie's* – were offering live Québécois singers in the 1980's. Among others, *La Québécoise* restaurant promised "vrais mets Canadiens" (Real French-Canadian Dishes) to its clientele, including poutine (a mélange of cheese curds, gravy and French Fries), beans with lard (bacon fat), *tourtière* (a meat pie once made from *tourtes*, passenger pigeons), yellow pea soup. For a while, during the 1980s, a *Saint-Hubert* roasted-chicken franchise (household name in Québec) was operating in Fort Lauderdale. And for the numerous self-caterers, there was a *Lucky Seven* convenience store in Dania that acted as an informal tourist information office for Floribec. There, Québécois could find some of their favorite staples, otherwise unavailable in the South (such as Vachon pastries, Bovril soup base, smoked meat and French-language newspapers).⁴¹

³⁹ Colleen Warren, "Canadian Snowbirds' Fun Raises Funds for Good Causes," *Miami Herald*, 27 January 2000, 1SE; Natasha Butler, "Canadians Enjoy Homecoming," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 7 December 2000, 6B; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (April 1997): a10; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 19 (27 December 2001): 10; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (May 2000): b17; Dupont and Dussault: 20; Dupont, *Les Québécois*, 105-107.

⁴⁰ Not Boardwalk.

⁴¹ Other goods at the Lucky Seven: pickled pork tongues, Dainty instant rice, Saint-Hubert Barbecue sauces, Five Roses' flour, Magic baking powder, Aylmer tomato soup, V-H and Catelli sauces, Kraft peanut butter, maple syrup, Salada tea, Humpty Dumpty potato chips (with Québécois favorite flavours: BBQ, bacon, and ketchup), sugar pie ("tarte au sucre"), head cheese. Stephanie Nolen, "La Floride, c'est comme chez nous," *Globe and Mail*, 15 March 1999; "Fleur-de-Lys Banners and French Ride High in 'Le Petit Quebec'," *Toronto Star*, 18 March 1990, A16; Amy Vernon, "Welcome to Quebec South," *Miami Herald*, 8 December 1994, 3SE; Banks: Luis Miullan, "À la conquête des snowbirds," *Le Banquier* (September-October 1995):

These businesses were an instance of Robert Harney's "migration brokers." That is, they offered services to facilitate the migration and community-building of their compatriots still innocent about the near abroad. One such broker was a lawyer named Larry J. Béhar, who lived on the Gold Coast. He became a prominent member of Floribec, and sold his expertise as a specialist of migration to, and investment in, the United States. During the 1990s, he published several editions of his book, *How to Migrate to the USA*, published in both English and French. Similarly, Douglas A. Grey, a Canadian attorney, started publishing in 1995 a financially-oriented *Canadian Snowbird Guide* in Canada's national languages.⁴² American brokers for American snowbirds were no less visible, but they understandably had nothing to say about the *immigration* aspects of moving to Florida. Of course, they did have something to say about buying swampland or timeshares

As for English-Canadian snowbirds, they seemed to enjoy getting together in Florida – more than the average American snowbird, it seems. In 1960, a *MacLean's* journalist noted that Canadians "are inclined to stick closer together than, say, Americans from one state." An Ontario snowbird declared in the 1980s: "...[A]s much as I like it here, I get hungry for my own people." An English-speaking Montrealer added, "We are Canadians, and we're proud of being Canadians, but we do love being here in the winter."

35; Wendy Shaffer, "Beach Bistros Close to Home for Canadians," *Miami Herald*, 21 January 1988, 4BNE; Rémy Tremblay, *Floribec, Les Québécois en Vacances*, research report (Montréal, 2001), 29; Gendron: 37; Saint-Hubert: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (March 1996): a4; Alain and Louise Tessier, "Les Québécois en Floride: Fuyant la TPS et la TVQ," *La Presse*, 7 January 1992, A6; Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 41, 42, 49; Dupont and Dussault: 8-11; pea soup: Peter Whoriskey, "French Canadians Love Sun, Sand, Fellowship," *Miami Herald*, 1 January 1992, 1BR.

⁴² Significantly, Behar's subtitle, "Doing Business in America," was translated in the French version into "Les investissements en Floride." Mathieu Perreault, *La Presse*, 17 November 1995, a10; "I'd Teach Desmarais to Live on a Billion," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1999, 1; Larry J. Béhar, *How to Immigrate to the U.S.A.: Followed by Doing Business in America* (Fort Lauderdale, 1989); Douglas Gray, *The Canadian Snowbird Guide: Everything you Need to Know About Living Part-Time in the U.S.A. and Mexico* (Whitby, On, 1995).

In their report on RV users, Dorothy and David Counts made the same observation: English Canadians stuck together as a group.⁴³

The wider geographic distribution of English Canadian (and American) snowbirds might explain why they have tended to socialize, more than Québécois through affinity clubs and associations. By 1960, there were five Canadian Clubs in Florida: in Daytona, Orlando, Miami, Lakeland, and St. Petersburg, the last since 1913; by the mid-1980s, the Florida Federation of Canadian Clubs had twenty chapters, including the Canadian Club of Bradenton-Sarasota, the Clearwater Canadian Fellowship, the Canadian Society of Lakeland (organizing annual picnics since 1957), as well as a Newfoundland Society, a Nova Scotia Society, and a Maritime Provinces Society. There even was an English-speaking Canadian Club in Broward County, but it held its meetings in Pompano at some distance from Floribec. In the winter of 2006, the Canadian Snowbird Association listed sixteen Canadian Clubs, all but two of them on the Gulf Coast or in Central Florida, none of them closer to Hollywood than Pompano – a mere fifteen-minute drive, but worlds away in terms of status.⁴⁴

⁴³ “Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds,” *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2D; Jon Nordheimer, “Canadians Who Find a Winter Haven in Florida Bring Separatism Along,” *NYT*, 8 April 1987, A20; R.T. Allen, “Florida, Canada's Hottest Province,” *MacLean's* (8 October 1960): 69; Sy and Carrol Eisler, in Tamarac (Broward), explain, in open letter section, that Ontarians are a majority among Canadian snowbirds: “Canadian to Snowbirds: Be on Your Best Behavior,” *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 2 January 1995, 10A; Lisa J. Huriash, “Canadian Winter: The Best Way to Spend it is in South Florida,” *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, C1; “Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds,” *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2D; D. Ayers Counts and D.R. Counts, *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America* (Peterborough, On, 1996), 87.

⁴⁴ Also: Central Florida Canadian Society; Canadian Club of Spring Hill (Hernando county); Canadian Club of Century Village, in Pembroke Pines; Canadian Club of Charlotte County; CC of Barefoot Bay (Brevard County); CC of Lehigh Acres (near Ft. Myers); CC of Wynmoor (Coconut Creek, North Broward); Canadian Club of the Treasure Coast (on the Atlantic, North of Palm Beach); Canadian Club of Cape Coral; Canadian Club of the Palm Beaches; Canadian Club of Ocala (North of Orlando), Canadian Club of the Gulf Coast (Pinellas County), Englewood Canadian Club (near Sarasota), Canadian Club of Vero Beach. At the annual picnic of the Canadian Club of Central Florida in 1987, 200 guests sing *America the Beautiful* and *O Canada*. They toast the Queen and the President. The same year there was a “Can-Am day” at Woodbrook Estates (Lakeland); Canadian Club in Wynmoor mobile home park, near Pompano: *Canada News* 5 (24 April 1987): 18; *Canada News*, 8 March 1985, 19; 5th annual Sudbury picnic, in Ft. De Soto Park

Maritimers formed independent affinity groups, while Ontarian clubs carried the "Canadian" label. The Maritimers were following the Florida norm, as American snowbirds also joined geographic-affinity clubs such as the Philadelphia or Brooklyn Clubs. Why were Ontarians the exception? Why was there no Ontario Club in Florida? Because the majority of Canadian snowbirds were Ontarians, the *Canadian* label was often a stand-in for *Ontarian*. Ontarians, as in Canada, tended to confound their provincial idiosyncrasies with what they felt were *the* Canadian folkways⁴⁵. As in Canada, Ontarians welcomed everyone to belong to Empire Ontario. One-third of the Canadian population and more than half of Florida's Canadian snowbirds, they readily identified themselves as being Canadians first, Ontarians second. (For similar reasons, few Ontario universities offered classes on the history of the province.)

Whatever the geographic designation, most club activities involved socializing: group meetings, dances, and the sharing of food and drink, mostly in the informal

(Pinellas), and Canadian Club of the Gulf Coast: *Canada News*, 3 April 1987, 21; Highlands Canadian Club (Sebring): *Canada News*, 20 February 1987, 26; Bemar Acres Canadian Club (Zephyrhills), Canada Night at the El Rancho Village (Bradenton), Canada Night at Citrus Valley Campground (Clermont), and at Hidden River Camps (Riverview): *Canada News*, 13 February 1987, 26; annual meeting of Lake and Marion county Canadians: *Canada News*, 4 March 1988, 26; Canadian Club of Spring Hill (Hernando county): *Canada News*, 8 January 1988, 22; among other editions of *Canada News*, 20 April 1984, 13; 23 March 1984, 8; 9 March 1984, 7; 10 February 1984, 5; 26 April 1985, 19; 12 April 1985, 14; 28 March 1986, 18; 7 March 1986, 20; 6 March 1987, 26; 4 March 1988, 26; a Michigan Canadian Club in Paradise Bay (Manatee): *Canada News*, 10 February 1984, 5; new Canadian Club in Lake Placid (Highlands co., near Sebring): *Canada News*, 2 February 1984, 3; "Canada Clubs," *CSA News* 50 (spring 2004); in the following, a listing of about 50 events and clubs, only three with a French-speaking element (eg name of the person in charge), none in Broward and Miami-Dade, only two in Palm Beach county: "Canadian Golf Clubs and Special Events," *CSA News* 33 (fall 1999); "Canadian Calendar 2005/06," *CSA News* 56 (Fall 2005).

⁴⁵ Steve Penfold has noted this tendency in his research, as did the team of literary scholars that he quotes: Christian Riegal, Herb Wylie *et al.*, *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing* (Edmonton, 1998), 11; see "'Eddie Shack Was no Tim Horton': Donuts and the Folklore of Mass Culture in Canada," in *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, eds. Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (New York, 2001); and Penfold's thesis: *The Social Life of Donuts: Commodity and Community in Postwar Canada*, PhD diss. (York University, 2002), 303; instances of Ontarian majorities at the Canadian Society of Lakeland picnic: *Canada News*, 16 March 1984, 8; similar Ontario majorities in *Canada News*, 10 February 1984, 1, 2; 2 February 1984, 3; 20 January 1984, 7; 16 December 1983, 3; 9 December 1983, 3; 26 April 1985, 23; 20 March 1987, 18.

atmosphere of public parks and mobile home parks. Through these person-to-person, intimate contacts, feelings of reciprocity and community arose between individuals.⁴⁶

Despite their provincial loyalties, Canadian snowbirds demonstrated some sense of national unity and identity in the crisis that led to the creation of the Canadian Snowbirds Association (CSA). During the fiscal crisis of the early 1990s, Canada's provincial governments sharply reduced the out-of-country coverage of their health-insurance programs, forcing snowbirds to buy costly private insurance policies to compensate for the growing gap between their publicly-financed coverage and the escalating cost of health care in the United States. These cuts, initiated by Ontario in early 1992, impelled 1,000 snowbirds to gather together in March 1992, in Lakeland, Florida, to plan a counter-offensive. The Canada-based CSA, formed soon afterwards, pressured provincial and federal governments to cancel the cuts, while negotiating group rates for its members with private insurance companies.⁴⁷

In February 1993, a Tampa meeting of the CSA attracted 12,000 snowbirds. This event gave birth to the yearly Snowbird Extravaganza, a formal and festive gathering of CSA members that featured a commercial fair (with 200 booths in 1999) and live entertainment. The Extravaganza drew 25,000 in 1994, its inaugural year, and nearly 100,000 in 1999, nearly two-thirds of whom were Americans. A tribute to snowbirds' penchant for flocking patterns, the CSA Extravaganza replaced the "Homage to Canada" events that had been held each February at the Florida State Fair in Tampa. The CSA enabled snowbirds to flaunt their unity and power – 100,000 members by 1994 – to

⁴⁶ From a conclusion coined by Marshall Sahlins: *Counts and Counts*, 174, 176, 177.

⁴⁷ Jonathon Gatehouse, "Canadian Snowbirds Descend on Tampa for Extravaganza: 100,000 Expected," *National Post*, 22 January 1999, A4; Canadian Snowbirds Association, *CSA News* 3 (spring 1993): 6, 13, 18; 1 (December 1992): 1; 26 (April 1998): 24-26, 37, 52, 53; 25 (December 1997): 42; 21 (March 1997): 40-

Floridians, Americans snowbirds, and to entitlement-cutting governments back home – with some success. The new Conservative government of Ontario rescinded part of the cuts in 1995. However, because it was founded in reaction to cuts in *Ontario's* Health Insurance Program, and because it was stronger in snowbird communities on the Gulf Coast, the CSA recruited few Québécois. Should the CSA have therefore been named the Ontario Snowbirds Association? Not to the Ontarian mind.⁴⁸ As the Extravaganza attests, fairs and festivals have been excellent ways to assert and publicize the collective bonds that define the snowbird community and clientele.

With equal grandeur as Ontarians, Québécois snowbirds have called their own festival CanadaFest since its founding in February 1983. Despite its name, the event, organized by Floribécois, has targeted French-speaking Canadians so exclusively that disappointed visitors from North York complained to its organizers in 1999 that the event should be called "QuébecFest."⁴⁹ Conceived by Richard Gauthier, a country music singer and producer, CanadaFest attracted crowds of 100,000 to 200,000 during the 1990s (the great majority of them Québécois) to its free concerts and exhibits on the Hollywood Beach Broadwalk.⁵⁰

42; 16 (March 1996): 7; 15 (December 1995): 22; 13 (September 1995): 23, 32; 10 (March 1995): 2; 9 (December 1994): 42.

⁴⁸ Canadian event at Florida State Fair, "Salute to Canada," sponsored by Molson and Wardair: *Canada News*, 13 February 1987, 18; Andrew Phillips, "Flocking Together: Homesick Canadian 'Snowbirds' Rally in the Sun," *Maclean's* 110 (10 February 1997): 24; Liz Doup, "Yo! Canada," *Miami Herald*, 10 March 1993, 1E; concentration of CSA's activities on the Gulf Coast: "CSA Days," *CSA News* 40 (fall 2001); "CSA Days," *CSA News* 44 (fall 2002); "Winter Information Meetings" and "Upcoming Events," *CSA News* 50 (spring 2004): www.snowbirds.org/csaneews/issues/50/33.html (retrieved June 2005).

⁴⁹ Letter from Anita and Murray Katzman, North York, to Denyse Chartrand, dated 10 February 1999: "We strongly suggest that you call your festival Quebecfest.": *Le Soleil de la Floride* 16 (April 1999): b28; Bonhomme: *Canada News*, 9 January 1987, 14.

⁵⁰ Survey of 298 CanadaFest visitors in 1998, 95% are Québécois. *CSA News* 26 (April 1998): 52; *CSA News* 21 (March 1997): 42; "Hollywood Says Thanks to Canadians," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 2 February 1996, 1; Amy Vernon, "Welcome to Quebec South," *Miami Herald*, 8 December 1994, 3se; Christopher Wellisz, "Canada Comes South," *Miami Herald*, 23 January 1988, 4Br; Eileen Soler, "Just Like Canada, But With no Snow," *Miami Herald*, 11 February 1999, 1SE; Lisa J. Huriash, "Canadian Winter: The Best Way to Spend it is in South Florida," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 21 February 1999, C1; Susan

Festivals like CanadaFest and the Snowbird Extravaganza would not have been feasible without the active support of another node of snowbird congregation: snowbird media and the news outlets that broadcasted news from the North. An important source was *Canada Calling*, the first radio broadcast for Canadians in Florida, initiated in 1952 with Dave Price as its host. In 1977, Prior Smith created a snowbird show that soon supplanted Price's in popularity. During the 1990s, Smith wrote weekly columns for the *Toronto Sun*, *Toronto Star* and *Montréal Gazette*. He remains active to this day, broadcasting over more than 25 stations. Over time Smith developed into a spokesperson for snowbirds: he was Master of Ceremonies at the 1993 meeting where the Canadian Snowbird Association was founded and was broadcast live from the Florida State Fair in February 2005. There also were a handful of French-speaking radio shows in the Fort Lauderdale area during the 1980s and 1990s, whose formats varied almost yearly.⁵¹ All

Wittman, "Celebration of French-Canada Draws 100,000 to Broadwalk," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 15 February 2002, C1; A.M. Voisard, "Sous les palmiers, la manne," *Le Soleil*, 3 April 1998, a1; Noaki Schwartz, "Quebec Quest," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 8 February 2002, C1; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 19 (December 2001): 10; *Canada News*, 24 January 1986, 3; Pierre Champagne, "Vive la Floride! 100 000 Québécois au Canada Fest," *Le Soleil*, 19 February 1995, C3.

⁵¹ *Toronto Sunday Sun: Tourism Industry Report* 9 (29 January 1990); Price: Jack Kassewitz, "Canada's Week in the Sun," *Miami News*, 2 March 1964; "Olsters Live it Up in St. Petersburg," *Miami Herald*, 3 January 1960, 5G; Adrienne P. Samuels, "Radio Show Keeps Snowbirds Tuned in," *Miami Herald*, 8 April 2002, 3b; Jon Nordheimer, "Canadians Who Find a Winter Haven in Florida Bring Separatism Along," *NYT*, 8 April 1987, A20; *CSA News* 3 (spring 1993): 18; *CSA News* 1 (December 1992): 9; Liz Doup, "Yo! Canada," *Miami Herald*, 10 March 1993, 1E; Mark Ricketts, "Where the Sun Also Sets -Fast," *Financial Post*, 27 March 1976, 1; "Fleur-de-Lys Banners and French Ride High in 'Le Petit Quebec'," *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1990, A16; daily French broadcast on the Gold Coast, by Gerald Edwards and Madeleine Martel: Kate McClare, "Radio Show Will Bring News to Visiting French Canadians," *Miami Herald*, 19 October 1997, 8BRI; late version of the original "Canada Calling," hosted by Finlay MacDonald (former president of the Progressive-Conservative Party), sponsored by Maple Leaf Estates, on a Port Charlotte radio: "Canada Today," *Canada News*, 30 March 1984, 15; *Canada News*, 26 April 1985, 18; 1 March 1985, 18, 19; 23 January 1987, 18; "Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2D; French broadcasts: Marie Tison, "Concurrence impitoyable entre médias de langue française," *La Presse*, 9 January 1992, A4.

these broadcasts had similar contents, mainly "news from home" and *Canadian* weather reports⁵².

Snowbirds received further group reinforcement from the weekly and monthly publications catering to them. Since 1982 the *Canada News* has brought to English Canadian snowbirds headlines about winter weather and other news from home, as well as a calendar of social activities for Florida's Canadian Clubs. In 1994 the competing *Sun-Times'* owners bought the *News*, but they kept both newspapers in circulation, a sure sign of the demand for the latter's community calendar.⁵³

All snowbird newspapers – those catering to American Northerners as well⁵⁴ – lauded the mildness of Florida's winters in contrast to the North's. They thereby helped to make voluble hedonism the common nexus of snowbird life, the most conspicuous element of their identity, among themselves and their hosts.⁵⁵ Vance Packard, noting in *A Nation of Strangers*, the snowbird habit of discussing the northern weather, concluded that it must have influenced their worldviews. Indeed, it did, helping to structure their

⁵² Coverage of northern winter weather: *Canada News*, 3 January 1986, 3; 22 February 1985, 19; 15 February 1985, 2; picture of a blizzard in St Catharines: 8 March 1985, 1; 20 January 1984, 3; Young, "Galoshes!," 144.

⁵³ Deirdre McMurdy: 36; "Florida's Winter Roosts Cater to Rich Canadian Snowbirds," *Miami Herald*, 20 February 1988, 2d; Doup, 1E.

⁵⁴ *Wilder's Park News* 8 (11 January 1960): tenant from Indiana "glad to be out of that Yankee winter"; 11 (22 February 1960): tenants from Illinois "15 inches of snow on the ground when they left home"; 8 (10 January 1970): from Schenectady, "Left snow, came down here fo a few nice days, then back to SNOW"; and from Detroit who just went back North: "don't know how they're weathering this week's storm. They enjoyed our summer weather, are looking to retiring in about 2 years and think this is the life."; 30 December 1978: from "N.Y. State (the cold North)"; in *Wilder's Park Collection*, box. 2, folders 2 and 10, in Special Collections and Archives, USF, St. Petersburg.

⁵⁵ Kathy English, "Florida Prospers on Canadian Dollars," *Toronto Star*, 9 March 1986, A12; *CSA News* 22 (June 1997): 8; 19 (October 1996): 54; 14 (October 1995): 21; 6 (May 1994): 27; Allison Dunfield, "Snowbirds Relieved to Hear They Can Still Head South," *Globe and Mail*, 17 May 2002; Stephanie Nolen, "La Floride, c'est comme chez nous," *Globe and Mail*, 15 March 1999; "Un hebdo en francais," *La Presse*, 20 December 1982, A2; C.A. Houghton, Torontoan wintering in St. Petersburg: "Hard to Beat the Dual Life of a Snowbird," *St. Petersburg Times*, 17 December 1987, P2; *Miami Herald*, 3 January 1967, 27A.

sociability by giving meaning and purpose to their will to congregate together and to build community.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, French Canadians have had the weekly *Journal de la Floride* during the early 1980s, and the notorious monthly, *Le Soleil de la Floride*, since the fall of 1983. The latter's publishers, Jean Laurac and Denyse Chartrand, learned their trade in Montréal's culture-and-gossip weeklies. Laurac and Chartrand also managed CanadaFest during most of the 1990s; their interest in Québec's old-school mass culture – country music, crooners, vaudeville and cabaret-type performing – reinforced CanadaFest's mandate as an event centered around performing acts: comedians, singers, and square/ ballroom dancing. The *Soleil* offered an upbeat, detailed coverage of the travels of famous Québécois through the Sunshine State, especially those who came to perform for tourists and snowbirds. By this attention to the presence and performance of Québécois mass culture in Florida, the *Soleil* contributed to the communitarian feeling and cohesion in Floribec. Its story also explains why Floribec was structured, spatially and temporally, around nodes of expressive culture: dancing, live entertainment, bars, and restaurants.⁵⁷

How precisely did *Soleil's* gossipy coverage of Montréal's "colonie artistique" foster a community spirit in Floribec? By pioneering. Some of these artists were pioneers in the foundation of Floribec: they had visited the Sunny Isles-Surfside area since the 1960s to perform for tourists and snowbirds in resort motels, where the small scale of the stages and crowds allowed them to interact informally with their public. The subject of media

⁵⁶ Packard, *A Nation of Strangers* (New York, 1972), 97, 98.

⁵⁷ Amy Alexander, "Web Site Connects Canadians to Broward," *Miami Herald*, 13 October 1996; "Un hebdo en français," *La Presse*, 20 December 1982, A2; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 11 (October 1993): a8; 13 (September 1995): a8; Francine Grimaldi, "Un 'vrai' théâtre pour les Québécois en Floride," *La Presse*, 19 September 1993, B9; Bob French, "French-Canadian Newspaper Offers its Readers Tips, Advice," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 3 May 1993, 1B; Jacquin Sanders, "Faces in the Crowd," *St. Petersburg Times*, 7

attention in snowbird periodicals and in Canada, these artists represented a brand of popular culture very dear to the snowbird public. The unity of taste was obvious: these artists were mostly from Montréal's vaudeville and cabaret scene. They found in Florida venues a natural extension of their provincial touring – and a necessary one as they were increasingly forced off Montréal stages by highbrow theatre and *chansonniers*, and by lowbrow pop music and television.

Muriel Millard led the southward trajectory by performing at the Hawaiian Isle motel in the early 1960s – amidst her peak in Québec's limelight –, followed, among others, by Rose Ouellette, Gilles Latulippe, Roméo Pérusse, Michel Louvain, Willie Lamothe, Paolo Noël, and Edna DesRobert. Jean Grimaldi, one of the most prominent promoters of live entertainment in Québec during the 1940s and 1950s, also performed his trade in Floribec South Florida nearly until his death in 1996. Normand Lachance, a producer associated with Montréal's temple of vaudeville, the *Théâtre des Variétés*, was active in Floribec during the 1980s and 1990s. For many years, starting in 1974, working-class entertainers Gérard Vermette and Johnny Farago hosted popular cabaret shows in the Castaways, Suez, Dunes, and Desert Inn motels. Two of these, from the *La vie en rose* bar of the Dunes motel and from the Desert Inn, were important enough to be broadcast live on a Montréal AM station, while two other radio hosts recorded daily radio clips from the Desert Inn, for the Montréal airwaves. Later in the 1980s, another generation of artists, country singers and "vaudevillians" entertained the snowbirds: Shirley Thérroux, Pier Béland, Evan Joanness, Franck Ollivier, Gil Tibo, and the Queen of Country herself, Julie

March 1993, 1; short-lived French newspaper on the Gold Coast: *Le Vacancier de la Floride*, in 1991-92, headed by Gerald Edwards: Marie Tison.

Daraiche.⁵⁸ It is fair to say that as the 1970s ended, Québec artists active in Floribec were rapidly becoming marginal in the Belle Province, increasingly confined to the AM airwaves, and to an aging public. As Floribec matured from Muriel Millard and Johnny Farago (who could claim some mainstream appeal during the 1960s and 1970s) to Pier Béland, it grew estranged, marginal in relation to the mass culture mainstream in Québec (which itself was maturing with its FM radio networks, pop-rock music, and market segmentation). At best, when Floribec tuned to country superstars like Julie Daraiche during the 1980s, it was patronizing a market segment ostentatiously snubbed by the FM mainstream in Québec. Chapter 8 will analyze these parallel lives further.

The value of snowbird entertainment as a beacon for Floribec can be seen in Illustrations 7.2 through 7.5, in chronological order. Illustration 7.2 is an advertisement of Québécois artists scheduled to perform at the Suez motel in Sunny Isles during the winter of 1975. Illustration 7.4 shows a gathering of Montréal's vaudevillians and entertainers at the Desert Inn motel in Sunny Isles during the 1980s.

⁵⁸ In 1993, owners of the *Soleil de la Floride* planned to transform an abandoned movie palace in downtown Hollywood, into a concert hall for local events and snowbirds—they could not find the financing for such a venture. Farago: Pierre Luc, "Huguette Martineau et le Desert Inn," *Miami Beach, P.Q.*, a memorial of Floribec, planete.qc.ca/floride/miamibeachpqbatisseurs (retrieved September 2006); Vermette: Paul Brinkley-Rogers, "Canadian Snowbirds Flock to Pembroke Park," *Miami Herald*, 22 November 1998, 1BR; "Bound for the South," *MacLean's* 106 (25 January 1993): 36; Vermette and Millard: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (June 2000): b2; ad for Ouellette, Louvain and Pérusse shows, at the Suez Motel: *La Presse*, 18 January 1975, D9; Lachance: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (January 1998): b13; 14 (January 1997): c6; 10 (February 1993): b25; 16 (March 1999): b8; 11 (June 1994): a5; also Jean Lapointe at the Club Canadien: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (March 1997): A8; 11 (February 1994): 8; 14 (January 1997): a8; "Willie Lamothe," *La Presse*, 21 October 1992, D22, E1; Wilson-Smith and Deacon: 36; Gendron: 35; Louvain and Joanness: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 10 (February 1993): 8; 14 (September 1996): a5; Lalonde, DesRobert, Daraiche: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 11 (February 1994): 8; 16 (April 1999): b8; 14 (January 1997): a8; 11 (April 1994): a9; *La Presse*, 21 October 1992, E1; Languirand, "Le Québec et l'américanité," *Études Littéraires* 8 (April 1975): 154-157.

ENCORE CETTE ANNÉE À MIAMI BEACH; L'ACTION EST
au motel SUEZ

ROSE OUELLETTE
 Comedienne
 11 fev. au 23 fev.

MICHEL LOUVAIN
 Chanteur
 7 janv. au 9 fev.
 25 fev. au 9 mars
 1er avr. au 13 avr.

ROMÉO PÉRUSSE
 Comedien
 11 mars au 16 mars

LES GRANDES ÉTOILES QUÉBÉCOISES EN VEDETTE TOUS LES SOIRS
FAITES COINCIDER VOS VACANCES AVEC VÔTRE VEDETTE PRÉFÉRÉE

Illustration 7.2: Advertisement for Sunny Isles' Suez Motel, January 1975. Source: *La Presse*, 18 January 1975, D9.

