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A place "rendered interesting": antebellum print culture and the rise of middle-class tourism

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Dissertation

**A PLACE “RENDERED INTERESTING”: ANTEBELLUM PRINT CULTURE
AND THE RISE OF MIDDLE-CLASS TOURISM**

by

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ABSTRACT

“A Place ‘Rendered Interesting’: Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of Middle-Class Tourism” analyzes the frequently overlooked ideological dimensions of antebellum print culture related to tourism. Traveling through the American leisure landscape became a primary means by which writers, poets, artists, and everyday sightseers explored and defined their worlds. Through tourism, authors expressed some of their deepest anxieties about the society they inhabited. Tourism texts are therefore deceptively powerful cultural artifacts; in fact, sometimes their codified and even repetitive nature was a means of emphasizing an author or authors’ deepest fears. In my dissertation, I analyze guidebooks, travelogues, periodicals, gift books, children’s literature, novels, and visual culture to reveal how authors and artists used potentially escapist discourses of leisure travel to engage with the most pressing problems of the antebellum moment. My examination of touristic print culture shows that this archive, long dismissed as superficial, was in fact central to the consolidation of white middle class identity, to the emergence of manifest destiny, and to ongoing debates over the rise of commercialism and abolition.

Chapter one explores how antebellum guidebooks address ideologies of progress and empire. I examine Catskill guidebook authors' uses of literary sources, particularly short stories by Washington Irving. These authors quoted and cited Irving's stories to create a white mythology for the Catskills that marginalized non-white people and encouraged their removal. Chapter two situates tourism within the broader context of antebellum class identity. I argue that authors like Catherine Maria Sedgwick and Nathaniel Parker Willis employ tourism discourse to articulate concerns about the threat of upwardly mobile lower classes and their potential impact on supposed middle-class morality. Chapter three frames the tension between Romanticism and capitalism inherent in touristic culture. Nathaniel Hawthorne's sketches and stories of the White Mountains, I argue, can help us understand the emergent antebellum problem of the commodified landscape. In Chapter four, I argue that tourism became a space for heated political debate on slavery. Abolitionists like Lydia Maria Child encouraged readers to consider the possibility of reorganized society – specifically, a society without slaves – through the imaginative possibilities of the cave aesthetic.

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Introduction

“This work is designed as a pocket manual and guide to travellers visiting these places. Our limits forbid that we should indulge in elaborate descriptions or minute geographical and statistical details. We have therefore confined ourselves to subjects of more immediate interest to the tourist; directing him in his course, and pointing out, as he passes, objects which most deserve his notice and regard.”¹

In this introduction to an 1830 edition of his guidebook, *The Fashionable Tour*, Gideon Davison seems confident in the genre in which he writes. Practical and concise, his guidebook serves to assist the touring reader, pointing out particular “objects” established as worthy of visiting. Of course, Davison could only publish such information if a clear tourist route was already present, which by 1830, it most certainly was. Ultimately, Davison’s book speaks to two contemporaneous and interlocked cultural trends of the antebellum era: the rise of the United States tourist industry and the explosion of the guidebook genre.

The American tourist industry emerged, and subsequently flourished, in the antebellum era. Improved transportation, the development of hotels and resorts, and the mass-manufacture of travel-based goods all helped create an infrastructure that transformed American travel into an experience unlike any form of travel in the previous century. This nascent period of American tourism coincides with the development of mass-market print culture, a key American industry in which the guidebook genre was situated. The publishing, printing, and circulation of reprinted British texts, as well as the flourishing of multiple forms of American print, simultaneously prompted and responded

¹ Gideon Davison, *The Fashionable Tour: A Guide to Travellers Visiting the Middle and Northern States, and the Provinces of Canada* (Saratoga Springs, NY: G.M. Davison and G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1833), introduction.

to the advent and development of new reading publics in America in the early nineteenth century, especially among the rising middle class.

Authors and artists increasingly recognized the popularity of the tourist industry among their audiences, and produced a variety of tourism-related texts. From guidebooks to gift books to magazine stories to children's literature to paintings and engravings, these publications embraced the aesthetics of antebellum tourism. Any text or image depicting a scenic tourist vista or describing a tourist's journey was extremely popular among middle-class readers. As historian Dona Brown has argued, the diversity of tourism texts "illustrate[s] not only the new complexity of the industry in travel literature but also the variety of strategies publishers were inventing to profit from the expanded market in books."² Tourism texts – including guidebooks, maps, engravings, and other materials aimed specifically at tourists – provided authors, artists, and their publishers with financial success by speaking to readers' interest in experiencing the American landscape through text and image.