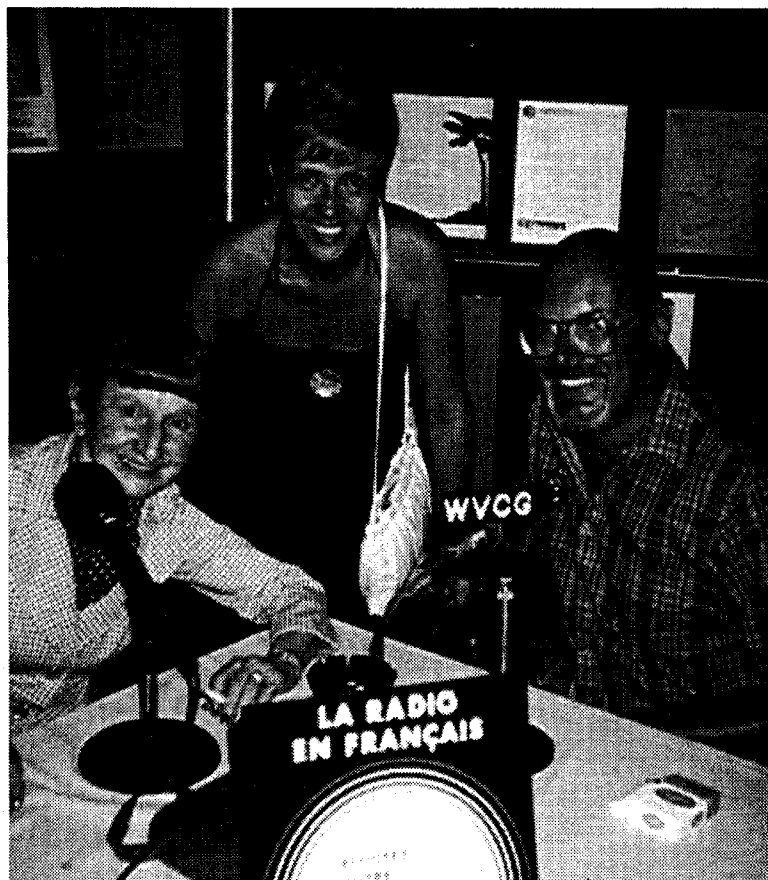


Illustration 7.3: Rose Ouellette, Denyse Chartrand, and André Robert, at a Florida Radio Studio in 1983.

Source: "Miami Beach, P.Q.," a memorial of Floribec by Pierre Luc:
planete.qc.ca/floride/miamibeachpq/ (retrieved July 2006).



Illustration 7.4: A Gathering of Montréal's Vaudevillians and Entertainers at the Desert Inn, Sunny Isles, During the 1980s. Left to Right: Raymond Lemelin, Gérard Vermette (with striped jacket), Jean-Paul Kingsley, Jean Grimaldi (with navy cap, *impresario* to Muriel Millard, La Bolduc, Alys Roby), Paul Thériault, Gilles Girard, Jacques Normand (khaki outfit, popular radio host from the 1940s to the 1970s), Michel Noël (light blue trousers, famous for his *Capitaine Bonhomme* stand-up character), and their host, Desert Inn manager Huguette Martineau. Source: "Miami Beach, P.Q.," a memorial of Floribec by Pierre Luc: planete.qc.ca/floride/miamibeachpq/ (retrieved July 2006)



Illustration 7.5: Julie Daraiche (left) performing at CanadaFest, Hollywood, in the early 1990s. Source: "Miami Beach, P.Q.," a memorial of Floribec by Pierre Luc: planete.qc.ca/floride/miami-beachpq/ (retrieved July 2006).

By the early 1980s, these crooners, vaudeville comedians, and country-western singers⁵⁹ were generally ridiculed as hopelessly passé by the Montréal intelligentsia.⁶⁰ In Florida, they performed far from this scorn, freer to practice their art as they saw fit, to a grateful audience that had grown up with these artists back North. In Florida they attracted positive news coverage by visiting journalists from Montréal's culture-gossip weeklies like *Échos-Vedettes*.⁶¹ Hence Floribec was a fertile soil for old-school Montréal vaudeville and mass culture, small-town Québec country music, and the daily fare of AM radios, all of which were wilting by the 1970s in the rockier, more "cultivated" soil of Québec. In Florida, they were far away from the metropolis where the intelligentsia and its media mouthpieces conspicuously ignored or despised them. While reinforcing the Floribec community, this peculiar entertainment also isolated it a little farther from the Québécois mainstream and wealthier, French-speaking snowbirds⁶². As this cultural rift has been more relevant to Québec than to Floribec, it will be developed in Chapter 8.

⁵⁹ By March 2005, the *Soleil de la Floride* website featured a direct web feed from the CJMS 1050AM radio station, Montréal's country-western outlet: www.lesoleildelafloride.com/fr/hebdo/accueil.htm (retrieved March 2005); other country singers in Florida: Pier Béland, Richard Gauthier, Dani et Julie Daraiche: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (May 2000): b17; 19 (1 November 2001): 6; 14 (January 1997): A8; Jean Beaunoyer, "Sous le soleil de Miami," *La Presse*, 6 March 1993, E10; Hollywood Cinema: Brent Mitchell, "French Films, Plays on Way to Theater," *Miami Herald*, 7 October 1993, 3BSE; rise in popularity of country music can be inferred from Pier Béland's change of repertoire in 2000, and in the scheduled concerts at CanadaFest 2005: www.canadafest.com/artistes.htm (retrieved May 2005); Ana Rhodes, "Mon Dieu, It's Snowing Canadians," *Miami Herald*, 10 February 2002, 2B; Thomas Swick, "Small Worlds," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 12 May 1991, 1J; Susan Wittman, "Celebration of French-Canada Draws 100,000 to Broadwalk," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 15 February 2002, C1.

⁶⁰ Daniel Lemay, *La Presse*, 6 November 1995, b5, Patrick Huard, Master of Ceremony at the annual gala of the Québec music industry (ADISQ), "à Pier Béland pour qui on devrait instituer 'le Félix de l'artiste s'étant le plus illustrée en Floride'."

⁶¹ Denyse Chartrand, founder of *Le Soleil de la Floride*, used to be a journalist at *Écho Vedettes*; Jean Laurac, co-founder and husband, worked at CKVL and *Dernière Heure*. Other Floribécois related to Montréal's artistic colony: André Robert, host of "Toute la ville en parle" broadcast on Télé-Métropole (Montréal's private French network, Channel 10) and founder of *Écho-Vedettes*. *Le Soleil de la Floride* 18 (February 2001).

⁶² Sallie James, "French Canadians Push North, West for Winter," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 20 January 1998, 1B; on Lamothe and country music: Languirand quoted by Lamonde, *Ni avec eux ni sans eux: le Québec et les États-Unis* (Montréal, 1996), 82; *La Presse*, 21 October 1992, E1; Languirand: 154-157; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17 (May 2000): b17; 19 (1 November 2001): 6; 14 (January 1997): A8.

The wealthy and the elites scorned Floribec for its lower-class "cheapness." While they did not quite label the Floribecois as trailer trash, they frequently labeled them "kétaine" (of poor taste), a term with a clear hint of class distinction, as it was often associated with small-town, rural, blue-collar culture. How poor were Floribécois snowbirds and tourists in reality? The Québécois cluster around Hollywood had relatively modest means, compared to the average Florida tourist. Motels and mobile homes Surfside, Sunny Isles, Hollywood, Dania and Pembroke Park were especially cheap amongst Gold Coast destinations. Even the Floribec elite occasionally voiced unease over the relatively modest means of "their" snowbirds and tourists. In the late 1970s, as the geographic center of the French-Canadian community moved northwards to Broward County a conflict developed between the "French Canadians" of Dade county and the "Québécois" element of Broward. To the French elite of Sunny Isles, the latter term then carried a "cheap," blue collar, plebeian connotation, a nuance not lost on Louis Dupont, who studied this war of identities.⁶³

Later, in the 1990s, André Vigneault and Jean Laurac of the *Soleil de la Floride* admitted that the relative poverty of Québécois snowbirds might justify the mild scorn expressed for them in South Florida, and by the mainstream media of their home Province. Vigneault and Laurac, forsaking their usual upbeat tone, expressed concern that Québécois snowbirds were of a lower grade than other visitors to Florida. Vigneault even admitted that the Québécois Florida was "kétaine."⁶⁴ Many of the permanent residents in Floribec asserted that some of the snowbirds were welfare profiteers – Québec welfare recipients fraudulently soaking in the sun while not actively seeking work as the regulations

⁶³ Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 37.

stipulated. And the *Soleil* editors and readers occasionally debated whether the reputation of Québécois snowbirds as poor tippers was deserved. Because poor tipping was bad for the reputation of their community, Floribec elites urged snowbirds to improve tipping practices and courtesy.⁶⁵ Did this protracted conflict indicate that Québec tipping standards were different than Florida's? Possibly, since there was a marked difference in the hourly wage levels, tips not counted, of service workers, in favor of Québec workers over Florida's. Actually, Florida had no minimum wage prior to 2005⁶⁶. As Québec hourly wages were higher, tipping in the Belle Province retained more of its definition as a gratuity (at the customer's discretion) than in Florida, where waiters, receiving a higher share of their compensation in tips, resented the "freeloaders."

Vigneault, Laurac and others' concern for proper decorum reflected not only the status obsessions of an essentially middle-class Floribec elite, but also a reaction to the occasional slurs and insults directed towards Québécois snowbirds by Floridians. As community leaders, the Floribec elite sought to do *damage control* on these incidents; while defending their constituents, they also warned Québécois snowbirds not to offend their neighbors by their beach dress and behaviour or by their tipping practices. The most infamous insults towards the Floribec community occurred during the winters of 1992 and 1993, when the Fort Lauderdale weekly *XS* twice published pictures of big-bellied, obese snowbirds in small swimsuits, caught on Hollywood Beach's Broadwalk – twice

⁶⁴ Laurac and Vigneault, *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (April 1998): a4, a6; "kétaine": 15 (October 1997): a13; 12 (November 1994): a4.

⁶⁵ Denyse Chartrand and Michèle Sénécal, "Beaucoup d'assistés sociaux en Floride," *Le Soleil de la Floride* 16 (March 1999): a11, a30, b24; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (October 1997): a12; 12 (December 1994): a9; Vigneault, "Les Canadiens sont-ils trop "cheapos"?," *Le Soleil de la Floride* 15 (June 1998): a6; Laurac on welfare profiteers: Éric Trottier, "En Floride, on s'inquiète des effets d'un OUI sur le tourisme du Québec" *La Presse*, 30 October 1995, a7.

⁶⁶ State of Florida, Agency for Workforce Innovation, "Florida's Minimum Wage," www.floridajobs.org/resources/fl_min_wage.html (retrieved August 2007).

labeling Floribécois as "frogs," and their look as a "harvest of shame." *XS* and its parent publication, the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* apologized after Floribécois leaders (notably Jean Laurac and Member of Parliament Vincent Della Nocce) voiced their outrage.⁶⁷

These slurs and pictures – and the defensive reaction of Floribécois – illustrated the cultural cohesiveness and visibility of the Québécois in Florida. This visibility made Floribec seem bigger than it really was: a common belief in Canada has been that Québécois form the majority of Canadian snowbirds and tourists in Florida; yet Ontarians have been more numerous by far.⁶⁸ Caribbean specialist Robert Chodos outlined exactly this when he testified to a House of Commons special committee in 1981:

When I was in Florida a couple of years ago ... there were a lot of complaints about the Quebecers. You know, they speak French and they fly these funny flags. Why do not they stay home if they want to speak French. You go on the beach, you think you are in France somewhere. When people in Florida have that kind of reaction, and Quebecers represent a very small minority of tourists there, I think it is possible to understand the reaction of people in the Caribbean [to tourism].⁶⁹

⁶⁷ David Johnston, "Florida Newspaper Calls Quebecers 'Fat, Cheap'," *Montreal Gazette*, 16 January 1993, A6; N.J. MacPhail, "Fair Weather Folly," *Report on Business Magazine* 10 (December 1993): 33; Monique Giguère, "L'invasion des Québécois Prend des Airs d'occupation," *Le Soleil*, 24 February 1993, A2; R.T. Allen, "Florida, Canada's Hottest Province," *MacLean's* (8 October 1960): 71; William Lowther, "Business: Canada's Loss is Florida's Gain," *MacLean's* (17 April 1978): 68; "The Fat's in the Fire," *Toronto Star*, 15 January 1992, A10; Bob Hepburn, "Canadians Go Home," *Toronto Star*, 17 March 1990, A2; Marie Tison, "Le Sun Sentinel s'excuse auprès des Québécois," *La Presse*, 22 January 1993, A1; Gilles Paquin, "L'éditeur du Sun Sentinel s'étonne de la réaction des Québécois," *La Presse*, 16 January 1993, A3; Eric Trottier, "Reportage haineux sur les Québécois publié en Floride," *La Presse*, 15 January 1993, A1; "Une campagne radiophonique anti-francophone tourne court, en Floride," *La Presse*, 6 April 1990, A5; Wilson-Smith and Deacon: 38; Jarvis: 193.

⁶⁸ Québécois and Ontarians were respectively 25% and 66% of Canadian visitors to the South Atlantic region -East Coast states between Delaware and Florida- in 1972. In 1999, this proportion was unchanged for Québec, and was 59% for Ontario. Statistics Canada, *Tourism Statistical Digest* (Ottawa, 1999), 109, 115, 126, 128; Statistique Canada, *Voyages entre le Canada et les autres pays, 1972 to 1985* (Ottawa, 1973-1986), Catalogue 66-201; Statistiques Canada, *Voyages internationaux: voyages entre le Canada et les autres pays, 1986 to 1999* (Ottawa, 1986-1999), Catalogue 66-201.

⁶⁹ Subcommittee of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, 1st session, 32nd legislature, vol. 6: 18 June 1981, sect. 6:35, 36; The President of the subcommittee, Maurice Dupras, jokes that visitors to Florida are "Americans and Quebecers." Robert Chodos concurs.

The residents of tourist towns want their own culture to be on display, and so resent overt displays of the tourists' own cultures.

And yet, however unsettling to Floridians, the cultural displays of the Floribécois have been a conspicuous example of snowbird community-building – of social bonding through greeting, small talk, reciprocity, and the sharing of food, drink, and living spaces. Snowbirds all built communities through statements about the winters they had fled, and the comfort they found in the sun. They built communities through the display of their identities, culture and backgrounds, which facilitated their clustering by affinity. Snowbirds also built community through their expressive culture: dances, music and songs, and live entertainment. These cultural displays, because of their abundance, had implications beyond the intention to create communities of like-minded snowbirds. Cultural displays often relied on political symbols and images, for instance flags that revealed the politics and identities of snowbirds.

7.4 Snowbird Politics on Display

During the winter of 1977, Québec snowbird Rémy Ross stirred unrest in the Dixie Mobile Court, a mobile home park north of Miami, when he hoisted the Québec flag, the *fleur-de-lys*, over his trailer next door in the Sun Haven park, which had significantly more Québécois as tenants. In Dixie, some of the tenants, including American military veterans, denounced this flag-waving as a "desecration" of the Stars and Stripes (as American law decreed that foreign flags could only fly beside and below the US banner). However, more than desecration was at stake in this outrage: over the past few years, the growing Québécois presence in Sun Haven had provoked an exodus of its American tenants, a trend that might have stirred resentment and concern in neighboring parks.

Already in 1976, Dixie residents had invaded Sun Haven to take down a Canadian maple leaf flag. As a reaction to Ross' posturing, Dixie tenants accompanied their park manager to take down the offending flag, triggering an altercation. The following day, Ross raised his flag again, this time along with a *smaller* American flag, which was, intentionally or not, a greater affront than no Stars-and-Stripes at all. Summoned by the Dixie manager, a Dade county policeman took down the fleur-de-lys flag again, leaving a note for the absent Rosses explaining that the American flag should be *at least* the same size.⁷⁰ While Americans took primary offense in this affair, it is highly unlikely that Rémy Ross intended to antagonize his hosts, but rather to voice his support – soon after the election of Québec's first "separatist" or "sovereignist" government – for Québec's independence from Canada. It was fellow Canadians he hoped to inspire or to annoy.

Rémy Ross' separatism was an exception among Québécois snowbirds. Most have been opposed to the secession of Québec, as has been true for most elderly Québécois.⁷¹ When secessionist sentiment peaked again in the early 1990s after failed constitutional talks, similar instances of flag-waving took place in Florida – of both Québec and Canadian flags, as partisans tried to stake out their park as a community of snowbirds with like mind on Québec's fate. The political fissures divided Floribec: by 1992, a group of Floribécois started to celebrate June 24th, the feast day of Québec's patron saint, Saint-Jean-Baptiste, as a nationalist holiday, while another, gathering nearly all the elite of Floribec, observed Canada Day (and the confederation of the provinces) on July 1st. Both

⁷⁰ Both parks are in Ojus, North Miami-Dade, along Dixie Highway: Theodore Stanger, "Trailer Park Fight 'Flag War'," *Miami Herald*, 19 March 1977, B1.

⁷¹ On the "federalist" views of most snowbirds: David Adams, "Winter Visitors Back Independence," *St. Petersburg Times*, 30 October 1995, 6A.

sides chose the same means: a picnic and dance, but at different locations, in both cases the patio of resort motels.⁷²

The politics of Floribec were in great part influenced by the rise of Québécois nationalism. In 1977 and 1978, the fast growth of Québécois investments in South Florida led many observers in Florida and Québec to conclude that the money was coming from Canadian investors alarmed by the victory of the separatist Parti Québécois in the November 1976 provincial election. Some had predicted a catastrophe just short of Armageddon in the event of a separatist takeover; such a prophecy could become self-fulfilling. Indeed, Canadian investment boomed in South Florida in 1977 and 1978. In 1978, an estimated two-thirds of all real estate transactions in Hollywood involved Canadians; one agent suggested that many types of property in that city were overvalued by twenty percent as a result of strong Canadian demand pushed by "political and economic instability."⁷³

In 1983, when Louis Dupont made a field study in Floribec, many migrants pointed to the economic and political climate of the Belle Province to justify their decision to leave Québec. For these people, Québec had too many taxes, regulations, and unions. They praised Florida's economic *laissez-faire*. Only a fifth of Dupont's respondents

⁷² on one occasion, both national holidays are celebrated at the Tropical Terrace, bought in 1992 by Giselle Bordeleau, former waitress at Frenchie's. Canada Day will be attended by lawyers, bank managers, the Canadian Consul to Miami, and members of the Can-Am Business Alliance: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (August 1997): b6, b7, c6, c7; 14 (September 1996): a12, a13, c8, c9; 13 (September 1995): c8, c9; 12 (July 1995): a8; 11 (August 1994): a4, a11; Mike Shahin, "Quebecers Fill Florida Jobs Illegally," *Montreal Gazette*, 8 December 1996, A10; Jean Beaunoyer, "Sous le soleil de Miami," *La Presse*, 6 March 1993, E10.

⁷³ Jim Crate, "Scared Canadian Dollars Run for Cover in Florida," *Miami Herald*, 26 March 1978, 1A; Crate, "Canadians Pour Money Into Florida," *Miami Herald*, 26 March 1978; Garry Fairbairn, "Pour le soleil ou contre le PQ?," *Le Devoir*, 17 July 1978, 1; Wayne Markham, "Canadians Buying up Real Estate in Florida," *Miami Herald*, 6 March 1977, H1; James J. Norman and Russ Mitchell, "County A Magnet for Canadians, Jews," *Broward in the 80s: Trouble in Paradise?* (Fort Lauderdale, 1980), 24; Lowther: 68.

explicitly blamed separatism. Dupont concluded that most migrants preferred America's version of economic liberalism to the "Modèle Québécois" of economic planning.⁷⁴

However few in numbers, scared federalists were active in Floribec. One of them, Réjean Lapierre, had left Montréal in 1977. An Accountant by training, he owned Livingston's Motel and the Saint-Hubert restaurant in Fort Lauderdale, and was a founding member of the Club Richelieu in Hollywood. He explained: "We had always wanted to come here for the weather, but what pushed us to come was the politics of Quebec." In a similar fashion, Alain and Louise Tessier bought the small Bellair motel in the early 1980s, because of their distaste for Québec separatism and Canadian inflation. When Montréal columnist Nick auf der Maur visited the Miami area in 1993, he marveled at its dynamic social, generational and cultural diversity while contrasting it with what Montréal had become since 1976: nationalism had made the metropolis less welcoming, less cosmopolitan, the English-language columnist believed, and he blamed provincial, tax-and-spend economic policies for encouraging an exodus.⁷⁵

According to most observers, Québécois nationalism did not cause this migration wave: in the words of one Floribec investor, there had been "an over-tendency to blame separatism, when it's more of a currency factor." Granted, the weak Canadian currency

⁷⁴ Dupont, *Les Québécois en Floride*, 92, 93.

⁷⁵ eg Robert Dolman left Westmount in 1980: Raymond Gélinas, *Le Soleil de la Floride* 14 (December 1996): C1, 6; eg Sol Luger, Montrealer scared by separatism: John Koenig, "What IS Causing Canadian Money to Flee Florida?," *Florida Trend* (May 1985): 64; eg Larry Steadman, who left Montréal in 1977: Crate, "An Out-of-Pocket Cost of Major Social Change," *Miami Herald*, 26 March 1978, 22a; Norman and Mitchell, "County A Magnet for Canadians, Jews"; Alain and Louise Tessier: "Les Québécois en Floride: Fuyant la TPS et la TVQ," *La Presse*, 7 January 1992, A6; Auf Der Maur, "Miami Profits from the Cosmopolitanism Quebec Rejected," *Montreal Gazette*, 20 January 1993, A20; Motel acquisition fever on the Gold Coast in 1977-78, reported by the *Globe and Mail*, 15 February 1978, quoted by Mira Wilkins, *Foreign Investment in Florida: The Impact of Non-U.S. Direct Investment* (Miami, 1979), 35-40; testimony of Floribécois who are in Florida since 1976: Jean-Pierre Lauzier (catered at Joe's Kitchen), Michel and Gisèle Faucher (owner-managers of Mobile Locksmith), Diane Normand (hairdresser at Salon Mélanie, Hollywood), Diane Pépin (La Belle Gaspésienne restaurant), and LaJean Lapierre: *Le Soleil de la Floride* 17

was caused by a combination of Canadian nationalism – the Trudeau government buying out US oil companies who repatriated their investments – and Québec nationalism, which discouraged some US investment and saddled the province with budget deficits. In that sense, nationalism might have encouraged budgetary deficits, which undid the Canadian currency. The "currency factor" resulted, in 1978, in mortgage rates 3.5 percentage points lower in Florida than in Québec. At the time, a Canadian law forbade the speculative resale of land, and had recently cancelled the tax-deductibility of fees levied for real estate transfers. Then, in December 1978, Québec's legislature passed a law protecting agricultural land from urban development. Consequently, migrant investors in Florida generally complained that real estate investment in Québec had been impaired by rent controls, taxes, unions, and (wrote a columnist at the *Soleil de la Floride* in 1999) an anti-capitalist climate "to hide the envy of some and the incompetence of others." Most of the decisions to migrate and invest in Florida were therefore business decisions, justified by comments on the political economy of the Belle Province.⁷⁶

Moreover, U.S. immigration laws favored investors: immigrants with a demonstrable amount of capital were then welcome.⁷⁷ The economic migrants came looking for a version of Florida less hedonistic than most variants of the Florida Dream. Indeed, they came to work hard in order, eventually, to enjoy the fruits of entrepreneurship

(October 1999): b7; 16 (August 1999): b18; 16 (July 1999): b10; 14 (April 1997): a10; "La Floride Draine les Gros Développeurs Canadiens," *Le Soleil*, 9 February 1979, A8; Gendron: 37.

⁷⁶ Norman and Mitchell; Dupont, 92, 93; "La Floride Draine les Gros Développeurs Canadiens," *Le Soleil*, 9 February 1979, A8; *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (April 1996), 17; Marie Tison, "Les Québécois en Floride: Les affaires reprennent peu à peu," *La Presse*, 6 January 1992, A4; Pierre Vigneault, *Le Soleil de la Floride* 16 (August 1999): a4.

⁷⁷ That's what pushed Paul Desmarais (no relation to the billionaire) to buy the Magnolia hotel, in 1972, in Dania; Jim Crate, "Pride, Property, or All the Money That Matters?," *Miami Herald*, 26 March 1978, 2A; "Fleur-de-Lys Banners and French Ride High in 'Le Petit Quebec'," *Toronto Star*, 18 March 1990, A16; Investors not blaming separatism: Lauris Boulanger, living in the United States since the late 1960s, Marcel Dutil, Paul Gobeil (Royal Trust and Métro-Richelieu), Robert Morin and Marc Dumas (Admestrie), Gaston

they believed that the socialist "North" – and especially Québec – denied to their generation. They had their own myth – but one less derived from Eden than from El Dorado.

Whatever variant of the Florida or American dream that Canadian and Québécois snowbirds embraced, most were a lot more careful than Remy Ross (or a Toronto couple who made a similar mistake with a Maple Leaf flag in 1996) to display their admiration for the United States – often, and especially, as identifiable Canadians. Thus, at the annual picnic of the Canadian Club of Central Florida in 1987, 200 guests sang both *America the Beautiful* and *O Canada* while toasting both the Queen and the President. When, amidst the Canadian flag-waving frenzy of the mid-1990s caused by the revival of separatism, the Maple Leafs Estates choir group added the Civil War anthem "Rally Round the Flag" to its repertoire, its members were displaying their attachment to both Canada *and* America, as well as their exposure to US culture. In the early 1990s, Régent Desormiers hosted a radio broadcast for Floribécois: the show started with *O Canada*, and ended with the *Star Spangled Banner*.⁷⁸

Following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the editors of *Le Soleil de la Floride* strongly restated their adherence to American ideals⁷⁹. And when Canada refused to participate in the Iraq war in 2003, radio host Prior Smith explained that Canada's foreign policy did not reflect the warm feelings of Canadians towards Americans, when managers

Tardif (Groupe Habitat), Pierre Parent (Promexpro): Yves Gilson, "Châteaux de Sable," *Affaires Plus* (October 1992): 57, 62, 64; Wilson-Smith and Deacon: 39; *Les Affaires* (20 August 1994): 47.

⁷⁸ Marie Tison, "Concurrence impitoyable entre médias de langue française," *La Presse*, 9 January 1992, A4; Jarvis: 193.

⁷⁹ Louis St. Laurent, III, "Editorial," *Le Soleil de la Floride* (November 2001): A4; St. Laurent, "La Floride: Sécuritaire et Chaude!," *Le Soleil de la Floride* (November 2002): 2; Judy Hill, "Snowbirds Have a Lot on Their Minds," *Tampa Tribune*, 3 February 2002, B1; J. Nealy-Brown, "Snowbirds Send Mixed Signals," *St. Petersburg Times*, 29 November 2001.

of a radio station in Charlotte County retaliated to Canadian foreign policy by canceling the broadcast of "Canada Calling."⁸⁰

Hence, not only did Canadian and Québécois snowbirds parade their national identities in Florida, they also used these displays to create and reinforce communitarian bonds with fellow snowbirds, Americans and Canadians alike. By choosing flags as signposts for their presence and their will to make friends, they used a widely known repertoire of signs, to communicate with fellow snowbirds and neighbors – give or take the few instances of political signposting. This creative use of national iconography arguably played an important part in their community-building. For these snowbirds, there was no contradiction between the proud display of one's background – with a Canadian or Québec flag -- and the display of their reverence for the American Dream.⁸¹ In this, they behaved like many ethnic *urban villagers* of American metropolises.

These two-sided displays also show how Canadian snowbirds could safely embrace their own version of America, while keeping a distance from it. Although they adhered to their version of the American Dream, they felt free to criticize their host society, along lines similar to those used by Canadian nationalists against the United States. Hence many Floribécois deplored the violence, racism and lack of "sincerity and communication"⁸² found in America. An Ontario snowbird summed up the Canadian ambivalence towards the United States in these words: "It doesn't feel like a foreign country. And then you turn

⁸⁰ Simon Houpt, "Crisis in Iraq: Florida Station Axes Canadian News," *Globe and Mail*, 20 March 2003; "Radio Station Cancels Show for Snowbirds Because it's Not Pro-American," *Canadian Press Newswire*, 21 March 2003; Phillips, "Flocking Together," 24; Clearwater Canadians are Beverly and Jim Harris, at the Japanese Garden Mobile Estates: J. Laurac, *Le Soleil de la Floride* 13 (April 1996): a9; "A Cold Shoulder for Canadian Snowbirds?," *Miami Herald*, 13 February 1996, 5B; at the annual picnic of the Central Florida Canadian Club, guests sing *America the Beautiful* and *O Canada*, and toast the Queen and the President: *Canada News*, 24 February 1984, 5.

⁸¹ "Snowbird Profile," *CSA Special Report 1999* (Toronto, 1999).

⁸² Quoted by Dupont, 97, 98.

on the news and see all the crime." In the winter of 1993, despite an all-time peak in Québécois patronage of the Gold Coast, Raymond Béland, a Sunny Isles entertainer, found that anonymity and crime made life in Florida difficult. Similarly, Dorothy and David Counts, in their field study of recreational vehicle dwellers, reported that Canadian respondents had critical attitudes towards some American mores: they boasted that they did not own any weapon, and said that the Americans gun-owners were more at risk of being killed.⁸³ On another level, when the Helms-Burton Bill, reinforcing sanctions against Cuba, was passed early in 1997, many snowbirds deplored the aggressiveness of United States' foreign policy. And even when the rate of exchange between the Canadian and American dollars became highly burdensome to Canadians traveling in the United States in 2002, an Ontario snowbird patriotically objected to Canada's adopting the U.S. dollar.⁸⁴

The number and variety of identity displays used by Canadian and Québécois snowbirds in Florida lead to three conclusions. First, snowbirds remained, contrary to the fears of nationalist writers, proudly Canadian, as Canadian as fishermen drinking a Molson beside an icehole. Second, snowbirds creatively used their repertoire of identity signs to craft the signposts that allowed them to create snowbird communities. These signposts featured images of Florida, the United States, and Canada. In crafting their collage of icons, they were subtler in their understanding of identity and more aware of the variable meanings of Canada, the US, and Florida, than were many parts of Canada's

⁸³ Victor Janoff, "Travelling Light," *Saturday Night* 104 (June 1989): 45; Counts and Counts, 111, 112, 160-162.

⁸⁴ anti-boycott, anti-Helms-Burton opinion of André and Joanne Verville, recorded on Hollywood Beach: John Grogan, "Canadian Boycott Of Florida? Non," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 3 November 1996, 1B; Deborah Ramirez, "Canadians Cool to Call for Florida Boycott," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 14 February 1997, 1B; Fred Langan, "What's Worse Than a Weak Loonie?," *The Telegram* (St. John), 27 January 2002, B1.

intelligentsia. Snowbirds thus stood as living refutations of dichotomous, essentialist understandings of Canada-US relations, of Montesquieu's North-South dichotomy, and of a simplistic Heat Line.⁸⁵

Third, snowbirds drew from their culture, background, and identity the signs they wanted to put on display. Granted, some snowbirds had more signage and identity vocabulary available than others. Consequently, there was a direct correlation between the repertoire available and the distinctiveness of the community. Hence American Jews could put on display their traditions, language, religion, and housing habits to become a very coherent, very visible community in Miami Beach. Similarly, Maritimers congregated in their own clubs and associations, whereas Ontarians felt the need, given the imperial history of their province, to be inclusively "Canadian." The Québécois quickly formed a distinct community. The amused, amazed, or scornful reactions that they elicited were merely proofs to them of the uniqueness and strength of their culture. English Canadians, Ontarians mostly, found in their own repertoire of identity-symbols the tools to clearly state their uniqueness and their will to be perceived as Canadians, even as they lived in the USA. Their unique use of *national* signs and icons has long illustrated their will not to be confounded with Americans or to be assimilated by America, despite their seasonal embrace of the American dream. It has been argued that Canada, unlike nation-states built on ethnic identity, exists as an act of will – that a Canadian is whoever embraces the national identity. Those snowbirds who wrapped themselves in the Canadian flag when in Florida have clearly sustained, even strengthened, their essential "Canadianism," but there

⁸⁵ We are here referring to the characterizations of Seymour Martin Lipsett and Pierre Berton, among others.

were always others who sought to "pass" as American.⁸⁶ These latter are, of course, more difficult for social scientists and historians to track down.

Overall, most Canadian snowbirds appear to have flown their identity at full mast. Their confident display of national imagery would appear to disprove the "myth of diffidence" of Canadian nationalism⁸⁷, which defines it as lacking in assertiveness and symbolic vocabulary, when compared to its boisterous American counterpart. "Diffidence" must be put in perspective: though Canadian snowbirds paid tribute to America, they kept on displaying Canadian symbols *first*, sometimes to the point of offending American neighbors. Thus snowbirds felt, to paraphrase playwright John Gray, never more Canadian than when they were in the United States⁸⁸. On the other hand, the Québécois snowbirds who migrated to Florida because they rejected the "modèle québécois" conformed to another variant of migration – one in which the host community is embraced passionately in order to make more complete the break with one's natal society.

Collectively, snowbirds came in many hues and subspecies. They have not, therefore, an unambiguous answer to the question of identity; rather they showed that the migrants' approach to their destination is structured by their relation with "home." This duality in allegiance, this manipulation of images from both the host community and the homeland is not unique to Canadians – it has occurred in many other migrant

⁸⁶ Desmond Morton wrote in *The Canadian Identity*, 1961: "Canada exists in America by the operation of geography, the needs of imperial strategy, the development of an historical tradition, and the conscious will of the Canadian people, it is not, more than other states, an historical accident or an artificial creation." We beg to differ. Quoted in *Famous Lasting Words: Great Canadian Quotations*, ed. John Robert Colombo (Toronto, 2000), 368; the "statist explanation" of English Canadian nationalism is laid out in Philip Resnick, *The Mask of Proteus: Canadian Reflections on the State*, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1990; see discussion in Millard, Riegel and Wright, "Here's Where we Get Canadian," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (Spring 2002): 12-14.

⁸⁷ See the analysis in Millard, Riegel and Wright.

communities. For recent arrivals and sojourners "home" is always present – in their choice of associates, in their accents, and in their worldviews. As urban historian Earl Lewis has suggested, the migrants' representation of both their original home and of their adopted place is surprisingly malleable: "because it is imagined, [it is] always transportable"⁸⁹. Thus the migrant community is structured around shared meanings of place. In the case of snowbirds, these places are Florida *and* their homeland, as defined by their upbringing, their southward journey, and the sharing of meanings with other migrants.

This chapter has shown how snowbirds congregated in Florida by affinity – they had come for much the same reasons, were looking for much the same things. Affinity was expressed in their choice of destination, of housing, and in their clubs and associations. One of the important factors that determined snowbirds' Florida Dream was their desire for outdoor leisure and pristine nature. This desire also took them to Northern cottage country. This passion for the great outdoors might have contributed, when Northerners migrated South, to the strength of environmental protection in the Sunshine State. Eventually, their love of the outdoor life drove some snowbirds away from the Gold Coast as it became more urbanized and cosmopolitan. More recently there has been an exodus of snowbirds out of from South and Central Florida into more pristine places in the Florida Panhandle, South Carolina, Texas, and Arizona.

Snowbirds' "shared lacks," their affinity through their weaknesses, also became factors that structured their community-building: their need for security, their relative social isolation, their geographic mobility, their vulnerability to a volatile real estate

⁸⁸ John Cray, playwright and performer (1981): Colombo, *The Dictionary of Canadian Quotations* (Toronto, 1991), 589.

⁸⁹ J. Tallentire quotes urban historian Earl Lewis, "Strategies of Memory: History, Social Memory, and the Community," *Histoire sociale/ Social History* 34 (2001): 205.

market were all ingredients in their congregation, their feelings of belonging, their ethos of mutual help, and their political militancy. These affinities also fostered their segregation from Floridians, thereby reinforcing the socio-spatial fragmentation that afflicts the Sunshine State.

The Canadian case study shows how these peculiar migrant communities were formed and bound together: by living in distinct, segregated places, by the display of identity signs, by sociability, by participating in expressive leisure and by sharing the same performative culture. In this community-building, Canadian snowbirds behaved like American snowbirds, who also had their identity signs and imagined homelands in the Northern states and metropolises.

Florida is an "elsewhere" to most North Americans, climatically and geographically. It is a place where one escapes from something to seek some satisfaction. It was rare for snowbirds either to desire to or leave their state and national identities behind. Thus the Canadian-nationalist definition of snowbirds as a threat to Canadian nation-building is too simple. Snowbirds' motivations and experiences of the South were too complex to be captured by narrow dichotomies, starting with the southward journey, as we saw in Chapter 3.

This snowbird story shows how community can emerge through acts of consumption, through leisure pursuits, through lifestyle choices. In the very "modern" acts of buying into the Good Life, of moving around the continent, through the medium of leisure, face-to-face interaction, breaking bread, and socializing, snowbirds have formed elective communities. Through their creative displays of identity, tastes, and expressive culture, snowbirds define their own social spaces – coherent, congenial, relatively

autonomous social spaces that represent diverse answers to the creeping anomie of late modernity.⁹⁰

Thus snowbirds have been apt builders of *bonding* social capital, assembling seasonal collages of uprooted individuals with family-like, small-town-like interactions. Unexpectedly, they occasionally are builders of *bridging* social capital: their mingling with people from diverse origins, and their journeys throughout the continent have taught them about the diverse reality of North America and its peoples. Through their experiences, some snowbird have become consummate social engineers, able to build bridges to the Other, and to reach out across these bridges between North and South, New Englander and Midwesterner, French and English, Canadian and American, Jew and Gentile.

Snowbirds have also been avid patrons of the "great good places," the thirdspaces that Ray Oldenburg saw as the most efficient means of community-building – places beyond the reach of the first (family) and second (work) category, like the church, the pub, the town square, and the community center. More to the point, they are often *actively building* these thirdspaces, through congregation; they flock together at beaches, campgrounds, public parks, dance halls, even Wal-Mart parking lots where RVers occasionally pass a night together.

Even in a modern landscape that seems to destroy national and communitarian bonds, that destroys the topophilia that allowed people to identify with their homeland, in the modernity that leaves societies anomic, snowbirds find and create community. Snowbird communities may not be the panacea for North America's fragmentation

⁹⁰ Kenneth Kusmer, "The Concept of 'Community' in American History," *Reviews in American History* 7 (September 1979): 385, 386.

problem (after all they exclude children). But they challenge the fear, prevalent in academic *communities* for a century that modernity, uprootedness, and lifestyle consumerism are innately antithetic to community. As George Calvin Hoyt suggested nearly forty years ago⁹¹, snowbird communities demonstrate the possibilities of community beyond anomie. In an acutely useful instance, snowbird mutual help networks can be an inspiration in our current crises aging population and health care financing.

What did tourists and snowbirds learn in Florida? They learned community-building anew and a few Floridian ways. What did they take back North? Is it possible that they came back to the North with more than sand in their shoes? That is, did they return to Ontario or New York determined to make it more like a Florida retirement community? And how did other Northerners react to their compatriots' migration? The interactions must have gone both ways. It would seem highly unlikely that millions of Northerners could visit Florida and not influence the evolution of the North in some way. Chapter 8 thus takes us on the return journey northward. In the next chapter, the tourist and snowbirds have come back. Does anyone care? Should anyone care?

⁹¹ Hoyt, *A Study of Retirement Problems* (San Francisco, [1962] 1975), 126.

CHAPTER 8

COMING HOME:

WHAT FLORIDA MEANS TO THE NORTH

It is time to take this story back North. It is time to ask what snowbirds brought back with them in addition to bags of oranges and suntans? What was the impact of Florida on the culture, identity, and worldviews of the Northern states and provinces? We already have seen that a folk knowledge of continental space and cultural diversity – or uniformity – took shape on southbound roads. We have also learned that the 1970s "wave" of Canadian migration and investment to Florida helped federalist Québécois to make their case against Separatism. Florida had additional meanings for Northerners, and this chapter presents more instances – it would be impossible either to know or list them all – where Florida has influenced the worldviews and self-perceptions of Northerners. This chapter concentrates on the Canadian and Québécois story because the popularity of Florida posed a particular, visible threat to local identities and to nation-building; hence there was more discussion north of the St. Lawrence River as to the meaning of Florida. Even so, northeastern Americans have also perceived the popularity of Florida as a threat to their own sense of identity and topophilia – that is, their emotional connections to their environment.

8.1 Florida as a Threat to Northern Identities

The first person to fret about the permanent effect of too much sun on the brain was not the features editor for a Northern newspaper, but rather the eighteenth-century *philosophe*, Montesquieu. According to Montesquieu, climate and geography affect the culture of communities: "Different climates created different needs, which have fostered different ways of living and customs, and these different ways formed the diverse types of laws."¹ Many have taken up Montesquieu's argument to assert that Canada and Québec are "imbued by winter" – as André Laurendeau put it.² According to urban planner Norman Pressman, a great part of Canada's history is a "history of surviving winter, enduring and adapting to it."³ Logically, this past has imprinted itself on Canadians in the present.

The nationalist painter J.E.H. MacDonald wrote in 1920 that from the physical characteristics of each country "has grown each country's art." Accordingly MacDonald and the Group of Seven, as well as Québécois painters such as Clarence Gagnon, Jean-Paul Lemieux and Miyuki Tanobe have produced evocative, Northern and wintry landscapes,⁴ while poets like Gilles Vigneault, Félix Leclerc, and Georges Dor sang about

¹ "Ce sont les différents besoins dans les différents climats qui ont formé les différentes manières de vivre, et ces différentes manières de vivre ont formé les diverses sortes de lois.": Montesquieu, "L'esprit des lois," in *Œuvres choisies*, eds. H. Labaste and R. Nicolle, eds. (Paris, 1949), 769; Norman Pressman, *Images of the North: Cultural Interpretations of Winter* (Winnipeg, 1988), 4.

² André Laurendeau, "Nous sommes un peuple pénétré par l'hiver," *Le Magazine MacLean* 6 (February 1966): 44; Anne Gilbert, "La nature comme légitimation," in *Dislocation et Permanence: L'invention du Canada au quotidien*, ed. Caroline Andrew (Ottawa, 1999), 47; Pressman, 10; Kerry Abel and Ken Coates, "Introduction: The North and the Nation," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History* (Peterborough, On, 2001), 10; N. Frye, "Sharing the Continent," in *Divisions on a Ground* (Toronto, 1982), 58; Wernick, "American Popular Culture in Canada," in *The Beaver Bites Back: American Popular Culture in Canada*, eds. David H. Flaherty and Frank E. Manning (Montréal, 1993), 296, 297; Pierre Berton, *Why we Act Like Canadians* (Toronto, 1982), 100; Louis-Edmond Hamelin, "Les Québécois face à l'hivernie laurentienne," *Québec Français* 88 (winter 1993): 85; Claude Picher, "Le coût de l'hiver," *La Presse*, 15 November 1990, E1; Howard Schneider, "Canadians Have Curious Love Affair With Winter," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 8 March 1997, 17A.

³ Pressman, 6.

⁴ The Québécois painters differed from the Group of Seven in that for the former, the landscape was a setting that allowed and participated in the expression of the artist's feelings, while for the Group of Seven,

winter during the 1960s-1980s period. In their texts, winter was understood as being the setting and determinant factor in the construction, like an ice castle, of a confident, autonomous, national identity.⁵ Although less hibernal in her perspective, Margaret Atwood in a 1970s book analyzing Canadian literature similarly found a peculiar "social outlook": Canadian plots being preoccupied with nature, human bodies, and survival in a harsh, natural environment. Atwood explained: "We are a wilderness nation; it has not been easy to come to terms with our environment."⁶ But grappling with it was profoundly Canadian. Another literary critic, Northrop Frye, took a similar environmental standpoint when he defined the culture of historical Canadian communities as having been determined by their isolation in the wilderness.⁷ In Québec historical writing, this story of struggle against – and adaptation to – the elements, has been frequently told, notably by Jean Provencher and Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne, with accounts of a French Canadian rural culture that, until the twentieth century, remarkably embraced winter through its seasonal rhythm of activities, its material culture, and its folklore.⁸ In sum, Canadian scholarship, literature, folklore and verse have developed a Northern, menacing-

the landscape was the subject of experiments in form, proposing views of Canadian realities for an emerging Canadian public – at least in the public statements of many of them.

⁵ Pressman, 4-6.

⁶ Boorstin, "Prologue: the Fertile Verge," *Hidden History* (New York, 1987), xvi-xix; Pressman, 10; Atwood is quoted in Berton, *Why we Act Like Canadians*, 100; about Atwood, see also R.L. Earle and J.D. Wirth, "Conclusion: the Search for Community," in *L'Américanité et les Amériques*, ed. Donald Cuccioletta (Québec, 2001), 203; Hamelin.

⁷ Keith Spicer, "Canada: Values in Search of a Vision," in *Identities in North America: The Search for Community*, eds. Earle and Wirth (Stanford, 1995), 16; Abel and Coates, "Introduction," 10; Frye, "Sharing the Continent."

⁸ Paulette Collet, *L'hiver dans le roman canadien-français* (Québec, 1965), 109, 257; Pierre Deffontaines, *L'homme et l'hiver au Canada*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1957), 203; Jean Provencher, *Les quatre saisons dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent* (Montréal, 1988); Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne, *L'hiver dans la culture québécoise (XVIIe-XIXe siècles)* (Québec, 1983), 130, 132, 145, 168; Lamontagne, "L'hiver au Québec: Une lecture du temps qu'il fait," *Études Rurales* 118-119 (April-September 1990): 137, 138; Bernard Arcand, *Abolissons l'hiver! livre (très) pratique* (Montréal, 1999), 28, 48, 50; Arcand, "Mon grand-père aimait l'hiver," in *Québec: Espace et Sentiment*, ed. Stéphane Batigne (Paris, 2001); Arcand and Serge Bouchard, "La neige," *Du pâté chinois, du baseball, et autres lieux communs* (Montréal, 1995), 58; Jean Éthier-Blais, "Splendeurs et mystères de l'hiver," *Forces* 88 (winter 1990), 13, 14, 17, 18; Pressman, 4-6.

wilderness trope that stands in sharp contrast with the Edenic, garden-like representation of a tame nature in most representations of Florida and the South.

In a young country like Canada, the possibility of painting in bold strokes a portrait of a national identity based on winter has been a blessing to would-be nation-builders. Canada and Canadians could be defined as "Northern," in contrast to Britain, France, and even the United States, a New England winter being dismissed for its brevity. (As for Groundhog Day, a "True North" nation did not need a pampered rodent to tell it whether there were six more weeks of winter as of February 2nd. There always were.) Historian Carl Berger, examining the rhetoric of nineteenth-century Canadian nationalists, found that they used Northerness to differentiate themselves from Americans. A southern climate had a degenerative influence on Anglo-Saxons, they claimed, and fostered black populations, tyranny, crime, "decay and effeminacy, even libertinism, and disease."⁹

The racial rhetoric cooled in the twentieth century, but Canada's cold climate continues to "legitimate" the international boundary.¹⁰ Historians Kerry Abel and Ken Coates contend that coping with winter should be one of the basic themes in the historical understanding of Canada. Similarly, political scientist Keith Spicer identifies three sources

⁹ Carl Berger, "The True North Strong and Free," in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto, 1966), 12-16; Berger is also quoted in Coates and Morrison, "Winter and the Shaping of Northern History: Reflections from the Canadian North," in *Northern Visions*, 24; same argument in Abel and Coates, "Introduction," 20.

¹⁰ Historian Pierre Berton dichotomized the two countries between "hot" and "cold": Berton, 83-87; Similarly, Canadian culture is ironic: Jamie Dopp, "Who Says that Canadian Culture is Ironic," in *Double Talking: Essays on Verbal and Visual Ironies in Contemporary Canadian Art and Literature*, ed. Linda Hutcheon (Toronto, 1992), 40-43; cultural sociologist Andrew Wernick said the Canadian representation of nature is "raw" (Canadians' relation to it being "agonic and defensive"), while the US version is "cooked" (anthropocentric and paradisiacal): Wernick, "American Popular Culture in Canada," 296, 297; Gilbert, "La nature comme légitimation," 47; Geoffrey Wall, "Recreation Resource Evaluation: Changing Views of the Land as a Recreational Resource," in *Recreational Land Use: Perspectives on its Evolution in Canada*, eds. Wall and John Marsh (Ottawa, 1982), 16.

to "Canadian values": climate, geography (natural resources, landmass, proximity to the United States), and history.¹¹

The most influential of the Northern theses has been that of W.L. Morton. Standing Turner's frontier thesis on its head, Morton argued that a northern frontier fostered a less individualistic society than Turner found in the United States, for its harsh conditions imposed a relative subservience to the common good. To historian W.L. Morton, the North is essential in understanding Canada. The existence of a Northern "frontier" in Canada has created a "permanent frontier" in Canadian culture: it has accentuated the dichotomy between civilization and wilderness, has encouraged mobility, has allowed a lowering of norms, and has provided a refuge from institutions. From a wider perspective, the North influences the whole social ideology of Canadians: in the North there is "absolute dependence on one's fellows, on cooperative skills, on communal capital ... in ever-lessening degrees southward...."¹² Morton's North strikes one as having more cottages than igloos. It is a *near*, highway-bound North where summering Canadians have learnt the ways and mores of the Northern wilderness, and thus kept building a common stock of northern topophilia, with help from the processes of modernization and urbanization that were supposed to pressure them to lose touch with nature – such as the automobile and the booming (since the 1940s) practice of amateur homebuilding and renovation. Moreover, the mobility, rougher norms, and northern neighborliness are all elements of the cottage lifestyle that likely influenced Northerners' expectations when they went to Florida.

¹¹ Spicer, 16; Abel and Coates, "Introduction," 10; Frye, "Sharing the Continent."

¹² W.L. Morton, "The "North" in Canadian Historiography," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W. L. Morton*, ed. A.B. McKillop (Toronto, 1980), 229, 230, 232, 239.

In popular culture, winter has been interpreted as fostering a certain pride, a feeling of superiority, and an element of a common identity that has been shared by Canadians through conversations and mass-mediated images. One Ottawa columnist suggested, "the 'winter conversations' keep us talking all year around. No matter what region [Canadians happen] to be from, [they] can relate to winter."¹³ Another Canadian columnist has added:

Canadians enjoy the winter. Some of us think we do, some of us say we don't but we do. Winter is a great plaything for some of us, a terrific topic of conversation for the rest. Even if we don't like going out in it, we like to talk about it.... "Isn't it cold?" they say, and the question carries enthusiasm and a certain joy.... It is a much more lively, much more cheerful conversation than the one, in warmer climes, that begins, "Isn't it hot?"... The joy of cold lies in enduring it. To endure is to triumph over it.... The act of enduring winter does not require that a Canadian necessarily go *out* in it much.... Small acts of endurance are enough: warming up the car on a cold night, shoveling snow, short walks through some of Canada's legendary windy intersections, standing by the boards in a hockey arena.¹⁴

If Canadians can build their identity and distinctiveness on climate, can Northerners in the United States do likewise? From the nineteenth century, dichotomous comparisons of the United States' two most iconic regions, New England and the South, were abundant – but generally ended up finding the South a lot more climate-determined than the Northeast.¹⁵ Undoubtedly the South got the most attention – what about the North? Mark Twain famously branded New England weather as quite distinct: "In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours." In the early nineteenth century,

¹³ Douglas Cornish, "Winter is Part of What Defines Us as Canadians," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 7 January 2002, D4; Bercuson quotes W.A. Foster, member of Canada First: David Bercuson, "Long, Cold Winters Have Created a Will to Carry On," *Financial Post*, 7 January 1995, 19; Gary Lautens, "Storm a Sure Cure for What Ails Winter Weenieland," *Toronto Star*, 15 January 1992, a2.

¹⁴ Charles Gordon, "How we Earn our Place in the Sun," *MacLean's* 100 (9 February 1987): 7.

¹⁵ A. Cash Koeniger, "Climate and Southern Distinctiveness," *The Journal of Southern History* 54, no. 1 (February 1988): 21-44.

New Englanders justified their increasing alcohol intake by their harsh climate.¹⁶ And as the settlement of Minnesota started at mid-nineteenth century, its promoters worked hard at redefining its climate with such silverlinings as "promoting moral rectitude" and "preventing infectious diseases."¹⁷ Much later, David Hackett Fischer, in *Albion's Seed*, put climatic determinism on its head to explain the Puritan mind: climate did not make New England, but the intimidating wilderness of the region, and the exceptionally cold climate of the seventeenth century showed the Puritans' mettle, their confidence in their sacred mission.¹⁸

As Fischer's argument shows, in most American explanations of the historical relationship between "nature" and culture, scholarly or literary, climate and landscape ended up being meshed together: there was seldom a monocausal, solely climatic (or solely geographic) determinism at work, to the exclusion of other elements (human or "natural," in these interpretations of the interplay of nature and culture, or more accurately the social construction of nature. In other words, "winter" or "cold" were rarely factors standing on their own, apart from, say, "forest" and "mountain." In most cases, the topophilia of Northeasterners and Midwesterners was best defined as a nexus of several elements of their relation with their landscape. For example, "wilderness" took on, in these northern regions, a multifaceted, peculiar, and coherent definition as a Northern (and Western) nexus of landscape-definition, with undertones of harsh, cold weather, thereby standing in sharp contrast with the warm, garden-like, Edenic topophilia found in the South and in Florida. This meshing of landscape and climatic elements, and their

¹⁶ William B. Meyer, Review of *New England Weather, New England Climate*, by Gregory Zielinski and Barry D. Keim, *The New England Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (March 2004): 159; Gerald Carson, "Rum and Reform in Old New England," *New-England Galaxy* 6, no. 3 (1965): 3-14.

¹⁷ William E. Lass, "The Eden of the West," *Minnesota History* 56, no. 4 (1998-1999): 202-214.

¹⁸ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (London, 1989).

comprehension through the lens of the *relations* between environment and human beings can be called "topophilia" – meshing together climate, topography, vegetation, sights, smells, sounds, and emotions.¹⁹ Meshing geography and climate together, and seeing them as "intricate interaction[s] of challenge and choice" through the lens of human perception, allows researchers to avoid a "mindless, monistic [climatic] determinism" against which D.H. Fischer has warned historians.²⁰

"Wilderness," with its undertone of harsh climate, has been a visible feature in North American culture, albeit less visible than southern Edenism (thanks in great part to Florida). Frederick Jackson Turner, who hailed from Wisconsin, defined "wilderness" as a prominent character in the shaping of American society and culture.²¹ Daniel Boorstin depicted, in Turnerian fashion, the continental geography as conducive to community and self-reliance along the frontier, *especially in the North*. Later, a pioneering study of snow in America meshed together the American and Canadian experience of the great white expanses.²²

As in Canada, it seems that US Northerners have identified, however negatively, with a cold, unpredictable, unforgiving landscape that stood in sharp contrast with the pastoral, Edenic theme of southern landscapes. Robert Frost repeatedly illustrated the struggles and conflicts of US history and of the individual, as well as the looming

¹⁹ Yi-Fu Tuan defined topophilia as "all emotional connections between physical environment and human beings." Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1974).

²⁰ D.H. Fischer, "Climate and History: Priorities for Research," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10, no. 4 (Spring 1980): 828.

²¹ Turner mentioned "wilderness" 11 times in his seminal address, and depicted it as an agent of cultural formation: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," on the American Studies Department web page, University of Virginia, xroads.virginia.edu (retrieved May 2007); "wilderness" also plentiful in "Rise of the New West," in *The American Nation: A History*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (New York, 1906).

²² Boorstin's Northern pragmatism and individualism is noticed by Kenneth Kusmer, "American Social History: The Boorstin Experience," *Reviews in American History* 4 (1976): 471-482; Boorstin, "Prologue,"

unknown of death, with the metaphor of *dark woods*, in the image of the forests he learned to love as he became a New Englander.²³ The literary representation of wilderness did not entirely stop with the acceleration of cultural modernization. When Sal Paradise, Jack Kerouac's alter ego in *On the Road*, starts his first westward journey, he gets stranded, at night, in a forested area by the Hudson river along a New York highway; as a freak rainstorm soaks him, raises threatening shadows from the woods and shake the ground under his feet, he experiences an epiphany with the same threatening wilderness that early Americans confronted. At the end of his first continental journey, Sal meditates

I thought all the wilderness of American was in the West till the Ghost of the Susquehanna showed me different. No, there is a wilderness in the East; it's the same wilderness Ben Franklin plodded in the oxcart days when he was postmaster, the same as it was when George Washington was a wildbuck Indian-fighter, when Daniel Boone told stories by Pennsylvania lamps and promised to find the Gap, when Bradford built his road and men whooped her up in log cabins. There were not great Arizona spaces for the little man, just the bushy wilderness of eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the backroads, the black-tar roads that curve among the mournful rivers like Susquehanna, Monongahela, old Potomac and Monocacy.²⁴

Later, a bleak New York City winter pushed a consumptive Ratso Rizzo and Joe Buck to Florida in *Midnight Cowboy* (released in 1969); and indie filmmaker Jim Jarmusch sent two New Yorkers and their Hungarian cousin to a wasteland-like Cleveland, amidst a blizzard, only to send them retreating to Florida, where they accidentally find the pot of gold at rainbow's end, in *Stranger than Paradise* (released 1984). Still at twentieth-century's end, much like in Canada, cold winters remained part of the topophilia of the

xviii; Bernard Mergen, *Snow in America* (Washington DC, 1997); Blake McKelvey, *Snow in the Cities: A History of America's Urban Response* (Rochester NY, 1995).

²³ Philip Booth, "Journey Out of a Dark Forest," *NYT*, 25 March 1962.

²⁴ Sal Paradise was stranded at Bear mountain Bridge, along the Hudson valley. *On the Road* (New York, 1976), 105. Other mentions of cold winters as creating American culture: in early Colorado mining communities: Diana DiStefano, "Alfred Packer's World: Risk, Responsibility, and the Place of Experience in Mountain Culture, 1873-1907," *Journal of Social History* 40 (2006): 181-204.

Northern United States, occasionally with a positive content: a magazine account suggested that "cold weather makes Midwesterners feel superior."²⁵

Arguably, Northern Americans have changed their minds about a cold climate being part of a superior identity, thanks to air conditioning and the growth of the Sunbelt. As Daniel Boorstin understood it, modernity fed a desire for a climate-free world. In the USA, this change in attitude is being challenged by recent environmental concerns, and thermostats set to save energy rather than to maximize comfort may bring the seasons back into sharp relief in both the South and North.

Environmentalism may yet have this effect in Canada, but the embrace of winter as an opportunity to wear woolens draws most of its potency from the belief – widespread amongst the Canadian chattering class – that winters are such an essential part of national identity that it is almost treasonable to prefer a summer sport like baseball to ice hockey. It worries defenders of the "True North Strong and Free" – as the anthem has it – whenever winter is lamented by the media, avoided in heated rinks and malls, or escaped outright. Geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin thus complained that,

Certain social ideas have hindered a better acknowledgement of winter... Meteorological agencies and the media are prone to alarmism on the topic of winter storms: Alert! Don't go out! Leave at once for the tropics...! However useful, these dramatized news reveal an aversion toward, if not a hatred of winter.²⁶

while Abel and Coates have noted that

Historians and other scholars bemoan the fact that Canadians ignore their north as much as possible, but have not really explained the phenomenon very

²⁵ John McCormick. "The Weather Outside is Frighful," *Newsweek* (31 January 1994): 43.