Yet despite their popularity, antebellum tourist texts were considered by both authors and readers to be ephemeral: guidebook authors produced new editions annually, and travel narratives were published in weekly, monthly, and annual publications like magazines and gift books. The disposability of this material has affected its modern reception: historians and literary scholars have tended to treat guidebooks and other

² Dona Brown, "Travel Books," in *A History of the Book in America Volume 2: An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*, eds. Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 458.

touristic print culture as superficial and frivolous.³ Thus, while scholars have noted the role print played in developing commercial tourism, their studies have inadequately addressed the larger cultural implications of the relationship between antebellum print culture and recreational travel. I seek to revise this understanding of tourist print culture in the antebellum era. *A Place 'Rendered Interesting': Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of Middle-Class Tourism* examines the multitude of ways that antebellum writers invoked tourism to engage with critical American social and political issues. I argue that touristic print culture helped conceptualize manifest destiny through the disavowal of non-white peoples and cultures. Touristic texts also identified middle-class men and women as being particularly skilled at specific touristic practices, thereby facilitating in the consolidation of white, middle-class identity. Moreover, authors and artists used certain tourist spaces to engage in antebellum cultural and political debates, including the pros and cons of mass-market consumerism, and the arguments for and against the abolition of slavery.

In codifying and commodifying the American landscape, the tourist industry sought to develop a uniform vision of America for tourists: one that was aesthetically pleasing in its adherence to contemporary aesthetics, luxurious in its amenities (including regular transportation and well established accommodations), and always on sale for those willing and able to pay. This vision emphasized white, middle-class culture at the

³ See, for example, a claim by Richard Gassan (perhaps the most prominent scholar on antebellum guidebooks) that “guidebooks as ephemera, are not, in and of themselves, a significant force in literature.” Richard Gassan, “The First American Tourist Guidebooks: Authorship and the Print Culture of the 1820s,” *Book History* 8 (2005), 67.

expense of other peoples and communities within the antebellum American landscape. Ironically, in this attempt to represent a systematized, consumable vision of America, tourist sites became spaces of heated social, political, and even philosophical contention. Instead of conveying a uniform depiction of the American landscape, tourism and the tourist industry in fact often became a space for grappling with cultural conflicts and exposing (or silencing) marginalized voices.

From Travel to Tourism: Establishing Context

Only by understanding how nineteenth-century American tourism differed from earlier forms of pleasure travel does its role in engaging with antebellum cultural issues become clear. Leisure travel in the late eighteenth century remained an elite, socially exclusive experience in which individuals journeyed for health, education, and socializing. Whether eighteenth-century travelers visited exclusive spas like Ballston (New York) and Virginia Springs or explored the politics and culture of the nation's cities and towns on an American adaptation of the European Grand Tour, they relied on the advice of family and social connections to shape their experiences. Their itineraries, including the routes they took and the inns at which they stayed, were determined by personal correspondence and connections. This unstructured, informal, almost improvised, nature of travel led to inconsistent patterns of leisure that varied widely based on one's individual social networks.⁴

⁴ For more on the transition from travel to tourism, see Will Mackintosh, "'Ticketed Through': the Commodification of Travel in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of the Early Republic* 32, no. 1 (2012): 61-89. For more on eighteenth-century travel, see Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999);

While trips to spas and tours of the country remained popular throughout the nineteenth century, Americans and visitors from abroad began to tour the country in novel ways as early as the 1820s. As historians have noted, improvements in transportation (including the expansion of stagecoach roads and canal systems, and the development of steamboat travel) allowed for more rapid, reliable travel.⁵ Tourists could now visit various locations without the need for elite social connections; all they required was the capital to purchase their passages. Rapid travel also allowed middle-class salaried men to take relatively brief trips with family, rather than the extended seasonal tours that were affordable only to the wealthy few.⁶ With transportation more regular and regulated, the travel experience evolved into a codified, easily reproducible commodity, opening up the tourist experience to middle-class Americans who lacked the social status, leisure time, and correspondence networks for eighteenth-century leisure travel, but who had the financial means for nineteenth-century tourism.