²⁶ "Certaines pensées sociales ont défavorisé une prise de conscience de l'hiver... des agences météorologiques et les médias peuvent donner dans un catastrophisme au sujet des tempêtes: Alerte! ne sortez pas! Partez immédiatement vers les tropiques...! Pour utiles qu'elles peuvent être, les informations dramatisées révèlent une aversion sinon une haine de l'hiver.": Louis-Edmond Hamelin, "L'hiver autrement," in *Écrits en Gérontologie*, no. 6; Hamelin, *Les personnes âgées et la vie en hiver* (Ottawa, 1989), 7; Bernard Arcand concurs in *Abolissons l'hiver!*, 24, 35.

well. ... Perhaps because almost all of our country is wintry to some degree, people do not feel the need to increase the quota of winter and cold in their lives by embracing even more of it; Toronto has winter enough for most Canadians. The North, it seems, is a necessary evil, a burden of history and geography, and a constant reminder of Canada's failures.²⁷

Some commentators blamed the un-Canadian aversion to winter to urbanization:

Tanning studios sent out the lure of endless summer. Radio and television stations issue the siren song of free trips to Florida. Revisionists are hard at work constructing, in our large cities, indoor streets, complete with glass walls, high ceilings and real trees.... It is the dream of such people that Canadians abandon their obsession with the outdoors, the loon, the lake, the snow, the cold, and get on with the important business of moving indoors and becoming truly cosmopolitan.²⁸

In addition to the reference of the "siren song" of Florida, a theme to which we will soon return, the reference to "becoming truly cosmopolitan" hued to the dominant frame of historical explanation – the metanarrative – of postwar Canadian history, namely that – take your choice – urbanization or modernization or the technological imperative was, in a context of American hegemony, making Canadian nation-building ever more problematic. As winter faded from significance, intellectuals and politicians feared, the Canadian nation-state might melt away entirely.

To numerous accounts of Canadians' relation with winter, it was melting indeed. Prior to the twentieth century, and following the arguments presented by Morton, Berger, Atwood, Frye, Lamontagne, and others, winter was, rhetorically at least, a defining element of Canadian culture. During the twentieth century, modernization and urbanization (noticeably through the technologies of domestic electricity and central heating), the cultural hegemony of Hollywood, the weather forecasts broadcast by the mass media since the 1950s, the introduction of the wind-chill factor in forecasts by the

²⁷ Abel and Coates, "Introduction," 18.

²⁸ Gordon: 7.

1970s, have changed winter into a "time for flight and denial."²⁹ Even Québécois songwriters, who had depicted winter in identity-building verses, evolved towards the representation of more urban realities, where winter has to be merely tolerated or fled. Thus these escapist poems were not merely expressing distaste with winter: they were advocating permanent summer, through travel to southern destinations as solutions.³⁰

Anthropologist Bernard Arcand and geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin explored the thesis of winter irrelevance further. They saw at work a collective obsession with "bad" weather that exaggerates winter's burdens, an obsession expressed in many defining nodes of Canadians' collective consciousness: in small talk and mass media, in weather forecasts and traffic reports, in the daily rhythms of work and rest – work during winter, rest for the summer –, in the importation of "Southern technologies and sociological models." Hamelin concludes that "all the 'weather warnings' and all the seducing glimpses of the travel agent's palm tree, put together, have contributed to the creation of a super-winter which is a false winter." As a consequence of the mass media's need for newsworthy material, the most reiterated representations of winter have become a litany of storms, blizzards, and the hardships of pursuing daily routine in extreme weather conditions (such as the risk of heart attack and back pain from shoveling snow). A blizzard has become a prime-time news item.³¹

To Arcand and fellow anthropologist Serge Bouchard, Canadians and Québécois have thus followed a southern, summer-loving pattern of seasonal activity, in spite of the

²⁹ The quote is from Lamontagne, "L'hiver au Québec": 137, 138; Collet, 109, 257; Deffontaines, 203; Lamontagne, *L'hiver dans la culture québécoise*, 130, 132, 145, 168; Arcand, *Abolissons l'hiver!*, 28, 48, 50; Arcand, "Mon grand-père aimait l'hiver"; Arcand and Bouchard, "La neige," 58; Ethier-Blais, 13, 14, 17, 18.

³⁰ In "Demain l'hiver," "Lindbergh" (the first written by Robert Charlebois, the second by Claude Péloquin, both interpreted by Charlebois), "Tous les palmiers" (interpreted by Beau Dommage), "Lit vert" (written and interpreted by Plume Latraverse), and "Cruel (Il fait froid, on gèle)" (by Daniel Bélanger): Roger Chamberland, "Du Nord au Sud: l'hiver chanté," *Québec Français* 88 (winter 1993): 95-97.

hardships of pursuing normal economic activities in the dead of winter, and then taking summer off. To them, this is a manifestation of a "colonized" culture, the acceptance of a southern cultural imperialism.³² To these authors, Florida is yet another example in the many ways Northerners flee winter.³³

A reader of Montréal's *La Presse* has asserted that bad weather broadcasts coupled with reports from the Sunny South have alienated Canadians from their own country:

I wonder what pushes the CBC, radio and TV, to promote 'The Sun of Florida and Mexico'. During the 6 o'clock news, we are told about the weather in all the hot countries. And the pretty weather woman – who wears tuques so well – adds: 'Lucky them!' Travel agencies are getting a daily and free publicity.³⁴

In these accounts, the growing unease towards winter is a measure of pervasive modernity, consumerism and American cultural influence. In a consumerist culture where comfort and pleasure are ways to measure one's happiness, winter cannot be appreciated. Writer Freya Stark quipped, "the only way to be hardened to uncomfortable conditions is not to know of a comfortable one."³⁵ Winter can only be valued in play, in winter sports,

³¹ Hamelin, "Les Québécois": 86, 88.

³² Arcand, "Mon grand-père aimait l'hiver": 125-127, 129, 132; Arcand and Serge Bouchard, "La neige."

³³ Harney, "The Palmetto and the Maple Leaf: Patterns of Canadian Migration to Florida," in *Shades of the Sunbelt: Essays on Ethnicity, Race, and the Urban South*, eds. R.M. Miller and G.E. Pozzetta (Boca Raton, 1989), 22; Hamelin, 85; Paul Longpré, "L'âme du Québec est nordique: Une entrevue avec le professeur Louis-Edmond Hamelin," *Forces* 88 (winter 1990): 25, 26; Hamelin and Caroline Montpetit, "La Nordicité, un prix à payer," *Forces* 88 (winter 1990): 64-67; Jody Berland, "Weathering the North: Climate, Colonialism, and the Mediated Body," in *Pop Can: Popular Culture in Canada*, eds. L. Van Luven and P.L. Walton (Scarborough, On, 1999), 209, 216; Gordon: 7; Hal Tennant, "What Winter Does to Canada -And Vice Versa," *MacLean's* 74 (7 January 1961): 19; Kim Bagnell, "In Closing," *The Review* (Imperial Oil) 5 (1982): 30; Bercuson: 19; David Phillips, "Aw, C'mon, Canadian Winters Aren't so Bad," *Canadian Geographer* (February-March 1991): 14; Gilbert, 56; Taras Grescoe, "Miami Ice," *Saturday Night* 114 (April 1999): 26, 27; Pressman, 6; Cornish.

³⁴ Carmen Hamelin, from Laval: "Je me demande ce qui pousse Radio-Canada, radio et télé, à faire la promotion du "Soleil de la Floride et du Mexique?" Au téléjournal de 18 heures, on nous donne les températures de tous les pays chauds. Et la jolie météorologue - à qui les tuques vont si bien - d'ajouter: "Les chanceux!". Les agences de voyages ont là une publicité gratuite et quotidienne.": "Vive nos quatre saisons," *La Presse*, 8 February 1989, B2.

³⁵ Freya Stark, traveller and writer (1989), in J.R. Colombo, *Famous Lasting Words: Great Canadian Quotations* (Toronto, 2000), 560.

or in the nostalgia for childhood, as in "those were real winters."³⁶ Literary scholar Jody Berland saw the devaluation of winter as an alienated form of Canadian topophilia – that is, a topophilia dependent on a hegemonic model from the world's most powerful "technocracy of sensuality" across the border, America the winterless. Appreciation for winter becomes impossible outside of a,

Pale, spineless toleration for an inferior condition.... How can the ... excesses of winter precipitation be admitted into a public discourse that is so much ordered and enabled ... by the frame of technological mastery, without appearing to be caught in a pre-modern, pre-adult condition of perverse glee?³⁷

To Arcand as well, the manifestations of winter are "felt like a paradox, an anomaly if not a failure, an inadmissible blunder, almost a shame."³⁸ The authors consequently see modernism, technology, and consumerism as closely entwined in a coherent, unique threat to Canada's existence as winter is relegated to the realm of nostalgia, fading tradition, and childish play. Despite their use of the most recent literary jargon, they have embraced the long-standing orthodoxy that posits a rigid dichotomy between Canada and the United States, and finds the Canadian folkways as vulnerable to consumerist modernity. The Canadian intelligentsia has been, since George Grant's *Lament for a Nation* in 1965, lamenting the fading possibility of building a distinct, genuine local identity that could stand up against the American cultural menace. More realistically, the radical redefinition of topophilia in Canada was partly a result of the technological conquest of winter in

³⁶ Réjean Tremblay, "Noël, Ça se fête dans la neige!," *La Presse*, 24 December 1993, A1; Tremblay, "L'hiver dans la peau," *La Presse*, 1 December 1990, s2; J.F. Donnelly, "Tracks in the Snow: Growing Up in Northern Ontario," *Queen's Quarterly* 79 (spring 1972): 60, 61; Hugh MacLennan, "On Living With the Winter In the Country," *Saturday Night* 76 (23 December 1961): 17; R.T. Allen, "What Ever Happened to Old-Fashioned Winters?," *MacLean's* 77 (2 December 1964): 12; Kenneth Bagnell, "Winters of Content," *Imperial Oil Review* 76 (winter 1992): 23; Audrey Grescoe, "Winter's Child," *The Review* (Imperial Oil) 66 (1982): 2, 4; Allan Smith, "The Continental Dimension in the Evolution of the English-Canadian Mind," in *Canada: An American Nation?* (Montréal, 1994), 58; Cornish.

³⁷ Berland, "Weathering the North," 210, 211, 217.

³⁸ Arcand, "Mon grand-père aimait l'hiver," 129, 130.

North America through innovations like central heating, covered or underground passageways in northern cities, front-wheel drive and radial tires. It also came as part of the more general threat to nation and tradition brought about by technology, as defined by Grant, Boorstin, and Jacques Ellul.³⁹ Boorstin wrote, in *Hidden History*,

Technology is the natural foe of nationalism. With crushing inevitability, the advance of technology brings nations together and narrows the differences between the experiences of their people.... Each forward step in modern technology tends to reduce the difference between the older categories of experience.... Technology aims to insulate and immunize us against the peculiar chances, perils, and opportunities of our natural climate, our raw landscape.⁴⁰

The popularity of winter travel to Florida was used as an illustration of this crisis in Canada's nation-building. Robert Harney, when studying the snowbird phenomenon, noticed that there was a Canadian counter-discourse on Florida, and likened it to other counter-discourses found in all places experiencing an important or threatening emigration. What was being said and written about Florida had been written, for instance, in Ireland about the United States in the nineteenth century and in Québec about New England in the early twentieth century. In Canada, this counter-discourse on migration has had more urgency because of the immediate threat that American culture and might pose to national distinctiveness. Harney stated, "annual dosages of Americanism administered in" a beguiling vacation atmosphere must rank ... as one of the chief impediments to the emergence of a Canadian people."⁴¹

To borrow a trope, the Canadian narrative for anti-modernist, anti-American intellectuals is a perverse version of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, wherein the White Witch –

³⁹ Boorstin, "A Flood of Pseudo-Events," in *Hidden History*, 255, 256.

⁴⁰ Boorstin, "Epilogue: The Republic of Technology and the Limits of Prophecy," in *Hidden History*, 307, 312.

⁴¹ Harney, "The Palmetto and the Maple Leaf," 27, 28, 32 (quote on 32).

she who made winter last a hundred years – is the true hero, and the four children, who travel back and forth from the verdant land (a garden-like place reminiscent of rural England or Tolkien's Shire, which suggests Florida as well) beyond the wardrobe, are "the chosen ones," evil innocents, who will tame winter and destroy what has made Narnia a truly unique kingdom. By coincidence, the Witch's name is Jadis, which in French means "long ago," making this reversed plot more meaningful than the original. In this strange, counter-discourse, Canadian snowbirds and winter tourists to Florida are either outright deserters or – at best – naives who childishly point out that Canada, Québec and the Great Lakes States are more like a northern Nod – that is, the land where Cain went, east of Eden. Novelist Guy Ménéard noticed that Québécois traveling abroad felt like traitors when they were caught publicly stating their dislike of winter.⁴² Montréal *Gazette's* Andy Nulman humorously labeled snowbirds as "extreme enemies of the state," and a Canadian journalist could not help but feeling "downright sinful" when in Florida during winter; he hoped his ancestors would forgive him. Jacques Grand'Maison even used migration to Florida as a metaphor of the national weakening that took place in Québec prior to the constitutional crisis of the early 1990s.⁴³

⁴² Ménéard is quoted in Gilbert Forest, *Dictionnaire de Citations québécoises* (Montréal, 1994), 98; likewise, a letter to the editor, in favour of Separation in October 1995: "ce qu'on veut, c'est un partenariat d'égal à égal. Certains libéraux fédéraux font semblant de ne rien comprendre à cela. Mon cousin non plus, qui veut s'ouvrir un compte en Ontario, et qui passe ses hivers en Floride. Mais les autres, vous tous qui avez encore un minimum de dignité, et de fierté, n'oubliez pas que la vraie question, le jour du scrutin, ce sera la suivante: les Québécois forment-ils un peuple?": "Les Québécois: un peuple?," *La Presse*, 12 September 1995, B2.

⁴³ Post-referendum commentary from Jacques Grand'Maison, who sees a new spirit of national regeneration: "On sent que mijote en souterrain un courant positif, une chimie de reconstruction de la conscience, le désir de se refaire par en-dedans. Une nouvelle couenne..! Les plus âgés sont inquiets de l'avenir de leurs petits-enfants, les baby-boomers rêvent moins de plages en Floride.": *La Presse*, 11 November 1995, b5; Scott Young; Claude and Daniel Jasmin, "Réveillez-vous les vieux!," *La Presse*, 25 September 1994, A1; Andy Nulman, "Shooting Down the Snowbirds," *The Gazette*, 14 November 1999, C5; Scott Young, "You All Should Be in Florida Too," *Saturday Night*, 23 February 1992: 8; "wimps who, as soon as they think winter is on its way, flee to Florida" ("lâches qui, dès qu'ils s'imaginent voir pointer l'hiver, fichent le camp en Floride"); Carl Dubuc, "Face à l'hiver," *Commerce* 69 (November 1967): 62.

Thus Florida is an iconic, somewhat caricatured symbol of the American menace to Canada's existence. Specifically, it is an encompassing metaphor for the seductions of modernity and technology: comfort, geographic mobility, leisure, and consumerism. Florida embodies, for many Canadian and Québécois nationalists a subtropical version of the American Dream or even worse, a pseudo-place (as defined by Boorstin) where technology uproots culture from nature, nation, and tradition.

8.2 Florida is for Deserters

Canadians going to Florida have been most vulnerable to allegations of treachery whenever the Canadian economy is suffering. During the postwar era, Canada usually experienced a deficit in its balance of travel spending: that is, Canadians spent more when traveling outside the country than foreigners spent when traveling inside it. The early postwar years were an exception because of Canadian exchange controls. Thus, Americans spent \$259 million in Canada in 1950; Canadians, \$191 million in the United States. Even then, *per capita* spending was far bigger southward than northward: Americans, ten times more numerous than Canadians, spent only a quarter more overall. By 1952, Canada had a travel deficit with the United States and by 1960 Canadians accounted for half the spending in the United States by foreigners.⁴⁴ The growing imbalance in travel spending contributed during the 1970s and 1980s an important part of Canada's imbalance of payments with the United States. As the travel deficit was a consequence of economic growth and prosperity *in Canada* – that is, of a currency and disposable incomes strong enough to permit Canadians to vacation in one of the world's

most expensive travel destinations⁴⁵ – the discontent appeared to be less about money than about anxiety over Canadian nation-building in a context of modernity. More accurately, as demand for Canadian products was slipping, as the economic plant of the country was growing obsolete, as productivity lagged, all at varying rhythms throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the economic discourse in Canada largely focused, in the public mind, on a worsening balance of payments and the declining value of the Canadian currency relative to the US greenback – more or less constant between 1976 and 2002. Thus, an antimodernist, anti-American anxiety crystallized around the problem of the travel deficit, because outbound tourists stood at the nexus of the two trends, and were an easily identifiable, benign scapegoat to have around.

In the late 1950s already, the media and political leaders started to bemoan the fact that Canada's negative balance of payments (overall) was growing too fast. One of the most politically palatable solutions (that is, without infuriating the US) was to step up the promotion of domestic tourism. At a federal-provincial conference on tourism in November 1955, industry representatives had asked for a "See Canada First" campaign, but the provinces had turned down the proposal as offensive to the United States. By early 1958, as the deficit in the balance of payments with the US passed the billion-dollar threshold, the Canadian Government began increasing the Travel Bureau's promotional spending.⁴⁶ By 1960, the Canadian Tourist Association, representing Canada's tourist

⁴⁴ *New York Times*, 7 July 1951, 18; *NYT*, 22 September 1951, 2; *NYT*, 6 July 1954, 32; 20 July 1955, 33; 1 June 1960, 54; in 1960, Canadians spent 470 million in the US, over a total of foreign spending of nearly one billion: *NYT*, 9 April 1961, 46

⁴⁵ Mitchell Sharp, Minister of Trade and Commerce (Liberal, Eglinton, ON), says the travel deficit is caused by prosperity in Canada: *House of Commons Debates*, 2nd session of the 26th Parliament, vol. 10 (24 November 1964), 10487.

⁴⁶ In early 1958, the promotional budget of the Canadian Travel Bureau increased by a third, to \$1,252,500 in fiscal year 1957-58. In late 1958, spending on literature increased by 50 percent over the previous year, to \$279,000; by 1961, it would reach \$435,500. Question by MP Francis A.G. Hamilton (Progressive

industry, was able to make more convincing pitches, calling for better tourist promotion and accessibility. Meanwhile, the alarm over Canada's economic dependency and imbalance of payments reached new heights, while Canadian nationalism grew over fear of American hegemony. In 1962, the forced devaluation of the proud Canadian dollar into a derisory "Diefenbuck" seemed to confirm the economic harm being done by the rising imbalance of payments.⁴⁷

As part of the same policy package, Canadians were encouraged to travel in Canada: a promotional campaign encouraged them to visit their own country, and the gaps in the Trans-Canada Highway were closed in order to make the West more accessible from Ontario and Québec. Also, the maximum value of duty-free merchandise a Canadian could bring back from the United States was drastically reduced – from \$300 per year to \$75. The measures worked: in 1963, Canada earned a positive balance in travel spending with the United States for the first time since 1951. It would last until 1974.⁴⁸ It seemed for a few years that the new policies, combined with a cheaper dollar, had worked.

Yet the travel account deficit with the U.S. came back in 1975 because of a boom in Canadian travel to the United States. The 1970s oil shocks encouraged Canadian travelers to seek out cheaper gasoline in the United States, while contributing to the rapid growth of chartered flights, the cheapest of which went to Florida. The travel deficit with the United States seemed to widen at the same pace that Florida gained in popularity. Canadian spending in the US increased steadily from 1973 onwards, until the travel deficit peaked

Conservative, Qu'Appelle, Sask.) on touristic advertising outlays: *House of Commons Debates* (Hereafter *HCD*) 1:26, v. 3 (29 July 1963), 2722.

⁴⁷ Remarks on supply by Mitchell Sharp: *HCD* 1:26, v. 1 (5 July 1963), 1874.

⁴⁸ Charles J. Lazarus, "Dollars Across the Border," *NYT*, 8 July 1962, sect. 10:1; Lazarus, "Canadian Tourism," *NYT*, 4 December 1955, sect. 2:37; *NYT*, 6 December 1962, 68; *NYT*, 8 April 1963, 54; James Montagnes, "Next-Door Host," *NYT*, 13 November 1960, sect. 2:19; Charles J. Lazarus, "Canadian Profit,"

in 1992 at more than \$6 billion. The deficit then narrowed, as Florida lost some its allure because of adverse publicity over crime and the cost of living. Meanwhile, the currency exchange rate had moved so decisively against Canadian tourists that a Florida vacation became a luxury, and so it would remain until the US dollar tumbled in 2006. Until then, the deficit trended downward and by the turn of the century was no longer considered a threat to a balance of payments that had changed to Canada's advantage.⁴⁹

However, the travel deficit looked a lot more menacing between 1976 and 1978, when it contributed around ten percent to a rapidly growing deficit in national accounts. The travel deficit grew as Florida became more popular. Between 1974 and 1979, the share of "sun" destinations (Florida, Hawaii, California, and the Caribbean) of the foreign travels of Canadians rose from 30 to 45 percent. Travel to Florida itself increased, in terms of visits, by 149 percent between 1973 and 1979.⁵⁰ Accordingly, those who fretted about deficits often blamed Florida.⁵¹ A tourism promoter at the federal level deplored that "The

NYT, 19 April 1964, sect. 10:12; Beatrice Riddell, "Canadians Abroad: Too Many Big Time Spenders," *Financial Post*, 10 November 1962, 51.

⁴⁹ Ontario Economic Council, Tourist Industry Committee, *Ontario's Tourist Industry: Its Potentials and Its Problems* (Toronto, December 1965), 21; Riddell; Policy, Planning and Coordination Body of the Canadian Government Office of Tourism, *Le tourisme au Canada: le passé, le présent, et l'avenir* (Ottawa, November 1982), 13; Strizzi, Bailie and Hince, *The Evolution of Canada's Travel Account, 1980-1997* (Ottawa, 1999), 6; remarks on the stepping-up of promotional efforts in 1962, by MP Dinsdale (PC, Brandon, MB), *HCD*, 2:26, v. 9 (16 October 1964), 9127, 9128.

⁵⁰ Traveldata Intl, *1979 Vacation Travel by Canadians in the United States* (Ottawa, 1980), 28.

⁵¹ Remarks of G.H. Aiken (PC, Parry Sound-Muskoka), mention Florida as illustrative of Canada's touristic underperformance: *HCD*, 2:26, v. 9 (16 October 1964), 9125; Aiken again, about poor performance of the industry and the lack of involvement of the Federal: *Débats des Communes*, 4:28, v. 4 (21 June 1972), 3360, 3361; comments of Mr. Stevens (PC, York-Simcoe), on lack of promotion and high wages, detrimental to the tourist balance of payments: *Débats des Communes*, 1:30, v. 8 (12 May 1976), 13448; remarks of William C. Scott (PC, Victoria-Haliburton, ON), on the reduction of government's spending: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 11 (25 November 1976), 1398; Mr. Chrétien (Lib., Saint-Maurice, QC) Minister of Trade and Commerce, replies to George Hees (PC, Prince Edward-Hastings, ON), that little can be done to prevent Canadians from visiting Florida: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 4 (3 March 1977), 3603, 3604; G. Isabelle (Lib., Hull, QC), against annexion of the Turks and Caicos, recommends Florida to winter-weary Canadians: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 5 (22 April 1977), 4933; Dan McKenzie (PC, Winnipeg South Centre, MB) against high taxes and sloppy promotional efforts: *HCD*, 3:30, v. 3 (27 February 1978), 3279; Bernard Loiselle (Lib., Verchères, QC) uses Florida as metaphor of the travel account deficit, of high domestic air fares of bad perception and promotion on winter: *HCD*, 1:31, v. 1 (18 October 1979), 382, 383; Nelson A. Riis (New Democratic Party, Kamloops-Shuswap, BC) quotes Florida as example of ease of

real trouble, though, is the Canadian climate, ...Canadians prefer to vacation in Florida and other such places." One of his counterparts in Ontario added: "There's no easy answer, Canadians like the South in winter, and how on earth are you going to stop anyone getting away from snow and ice to sit for a while in the sun beside a swimming pool?"⁵²

Canadian politicians felt the heat, as the press started to report the names and destinations of federal and provincial ministers who went south on vacation –in spite of the historical relation of Canadian elites with Florida.⁵³ The opposition benches took up the cause, their speeches castigating travelers to the United States as "deserters." A Newfoundland MP, John Crosbie, said, in the fall of 1977, that the tourist deficit should be addressed by a "ban the tan" campaign: "Every Canadian who dares to go south next winter and returns to Canada with a tan should be ostracized," he suggested. A few days later, Finance Minister Jean Chrétien recommended that Canadians take their winter vacations at home. Then, Prime Minister Trudeau went to the Bahamas on vacation, and Crosbie accused him of setting a "tremendous example for all Canadians." Later on, Crosbie sardonically remarked that "perhaps handcuffs and leg-irons" were needed to

travel abroad: *HCD*, 1:32, v. 21 (4 April 1983), 24465, 24492-24497; R.M. Whicher (Lib., Bruce) names Florida when discussing the tourist deficit and provincial promotional efforts: *Legislative Assembly of Ontario Debates*, 4:27 (14 March 1966), 1486; Walt Disney World is stiff competition for Ontario, according to S. Cureatz (PC, Durham), *Legislative Assembly of Ontario Debates* (hereafter *LAOD*), 4:31 (13 March 1980), 52; Florida is where Ontarians go, says witness Laschinger, *LAOD, Standing Committee on Resources Development*, 2:32 (4 November 1982), R706.

⁵² David Moilliet, of the Canadian Office of Tourism: *Montreal Star*, 12 November 1977, a1; Bennett, who is in charge of touristic promotion for Ontario: Robert Turnbull, "How U.S. Beats Ontario in Battle for Tourists," *Globe and Mail*, 6 August 1977, 1.

⁵³ For instance, in the winter of 1979, the *Globe and Mail* noted that three Ontario cabinet ministers, and the leader of the Liberal opposition, went to Florida. Two other ministers went to the Caribbean. *Globe and Mail*, 24 March 1978; Barbara Yaffe, *Globe and Mail*, 28 October 1978; Yaffe, *Globe and Mail*, 23 December 1978, 5; *Globe and Mail*, 20 December 1977; "Queen's Park. Bronze Face no Boost," *Globe and Mail*, 24 November 1979; Sylvia Stead, "The Cabinet in Winter Ontario no Holiday for Davis and Four Ministers," *Globe and Mail*, 23 December 1980. Historically, we find Prime Ministers Laurier, Mackenzie King, St. Laurent, Pearson, Trudeau, Clark, Mulroney, Chrétien spending extended stays in Florida. So are Governor General Jeanne Sauvé; provincial Premiers Lesage, Bourassa, Bouchard, Charest, Bill Davis; and provincial ministers Lise Payette and Guy Chevrette in Québec, and James Snow, Larry Grossman, and Stuart Smith in Ontario.

prevent Canadians from traveling abroad.⁵⁴ And when, in the early 1990s, Canadians went into a cross-border shopping spree in the United States to evade the new Goods and Services Tax, a columnist of the *Calgary Herald* lumped together the shoppers and the snowbirds as unpatriotic profiteers.⁵⁵

By the mid-1970s, as efforts to promote travel in Canada were increased and refined, most of the advertising attempted to change the image of Canada from a wilderness to an urban, culturally vibrant nation (as illustrated by the hypermodern Québec pavilion at Expo 67, or the successful "Yours to Discover" campaign for Ontario, launched in the late 1970s).⁵⁶ As some Canadian provinces advertised their winter sports amenities in cities of the US (for example, the Laurentians and Eastern Townships ski resorts were heavily promoted in the US Northeast since the 1940s), Canadians were seldom sold their own winters. During the winter of 1984, a series of federal ads tried to convince Canadians to vacation in their own country, in coordination with an increased effort beamed at Americans – the latter were offered winter sports, in addition to the newly repackaged, modern/ urban tourist product.⁵⁷ A 1996 brochure from the

⁵⁴ John C. Crosbie (PC, St. John's West, Nfld.); Chrétien (Lib., Saint-Maurice, Minister of Finance) boasts he changed his Christmas vacation plans, and stayed in Canada instead of going South; Crosbie adds later that Jack Horner (Lib., Crowfoot, AB, Minister of Industry, Trade, and Commerce) should get pledges from cabinet members to vacation in Canada, and not in "Bahamas, Colorado, Cuba": *HCD*, 3:30, v. 1, 2, 4 (25 October, 16 November, 25 November, 1977, 2 March 1978), 252, 946, 1274, 3380; "Handcuffs," and Crosbie blames Trudeau again for his vacation travel abroad: *HCD*, 4:30, v. 2, 4 (7 December 1978, 8 March 1979), 1884, 3940; during debate on tourism, Ian Deans (NDP, Hamilton Mountain, ON) blames Trudeau and Mulroney for travelling to Florida last Christmas: *HCD*, 2:32, v. 2 (22 March 1984), 2318; Cosmo Maciocia (Lib., Viger), blames Lévesque and other cabinet minister to vacation outside of Québec: *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale*, 3:32, v. 26:38 (17 March 1982), 2561, 2562; the stay-at-home argument of Mr. Chrétien is taken up by Bennett (PC, Ottawa South) and E. W. Martel (NDP, Sudbury E.): *LAOD*, 1:31, (28 October 1977), 1283.

⁵⁵ Peter Calamai, "Criticism of Migratory Habits Ruffle Snowbirds' Feathers," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 25 May 1991, B6.

⁵⁶ Wendie Kerr, "Our National Identity Seen as Key to Tourism," *Globe and Mail*, 9 July 1979, B9; Robert Martin, "Times Kept Canadians Closer to Home This Year," *Globe and Mail*, 25 December 1982, T2.

⁵⁷ 1984 campaign announced by David Smith (Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism): *HCD*, 2:32, v. 2 (24 February, 13 March 1984), 1708, 2049.

Government of Ontario directly addressed the readers' ambivalence towards winter:

"Winter. Don't hate it! Get out and enjoy it!"⁵⁸

While Canadian elites were convinced that a distaste for winter and a taste for Florida sunshine were evidence of a declining commitment to Canada, it was not until 1975 that they sought to verify their suspicions. Instead, a survey of the attitudes of Canadian travelers found that those who chose a US destination were well aware of the differences between the two countries –not an altogether bad omen for nationalists. Less than a sixth of respondents who had visited the United States in 1973 or 1974 agreed with the eighth statement – "US does not feel like a foreign country" – and two-fifths believed that Canada was "becoming a better destination than US." However, those who wished to worry could point to the fact that about half of the sample did not "especially consider" whether their destination was in Canada or the United States – as though the border did not matter.

⁵⁸ In 1995, consultations on Canada's tourist industry led to the creation of the Canadian Tourism Commission, a public-private partnership devoted to the coordination of promotional efforts. Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism, *Annual Review* (Toronto, 1981), 9; Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism, *Annual Review, Industry and Tourism: A Perspective on the 80's* (Toronto, December 1980); Ontario brochure for winter tourism: "Cold Weather, Hot Times," published by Ontario Tourism (Toronto, 1996) (in National Library of Canada). Dismay: *L'Actif* (joint bulletin of the Department of Tourism and ATRAQ) 1 (March 1989); and *Des saisons et des gens: Le partenariat, force motrice de l'industrie touristique* (tourism strategic plan) (Québec, 1992), 9; Strizzi, Bailie and Hince, 14.

Table 8.1: Canadians' Positive Attitudes Towards Travel in the United States, by Topics of Comparison with Canada, 1973 and 1974 (percent of respondents who agree *strongly* or *completely* with statement).⁵⁹

	1973		1974	
	Respondents who visited US in 1973	Respondents who did not visit US	Visited US in 1974	Didn't visit US in 1974
I don't consider whether my destination is in Canada or US	50%	37	46	37
US has... better weather for vacations	28	18	28	20
...better beaches	23	14	24	15
... smaller distances between points of interest	22	18	21	16
Canada is becoming a better destination than US	40	52	37	46
US does not feel like a foreign country	15	20	16	9

The survey, taken at a time when an overvalued Canadian dollar made the US an especially attractive destination, mainly revealed that opinions were shaped by experience: that is, there was a direct correlation between liking the United States and visiting it. A later poll, published in 1978, found that 61 percent of respondents declared that they had made an extended visit to the United States and that travel to the US was popular across all classes and linguistic groups.⁶⁰ Yet it also confirmed (see Table 8.2) the findings of the earlier, 1974 survey that Canadians were ambivalent about their Southern neighbor. Even to those who visited the United States, it felt like a foreign country, and only a surprisingly small proportion agreed that the U.S. had better weather, beaches, or shorter distances.

⁵⁹ 1. "When I choose a vacation spot, I think of the place itself and don't especially consider whether it's in Canada or the U.S.; 2. The weather in the US is usually better for vacations than it is in Canada; 3. The US still has better beaches than Canada does; 4. A vacation in other provinces would involve having to travel greater distances between points of interest than one in the US; 5. To my mind, Canada is getting to be a better vacation spot than is the US; 6. Vacationing in the US is almost like not being out of the country": Traveldata, *Vacation Travel by Canadians in 1974, in the United States*, v. 1 (Toronto, October 1975), 28. (Sponsored by the US Travel Service, the Canadian Office of Tourism, the federal Department of Transportation, the Québec Department of Tourism, Hunting and Sport Fishing, and The *Montreal Star*)

Table 8.2: Attitudes Towards Travel in the United States, by Topics of Comparison with Canada, for Canadians Who Visited the United States, by Region, 1974 (percent of respondents who agree *strongly* or *completely* with statement).⁶¹

	Atlantic Provinces	Québec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia
Better beaches	28%	70	31	26	34
Better weather	54	68	42	42	43
Closer points of interest	43	47	41	33	51
Better family entertainment	16	28	30	32	31

So far so good – for both Canadian nationalists and tourism entrepreneurs. However, when the data were broken down by region, they revealed a Québec exception – that Québécois who had visited the United States were much more likely than other Canadians to prefer America’s beaches and weather. At the time, it was embodied by the booming popularity of Florida, and by the summer *hegira* of Québécois to the Maine beaches around Old Orchard – reputedly the Ocean beaches closest to Montréal. This anomaly might be explained by the Québécois' taste for informal, beach-and-summer activities and sociability. In the 1990s, Québec had twice as many backyard pools per capita as wealthier, warmer Ontario, in part because Québécois were more willing to cavort in a cheap, above-ground pool.⁶²

On the other hand, the data in Table 8.2 might also be affirming the Québec nationalist contention that the Québécois' are relatively more familiar with the United States than with the rest of Canada. Most famously, René Lévesque once said that: "[T]he

⁶⁰ 1105 interviews, conducted in October 1978: Laboratoires Data Conseillers en Recherche, *Report of a Survey of Canadians' Travel In Canada and Abroad* (Ottawa, 1978), 2, 9, 39, 46, 47.

⁶¹ Laboratoires Data Conseillers en Recherche, 29.

⁶² A serious report with coverage between 1990 and 2000 said that Quebec had *half* of Canada's private pools: Canadian Red Cross, *Drownings and Other Water-Related Injuries in Canada, 1991-2000* (Ottawa, 2003); By Summer 2007, Québec had 290,000 private pools, the same number as Ontario, with little more than half the population. Curiously, the Québec backyard pool was cheaper, which might explain its spread: two-thirds were of the above-ground type, while two-thirds of Ontario pools were in-ground. Jasmin

place where I feel more at home outside Quebec is the United States"⁶³. Later in 1989, at the dawn of a crisis in Canadian unity, Liberal senator Serge Joyal noticed that the Québécois who looked beyond their borders were looking towards the US, not the rest of Canada: "for today's Québécois, the American Dream is no longer on the Canadian scale, which is too fragmented for a market; it is on the continental scale.... If there is a country that Québécois have come round to appreciate, it is the United States."⁶⁴ Mere months later, Progressive-Conservative MP Lucien Bouchard became a charismatic separatist leader, and reiterated that idea on numerous occasions. However, another survey in 1978 found that Québécois were less likely than Ontarians to have ever visited the US. Moreover, only 48 percent of Francophones had been there, compared with 65 percent of Anglophones. Yet those Francophones who did cross the US border stayed for a longer time: 107 days for French-speakers as compared with 82 days for English-speakers.⁶⁵

Legatos, "Stop Diving Accidents in Home Pools, Association Urges Quebec, Cities," *The Gazette*, 22 June 2007, A7; Rene Bruemmer, "Drowning in Silence," *The Gazette*, 16 June 2007, B1.

⁶³ Rémi Maillard, *René Lévesque, Mot à mot* (Montreal, 1997), 126, 127, 241 (quote on feeling at home on latter page); "Review of Chodos and Hamovitch, *Quebec and the American Dream*," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 18, 2 (Spring 1993), 211-213; Maillard, *Lucien Bouchard, Mot à mot* (Montreal, 1995), 21, 147, 148;

⁶⁴ Serge Joyal, "Le Parti libéral du Canada a-t-il un problème québécois?," *La Presse*, 21 April 1989, B3.

"Le rêve américain pour les Québécois d'aujourd'hui n'est plus à l'échelle canadienne, un marché trop éparpillé. Il est à celle du continent.... C'est ce que nous n'avons pas su comprendre dans le débat sur le libre-échange. L'avant-garde québécoise se trouvait aux premières loges de l'occasion qui lui était présentée de percer sur le marché américain. S'il est un pays que les Québécois ont exorcisé, ce sont bien les États-Unis. En Floride l'hiver, à Old Orchard l'été, il n'y a pas une secrétaire, un petit commerçant, un professionnel, un homme d'affaires qui ne rêve pas du condo à Miami ou de la plage du Maine. Tout le brassage culturel que l'attrait de New York représente pour les arts visuels et musicaux laisse finalement peu de place à l'imagination 'canadienne'."

⁶⁵ 1105 interviews, conducted in October 1978: *Traveldata, 1979 Vacation Travel by Canadians in the United States* (Toronto, 1980), 2, 9, 39, 46, 47; survey of 3356 Canadians aged 15 and over, conducted in September and October 1995: Canadian Tourism Commission and Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, *Domestic Tourism Market Research Study, Ontario Report* (Ottawa, 1996), 6; Canadian Tourism Commission and Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, *Domestic Tourism Market Research Study, Québec Report* (Ottawa, 1996), 6; In 1996, an estimated 19% of Ontarians had taken an overnight, non-business trip to the US, while 13% of Québécois did. 13% of Ontarians visited other provinces while 11% of Québécois did. In 1997, equivalent figures were 24 % for Ontarians in the US, 12% of Québécois, 16% of Ontarians to other provinces and 14% of Québécois: Statistics Canada, Tourism Statistics Program, *Tourism Statistical Digest* (Ottawa, 1999), 116, 117; Canadian Tourism Commission and Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, *Domestic Tourism Market Research Study, Québec Report* (Ottawa, 1996), 6.

What emerges, therefore, from the data is the role of Québec's snowbirds in mediating relations between their people and the United States. Moreover, there was a sharp divide in Québec society between those who had gone to the United States and those who had not. This differentiation will be analyzed below.

Overall, the data should relax even the most nervous nationalist. There is almost no evidence that either English Canadians or Québécois returned from the United States with pro-Americanism in their suitcase. Most remained faithfully Canadian, even when spending months in the South. In this light, it appears that the Canadian discourse on the attraction of Florida was a rhetorical tool used by both Canadian nationalists to lament a supposed crisis of national identity in the face of an almighty American influence, and by Québec nationalists to prove the lack of Canadian identity. In other words, those who talked about travel as "desertion" to Florida were saying more about their own unease with America than about the actual baggage brought back by Canadian snowbirds.

8.3 Canada's Empire: Proposals for a Caribbean Province

Even though there was no real threat of a (sub)tropical American siren luring Canadians towards the shoals of continentalism, a handful of Canadian politicians and businesspeople, have, since the 1960s, tried to push a non-American solution to Canada's love affair with the Tropics. Canada, they proposed, should form a political and economic association, a political union if need be, with one or more Caribbean islands. This association or union would, it was argued, build upon the capital of sympathy enjoyed by Canadians in the Caribbean. It would also improve Canada's balance of payments, by allowing winter tourists to use Canadian dollars while enjoying a tropical vacation. Florida was often criticized in this discourse as the main source of tourism's imbalance of

payments. To counter its continuing popularity, some opinion-makers proposed a vacation alternative that would not require Canadians to buy US dollars and values?⁶⁶

As a first step towards a Canadian haven in the sun, a Newfoundland Member of Parliament introduced a resolution in 1964 calling for free trade with the Commonwealth (English-speaking) nations of the Eastern Caribbean. Members from four more provinces agreed that the ultimate desirable link between Canada and the Caribbean should be a provincial status for the Caribbean islands. The Member from Halifax remarked that a monetary alliance with the islands would alleviate the balance of payments problems caused by winter travel to Florida. In 1966 other Honorable Members took up the question again, as Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson prepared to meet with leaders of the British West Indies. A Prince Edward Island Member introduced a resolution for improved trade policies between Canada and the West Indies.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, a Maritime entrepreneur, who was planning to build retirement communities in Trinidad, Antigua and St. Lucia, recommended the Canadian dollar as the currency for eight former British colonies in the Caribbean. In 1970, a special committee of the Canadian Senate recommended a closer political and economic association with countries of the Caribbean. Starting in 1974, further proposals suggested that Canada formed a partnership with the Turks and Caicos

⁶⁶ "Now, here's a merger we can all support," *Toronto Star*, 6 November 2001, A23; when Heath Macquarrie (PC, Hillsborough, PEI) presents a motion calling for a warming of relations with the former and current British colonies of the Caribbean, at least three orators quip that Canadians *need* to go South during winter: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 2, 5 (19 November 1976, 22 April 1977), 1211-1217, 4926-4933.

⁶⁷ Macquarrie (Queens, PEI) moved that: "the government should consider the advisability of establishing free trade between Canada and those West Indies islands comprising the proposed Eastern Caribbean federation"; R.N. Thompson (Social Credit, Red Deer, AB), John C. Mullally (Lib., Kings, PEI), Thomas M. Bell, (PC, Saint John-Albert, NB), Gerald A. Regan (Lib., Halifax, NS) strongly agree: *HCD*, 1:26, v. 4 (3 June 1964), 3907-3916; 1966: Questions by David S. MacDonald (PC, Prince, PEI), *HCD*, 1:27, v. 6 (13 and 15 June 1966), 6303, 6447; resolution for trade encouragements, Macquarrie (PC, Queens, PEI): *HCD*, 1:27, v. 7 (22 June 1966), 6774; another Macquarrie resolution for trade perks: *HCD*, 3:30, v. 5 (5 May 1978), 5212-5218; again: *HCD*, 4:30, v. 2 (15 December 1978), 2195; J.M. Forrestall (PC, Dartmouth-Halifax East, NS), moves for closer economic ties with the Commonwealth Caribbean: *HCD*, 1:32, v. 8 (9 April 1981), 9123-9128.

Islands, an eight-island British Overseas Territory north of Haiti with a population of just 19,000 in the late 1990s.⁶⁸

From the late 1960s until the late 1970s, the Turk and Caicos government courted Canada for a kind of association. Faced with declining primary industries and an underdeveloped tourist infrastructure, it feared the premature severance of its colonial status. In January 1974, shortly after the Turks and Caicos State Council passed a resolution calling for some form of association with Canada, Max Saltsman, NDP Member of Parliament from Waterloo, introduced a Bill to the Commons, proposing such an association. The British government seemed agreeable, but Canada's Department of External affairs informed the British government that the disadvantages to Canada of a formal union outweighed any possible advantage. The Department evoked the specter of racial violence, for a string of violent incidents against Caribbean immigrants had recently

⁶⁸ Leeward Islands are Antigua, St. Kitts, and Montserrat; Windward Islands are Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada. Robert Chodos, *The Caribbean Connection* (Toronto, 1977), 160, 161; Monetary union with Caribbean: G.A. Regan (Halifax), *HCD*, 2:26, v. 4 (3 June 1964), 3916; Annexation: question from Walter G. Dinsdale (PC, Brandon, MB) to Paul Martin (Lib., Essex-E., Minister of Foreign Affairs): *HCD*, 1:27, v. 4 (25 April 1966), 4227; question and resolution for closer relations with British Islands of the Caribbean, by Macquarrie, *HCD*, 2:28, v. 1, 7 (20 November 1969, 29 May 1970), 1031, 7510-7517; Bill C-249 introduced by Max Saltsman (NDP, Waterloo-Cambridge, ON), *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1:29, v. 8 (10 January 1974), 9223; Gilbert Rondeau (Social Credit, Shefford, QC), Mitchell Sharp (Lib., Minister of Foreign Affairs), Saltsman: *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 2:29, v. 1 (6, 11 March 1974), 224; David MacDonald (Prince, PEI), Macquarrie (Queens, PEI), Jean-Eudes Dubé (Lib., Restigouche-Madawaska, quoting a favorable editorial from the *Financial Post*), Robert McCleave (PC, Halifax, NS), P.E. Trudeau (Lib., Mont-Royal, QC): *HCD*, 1:27, v. 6, 7 (13, 15, 22, 27 June, 5 July 1966), 6303, 6447, 6774-6781, 6927-6929, 7191; Dubé again, *HCD*, 1:27, v. 12 (13 February 1967), 12985; Macquarrie, Claude-André Lachance (Lib., Lafontaine-Rosemont, QC) and Maurice A. Dionne (Lib., Northumberland Miramichi, NB) are against neo-colonialism, while Stanley Knowles (NDP, Winnipeg-North-Centre, MB) is for it: *Débats des Communes*, 1:30, v. 6 (16 May 1975), 5898-5903; Macquarrie submits another version, with approval of Knowles and McCleave (PC, Halifax-East Hants); disapproval from Albert Bécharde (Lib., Bonaventure-les Îles, QC) and Fernand E. Leblanc (Lib., Laurier, QC): *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 2 (19 November 1976), 1211-1217; further debate later: Maurice B. Foster (Lib., Algoma, ON), F.A. Philbrook (Lib., Halton, ON) and G. Isabelle (Lib., Hull, QC) are against, J.M. Forrestall (PC, Halifax) is for: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 5 (22 April 1977), 4926-4933; another submission by Macquarrie: *HCD*, 3:30, v. 5 (5 May 1978), 5212-5218.

taken place in Toronto.⁶⁹ To deal with the private members' bills that advocated an association, the Standing Committee on External Affairs in 1981 struck a subcommittee to study the feasibility of establishing closer relations with *Latin America and the Caribbean*. As the inclusion of Latin America forewarned, the subcommittee's recommendations (issued late in 1982) simply ignored the issue of an economic or political association with *any* Caribbean island.⁷⁰ After all, how could a small island warrant much ink in a report that talked about heavyweights like Mexico and Brazil?

Even so, interest in a Caribbean island partner did not die. In 1987, a delegation of Turks and Caicos islanders visited Canada seeking a deal, thus forcing another parliamentary committee to be established. Once again, the Department of External Affairs reported that annexation would be costly and would foster racial tensions. A fearsome possibility was that poor black people from Haiti and eastern Cuba would attempt to reach Canada and shelter by making the short sea voyage (about 250 kilometers) to the Turks and Caicos.⁷¹

In the spring of 2003, a group of citizens calling themselves Canadians for a Tropical Province revived the idea by petitioning for the annexation of a tropical island.

⁶⁹ Robert Chodos testifies to the Subcommittee of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, *HCD*, 1:32, v. 6 (18 June 1981), sect. 6:28; Glen McGregor, "Paradise Found," *Edmonton Journal*, 25 April 1999, H1.

⁷⁰ Proceedings and Minutes of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defense, *HCD*, 1:32, v. 78 (23 November 1982), 81-83.

⁷¹ McGregor; Norbert Morin, *Le touriste* (UQAM) 1 (March 1979): 6; Saltsman (NDP, Waterloo-Cambridge, ON) presents his C-249 (later C-174) Bill, to study possible union between the Turks and Caicos Islands and Canada: *Débats de la Chambre des Communes*, 1:29, v. 8 (10 January 1974), 9223; Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford), Mitchell Sharp (Lib., Eglinton, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Saltsman: *Débats des Communes*, 2:29, v. 1, 6 (11 March, 21 April 1974), 224, 395, 396, 410, 1321; Bill reintroduced by Saltsman (C-269); Macquarrie proposes a special committee to study the question (as he did back in 1964): *Débats des Communes*, 1:30, v. 1, 6 (15 October 1974, 16 May 1975), 376, 5897; Subcommittee on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, 6:35, 6:36; B.M. Paulin, "Re: Our Own Caribbean Paradise," *National Post*, 11 February 2004, A19; Chodos, 14; Forrestall (PC, Dartmouth-Halifax East), moves for closer economic ties with the Commonwealth Caribbean, while Henri Tousignant (Lib., Témiscamingue, QC) moves for economic and political association with Turks and Caicos

The Turks and Caicos chief minister, Michael Misick, said he was ready to negotiate. In 2004, businesspeople and MPs around Albertan Conservative Peter Goldring, took up the cause. They named their group "A Place in the Sun." That same year, former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna visited the islands to meet government officials, while claiming to have taken up the topic in private with Prime Ministers Mulroney, Chrétien, and Martin. In his 2004 Caribbean trip, McKenna, who was chairman of CanWest Global Communications Inc. (a Toronto and Winnipeg firm), received extensive coverage from its television network and newspaper chain. These papers came forward with a survey wherein 90 percent of Canadian respondents were purportedly favorable to annexation. In March 2004, an enthusiastic Oshawa councilman proposed to include the islands in the city borders.⁷²

Despite these voices, the possibility of either annexation or union was fading. The islanders were enjoying a rapidly growing tourist industry, thanks in part to Canada's allowing the Turks and Caicos to become an offshore tax haven for Canadians. Ironically, unpaid taxes from rich Canadians became the economic aid that the islands had long been seeking. Meanwhile Canadian policy makers, blessed since the 1990s with an improved balance of payments with the United States, had decided that Latin America was a far more important playing field for external affairs. Even had the Turks and Caicos flown the Maple Leaf, Canadian travelers, unlike the politicians, understood that the lure of Florida

islands. Motions withdrawn, referral made to the Standing Committee: *HCD*, 1:32, v. 8 (9 April 1981), 9123-9128.

⁷² Chris Morris, "Turks and Caicos Union Proposal is Back," *Montreal Gazette*, 15 March 2004, A11; Mary Vallis, "Canada Urged to Create a 'Sunshine Province'," *National Post*, 14 June 2003, A8; David Roberts, "The Turks and Caicos Wants to Join Canada," *National Post*, 7 February 2004, A5; Peter Goldring, "It is Time to Take Another Look," *Montreal Gazette*, 11 August 2003, A19; in 2003, the petition demanding the annexation of tropical islands was on the website www.aplaceinthesun.com (retrieved October 2003); survey: Dawn Cuthbertson, "Turks and Caicos," *National Post*, 10 February 2004, A7; Oshawa: Stan Josey,

could not be challenged by small Caribbean islands, whatever flag they waved. The Turks and Caicos were an expensive destination, reachable only by air, while Florida remained cheap, still the primary destination of cheap charters and motorists. And Florida had more advertised attractions than any place on the planet. It was – unlike the Turks and Caicos – a place for dreams.

8.4 Florida is for Economic Liberals

Adding a tropical province was only justified by the travel deficit in the heat of the argument, as a rhetorical ploy to tap into the concerns of Canadian elites; the proposal more likely originated from a complex of historical and economic factor that included the historic relations between Eastern Canada and the Caribbean. Many more commentators claimed, in any case, that Canada had a solution to its tourism deficit problem much more efficient than becoming imperial. All Canada had to do if it wanted to reduce its tourism deficit, was to reduce its tax and regulatory burdens on domestic tourism.⁷³ In 1977,

"Oshawa the Fun and Sun Capital of Canada?," *Toronto Star*, 1 March 2004, B04; Chris Morris, "L'idée d'annexer au Canada les îles Turks et Caïcos refait surface," *La Presse*, 15 March 2004, A5.

⁷³ when calling for action on the high costs of travel in Canada, Crosbie (PC, St. John's West, Nfld.) gives the example of air fares between Toronto and Miami, lower than from Toronto to Québec: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 2 (25 November, 16 December 1976, 1398, 2062; Marcel J.A. Lambert (PC, Edmonton West, AB) blames the prohibition on domestic charter fares as encouraging the tourist deficit to Florida: *HCD*, 3:30, v. 1 (27 October, 2 November 1977), 319, 329; Marke Raines (Lib., Burnaby-Seymour, BC) says domestic air fares compare badly with flights to Florida or California: *HCD*, 4:30, v. 2 (15 December 1978), 2198; Bernard Loiselle (Lib., Verchères, QC) cites Florida when speaking on the travel account deficit, and of high domestic air fares ("\$160 from Montreal to Miami ... less than air fare of \$192 plus the 8 per cent tax from Montreal to the Magdalen Islands."): *HCD*, 1:31, v. 1 (18 October 1979), 382, 383; in 1990 debate about tourism promotion in Québec, Minister Vallerand (Lib.) cites Miami as foreign competition: *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale, Commission permanente de l'économie et du travail*, 1:34 (23 May 1990), sect. CET:2069; comments by Vallerand and snowbird-MLA Yves Blais (Parti Québécois, Masson): *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale, Commission permanente sur l'économie et le travail*, 2:34 (6 May 1993, sect. CET:2988, 2989; Jean-Claude Gobé (Lib., Lafontaine) sees relief in rate of exchange with the US, which slowed travel to Florida: *Commission permanente de l'économie et du travail*, 2:36, v. 3 (25 April 2001), 8; N. Davison (NDP, Hamilton Centre) and R.H. Knight (Lib., Port Arthur): "why tourists should come here, when they can go to Nassau, Miami or Barbados": *Legislature of Ontario Debates*, 2:28 (19 March 1969), 2473, 2476; in Committee, John E. Stokes (NDP, Nipigon) reads aloud a letter from a

Canadian tourism representatives advised Ontario minister Jack Horner that the best way to solve the travel deficit was to reduce domestic airfares, the minimum wage, and taxes pertaining to travel (those on alcohol, gasoline, and accommodations). Throughout the 1970s to the 1990s, industry representatives repeatedly voiced these demands⁷⁴. They were taken up, in the House of Commons and in provincial legislatures, by critics of the "Canadian model of Big Government." During the inflationary 1970s, this argument was even taken up, defensively, by federal ministers against provincial governments: *they* were the ones who had set minimum wages too high.⁷⁵

snowbird in Largo, Fla., who suggests lower taxes for tourism: *LAOD, Standing Committee on Resources Development*, 4:32 (14 November 1984), sect. R:984, 985.

⁷⁴ John Lawson, Executive Director of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, blames the dollar and economic growth for the travel deficit: *Globe and Mail*, 1 September 1989, b2; *Globe and Mail*, 6 May 1988, b6; John Kohut, *Globe and Mail*, 19 May 1988; *Globe and Mail*, 26 February 1985, 3; *Globe and Mail*, 20 April 1990, b8; Daniel Phelan, in the restaurant business, and Reginald Groome, president of Hilton Canada, revile the minimum wage laws: Arnie Hakala, "Our Sick Tourist Industry Getting Sicker, Forum Told," *Toronto Star*, 27 October 1977, a3; William Pattison, of Delta Hotels, suggests wage laws be relaxed for students: Andrew Szende, "Travel Industry Gets Rough Ride," *Toronto Star*, 7 October 1977, A4; Campbell, president of TIAC, blames taxes for making Canada tourism uncompetitive: Olivia Ward, "Why Don't Tourists Like Canada?," *Toronto Star*, 18 September 1983, A10; "Editorial: Let's Make it Easier to Holiday in Canada," *Toronto Star*, 27 November 1977, A6; blaming the dollar: *Ontario Travel Monitor* (Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation) 3 (1990); against taxes, a brief was presented to Jack Horner (Lib., Crowfoot, AB, Minister of Trade and Industry), by travel industry executives: *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 1977, b14; CAA pleads for lower taxes and "other factors which result in Canada pricing itself out of the competitive tourist market": *CAA Annual Report* (1984), 14; *CAA Annual Report* (1991), 14, 19; *CAA, 1994-95 Statement of Policy* (Ottawa, 1994), 54; Otto Jelinek (PC, Halton, ON) reads a letter from TIAC to Minister Lalonde (Lib., Finance, Outremont), calling for tax relief: *HCD*, 2:32, v. 2 (22 March 1984), 2312; R.H. Knight (Lib., Port Arthur) cites a petition by Ontario tourist industry, against new sales taxes: *LAOD*, 2:28 (19 March 1969), 2472; Rod Siling, president of the Ontario Motel and Hotel Association testifies to Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: *LAOD*, 1:36 (27 February 1997), sect. F:1138.

⁷⁵ Crosbie (PC, St. John's West) gives example of Florida; William C. Scott (PC, Victoria-Haliburton, ON), on the new gas tax and how it impairs the tourist industry; Stan Darling (PC, Parry Sound-Muskoka), on high taxes detrimental to tourism: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 2 (25 November, 16 December 1976), 1398, 2062; Sinclair Stevens (PC, York-Simcoe) blames a new tax on airplane tickets for worsening the travel deficit: *Débats des Communes*, 2:30, v. 6 (20 May 1977), 5850, 5851, 6018; Darling blames weak tourism on high taxes; Marcel Lambert (PC, Edmonton West) cites popularity of Florida; Otto E. Lang (Lib., Minister of Transport, Saskatoon) and Jack H. Horner (Lib., Industry, Trade and Commerce) blame provinces for uncompetitive minimum wages; Eldon M. Woolliams (PC, Calgary North) against high costs of travel in Canada; Dan McKenzie (PC, Winnipeg South Centre) against high taxes and sloppy promotional efforts: *HCD*, 3:30, v. 1, 3 (27 October, 2 November 1977, 30 January, 27 February 1978), 319, 329, 589, 2344, 3279; Jack Murta (PC, Lisgar, MB), Mazankowski (PC, Vegreville, AB) and Crosbie see in rise of airport fees a disincentive to travel in Canada: *HCD*, 4:30, v. 2 (16, 21 November 1978), 1181, 1314; Marke Raines (Lib., Burnaby-Seymour) says domestic air fares compare badly with flights to Florida or California; Mazankowski and Hnatyshyn (PC, Saskatoon-Biggar) say rising airport fees encourage the travel deficit:

In Québec during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Liberal opposition to the ruling Parti Québécois explained the provincial tourist deficit as a consequence of high taxes, and of the unfriendly specter of separatism to non-Québécois. In these debates, provincial and federal, Florida was the favorite example of the popular "outside" destinations that competed with Canada, Ontario and Québec – a place so alluring that it could only be fought through tax holidays and nationalist hype.⁷⁶

In early 1979, Toronto's *Financial Post* published a piece on the importance of Canadian investment in Florida.⁷⁷ Conservative MP Sinclair Stevens cited it as illustrative of the negative effects of high taxes and economic regulations. To Stevens, Canadians were fleeing high costs by traveling to, and investing in, Florida and the United States: "The reason I link the tourist deficit with the capital investment which is taking place in Florida it not just that the people are going down to sunny Florida as tourists; they are

HCD, 4:30, v. 2, 4 (15 December 1978, 22, 23 March 1979), 2198, 4432, 4463, 4464; Stan Darling against high gas taxes, William Rompkey (Lib., Grand Falls, NL), Minister of State to Small Businesses and Tourism) deflects criticism on provinces; later, J.R. Ellis (PC, Prince Edward-Hastings, ON) and Jelinek (PC, Halton) point to high taxes: *HCD* 1:32, v. 21, 24 (10 March, 14 April, 5 October 1983), 23649, 24493, 27760. On March 22, Jelinek tables a motion calling for tax relief for the industry: *HCD*, 2:32, v. 1, 2 (26 January, 5, 22 March 1984), 769, 1752, 2311-2324, 2341-2353.

⁷⁶ Resolution presented by Cosmo Maciocia (Lib., Viger), against high taxes and sloppy promotion; in the ensuing debate, Florida is mentioned: *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale*, 3:32, v. 26, no. 38, March 17, 1982, pp. 2561-2573; debate on same topic, with same Members, before the Standing Committee on Industry, Trade and Tourism (Commission permanente de l'industrie, du commerce et du tourisme): *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale, Commission Parlementaire*, 4:32 (20 May 1983), sect. B: 3457-3471; on promotion, with Luce Dupuis (PQ, Verchères) and Jean Leclerc (Lib., Taschereau), saying high taxes will drive tourists to the U.S.; Minister Vallerand pledges to shore up the tourist deficit: *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale, Commission permanente sur l'Économie et le travail*, 1:34 (23 May, 11 April 1991), sect. CET:2057-2069, 3581-3593; *Commission permanente sur l'Économie et le travail*, 2:34 (6 May 1993), CET:2985-3013; similar denunciation of taxes in Ontario: Knight (Port Arthur), *LAOD*, 2:28 (19 March 1969), 2470; again by McLean: *LAOD*, 2:34 (20 July, 24 October 1989, 24-25 April 1990), 729, 744, 2525, 3248.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 7 for the discussion of Canadian investment in the late 1970s. Business historian Mira Wilkins has studied foreign investment in Florida. She found that the separatist threat was far less significant inducement than Florida sunshine for Canadian investment. Mira Wilkins, *Foreign Enterprise in Florida: The Impact of Non-U.S. Direct Investment* (Miami, 1979).

taking their money with them." The same rhetorical use of Florida was practiced by some of his colleagues.⁷⁸

This critique against Canadian economic policies was often defined as a *brain drain*: wealthier, educated Canadians were tempted, it was alleged, to migrate to the United States, looking for better-paid jobs, lower taxes, and better investment opportunities. Florida was often mentioned as a destination for Canadian economic migrants, especially for small investors and health professionals, who hoped to benefit from the needs of a rapidly growing population with a high proportion of retired persons. Alarmist accounts of the brain drain called for a closer alignment of Canadian economic policies with the United States: lower taxes, less powerful and fewer unions, reduced economic regulation, and a pro-business civic culture. In these statements, Florida came into play as an illustration, often a caricature, of the attractiveness of the United States to educated, upwardly mobile Canadians. Why Florida? Because it had right-to-work regulations, an entrepreneurial civic culture, booming construction and medical industries, and no state income taxes. (And it had no winter.) This rhetoric frequented the pages of the economically conservative Hollinger and CanWest newspapers.⁷⁹ In Québec, Claude

⁷⁸ Sinclair Stevens (PC, York-Simcoe): *HCD*, 4:30, v. 3 (8 February 1979), 3052; Harvie Andre (PC, Calgary Centre): *HCD*, 3:30, v. 5 (23 May 1978), 5650; Gordon E. Taylor (Bow River): "Collectivism, centralized planning, regulation after regulation, frustrate people.... One man said to me, '... I am going down to Florida where I can invest the money and where people are glad to have the investment.'" *HCD*, 1:31, v. 1 (18 October 1979), 379.

⁷⁹ in July 2002, alarming account of the Brain Drain appears in three CanWest papers, authored by one writer: Rick Mofina, "Brain Drain Gained 66% in 2000, Study Concludes," *National Post*, 2 July 2002, A1; Mofina, "Brain Drain to U.S. Accelerates," *Calgary Herald*, 2 July 2002, A1; Mofina, "Brain Drain From Canada to U.S. on Rise: Study," *Vancouver Sun*, 2 July 2002, C5; Duncan Stewart, "Brain Drain? Don't Worry, be Happy," *National Post*, 6 February 2001, C10; Moira MacDonald, "Tech Brain Drain by the Numbers," *National Post*, 7 July 2001, A8; double billing of same article in CanWest papers –now you'll know why *The Gazette* is no longer independent: "Editorial: Plugging the Drain," *The Gazette*, 5 January 2001, B2; "New York, New York," *Calgary Herald*, 3 January 2001, A12; Aaron Derfel, "Quebec Nursing Crunch," *The Gazette*, 10 June 2000, A1; Pauline Tam, "Brain Drain to U.S. Getting Worse," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 25 May 2000, A6; John Robson (The Ottawa Citizen), "Gun Control Might Put us in Danger," *Calgary Herald*, 8 December 1999, A27; Eric Beauchesne, "Survey Finds Drain Took Some of Our Best Brains," *Edmonton Journal*, August 28, 1999, p. A16; Beauchesne, "Brain Drain is 'Quality, Not Quantity',"

Picher of *La Presse*, amateur economist and nemesis of Québec's economic policy model (the *Modèle Québécois*) and of separatism, led the assault. Picher was, not coincidentally, durably alarmed by Canada's travel account deficit.⁸⁰

Case in point, in 1994, a young Québécoise, Hélène Jutras, made headlines with an open letter to *Le Devoir*, Québec's most nationalist newspaper, entitled *Le Québec me tue* – "Québec is Killing Me." She lamented the lack of opportunities for youth in an intellectually, politically, and economically stagnant Québec. To her, the winter exodus of snowbirds to Florida was a sign of societal malaise⁸¹. Jutras' position, which she eventually elaborated into a book, raised furious comment and even a bit of self-doubt in nationalist circles. Despite the contention of Québécois nationalists that the United States were unlike English Canada, and therefore unthreatening to the nation, some of them uneasily interpreted Jutras' manifesto as a sign of civic demobilization in the face of the better opportunities of the United States and English Canada. Jutras briefly became a

Ottawa Citizen, 28 August 1999, D1; Beauchesne, "Canada's Brain Drain is in Quality, Not Quantity," *Vancouver Sun*, 28 August 1999, A12; Jay Bryan, "Brain-Drainers Speak Out," *The Gazette*, 19 August 1999, F1; Rick Mofina, "U.S. Cities Far Less Taxing," *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 August 1999, F1; Diane Francis, "Canadians Forced to U.S. by Taxes, Desmarais Says," *National Post*, 11 March 1999, A1; Randy Boswell, "Should we Care About Our Dollar?," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 July 1998, C1; Gina Mallet, "Taxed to the Max," *Canadian Business* 67 (February 1994): 20-27; Peter Hunt (Ottawa Citizen), "Economic, Political Woes Driving Professionals South of Border," *Edmonton Journal*, 12 August 1991, A3; Peter Hum, "Moving to the U.S.A.," *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 August 1991, A1.

⁸⁰ All the following texts in *La Presse*: Claude Picher, "La course vers la médiocrité," *La Presse*, 29 July 1995, A17; Picher comparing Québec welfare rolls with US states, Florida included: "L'aide sociale au Canada et aux États-Unis," 10 November 2001; on brain drain: "Le cinquième budget Landry," 14 March 2000; "Le compte courant du Canada... et des autres," *La Presse*, 8 July 1995, E2; "Les Américains et le déficit touristique," *La Presse*, 28 August 2004; "Tourisme: l'autre côté de la médaille," 6 April 2002; "Tourisme: vers une autre excellente saison," 27 May 2000; "Le dollar faible, une stupidité?," 16 October 1999; "Les défis du secteur touristique," 3 February 1998; "L'omelette," 14 November 1996; "Tourisme: vers une autre année désastreuse," 30 September 1989; "Vacances au Québec," 5 January 1993, C2; Pascale Breton, "Un monde de différences," *La Presse*, 13 September 2004; Lysiane Gagnon, "Les cerveaux migrants," *La Presse*, 24 July 1999; Gagnon, "La mobilité des citoyens (1)," *La Presse*, 9 February 1999; François Berger, "Le Québec perd la moitié de ses scientifiques," *La Presse*, 24 November 1991; Valérie Beauregard, "Bye Bye Montréal!," *La Presse*, 26 October 1996, F1.

⁸¹ Hélène Jutras, "Y-a-t-il un avenir pour les jeunes au Québec? Le Québec me tue," *Le Devoir*, 30 August 1994, A7; on reactions: Stéphane Baillargeon, "Le mouton noir," *Le Devoir*, 29 October 1994, A1; Jean Dion, "Le Québec qui tue," *Le Devoir*, 29 October 1998, B1.

statistic for the brain-drain thesis by pursuing her studies in France; she undercut it by returning a couple of years later.

As economic liberals wielded Florida like a wrench in a not-so-subtle attempt to plumb North America with a uniform, free-flowing set of economic pipes, nationalists and socialists in Canada were using the Sunshine State like a sandbag against the storm surge of economic internationalization. They depicted Florida as the epitome of what was undesirable in the United States, indeed, a reason for government to regulate the flows between the two nations and societies. In Florida, there were instances, often extreme ones, of crass commercialism⁸², environmental damage⁸³, poorly funded public services, and dog-eat-dog division of society into winners and losers.⁸⁴ When the Ontario Tory government rolled out the red carpet for Canada's Wonderland theme park near Toronto in

⁸² Florida stands for individualism, overdevelopment, commercialism, Manifest destiny (southward), gun ownership, bad food, heavy traffic: Joey Slinger, "Retreat of the Birds," *Saturday Night* 104 (April 1989): 76, 80; Berland, "Weathering the North": 214, 215; Slinger, quoted by Colombo, *The Dictionary of Canadian Quotations* (Toronto, 1995), 174; Pierre Vennat, "Pour comprendre l'Amérique," *La Presse*, 18 November 1990, C6; Paul Roy, "Des traces de neige jusqu'en Caroline du Sud," *La Presse*, 7 February 1988, B1; Réal Pelletier, "De Montréal à Bethléem, en passant par Melbourne," *La Presse*, 29 December 1990, G10.

⁸³ When development threatens the Muskoka cottage area, in Ontario, a Gravenhurst resident suggests "It could end up looking like Miami Beach": Peter Gorrie, "Muskoka: Growing Pains in Cottage Country," *Canadian Geographic* 109 (June-July 1989): 20; Comment of Claude Simard (Lib., Minister of Leisure, Hunting and Fishing, Richelieu) on the regulation of roadside billboards in Québec: the roads to Miami exemplify the "pollution" that we want to control and avoid: *Débats de l'Assemblée nationale, Commission permanente de l'industrie et du commerce*, 2:30 (23 May 1974), 2312; similar comments by constituents of Brenda Elliott (PC, Guelph), on new roadside signage "the last thing in the world we want in beautiful Ontario looking like Florida": *LAOD, Standing Committee on Estimates*, 1:36 (20 November 1996), E801; when discussing the water supply problems of Ontario, Ernie Parsons (Lib., Prince Edward-Hastings) gives the much worse example of Florida: *LAOD*, 1:37 (23 October 2000), 4924.

⁸⁴ Foglia, "L'Aventura," *La Presse*, 22 April 1995, A5; Claude and Daniel Jasmin, "Réveillez-vous les vieux!," *La Presse*, 25 September 1994, A1; Jacques Grand'Maison, *La Presse*, 11 November 1995, b5; from a reader, about snowbird investors, on the eve of the October 1995 referendum: "Les Québécois: un peuple?," *La Presse*, 12 September 1995, B2; Myth: Paul Wells, "Reverse Brain Drain," *Maclean's* 117 (22 November 2004): 60; Dalton Camp, "When it Comes to the Economy, Everyone is Guessing," *Toronto Star*, 3 June 2001, A13; Pat Johnson, "Bye-bye, Brains: If you Want to Chase the Yankee Dollar, Fine," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 March 2001, A11; Susan Riley, "There Are no Quick Fixes on Taxes," *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 March 1999, A17; Barbara Yaffe, "Canada's Unique Values Protect us From 'Brain Drain'," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 November 1998, A9I; Judy Steed, "Why Joe Repovs is Staying in Canada," *Toronto Star*, 13 January 1991, B1; Linda McQuaig, "Here's a Plan: Let's Tax the Poor to Keep the Elite From Leaving Canada," *National Post*, 22 March 1999, C07.

the economically-distressed 1970s, a Member from the NDP attacked the government thus: "Your answer to our economic ills, it seems, is to create a Florida of the north, turn it into a Walt Disney World."⁸⁵ Much later in the 1990s, a Florida tourism executive, during a presentation in Toronto, offended nationalist sentiment by saying, "We're not really foreign in Florida. Canadians can feel at home here. They feel safe. They can drink the water and eat familiar food. They know the major food franchisors [*sic*]. We all speak the same language and they can watch the same TV that they get at home."⁸⁶ Such sentences were for Canadian nationalists what flood tides crashing on the levees were to New Orleans residents.⁸⁷

The Florida executive had little excuse for his verbal miscues, because the place of his state in economic and political rhetoric was well set – even a bit congealed – by the 1990s. He should have known that Florida was a trope for Canadians' relationship with the United States and for fears over Canada's identity and the loyalty of its citizenry. Florida was the pool at the end of the brain or money drain – a pool of crystal clear water for those anxious to cleanse Canada or Québec of "socialism" or a cesspool for those who blamed the United States for the national malaise that afflicted both Canada and Québec. The tourism executive should not have waded into either rhetorical pool, for there was a good chance of drowning in both, given the fact that hard data – the actual leaks of people and

⁸⁵ David W. Warner (NDP, Scarborough-Ellesmere): *LAOD*, 3:31 (7 December 1979), 5279.

⁸⁶ Jill Wykes, "Florida Basks in Success of Tourist Industry," *Financial Post*, 29 September 1984, S4; Florida snowbirds mean Canadian familiarity with USA: Charles Baillie (chief executive of the Toronto Dominion Bank), "Rebuild Canada's prosperity," *Toronto Star*, 22 March 2002, A26.

⁸⁷ A few careful, scientific studies showed how small or ideologically tainted the brain drain was. Snowbirds from the Bertrand riding (Laurentians, north of Montréal) are signs of the popularity of the area among retired persons and affluent Québécois: Jean-Paul Charbonneau, "Portrait de Bertrand: Les maires appuient le PLQ," *La Presse*, 31 August 1994, B5; Statistics Canada finding that 1.5% of the 1995 cohort of Canadian university graduates moved to the US during the two years following their graduation. In Québec the proportion was 0.6%: André Noël, "L'exode des cerveaux: l'affaire d'un petit nombre," *La Presse*, 28 August 1999; Daniel Leblanc, "Brain-Drain Study Finds the Best Are More Likely to Leave," *Globe and*

dollars to Florida – mattered little to the ideologues who used Florida as a rhetorical tool to muddy the waters.

In other words, the Canadian and Québécois fascination with Florida and the United States is best understood as a peculiarly Canadian way of making sense of modernity. Discussions of Florida are thus fitted into metanarratives of national construction or deconstruction.⁸⁸ Recent scholarship on Canada-US borderlands⁸⁹ and on perceptions of the United States in Canada have proposed less dichotomous, more ambivalent, polysemantic interpretations, that contend that Canadians did have the power to construct their own meanings of what it meant to be Canadian, meanings that were grounded in their actual experience of North America rather than in the nation-building metanarratives proposed by intellectuals, politicians and textbook writers. This empowerment tapped on Canadians' traditions and worldviews, and on the ongoing collective conversation that has been constructing a folk knowledge about life in North America ever since folks first arrived.

Paradoxically, the repertoire of popular culture beamed from the United States has also played a part in Canadians' empowerment, for instance on the many occasions where

Mail, 28 August 1999, 1; Linda McQuaig, "Conrad Black: I am not -- Canadian," *Globe and Mail*, 26 May 2001; Lynda Hurst, "Brain Drain or Brain Gain?," *Toronto Star*, 25 September 1999, 1.

⁸⁸ See for instance Joseph Yvon Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité* (Montréal, 2002), 165-261; see also media scholar's G. Stuart Adam's version of Canadian history, "Broadcasting and Canadian Culture: A Commentary," in *The Beaver Bites Back: American Popular Culture in Canada*, eds. David H. Flaherty and Frank E. Manning (Montreal, 1993), 81-84; see also Bernard Ostry, "American Culture in a Changing World," and Paul Rutherford, "Made in America: The Problem of Mass Culture in Canada," in *The Beaver Bites Back*, 33-41, 260-280; George Parkin Grant's *Lament for a Nation* is another illustration of this narrative strategy (*Lament for a Nation: the Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1965).

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Jameson, "Dancing on the Rim, Tiptoeing Through Minefields: Challenges and Promises of Borderlands," *Pacific Historical Review* 75 (2006): 1-24; Stephen T. Moore, "Defining the 'Undefended': Canadians, Americans, and the Multiple Meanings of Border During Prohibition," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 34 (2004): 3-32; Sheila McManus et al., "Challenging the Boundaries of Geography: A Roundtable on Comparative History," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 33 (2003): 139-160; W.H. New, *Borderlands: How We Talk about Canada* (Vancouver, 1998); Randy William Widdis, "Borders, Borderlands and Canadian Identity: A Canadian Perspective," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 15

American images were folklorized into some foreign Other. From Florida, images such as giant, talking mice at Walt Disney World, of promethean engineers and God-fearing astronauts at Cape Canaveral, of cocaine cowboys in Miami Beach, or alligator wrestlers at a Seminole camp, however fascinating, were understood by Canadians as an Other. These images helped Canadians to understand themselves as *not American*. Snowbirds themselves, as we have shown, were using Canadian symbols and in a less dichotomous and defensive fashion than academic nationalists supposed. In combination with gestures of appreciation for the American Good Life, they congregated with their compatriots in the southlands even as they reached out to their American neighbors.

In this way, Snowbirds reached their own conclusions about Canadian identity, remaining surprisingly Canadian. By this enduring Canadian character, they put into question the view common to borderlands scholarship that liminal places like Florida foster multinational "blends."⁹⁰ Snowbirds were not exactly *blending*, as we have seen. They were mingling, to be sure, but mostly so that they could experience their own, unique version of the Good Life, a version that was Canadian.

What was the Canadian snowbird Good Life like? It took place in a foreign country that remained an ideal Other to Canada, that was nearly impossible to call "home." Canadian Good Life in Florida was fed by a northern tophilia which shaped a national imagined community (however negatively to some), and was shaped by subtropical and American exoticism (Southern exoticism foremost), by a welfare state that limited the duration of out-of country sojourns and the output of migrants to the US, and by the integration in folk culture of the North and winter, in ways depicted by W.L. Morton. In

(1997): 49-66.

other words, being from a country without a South within its own borders, but with plenty of North, snowbirds illustrated *the* nexus of Canadian identity. This finding supports the "people's agency" interpretation of North American popular culture, an interpretation that allows persons and groups to find meaning outside of metanarratives and other top-down discourse.⁹¹

8.5 Florida is for Low Brows

In Québec, Florida had an impact on the bottom-up folklore in other ways, arguably ways unique to the Belle Province. In Chapter 7 we observed the scorn with which Québécois media and elites occasionally treated Québécois snowbirds in Floribec, as both sought to differentiate themselves from the brand of popular culture embodied by snowbirds. The media and elites evinced a widespread, conspicuous contempt for the popular, rural and small-town, blue-collar culture of Floribec. Snowbirds they singled out as "kétaines" or "quétaine": people embracing a campy, cheap culture, with bad taste. The slur was related to another way of identifying working-class Québécois, as *pepsi*, an allusion to their relative poverty and bad eating habits (Pepsi once had been marketed in Canada, as in the United States, as a cheap alternative to Coca-Cola). The "kétaine" slur became widespread following its use in a hugely popular late-1950s sitcom⁹², and was further crystallized in the public's mind in 1985, with the release of *Elvis Gratton*, the cult film where the character by the same name is a culturally impoverished, Americanized

⁹⁰ Allan Smith, "Review of Robert Lecker, ed., *Borderlands: Essays in Canadian-American Relations*," *Canadian Historical Review* 74 (1993): 305.

⁹¹ On the uneasy cohabitation of academic nationalism with postmodern scholarship in Canada, see John H. Wadland, "Voices in Search of a Conversation: An Unfinished Project," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35 (Spring 2000): 52.

⁹² "Kétaine" was used by Dominique Michel and Denise Filiatrault in *Moi et l'autre* in the late 1950s. Pierre Arpin, "La véritable origine du mot kétaine," www.ketaineries.com/index1.html (retrieved June 2007).

buffoon performing physical gaffes, dressing up and decorating his suburban bungalow with awful taste, speaking a slurred, joul⁹³ French, and impersonating his passé idol Elvis Presley in a TV contest. In 1993, the influential columnist Pierre Foglia compared the denizens of Floribec to the Gratton character, in response to the controversy stirred by the unflattering photos of pot-bellied Floribécois published by *XS*. On his way to Florida, Foglia expected to see Grattons on the plane, or what he called "porcs frais" – fresh pigs, another slur. Foglia, ever looking for the evocative one-liner, used *pepsi* as well. Later on, Patrick Huard, the host of Québec's musical award ceremony (the *Gala de l'ADISQ*) quipped that snowbird entertainer Pier Béland should get an award for being "Québec's most successful in Florida." The sarcastic tone of the joke was not lost on the crowd of music industry people, especially since the host made his living as a comedian making fun of *kétaines*, like most of his colleagues in Québec.⁹⁴ As with other statements about Florida or about the snowbirds, these slights revealed more about their source than about their target. Through such caricatures of the "other," they were seeking to establish their own authority to define who was *in* and who was *out*. And Floribec was quite out.

⁹³ "Name given to a form of popular French spoken in Quebec province.... The word is a transliteration of the dialect pronunciation of the noun *cheval* [horse]. Joul has been mocked and attacked ...as a degraded form of the language, ungrammatical, phonetically corrupt, and full of Anglicisms. From the mid-1960s, however, many québécois writers used it to give their work the authentic ring of common speech and to promote the real language of the majority to the dignity of literary language. A good example of literary joul is [Michell] Tremblay's *Les Belles-Sœurs*." *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French* (London: (1995) 2005).

⁹⁴ Comedian Patrick Huard hosted the *Gala* in 1995: Daniel Lemay, *La Presse*, 6 November 1995, b5; Pierre Foglia expects to see Gratton-like characters in Florida, what he calls "porcs frais," "Les zéros positifs: gros con-sul," *La Presse*, 15 April 1993, A5; "Jolie pluie," *La Presse*, 23 January 1993, A5; "Le poisson rouge," *La Presse*, 16 January 1993, A5; "Carte postale de Floride," *La Presse*, 3 April 1993, A5; "La différence," *La Presse*, 25 March 1995, A5; Stephanie Nolen, "La Floride, c'est comme chez nous," *Globe and Mail*, 15 March 1999; Daniel Lemay, *La Presse*, 6 November 1995, b5; Normand Cazalais and Guy Deshaies notice metropolitan scorn, but dissociate themselves from it: Cazalais, "La Floride malgré tout," *Le Devoir*, 5 October 1979, 11; Deshaies, "Du côté de Tampa, une nouvelle Floride," *Le Devoir*, 13 November 1981, 7.

Two especially revealing examples of this discourse of cultural distinction⁹⁵ appeared in Montréal's *Le Devoir* in 2004. In one article, the author, after explaining the etymology of "kétaine," illustrated it with examples of *kétainerie*, some of them associated with Florida: Elvis Gratton, pop diva Michèle Richard, and the snowbird favorite, country singer Pier Béland. A second article, commenting on the "return" of Céline Dion from a two-year sabbatical denigrated her as a "quétaïne," because she owned a *Florida* home. It compared her to the later years of Elvis Presley, which had been haunted by poor writing, stilted interpretations, bloated orchestrations and chorus, and gaudy dress and lighting.⁹⁶

This snobbery allowed the authors, and the readers of *Le Devoir* to display their superior, cosmopolitan taste. Snobbery of the cultural type was made necessary for elites and intelligentsia who felt mildly shameful not only of their participation in consumer society, but of their actual enjoyment of a consumerist, American version of hedonism. Columnist Orland French defined the shame thus: "[W]hat we don't speak of in Quebec is that our fondness for glitz is sated in Florida."⁹⁷ To assuage the shame, it was necessary to strive for authenticity, and to put down the inauthentic crowd, by means of such fine but symbolic distinctions as putting down Céline Dion while listening to Barbara Streisand, enjoying soccer while snubbing American football, and choosing California or Mexico instead of Florida – all the while putting down more purist cultural elites such as upper-class Parisians, who would scorn their distinctions as a meaningless sorting through rubbish.

⁹⁵ see previous note and: Jocelyne Lepage, "Ode à la petite vie," *La Presse*, 29 January 1994, E1; Beaulieu, *Oh Miami Miami Miami* (Montréal, 1973), 179, 183.

⁹⁶ Jean-Yves Girard, "Foule quétaïne," *Le Devoir*, 2 July 2004, b6; Vincent Desautels, "Le retour de la Queen Mom," *Le Devoir*, 16 April 2002, B7; and when this TV critic sees Céline Dion's Palm Beach house, he can't refrain from labeling its Mediterranean look as "quétaïne": Didier Fessou, "La vie secrète de René," *Le Soleil*, 5 November 1998, C3.

⁹⁷ Orland French, "Time for Canada to Close the Glitz Gap," *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 January 1994, B3.

This counter-discourse on Florida is rooted in the discomforts felt by the intelligentsia in a context of consumerist modernity. That is why it permeates the intelligentsia's comprehension of tourism anywhere: Dean MacCannell and Daniel Boorstin, and those that they inspired, defined travel and tourism as two sides of a dichotomy between enlightenment and hedonism, between pilgrimage and consumption, between the noble, romantic figure of the traveler and the ignoble, consumer-tourist.⁹⁸

This view of Florida has not been exclusive to the Québec intelligentsia: this contempt for what Florida stands for – that is, for mass tourism and tastes – was also found in the media of English Canada, and the Northeastern United States. For instance, a Toronto newspaper piece about Florida tourism started with, "In the Sunshine State, kitsch is king."⁹⁹ It is arguably for the same reasons that a Toronto journalist depicted Floribécois snowbirds at CanadaFest in such a negative fashion:

In an amphitheatre on the boardwalk, 400 pensioners, in bathing suits, flip-flops and sun visors, are jammed in to see comedienne Edna DesRoberts.... The men are tanned mahogany and the women have the same shade of shiny blond hair (Clairol seems to be doing well locally)... Most people spend most of the day in their bathing suits. (Age is clearly no barrier to wearing a teeny Speedo.) The air is thick with the smell of frying foods and every second shop sells T-shirts with raunchy slogans. A company called Transports Laberge has engaged three platinum-haired women on the far side of 60 to flog its car-ferrying service, and kitted them out in red hot pants, midriff tops and high heels.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Boorstin, "From Traveler to Tourist," in *Hidden History*, 303, 304; MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1976), 11, 14, 15; Urry, *Consuming Places* (London, 1995), 133, 138, 139.

⁹⁹ Mitchell Smyth, "Offbeat USA," *Toronto Star*, 19 June 1993, B1; Key West is "90 miles from Cuba and far enough offshore from the mainland to resist the Chick'n N Grits, the Gator Worlds, the glitz and the kitsch that infests the rest of Florida like some fungal blight": Arthur Black, "Escaping Winter's Grip," *The Windsor Star*, 4 March 1991, A6; Barbara Shea, "St. Augustine: Old-world Charm in the Kitsch Capital of Northern Florida," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 1992, H3; Barbara Kay, "A Mecca of Sun, Surf ...and Spam," *National Post*, 3 March 2003, A14; Mitchell Smyth, "'Handle' Offers Taste of Deep South," *Toronto Star*, 4 March 2004, J1; Janice Bradbeer, "Everglades Swamped with Excitement," *Toronto Star*, 4 March 2004, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Stephanie Nolen, "La Floride, c'est comme chez nous," *Globe and Mail*, 15 March 1999.

This depiction is a rare case of English Canadians mocking French Canadian snowbirds. At worst it demonstrates the peculiarity of Floribec, but at best it means that parts of the Toronto intelligentsia also needed some scapegoat to assert their distinction, and saw in Québécois *pepsi* a meaningful target.

New York City tongue-lashings of Florida were proportionately less numerous but less forgiving than Canada's. One *New York Times* writer depicted Florida in 1990 as "a state singularly free of romantic delusions and, indeed, proud of the speed with which it has beaten the bleak industrial states at their own blight." Later, the satirical magazine *SPY* ranked Florida the second-most annoying state: "like California, only tackier and more culturally destitute."¹⁰¹ In the most advanced displays of ironic sophistication, journalists, fashionistas and decorators cited Florida as the capital of kitsch, where the new postmodern taste found inspiration, where the true avant-garde could indulge in the ironic enjoyment of its insider's taste for refined camp.

To be fair, most of these accounts appeared on the travel pages and were trying to steer the readers away from kitsch and toward a "natural" or "authentic" – often pricier – Florida destination. Also, the premium placed on humor and wit in journalistic writing pushed the writers to craft ironic, caricatured formulas, built around the iconic Florida images that were best known to their readers. In other words, these statements about Florida were less about the real Florida than about their authors' uneasy participation, as members of the intelligentsia, in mass culture and consumerism. Florida, for them, could

¹⁰¹ "singularly free of romantic delusions": Russell Baker, "Among the Gators," *NYT*, 28 February 1990, A27; *Spy* magazine quoted by David Grimes, "No. 2 Whines Harder," in *Tourists, Retirees, and Other Reasons to Stay in Bed* (Sarasota, 2000), 64-66; Ada L. Huxtable, "Show Offers 'Joy' of Hotel Architecture," *NYT* (15 October 1970), 60; Steve Dougherty, "In Florida, Can 1950's Motels Become Hip Enough to Survive?," *NYT*, 5 March 2004, F1; Robert W. Tolf, "Florida: Escape to the Backbone," *NYT*, 12 December 1976, sect. XX:1; Francine Prose, "Splashy, Flashy Miami," *NYT*, 1 March 1992, sect. TST:15; Judith Anderson, "Seeking the Offbeat, Untrendy Florida," *NYT*, 6 April 2003, sect. TR:6.

be used as a caricature of late-modern dystopia, a rhetorical device by which they could point out, and with luck quarantine, the worst of late modern culture. These kinds of statements became increasingly numerous by the 1970s, as the elite critique of consumerism grew more strident in response to inflation (too much current demand) and stagnant real incomes (reduced future demand).

More of the putdowns emanated from Canada than from the American Northeast, because Florida was for the Canadian intelligentsia a caricature of the American mass culture that threatened Canadian identity. A large proportion of these statements emanated from Québec as well, apparently because Québec's elites found Florida and its iconography a necessary Other for the mid-Atlantic, faux European Québécois they were seeking to create. Not that Québec was altogether different: the dynamics of consumerism and mass culture were forcing the intelligentsia in every modernizing society to establish distinctions between the unacceptable – standardization and homogeneity – and the desirable – authenticity and cosmopolitanism without harm to identity and individual rights. Yet it would appear that Québec's elites, effectively fighting on two fronts, against assimilating, modernizing forces from both English Canada and the United States, were more committed (or desperate) than most to define and protect what was best in their provincial culture. Either that or that the laidback, irreverent culture of late modern Québec led people to believe that they could, as in a family, instruct each other on decorum.

Whichever the case, scorn for Florida and snowbirds became a feature of Québec life. In Québec's cinematography, Florida was represented at best as an escape from a northern normalcy: a flight from work, from winter, from normal mores and morals, towards an easier, leisurely, warmer lifestyle, and a naughtier, possibly a more sexually

satisfying, time. Often, however, Florida stood as a negative metaphor of Québécois modernity: travel to Florida meant cultural impoverishment, American cultural colonialism, conspicuous consumption, a suspect longing for social mobility, and a renunciation of Québécois identity. As for literature, Berthold Mâchefer and Abel Beauchemin, the two main characters of Victor-Lévy Beaulieu's novel *Oh Miami* fled normalcy, witnessed cultural poverty, and refined in unexpected ways their understanding of America by going to Florida.¹⁰² Both men lived unexpected and liminal experiences, sexually and creatively, amidst the "kétainerie" of North Miami Beach, away from the constraints of "home."

Robert and Linda Gratton, the main characters of *Elvis Gratton* (shot between 1981 and 1985, released that latter year), are monstrous caricatures of the Americanized, right-wing, ignorant and culturally destitute Québécois that Pierre Falardeau, the screenwriter-director of this cult movie, blamed for the May 1980 defeat of Québécois separatism. For the Grattons, Florida is the "normal" destination of their winter trips: they hate winter, they have visited Florida on numerous occasions, and when Robert wins an Elvis Presley impersonating contest, he is rewarded with a trip for two to the Caribbean dictatorship of Santa Banana. The Grattons find the island too exotic for their taste: they say that hotel rooms are cleaner, better in Florida. Although the movie is not set in Florida, tropical vistas, beach scenes, and plenty of dialogue establish the Sunshine State at the main sun-and-fun reference of the characters. The director takes advantage of this tropical location to editorialize about patronizing tourists, unaware of, and insensitive to, the natives' plight. Worse, Gratton is a crypto-fascist: while nursing a sunburn in his hotel room, he watches

¹⁰² Beaulieu, *Oh Miami*.

the Dictator of Santa Banana, Augusto Ricochet, a caricature of a Latin America military tyrant played by a dwarf, deliver a pro-American television speech. Seeing this, Gratton expresses his admiration for this strong man: at least this politician knows what he wants and how to get it. Upon their return home, the Grattons attend a pool party where they meet pretty, wealthy Yvette Nault, who boasts of her stay at a California health spa. Yvette's wealth and destination casts in sharper contrast the mediocrity of the Florida-loving Grattons.¹⁰³ Illustration 8.1 is a frame from *Elvis Gratton*, with Robert and Linda enjoying the sunshine on a Santa Banana beach, while listening to a baseball game they taped on the radio. Québec's intelligentsia would immediately notice Robert's Maple Leaf shorts, and Linda's hat and boombox.

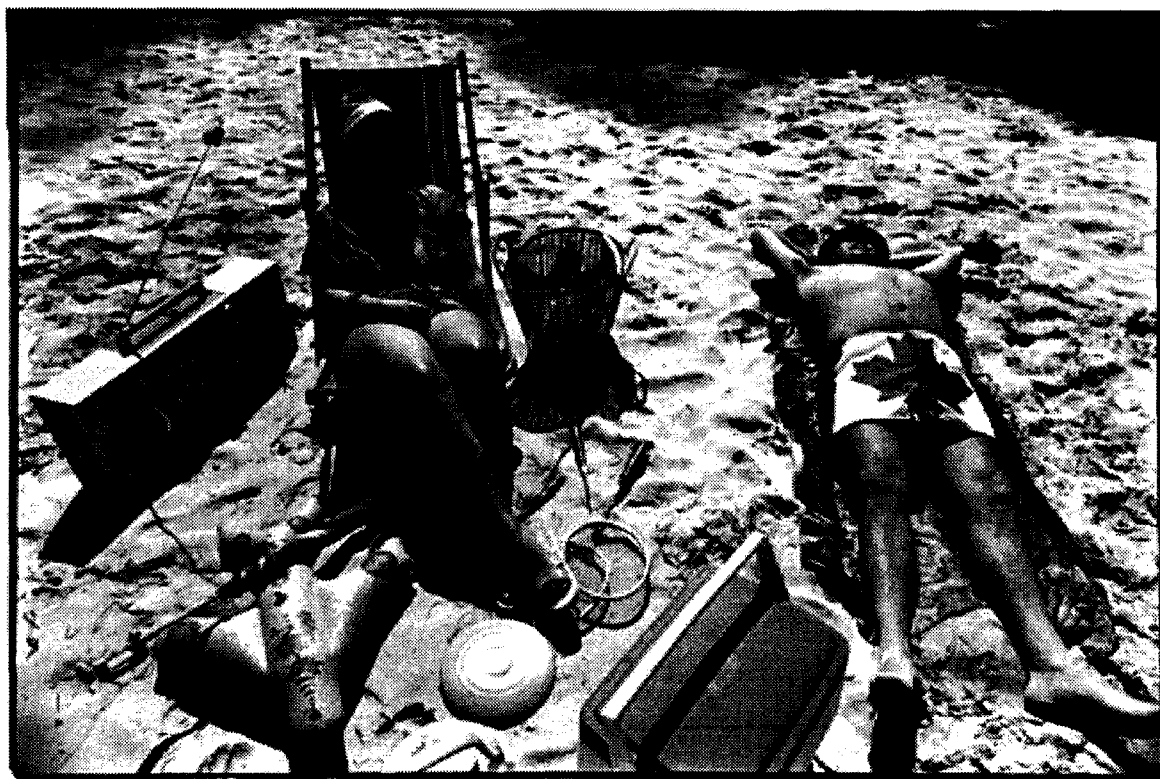


Illustration 8.1: Linda and Robert Gratton, on a Santa Banana Beach. Source: director's website, www.pierrefalardeau.com (retrieved August 2006).

¹⁰³ Pierre Falardeau, *Elvis Gratton: Le King des Kings* (Québec, 1985), 100 min. The segments in Santa Banana and with Yvette Nault were shot respectively in 1983 and 1985; Poitras, *Boîte Noire, Guide Vidéo et DVD 2002* (Montréal, 2001), 121, 161, 374, 623.

Le Crime d'Ovide Plouffe (1984), directed by Denys Arcand, is set in a working-class Québec City neighborhood during the 1950s. Ovide is accused of bombing a passenger airplane, allegedly to kill his cheating wife. At the end of the film, when an exonerated Ovide goes to Paris to meet a lover, his travel agent warns him about France. Their toilets are awful, she says, so why not go to Florida instead? Comic legend Dominique Michel fittingly plays the travel agent: in the early 1980s, she had been Air Canada's poster woman in Québec, in ads for its "sun" destinations. Moreover, this actress, an heir to the vaudeville-burlesque crowd still active in Floribec, was known for her year-round suntan, gained in frequent visits to Florida.¹⁰⁴

In *La ligne de chaleur*, directed by Hubert-Yves Rose (1988), a three-generational, father-son conflict is illustrated by the divergent values of the two elders: the late grandfather was a hedonist who, hating winter, had fled to Florida. His exuberance stands in sharp contrast with the sullen cheerlessness of his son Gabriel, a baby-boomer intellectual and depressive, who can be cheered neither by his own eight-years-old son nor by the Florida sun. On their way back from Florida after repatriating Grandpa's body, an elderly American met in a roadside hotel takes the boy to a theme park, which triggers another father-son crisis – for Gabriel, life is not a frolic in the sun, to the child's dismay. In this film, Hubert-Yves Rose pitilessly depicted a midlife crisis much like some that he had witnessed in his own milieu (aged 42 at the time of release, he was teaching at a Montréal university); he thus pictured Florida as a rebuke to his main character's repressed hedonism, thereby putting into sharp contrast the Québec intelligentsia's dead-seriousness with the *joie de vivre* of everyone else. Another mid-life crisis in Florida surfaced in

¹⁰⁴ Denys Arcand, *Le crime d'Ovide Plouffe* (Québec, 1984), 107 min.

Moody Beach (1990), a film by Richard Roy. In it, a man in his forties fled to Florida in a red convertible in an effort to escape social and sexual norms. The contempt of the film's creators for Florida becomes evident when the man, upon his arrival in the Sunshine State, finds relief in the arms of a young ...European woman.¹⁰⁵

In the comedy *La Florida* (1998), Léo Lespérance escapes a harsh winter and the yoke of a steady job by buying a motel in Hollywood Beach. There his family encounters a series of comical crises that are resolved, not by their talent for pursuing their American Dream and managing their small business, but by their love and loyalty for their family unit and their ethnic roots (both of them being embodied in the character of Grandpa). In the scenario-ending plot reversal, Grandpa finds out that young Carmen Lespérance's American beau, Jay Lamori, is in fact "un de nous-autres," being from a once-Franco-American family. By this narrative twist, the character that earnestly embodied the American Dream all along becomes part of the family, in a fashion that smells of nostalgia for the French North American diaspora, or for the French Empire in America. However the main message of *La Florida* is that the American Dream must not be pursued at the expense of loved ones (or of ethnic solidarity), making this movie more about the threats of modernity to traditional identities than about cultural impoverishment. To drive home the authenticity of the Lespérance and their Floribécois entourage, *La Florida* relies heavily on the comical repertoire of Québec's lowbrow culture: slurred and *joual* language, slapstick-like tongue-lashings, and *kétaine* mores. The film even makes a good-

¹⁰⁵ Richard Roy, *Moody Beach* (Québec, 1990), 94 min; Hubert-Yves Rose, *La ligne de chaleur* (Québec, 1987), 90 min; Claude Racine and André Roy, "Entretien avec Hubert-Yves Rose" and "La Ligne du risque," *24 Images* 39-40 (Fall 1988): 40, 42 44; Léo Bonneville, "La Ligne de chaleur," *Séquences* 137 (November 1988): 62.

natured reference to the *XS* controversy by featuring a montage – with loud rock music for ironic effect – of pot-bellied beach dwellers.¹⁰⁶

Arguably, *La Florida* and *Elvis Gratton* were inspired by an earlier Québécois movie. Aired in 1958 on television, a vaudeville play titled *La famille Plouffe en Floride*, sent the iconic Plouffe family and their friend the Père Gédéon (*père* meaning patriarch here) to Florida. Gédéon triggered memorable laughter when he showed up on the beach in his fur coat to engage in maladroit girl watching – a lazzi borrowed by Robert Gratton in the 1985 film.¹⁰⁷

Turning from cinema to music, sociologist Yves Claudé saw a creeping class struggle at work in the scorn showed against country music by Québec's intelligentsia; arguably, the scorn against country is similar to the representations of Florida in Québécois movies. This musical genre, as we have seen, is widely appreciated among snowbirds in Florida, and among RV dwellers in Québec. While a few scholars and intellectuals saw in Québécois country music the manifestation of a continental element in Québec culture (*l'américanité*), to Claudé, the intelligentsia's conspicuous aversion to country music is an avatar of the muted class struggles taking place in the Belle Province.¹⁰⁸ Florida plays a similarly negative role as country music in the worldview of the Québec intelligentsia.

¹⁰⁶ George Mikhalka, *La Florida* (Québec, 1993), 115 min; Léonce Gaudreault, "La Florida: Une banale succession de clichés," *Le Soleil*, 13 March 1993, G3; Huguette Roberge, "Rémy Girard réalise le rêve de Léo Lespérance," *La Presse*, 6 March 1995, D1; Mario Cloutier, "La Florida," *Séquences* 164 (May 1993): 51, 52; Roger Hurlburt, "Dumpy Motel is Stuff of One Family's Dream," *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 13 November 1993, 3D.

¹⁰⁷ *La famille Plouffe* was a pioneering TV drama aired from 1953 onwards on the Société Radio-Canada network (the French CBC). Jean Beaunoyer, "Doris Lussier: Homme de coeur et homme d'esprit (1918-1993)," *La Presse*, 29 October 1993, C1.

¹⁰⁸ Yves Claudé, "Le country-western au Québec: structures sociales et symboliques," in *Les Hauts et les bas de l'imaginaire western dans la culture médiatique*, eds. Paul Bleton and Richard Saint-Germain (Montréal, 1997); Catherine Lefrançois, "Country Québec," *Voir* (Montréal), 29 September 2005; Jacques Languirand, "Le Québec et l'américanité," *Études Littéraires* 8 (April 1975): 154-157.

The snobbery of the elites is a constant reminder that Québec, like the rest of North America, is a class society, its apparent classlessness a result of a casual, egalitarian, meritocratic ethos, and a civic culture that values social mobility more than community. In Québec however, egalitarianism is more entrenched than elsewhere in North America in ideology, perhaps as a result of the historical importance of the rural, Catholic mores that prevailed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These contributed mightily to French Canadian identity and to Québec's particular brand of modernity – with its, among other elements, anticlericalism, statism, boosterism (to the point of militant blindness to the weaknesses of the homegrown product), and relatively indolent work ethic. Louis Hartz and Gad Horowitz even ventured that Québec's brand of egalitarianism originated from its feudal heritage.¹⁰⁹ The origins of nation, egalitarianism, and modernity remain a hotly debated topic in today's Québec, the historical profession included.¹¹⁰ Yves Claudé has argued that class struggles, inevitable even in egalitarian societies, are often muffled by the egalitarian ethos. As a result, they are displaced to the field of culture, where the elite can broadcast its taste and distinction. This struggle, for the intelligentsia, has become all the more necessary since the 1970s, because most of them have embraced American culture and pop iconography – even some elements of country-western culture – while rejecting many of the French, elite, academic elements of high culture that prevailed in Québec until the 1970s. Thus, as the intelligentsia has "descended" closer to the lower forms of popular culture, it has become necessary to enforce ever-finer distinctions in

¹⁰⁹ Louis Hartz, "American Historiography and Comparative Analysis: Further Reflections," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (July 1963): 369; G. Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism, and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 32 (May 1966): 155.

¹¹⁰ See for instance: Joseph-Yvon Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité*, 265 et al.; Gilles Bourque, "Traditional Society, Political Society and Quebec Sociology, 1945-1980," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 26 (1989): 394-425; Brigitte Faivre-Duboz, "Seuils de la modernité: 'Trente arpents' et 'Bonheur d'occasion,'" *Québec Studies* 32 (2001): 71-8.

order to distinguish the social classes. In other words, when the elite stops wearing suits to dinner, it can become obsessed with the pattern of the diners' shirts. When the Québec elite stopped talking like clerics and cherishing France, they became obsessed with details such as the way to pronounce the "a" vowel, the use of profanity and swearing (whether to say "merde" or "calice," and how often), the appropriate television channel (Radio-Canada or Télé-Métropole?), radio station (definitely not CKAC and CHOI), or newspaper (*La Presse* or *Le Journal*? – meanwhile, the few readers of *Le Devoir* contemptuously looked down on the others), or music (Ginette Reno or Diane Dufresne?).¹¹¹ The class-struggle nature of this obsession with good taste was obvious even to the bottom end of the cultural scale, and so deeply resented; indeed, the Montréal intelligentsia's media and cultural icons were conspicuously loathed by the talk-radio, blue-collar subculture in small-town Québec and not-so-small Québec City, as they also began, at the turn of the twenty-first century, to vote against the candidates proposed by the federalist and sovereignist elites. In an instance more redolent of Floribec culture, when the organizers of Eastern Canada's biggest country music event, the Festival Western de Saint-Tite, refused to schedule some of Montréal's country singers and bands, one Montréal promoter understood the refusal as if Saint-Tite people "were scared that we'd laugh at them." As if the lighthearted, humorous country songs created by young Montréal musicians were new, cruel ways for the elite to mock the old-school, small-town folk.¹¹²

Perhaps more comfortable in their own skins, some members of the Québécois intelligentsia represented wintering in Florida in a sympathetic fashion. True, Florida remained in their creations a place of hedonistic escapism; but this Florida Dream did not

¹¹¹ Claudé; Lefrançois.

per se alienate its seekers. Better, some of these unashamed sun-seekers even managed to retain and refine a critical distance with the Dream. Thus Onésime, the small-town pensioner created by Albert Chartier for a *Bulletin des agriculteurs* cartoon in November 1943, often took sun-and-sand vacations in Florida, Maine, and Cuba. Although he enjoyed watching pretty girls on the beach, Onésime generally laid on the United States a no-nonsense, critical gaze that stood in contrast with the admiration of his wife Zénoïde and the patriotic pride of his Franco-American niece. On a crowded beach, Onésime thus commented: "we'd be better off on a beach by one of our lakes back home."¹¹³

8.6 Florida is for Rich People

Not all the French-Canadians who wintered in Florida were regarded as contemptibly poor or crass. Some were contemptibly rich: the rich and powerful Québécois who went to Florida could be branded as pro-American traitors by left-wingers and nationalists, especially amidst the class warfare of the late 1960s and 1970s. In the 1970 manifesto of the *Front de libération du Québec* it was suggested to everywoman "Madame Lemay de St-Hyacinthe" that there were many reasons why she could not afford "trips to Florida, unlike the dirty judges and Members of Parliament do with our

¹¹² The Festival takes place each September in Central Québec, northeast of Trois-Rivières, in 2006 it held its 39th edition. Lefrançois.

¹¹³ Onésime: notably "Vive nos hivers Québécois," *Le Bulletin des agriculteurs* (February 1957); Old Orchard: "Plaisirs de la plage" (July 1958); Onésime critical of dances imported from the U.S.: "Un pied-denez aux USA" (January 1963); Onésime collection found in Canadian digital collections, in cooperation with the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec: collections.ic.gc.ca/onesime/ (retrieved April 2006); Gilles G. Lamontagne, "Berthe et Rose en Floride," *La Presse*, 30 July 1990, B4. In the 1980s, actors-authors Gérard Poirier and Guy Fournier each wrote a play representing the comical misadventures of Québécois in Florida, much like *La Florida* did. Fournier: Louise Cousineau, "Les Héritiers Duval sera un téléroman pour adultes," *La Presse*, 14 December 1994, C1; Gérard Poirier, *Berthe et Rose en Floride*, comedy created in 1982, found on the website of Québec's Playwrights Association: www.aqad.qc.ca (retrieved April 2006).

money."¹¹⁴ Here travel to Florida was used to illustrate Québec's class struggle. Victor-Lévy Beaulieu took up this argument in his *Oh Miami* novel. On a cruise around Biscayne Bay, when a group of Québécois passengers admired the surrounding villas, Beaulieu's *alter ego* ruminated against "the overwhelming power of capitalism." Then, when he learned that one of these big houses belonged to the in-laws of the provincial Premier, Abel Beauchemin grumbled that "we can't go anywhere without hearing about these damned faces."¹¹⁵

This discourse had a parallel in English Canada, albeit in a more muted fashion. As seen earlier, the elite sellouts to American capitalism were, in English Canada, the Prime ministers, Premiers, and ministers who went south on vacation amidst the tourism balance deficit crisis of the 1970s-1980s.

Nonetheless, almost uniquely for North America, "Florida" was used in Québec as a weapon of class struggle. Québec intelligentsia used Florida to condemn popular taste and to fret about the ambiguous rewards of social and geographic mobility. On rare occasions, Florida-the-metaphor also appeared in socialist rhetoric against Québec's upper class. Why so infrequently? Because left-wing Florida did not sit well with the anti-Americanism of the Left. In other words, an American state could not be used to reproach the Catholic Church, the capitalist State, or the bourgeoisie of Montréal, Toronto, and New York. After all, it was difficult to make much use of Florida as a *bête noire* when the real one (from a

¹¹⁴ "des petits voyages en Floride comme le font avec notre argent tous les sales juges et députés": "Le manifeste du FLQ," *La Presse*, 6 October 1990, B3.

¹¹⁵ "Toute la puissance exacerbante du capitalisme qu'on vous jette dans les yeux et que vous êtes trop caves pour comprendre. »

— La maison de Messieurs les Simard, Sorel, Canada !

Et discrètement le bateau s'était remis à glisser sur les eaux, les ostis ! les ostis ! disait Longs Cheveux. C'est rendu qu'on peut plus aller nulle part sans entendre parler de ces maudites faces !": Beaulieu, 160, 161.

socialist perspective) was the bronze bull on Wall Street. It was there, not Florida, that the Québec bourgeoisie was said to worship its idols.

True, there were people in every province who depicted Florida snowbirds and tourists as deserters. In both Canada and Québec, nationalists, worried as always by the threat posed by the American Dream, claimed to see in travel to the United States – and in the unease with winter embodied in travel to Florida – a clear warning of the disappearance of national cultural autonomy and national identity. Thus there was relatively little in the way of class struggle in most of the Canadian discourse on Florida.

Like the Canadian bourgeoisie, most tourists and snowbirds eventually traveled back north, leaving their Dream and going back to a less pleasant reality. The bourgeois returnees still had to cope with the Canadian model of taxes and regulation, while snowbirds could not escape a few cold spells and flurries in the early spring and late fall. Iconic dream-places like Miami Beach, Orlando or Tampa Bay beamed their meaning throughout their cultural hinterland, which has long included Central Canada. In the north, the meaning could be appropriated and transformed by everybody, snowbird or not. Was Canadian winter finally conquered because of Florida?

In sum, Florida was a potent metaphor for Canadian and Québécois dislike of winter, for their identity insecurities, for their ideological debates about Canada's relationship with the United States, for the alienating modernity that the US seemed to portend, for the elite's response to mass culture, and finally, for the ways in which economic liberalism (free markets) was seen by different segments of the Canadian public. Canadians' statements about Florida thus were often negative, even alarmist.

In other words, the Canadian discourse on snowbirds constitutes a part of a folklore of Canadianism. It speaks to the problems of being a minority in North America (or within

Canada) and of sleeping next to the American elephant. No matter how easy it is to travel through, no matter how friendly, or familiar (and arguably *because* of its familiarity), the United States in this discourse stands as an eternal *Other*. Thus what snowbirds state about life in Florida, and what Canadians say about snowbirds and Florida tells us more about the commentators than about the would-be Eden. It has been through those speech-acts that they have pursued their collective conversation about what Canadians and Québécois should cope with America. Thus Florida has been an important icon and node of meaning for Canadian folk identity and continental awareness. This usage has been Florida's primary influence on Canada.

While ideology is often impervious to experience, folklore is a constant learning experience. It provides a platform for the bottom-up construction of worldview, shared understanding, and identity. What is special about folk culture and folkish worldviews is their ability to reframe institutional discourses through the agency of anybody, no matter how elite or lowly. That does not mean that a single meaning emerges: we have seen that the folklore of the Canadian and Québécois intelligentsia has been far more critical of Florida than has been the snowbirds'. Yet snowbirds have remained Canadian or Québécois in their own folkways and lore, thereby acting like a Diaspora, like a classic migrant community. To an extent, because of their obdurate visibility but mostly because of the imaginative use of their repertoires of identity, snowbirds have been active *agents* of identity-building in both Florida and Canada, as well as in the communities on the roadways between them.

CONCLUSION

Goodbye North, Hello South
It's so cold up here that the words freeze in your mouth
I'm going to Florida, where I can have my fun
Where I can lie out in the green grass and look up at the sun

Clarence Williams and Bessie Smith
"Florida-Bound Blues," 1925

As snowbirds flew back home to share with their fellow Northerners what they had learned in the South and along southbound roads, they *drove home*, to the Northern consciousness, the principal meaning of Florida and the South since the 1940s (at least until the infamous affair of the hanging chads and butterfly ballots). Chapter 8 has shown us that these meanings were important to the self-understanding of Northerners: the long shadows cast by Florida royal palms extended all the way to the Great Lakes, Adirondacks, and St. Lawrence River valley where they were seen as delineating changes in the local culture, identity, and topophilia of the American Northeast and Midwest, and of Ontario and Québec.

There were good reasons for seeing Florida as an increasingly important state and cultural force. Florida, with more than 18 million people, has become the fourth most populated state, apparently destined soon to surpass the Empire State of New York. With population will come influence, as already seen in the disputed election of 2000. The Sunshine State's many immigrants – international, interstate, retired, and snowbird –

promise to make it an internationally recognized barometer for the highs and lows of an ageing, browning, modernizing North America.

This thesis began by asking "Why Florida?" Or more exactly, "What made Florida so desirable that it has enjoyed, since 1945, more rapid population growth than the Northern states and central Canadian provinces?" The answer, we found, lay in the Florida Dream. Its construction drew upon a stock of Edenic, exotic, escapist desires and images that have existed since Antiquity. It started to draw people to the state, as migrants and tourists, in the late nineteenth century, taking advantage of the cultural and technological changes that John Kasson identified as promoting Coney Island: especially transportation technology and the new "spectacular, irreverent" culture. As the expanding rail network bore travelers ever deeper into the Sunshine State, that culture found its expression on Florida's beaches, in its architecture and commercial attractions, and in the visitors' leisurely lifestyle.

The desires and images of the "Florida Dream" were firmly rooted in the landscape of the state – in its tropical foliage, beaches, exotic and threatening beasts – as well as in the desire for leisurely, outdoor pursuits in a comfortable climate. These desires and images gained increased and widespread appeal with the rise of a consumer culture at the turn of the Twentieth Century. These desires and images were not transposed from California, Hollywood or the Disney Empire. Although the Florida and California dreams involved similar images and thrived on similar desires, there was a unique quality to the Florida Dream and to the Florida icons, almost inevitably so, in light of the state's natural assets as the only subtropical "paradise" in either Canada or the United States. Moreover, Florida's dreamworks existed in the nineteenth century, decades before the founding of

Hollywood. The Florida Dream was, even so, derivative from a repertoire of deep-seated myths and worldviews that anteceded – indeed provoked – the American experiment.

We have seen how Florida promoters translated these ancient desires and images into a beacon of publicity that they beamed to Northerners, offering the state as an exotic, affordable diversion from the pain and grind of winter, the workaday world, and the sexual constraints of "home." This message did not grow naturally from the soil. It was not borne effortlessly by the wind. Purpose-built, Florida and its dream were as much social constructs as Disney's Main Street.

Floridians were not constructing in social isolation. Northerners injected the Florida "dreamscape" (as Ray Arsenault has called it) with their own aspirations. Indeed, the state's key promoters were Northerners: Henry Flagler, Carl Fisher, Steve Hannagan, Richard Pope, Hank Meyer, and Harold Gardner. They embraced the spectacular pop culture that emerged from the late nineteenth century onwards, with its reliance on *cheesecake* (pictures of scantily clothed females), sporting events, and the spectacle of wealth and power, to make the dreamscape more appealing to fellow males. They appreciated that people came to exotic Florida to pursue – or witness – activities that were characterized by norm-reversal and a carnivalesque redefinition of time and place, in which routine, discipline, and duty are temporarily suspended. *Fun* was to be the most serious pursuit allowed – in sharp and necessary contrast with the pious earnestness of the dominant culture of nineteenth-century America.

This way to define travel and tourism as structurally opposed to "normal" social life bears the risk to treat objects in those fields as exotic categories with little relevance to the "normal" realms of work, family, home, and community. As demonstrated in Chapters 3, 4, 6, and 7,

The Florida Dream tightened its hold on the North American imagination in the 1920s, and even more dramatically after 1945, as improvements in transportation and communication made Florida increasingly visible and accessible. The population of the Midwestern and Northeastern metropolises (Montréal and Toronto included) found they could easily and cheaply partake of Florida. Even had there been no jet revolution, the postwar period would have witnessed a surge of Florida tourism thanks to the automobile, its route to the sun facilitated by municipal bypasses, state-sponsored turnpikes and Interstates. As we have seen, Florida-bound drivers elaborated a mythology, a folklore of southbound roadscapes, that resonated all the way back home: the mammoth freeways and traffic jams of Northern metropolises, fried chicken, country music, cotton fields, and threatening traffic cops. This folklore evolved in the shadow of the mythology of westward trails, railways and roads; yet it arguably had an independent life of its own, quite autonomous from Westward ho!

Along southbound roads, travelers elaborated a folk knowledge of North American roads and landscapes – a mythology redolent of the *Odyssey*, in that it was a plot set in the timespace of travel, of a journey; in that it had as many authors as there were narrators; and in that it was a collective conversation on myth, ethics, and folklore. On southbound roads, sun-seekers encountered Sirens, for instance in country songs that rhymed eloquently of the Call of the road – country music being more a *Southern* than western genre. On southbound roads they feasted on unfamiliar local fare: citrus fruit, chicken, pecans, hominy grits, boiled peanuts, in places like truck stops, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Stuckey's, Saxon, Red Lobster or Hooters, now familiar names because they eventually accompanied Northerners on their return journey. Down South in Florida, Northerners thought they had found a Land of Lotus-Eaters, where people seemed to lead happier,

slower-paced, carefree existences – a place that travelers were reluctant to leave. The southbound saw plenty of Scylla and Charybdis in the threats and menaces of the roads, including speed traps and southern policemen. And those that came back found their beloved hometowns and homelands, like so many Penelopes, courted by chauvinist, nationalist suitors that were telling to everyone around that Odysseus had either died, or chosen not to come back.

This knowledge of the roadscapes stood for more than the geographic erudition of travelers – not a negligible achievement either, in the land of the restless. It participated in the shaping of their identity as Northerners, in their construction of a Southern Other and, for Canadians, of an American Other. (Some Western Ontarians may also have met their first live "French Canadian" in Florida.) It also was integrated in their view of modernity, wherein the experience of moving through the continent, of constructing and maintaining social networks over long distances, of visiting roadside businesses, of sightseeing cultural icons, regional differences and other peculiarities of the roadside landscape, merged into an understanding of modern ways that was both critical and participative. As travelers made negative comments on the ugliness, commercialization and standardization of roadside landscapes, they participated in the creation of folk knowledge of the good and the bad in mobility and modernity. This knowledge allowed the average sun quester to critique and partake in modern culture. Indeed, the journey gave a (modern) sense of freedom – of being able to discriminate, to pick and choose, between the offerings of modernity because it was more smorgasbord than fixed menu. Some of the fare of the late modern traveler to Florida was five-star: with a minimum level of curiosity and knowledge, the Florida-bound traveler could better understand and experience almost directly the Civil War (on the battlefields or at Stone Mountain), Florida's teeming

ecosystems, the vibrant life of antebellum southern cities, the economic structure and history of the South and Florida. If some of the items on the traveler's menu were of the fixed-menu type (predictable, cheap, low in value, like at KFC), the consumers nonetheless learned of – and benefited from – the conveniences of standardization – rationalization, as Max Weber would have it – in late modernity. In other words, these products and images were "a real service of life," as Marxist historian Raymond Williams argued¹: cheap and convenient, empowering people to move around in ways that many travelers had never experienced before venturing south. One did not have to be a scholar or an intellectual to comprehend modernity and to appropriate it: it was there to be experienced as a round trip to Florida.

The folk knowledge of the Florida-bound did not merely help to strike a balance between, on one side, the traveler's striving for authenticity and distinctiveness, and on the other, the freedom and comfort found in the consumption of standardized roadside services. "Sneering at theme parks"² impaired the understanding of scholars: although Daniel Boorstin drew a sharp, disapproving distinction between the experiences of the Victorian traveler and the modern tourist, the journey to Florida suggests that roadscape folklore often reconciled folk authenticity and mass-produced comfort. The experience of the journey did not merely allow a series of uneasy trade-offs between Boorstin's traveler and Dean MacCannell's tourist, between the pilgrim and the sightseer, between fresh orange juice and Pepsi, or between the Everglades and Disney. Rather, this folklore often *fused* authenticity with consumption: in moving through the roadside landscape, people

¹ Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," in *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, eds. Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan (London, 1993), 10.

² This happy formula was suggested by Patrick Wright, quoted by Jon Goss, "Disquiet on the Waterfront: Reflections on Nostalgia and Utopia in the Urban Archetypes of Festival Marketplaces," *Urban Geography* 17 (April 1996): 222.

experienced the coherent cohabitation of two of the desires most commonly expressed in modern culture – authenticity and comfort. This is coherent with MacCannell's view:

Spuriousness drives everyone out of domestic and ethnic niches and minds into the modern world in search for a real experience: the Big Time. The individual then returns to a daily existence which is an increasingly complex elaboration of images of reality elsewhere, or an increasingly compelling reason to leave again to search for authenticity.³

In Florida, Beach areas best exemplified this reconciliation of a dichotomy (reconciling the authentic sea with transportation technology); it was also at work in the small commercial attractions showcasing Florida (authentic alligators, snakes, dolphins and semitropical gardens, enjoyed in a manufactured landscape) and in game fishing (a hunter-gatherer's practice, with a little help from technology). As anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner suggested in 1978: "A tourist is half a pilgrim, a pilgrim is half a tourist."⁴ Thus a journey to Florida, thanks to its mythical status, made the Sunshine State as a kind of "spiritual centre" of the Western world. In other words, to understand modern times, one had to experience Florida. Certainly, by the 1970s many foreigners thought it closer to the quintessential meaning of the "American Century" than the corroding cities of the rust belt.

Florida and Community

Did the snowbirds change Florida? Yes and no. Yes because they participated in the flood of tourists over the Sunshine State since the late nineteenth century. Yes because they formed a great part of the room renters (since the nineteenth century), of the mobile home buyers (since the 1940s) and of condo dwellers (since the 1960s). Yes because

³ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1976), 151.

snowbirds provided the perfect scapegoat when Floridians started to feel, *circa* 1968, that there must be more to Florida than tourism. Since then, snowbirds and other tourists have been used for constructing a common understanding of modern Florida *for Floridians*, by castigating snowbirds and tourists for their rudeness, arrogance, leisurely carelessness, bad driving, and self-segregation. They were, in short, the "other" by which Floridians measured their own social progress. Snowbirds were a conveniently benign symbol of social fragmentation for Floridians, which many held to be responsible for the state's decline of "social capital," a social science term denoting the sum of resources available to individuals and groups, arising from "social networks, systems of reciprocal relations, sets of norms, or levels of trust."⁵ Through criticism of snowbirds and tourists, Floridians started to construct, by the late 1960s, a shared repertoire of good driving, of civism, and an ethics for life in the Sunshine State that allowed them to feel more at home in spite of their growth problems, social fragmentation, and boosterist civic culture. By questioning the goodness of snowbirds', retired migrants' and tourist's presence, Floridians took a few steps towards becoming a better civic polity and community.

So far these steps have not been large ones. Florida is still known as much for its weak social capital as its strong realty capital. In *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam put the fragmented Sunshine State near the bottom of the states in terms of social capital; he has not been alone in this assessment⁶. Hence, the snowbirds and tourists, whether welcomed or shunned, have not revolutionized Florida. But some progress has been made: because

⁴ Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford, 1978), 20.

⁵ Definition in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (New York, 1996); Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, "Understanding the American Decline in Social Capital, 1952-1998," *Kyklos* 56 (2003): 40, 41.

⁶ Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000), 298, 300; Anil Rupasingha, Stephan J. Goetz and David Freshwater, "The Production of Social Capital in US Counties," *Journal of Socio-Economics* 35 (February 2006).

of tourism's outsized impact, Floridians have coalesced in their support for environmental protection and have embraced international migration because it has brought the young families essential to (most) community-building. In response, as we saw in chapters 2 and 5, Florida's local and state governments *moved away from tourism* and population growth as priorities in the 1970s-1990s.

Snowbirds also influenced Florida more directly, in their above-average practice of volunteering and their keen political awareness. For instance, in a state with a thin social safety net, elderly volunteers have brought needed hope to some of the Sunshine State's poorest people. Elderly migrants also revived the Florida Republicans in the 1950s, while in the 1980s and 1990s, Miami-area retirees kept the Democrats' light flickering in the urban white South. Snowbirds and retired migrants have acted diligently, since the 1960s, to defend mobile housing, the main source of low-cost housing in the state (and probably in the whole United States as well).

Snowbirds have also led by example. Their behavior in snowbird communities, their socializing, their tight networks of mutual help and their careful accumulation of *bonding* social capital amongst people who started off as strangers give hope for the future, unless, as Robert Putnam argues, their behavior owes more to accident of timing than to location. Their oft-noted gregariousness may be simply that of the "long civic generation" born between 1910 and 1940. Putnam claims that these cohorts were fused into a solid block of citizenry by the shared experience of the Depression, the New Deal, World War II, and the early Cold War. They developed into a group of joiners, of active participants in collective institutions.

Admittedly, the snowbird and retired kind of community may be something that only the long civic generation could achieve. Their solidarity may give no promise for the

future of either the state or the continent. When the last of the long civic generation has taken her final ride northward, the gregarious people may become as extinct in Florida as a Pallid beach mouse. It is one possible outcome, but not the most likely one, for the clever use of leisure and identity displays by snowbirds and retired migrants looks to be more rooted in their patch of the Florida dreamscape than the gregarious civism of a single, idiosyncratic generation. In other words, *the snowbird and retired lifestyle is in itself a social-capital machine*. In spite of their migration and humble means, snowbirds have not been hapless, culturally deprived folks, wilting away in the harsh semitropical sun as they deplete a nest egg of social capital carefully earned back North after years of hard work, social networking and amateur bowling. To the contrary, they have developed strong bonds – often life-saving ones – between relative strangers by imaginatively using a repertoire of Edenism, sociability and leisure, identity signs and other modes of self-presentation, and folk knowledge of travel and leisure. Granted, these ways and means do not fit traditional definitions of social capital, as they are leisurely and associated with lifestyle or consumption rather than with production, work, or parenting. Yet their methods *do* create common (social) bonds, ethics, and identity. Moreover, the snowbird lifestyle has fostered a keen awareness of environmental issues, as snowbirds and retired migrants, having chosen Florida for its natural assets, have mobilized against their subsequent degradation. They have, as a result, become integrated into the larger community of environmentalists.

The story of the snowbirds and Florida's sojourners thus reveals how community can be built in advanced modern conditions. Far from being the anomic, atomized individuals that sociologist Louis Wirth feared to be the inevitable product of the urbanization (or modernization) process, snowbirds resemble the prosperous subjects of

William H. Whyte's *Organization Man* – the highly mobile, white-collar people whom he depicted as irrepressible *joiners* in their neighborhood and at work. Whyte's upper-middle-class suburbanites could well have become social isolates who cared only about money and status, if only because of their long working hours and frequent moves. But Whyte's analysis of their neighborhood sociability and network-building⁷ found that they, like our snowbirds, actively built community through *schmoozing*, entertaining, visiting and playing at the neighborhood level. Whyte also found that local geography mattered in neighborhood networks: the links and barriers between houses, footpaths, the width of streets, the size and aggregation of parking spaces could determine to what extent neighbors socialized. Geography had a similar determinism in the lairs of snowbirds, their RV campgrounds, mobile home parks, and condo complexes encouraging a pedestrian lifestyle with its frequent, chance encounters. In fact, the belief that neighborliness is achievable through design is central in the New Urbanism movement⁸, which is beginning to have an impact on Florida's urban landscape, notably in Seaside (Walton County, in the Panhandle), Miami Lakes (Miami-Dade), and Celebration (the Disney town in Osceola County).

The relevance of snowbirds as a model for community-building in late modern North America is limited by their self-segregation along generational, class and ethno-racial lines. This segregation was long in phase with American (and to some degree, Canadian⁹) mores, where it has been imposed by the landscape by developers, planners

⁷ William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Garden City, NY, 1957), 295-404 (part seven).

⁸ For the history of the Chicago-based Congress for the New Urbanism, founded in 1993 by architects Andres Duany and Elisabeth Plater-Zyberk, see their web page www.cnu.org/aboutcnu/index.cfm (Retrieved September 2006). A number of their Florida projects are listed in their "Awards" section.

⁹ Posturing for Canadian distinctiveness aside, and given a difference in degree compared with the United States, the Canadian city was (and is becoming) a segregated place. Robert Lewis, "The Segregated City: Class, Residential Patterns and the Development of Industrial Districts in Montreal, 1861 and 1901,"

and laws, whether zoning ordinances, school assignments, or segregation edicts. It has been less in phase, however, since 1968, the year in which snowbirds secured *formal* segregation through legislation, just as it was being outlawed everywhere else. Yet the amount of *informal* segregation in American and Canadian metropolises, suggests that snowbird communities are not fundamentally different from other neighborhoods. As informal segregationist practices have remained rampant in the fields of housing and real estate, it is not surprising that retirement communities have sorted people out by income, class, race, ethnicity, language, and place of origin through the "visible hand" of market segmentation.

Even though the formal segregation of retirement communities is age-based, snowbird solidarity is not essentially a consequence of old age. Many of the snowbirds' community bonds have been justified by their need to re-root themselves in their new neighborhoods, to rebuild networks of mutual help, and to regain a collective ethos of trust and comfort in a strange land. Snowbird communities are thereby much like big-city, immigrant neighborhoods. The necessities of community-building thus can explain why snowbirds have relied so much on sociability, participative leisure, expressive culture and identity-signs. These *bonding* strategies are similar to those *urban villages* of big-city migrant communities who brought security, belongingness, and friendship to their members, in North American metropolises, as shown by research on the Irish, Chinese, Italians, Jews, South Asians, amongst others.¹⁰

Journal of Urban History 17 (1991): 123-152; James W. Walker, "Allegories and Orientations in African-Canadian Historiography: The Spirit of Africville," *Dalhousie Review* 77 (1997): 155-178; John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montreal, 2003); Michael Doucet and John C. Weaver, *Housing the North American City* (Montreal, 1991); Rosalyn Trigger, "Protestant Restructuring in the Canadian City: Church and Mission in the Industrial Working-Class District of Griffintown, Montreal," *Urban History Review* 31 (Fall 2002).

¹⁰ Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York,

Snowbirds' socializing also recalls another of Putnam's conclusions, one that brings us some hope for future community-building. He observed that another factor of community decline was the decrease in informal, face-to-face sociability, what he insisted on calling *schmoozing*. Similarly, Ray Oldenburg has blamed community decline in recent years on the decline of the Great Good Places, thirdspaces such as the pub, the church, the post office, and other hubs of sociability outside family and work. The lives of the snowbirds contradict both findings: first, they have been avid schmoozers; and second, they have been more than enthusiastic thirdspace patrons, they have been thirdspace *builders*.

Snowbirds and tourists have injected Florida with the casual, neighborly, outdoors, domestically-oriented behavior and ethics that the migrants acquired through, or had reinforced by, cottage and RV living. Most snowbirds learned the mores and ethos of the outdoor life *up North* in cottage country; only afterwards did they come to Florida to pursue the good life all winter long. This fresh-air passion for is another way in which snowbirds have been pushing Floridians to become more outgoing. Indeed, Floridians believe that their visitors seem to crave the outdoors more than they do themselves.

The North

As snowbirds and tourists moved back and forth between Florida and the North, inevitably they influenced both places. The Florida Dream left its imprint on the Northern States and Central Canada. It encouraged Northerners to act upon their fantasies of escape

1965); Donna R. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1988); Donna R. Gabaccia and Vicki L. Ruiz, *American Dreaming, Global Realities: Rethinking U.S. Immigration History* (Urbana, IL, 2006); Eli Lederhendler, *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity, 1950-1970* (Syracuse, NY, 2001).

and comfort. But, as the Dream is not reality, tourists and snowbirds have redefined their meanings of Florida while visiting it, and by sharing their experience with fellow Northerners they have altered their region's understanding of both Florida and "the South." Through this experiencing and sharing, fantasies of Florida have grown more sophisticated, more knowledgeable of the social faults and cracks, of the continental geography, of the economics of leisure and land, of the crass and the authentic in late modern culture. By acting upon their Florida Dream, and by redefining it in the process, sojourning Northerners have empowered themselves culturally; through the processes of contrast, comparison, and on-site experience, they have gained new and useful knowledge about home (and home-away-from-home), community, and friendship, in a context of wide geographic distance and difference. However briefly, they have seized the opportunity – as most of humanity cannot – to taste the Good Life, as they conceived it. As they grasped their dream, they learnt its limits, its evanescence, and its cost, both human and material. Even so, they had a moral to tell to the people of both Northern and Southern climes who yearned but feared to pursue a dream of their own. Did swaying palm trees solve life's problems? Could two months of "sun and surf" change the meaning of an entire year? These were existential questions, to which the existence of the snowbirds and Florida's sojourners provided answers.

It has been too easy for social commentators to dismiss the snowbirds' experience as inconsequential, as being more "sightseeing" than living. However, their trips to Florida should be considered an instance of sightseeing in the way Dean MacCannell defined it, as a

collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience.... The act of sightseeing is a kind of

involvement with social appearances that helps the person to construct totalities from his disparate experiences. Thus, his life and his society can appear to him as an orderly series of formal representations, like snapshots in a family album.¹¹

By going to Florida, Northerners did not merely escape the dull realities of work, duty, and family. They made sense of modern life in North America, in ways impossible to achieve by staying home watching TV.

Travel and tourism thus is not solely about escaping the ordinary, but have become necessary elements in the modern experience, not only to evade work, duty, and family, but also to make sense of the modern totality, as Dean MacCannell has argued. Moreover, travel and tourism could lead to community-building: travelers and tourists, not solely snowbirds, have been understood by anthropologist Victor Turner as experiencing a liminal social state where social relations are no longer normative, hierarchic and distant, but closer and more egalitarian. In tourism, individuals may reach among themselves a state of *communitas* (a non-hierarchical community that can be formed in a liminal spatio-temporal "threshold," – such as a beach or a campground – wherein roles, rank and status symbols are temporarily put off, and other rules are temporarily adopted. "Even when people bury themselves in anonymous crowds on beaches, they are seeking an almost sacred, often symbolic, mode of *communitas*, generally unavailable to them in the structured life of the office, the shop floor or the mine."¹²

Moreover, as we observed in Chapters 3, 4, 6, and 7, the ways in which consumption, folklore, face-to-face interaction, and social networking structured the snowbird experience clearly indicates the extent to which travel and tourism can be put to

¹¹ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1976), 14, 15.

use to construct and reinforce social networks, making travel and tourism central elements in the social life of modern individuals, and not solely the marginal, exotic social category some have made them to be.¹³

Did snowbirds change the North? Yes and no. To Northerners, snowbirds conjured powerful images of mobility, leisure, and hedonism. They were not alone in embodying these ideas; together with cottagers, sports fishermen, Carnival folk and others, their assemblages stood as examples of how belonging could be achieved simply by joining together in play. By returning to the North each springtime, snowbirds demonstrated their continued commitment to Northern "Puritanism" – that consumption and leisure were not an entirely worthy calling, which meant that fun-seeking should be limited to a brief reversal of the ethos of work, thrift, and duty. But these holidays have been growing in number and frequency (via the "long weekend") – an indication that snowbird values are spreading. It now seems that the whole continent is reverting to childhood: playing, indulging, and throwing off the most oppressive rules of daily life. If Floribécois snowbirds' *joie de vivre* and (relatively) uninhibited behavior in Florida seems to indicate a Latin or French element in Québec (and French-Canadian) culture, this dissertation has demonstrated that their sense of duty and thrift is not altogether different from their (allegedly Puritan) Anglo-Protestant co-travelers. Thus by seasonally heading back to the frigid North, Catholic Québécois pay their symbolic tribute to Ignatius of Loyola as much as Yankees do unto Cotton Mather. After all these snowbirds, beyond all their varied hues and chirping, are North Americans.

¹² Graburn, "Tourism: The Sacred Journey," *loc. cit.*, pp. 25, 28; Graburn, "The Anthropology of Tourism," *loc. cit.*, pp. 11, 14, 15, 17; this definition of travel and holidays has been encouraged also by Bernard Mergen, "Review Essay: Holiday Rates," *American Studies International*, vol. 39, no. 2, June 2001, p. 94.

¹³ Jonas Larsen, John Urry and Kay W. Axhausen, "Networks and Tourism: Mobile Social Life," *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (2007): 244–262.

In addition to challenging definitions of the proper calling and destiny of humankind, in Canada, snowbirds have also played a special role as illustrations – most often caricatures – of the lure of the United States, and of the *un-Canadian*, yet very Canadian, dislike of winter. Snowbirds have become part of intellectuals' commentary on the disappearance of local and, more crucially, national meanings of place, culture and identity in a context of Canadian consumerism and American cultural hegemony. Snowbirds have had little power over such meanings, which have been part of the permanent debate about Canada's relation with the United States, a debate that intensified in the 1950s as fears of vassalization grew with the size of the US stake in the Canadian economy.

Concern and worrying over American influence was much the same on both sides of the Ottawa River. English Canadian and Québécois looked with *equal* dismay (contrary to nationalist myth in Quebec) at Canadians' quest for the Florida Dream. As the postwar period went on, a great majority of Canadian elites, and virtually all of its intellectuals, came to define themselves as *not American*; accordingly, anyone who loved Florida was suspect. At the same time, there was a competing discourse in Quebec (and Alberta, if Arizona rather than Florida were the focus here) that regarded the United States as a beacon of republicanism and economic growth, whose powerful beam should be followed in preference to the flickering Victorian gas lamps of Canadian constitutional monarchy. From this nationalist perspective, it was less suspect for a Québécois to love Florida than to vacation in Ontario's Muskoka Lakes. That is, until recently. As the rebels of the 1960s-70s have joined the ranks of the Québécois elite, and as posturing on US foreign policy has become a favorite means of self-definition for most Western elites, the Québécois elite has become increasingly fearful of US hegemony, as anxious as the

French about the language of the films being shown in cinemas, and so their anti-American posturing is gradually taking on a distinctively English-Canadian flavor. Nowadays, an important part of the population has followed this trend¹⁴. The choice of wintering spot thus becomes more politically fraught in both English and French Canada. Hence, with much fanfare since the early 1990s, in both Québec and the rest of Canada, the United States' loss is Mexico's gain (the same can be said of Costa Rica, Cuba, New Brunswick, Prince-Edward Island, British Columbia).

Even so, reality screams that Canadians love going to the United States, while myth has long held that the Quebecois love Florida more than any other Canadians. Was this true? Were Québécois snowbirds more enamored and familiar with the Sunshine State than other Canadians? We found one clear answer to this: Floribécois knew Floribec, period. Their congregation on the Gold Coast was a result of their foreign language, a factor that limited their ability to blend with Americans. Floridians seemed to find Floribécois quite foreign as well. Bilingual Québécois snowbirds, like many bilingual Québécois (and Franco-Americans) up North, were far less visible than their French-only compatriots. Bilinguals went to places other than Floribec, where they engaged in a similar sociability as English Canadian snowbirds. It is unlikely, however, that they socialized more intensively than these "normal" snowbirds.

Thus the nationalists' view of Québécois' unique familiarity with the US is confounded by this finding. (It is unlikely to be revived by research on Maine's Old Orchard Beach, another Quebecois enclave along a coast much frequented by English Canadians.) If this peculiar ease ever existed, it had died during the 1970s, as the whole

¹⁴ John Wright, Gregory Millard, Sarah Riegel, "Here's Where we Get Canadian: English-Canadian Nationalism and Popular Culture," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (Spring 2002): 11-34.

world retreated from the American Dream. The nationalist argument that the Quebecois and Americans have a special affinity because of shared republican values, while never convincing to anyone who has watched English Canadians blend into American mobile home parks, has served a political purpose – it distances Québec from its heritage of British colonization and assuages fears that secession from Canada would accelerate Quebec's submission to American cultural hegemony.¹⁵ In fact, "Americanization" seems to have less to do with political than with social and economic factors – one's socio-economic class, one's dependence on the export economy or career path (academics, for example, may seek or fear a continental market in fellowships and professorships), or the relative strength of the US, Quebec, and Canadian economies – cultural industries foremost. Americanization is also, obviously, a process that happens most quickly to those who live in the United States for an extended period, even if the Americanization means the addition of the sojourner to the mass of American dissidents and Jeremiahs. To some degree, then, Canadian snowbirds have been "Americanized" by their experiences, although they have not necessarily become more pro-American or less nationalistic. (Americans from the Northern states similarly became "Southernized" by their sojourns in Florida, even if they became more anti-Southern and Yankee in the process.)

The mingling of the Canadian and American peoples in Florida clearly had an effect on both, but overall the effect that has *not* been to weaken national and regional ties and identities. Even if the occasional American now says "eh" and the Canadian "huh," an analysis of the snowbirds suggests that the principal outcome of this mingling, even for the outnumbered Canadians, has been – for those who experience the mingling – a bottom-up reinterpretation of the differences between the two. This reinterpretation often

¹⁵ Joseph Yvon Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité* (Montréal, 2002).

results from the ease of movement throughout the continent, the friendliness and familiarity of the *Other*, the confirmation of the existence of the *Other's* great sights and destinations, like pilgrims visiting a shrine: it might be the traditional sort like St. Joseph's Oratory or Ste. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec, but it is more likely to be a late modern variant, like Disney World or South Beach, the Vegas Strip, Toronto's CN Tower, or Montréal's Grand Prix. To contemporaries, these can evoke the wonder of Chartres or Henry Adams' giant dynamo. As they mingle, Canadians and Americans have grown more sophisticated about themselves, without the intervention of intellectuals, and without becoming the *Other*. But by the same mingling, movement and travel, Canadians seem also to reconfirm their differences with Americans. Thus mingling does not imply amalgamation. Canada does not become Florida. Nor have the blue states become red. Still, as noted above, a trace of purple is not unbecoming to those who have traveled beyond their region to experience the familiar unknown.

The conclusions here are similar to the findings of Borderlands scholarship. The initial working hypothesis of Borderlands scholars was that fusion – the gradual lessening of Borderlanders' attachment to their own Nation or Culture – took place in borderlands, the zones of contact between nations and/or cultures. But their actual research found more instances of enduring national or ethnic identities than instances of integration. Although many exchanges and contacts have taken place in Florida's Borderlands, national identities appear to have been the least affected elements of the population mix. Indeed, Florida's snowbirds have demonstrated an ability to construct *their own* understandings of what it meant to be a Canadian in the United States, regardless of the discourse of their hosts. Both Francophone and Anglophone snowbirds used a repertoire of national and cultural

signs, behaviors, and affinity groups to associate with fellow Canadians while still reaching out to American snowbirds, and to their Florida hosts.

Canadian snowbirds built bridges by making respectful statements about America; they flew the Stars and Stripes; they sung "Rally Around the Flag"; and proved their solidarity in times of crisis, such as after September 11, 2001. Nevertheless, when asked, they remained proudly Canadian or Québécois. Moreover, like the Canadians back home, they retained ambivalent views of life in America. In keeping with the nine-eleven example, Canadians by 2007 retained and refined a critical view of the United States, even as *their military presence in Afghanistan redefined and reinforced their national identity*. Their measured critique of the good and bad in America, and their strong identification with their homeland, has been perhaps the clearest indication of the flexibility of meaning that identity signs (such as words, flags, customs) can carry. It also indicated the potency that the act of constructing pop folklore through a collective conversation has had for the preservation of identity and for the ability of regular folk to find their own meanings of place and belonging.

Thus Canadian snowbirds have used their national repertoire, a number of participative and performative leisure pursuits, *and* overtures towards Americans to build their communities. They have done these things to find community in the southland, rather than to preserve a Canadian-ness, which they always considered inviolate. In their own community-building, Québécois snowbirds acted distinctively: they have used more participative and performative leisure than have other snowbirds – more dances, more live entertainment. Their geographic concentration in Floribec has decreased the necessity of *identity displays* and *group institutions* (like affinity clubs) as compared to the more dispersed English-speaking snowbirds from the rest of Canada and the US. The expressive

ways of Floribécois did not demonstrate a lesser need for community, but rather a different repertoire of leisure and sociability that they used to build a community more based on a shared culture, a community more based on nostalgia for the old days and the old country (minimally *la Belle Province*, occasionally *la patrie et le bon vieux temps*).

Arguably, Floribec culture has also been distinctively working-class. Of modest origins and incomes, its snowbirds have patronized a vibrant showcase of a blue-collar, small town culture that back home has been cast into the shadows by the new middle-class culture of post-1960s Québec. The disdainful response to Floribec in cosmopolitan circles in Montréal, Toronto and Hollywood testify to the persistence of class and status conflict in late modern societies. The debate over the uninhibited behavior of the Floribécois has been an instance where class conflict has taken place in the realm of cultural legitimacy – taste, on most occasions. As late modern elites have increasingly shared the cultural repertoire of common folk, while voluntarily giving up the exclusive institutions and tastes that made them distinctive, they have focused their attempts at distinction on smaller matters of taste. In short, in a world where everybody wears denim, only a lower class Floribecois would wear Lee's.

Florida has, in other words, mattered – to Canadians, to Americans of the Midwest and Northeast, far more than Floridians diffidently realize. Florida has been a late modern beacon on a human-built hill beaming its multiple meanings onto the white blanket of Northern snow. The Sunshine State lacks a Hollywood (although even that is changing so far as Spanish-language film is concerned) but its amenity machine has spread its dream and message around North America, indeed the world.

This dissertation began as an attempt to make a contribution to the historiographic and muckraking traditions that have contributed to our understanding of the Sunshine

State and of North America's internal migration by studying the people who wintered in South Florida . It has found that Florida has been since the turn of the twentieth century a vivid part of the North American imagination as a semitropical wonderland and orange grove. By the 1910s, the entrepreneurs of leisure had, by identifying the Sunshine State with ancient Edenic themes, transformed Florida into a highly visible Mecca of the consumerist good life. Florida more than any other state was, therefore, poised to take advantage of the post-1945 economic boom with its paid vacations, Interstate Highways, and cheap fuel (until OPEC grabbed the pumps). As the Sunshine State grew rapidly thanks to its natural beauty and boosterist civic culture, it turned into a unique embodiment of the American Dream, a Florida Dream characterized by the Beach, warm winters, a semitropical landscape, and modern architecture.

In the meantime, and especially since the 1950s, the Sunshine State has become what its promoters most craved it to be – a showcase for North Americans, if not the world. And what has been showcased? Increasingly, they have been three of the most important questions in North American history and life: first, the prospects for community-building in a modern context of high mobility and spatial fragmentation; second, the cultural power of ordinary folk to promote and define their own interests despite constant pressure from the mass media, from promoters and entrepreneurs, from politically-correct elites, and the intelligentsia to dictate the acceptable in display, imagery, taste, and behavior; and third, the debate over the management of "natural" and urban assets through the mediation of the increasingly pressing and divergent demands of real estate, agriculture, recreation, preservation, national defense, and natural emergency preparedness. South Florida has been the cutting edge of tomorrow for more than a century now; whether tomorrow will indeed be a brighter day is something that Floridians

may well decide – at least for their own patch of paradise. In the meantime, they should not be in too much of a hurry to chase away, in the name of normalcy, the wisdom of the gray hairs living in snowbird communities. Their many pasts and experiences with the road will come in handy as Florida seeks the route to its best possible tomorrow. Florida may not have a fountain of youth, but it does have a wellspring of wisdom in its wizened winterers. It only needs to ask.

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