Yet this project does not merely explore how technological improvements led to increased travel. Instead, I examine the role of what historian Richard Gassan calls the “cultural infrastructure” of the tourism industry.⁷ This infrastructure provided historical, literary and aesthetic depictions of the landscape through both print and visual culture such as paintings, lithographs, engravings, novels, poems, stories, and guidebooks. While

Charlene Boyer-Lewis, *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 15-44.

⁵ The canonical text that initiated the idea of a “transportation revolution” during this period is George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Routledge, 1950).

⁶ Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 7.

⁷ Richard H. Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism: New York, Hudson Valley, and American Culture, 1790-1830* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 6.

developments in transportation helped open up travel to middle-class Americans, print culture also played a fundamental role in transforming eighteenth-century travel into systematized, consumable touristic experiences. Middle and upper-class men and women read novels and travelogues that established a cultural infrastructure for various sites, they purchased and engaged with guidebooks that provided detailed statistics on and descriptions of popular routes, and they devoured magazines and newspaper articles that detailed experiences on these routes.⁸ Along with these literary depictions of various sites and routes, Americans also engaged in a visual consumption of the landscape.

Throughout the antebellum era, Hudson River School painters like Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, and Albert Bierstadt created works celebrating popular tourist vistas. These works both responded to and inspired the literary works of authors like Irving, Sedgwick and Willis. Middle-class men and women familiarized themselves with the Hudson River School aesthetic through viewing paintings at art unions and in private collections, and admiring reprintings of these works in illustrated magazines and gift books.⁹ Through these renderings of the landscape, audiences became familiar with the pictorial and textual aesthetic required of a conventional tourist. These print productions helped codify the tourist experience in a multitude of ways. From systematizing itineraries through detailed indexes and maps to providing a consistent aesthetic language for American tourist sites, the print culture surrounding tourism provided a structured, easily

⁸ Brown, "Travel Books," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 2*, eds. Gross and Kelley, 449-458.

⁹ Georgia Barnhill, "Transformations in Pictorial Printing," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 2*, eds. Gross and Kelley, 422-440.

reproducible experience that any member of the middle-class reading public could study and follow.

Antebellum tourism not only differed from earlier American travel in its relative accessibility and systematization, but also in its purpose. While people continued to travel for health and education, Americans increasingly traveled for aesthetic purposes, visiting specific hotels and following selected routes in order to view and exclaim over popular vistas.¹⁰ Tourists also continued to visit various cities through the United States, but more and more often participated in a bucolic form of tourism – one that celebrated views of natural scenery. Despite scenic tourism’s novelty, it drew on earlier developments in aesthetic travel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In particular, Americans turned to Great Britain, where William Gilpin’s essays on the picturesque and sublime and Walter Scott’s later literary adaptations of these aesthetic terms popularized picturesque travel throughout England and Scotland.¹¹ Antebellum print networks, especially the system of reprinting, helped spread awareness of this British aesthetic throughout America’s reading publics, and American writers and artists embedded an adapted version of this aesthetic into American tourist sites.¹² Authors’ aestheticization of various American landscapes, as well as Hudson River artists’ depictions of these scenes

¹⁰ Aron, *Working at Play*, 15-44.

¹¹ For more on British picturesque tourism, see Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989). For more on America’s adaptation of the British picturesque tour, see Beth Lynne Lueck, *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour: The Search for National Identity, 1790–1860* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997).

¹² For more on the system of reprinting in the antebellum era, see Gross, “Introduction: An Extensive Republic,” in *A History of the Book in America Volume 2*, eds. Gross and Kelley, 1-50; Meredith McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

both shaped and were shaped by the burgeoning American tourist industry. I argue that, by providing a visual and textual language for this tourist aesthetic, print culture converted aesthetic values into consumable, reproducible products and practices.

Methods and Intervention

To articulate the complexity of tourist texts, I embrace a methodology that combines close reading and formal analysis with two interdisciplinary approaches: tourism history and book history. Together, these approaches allow me to explore how antebellum authors and artists employed both tourism and print culture to address social and political issues.

Sociologists and cultural historians dominated the earliest scholarship on tourism, typically focusing on general theoretical questions about the touristic experience. Daniel Boorstin's social theory scholarship (including *The Americans* [1958] and *The Image* [1962]) and Dean MacCannell's now classic text, *The Tourist* (1976), examine tourism as a theoretical concept.¹³ MacCannell in particular initiated the concept that tourism is an outgrowth of modern society. While these texts remain significant in their recognition of tourism as a topic of scholarly value, more recent scholars have delved into the specific ways in which tourism is central to modern American culture and society. Shelly Baranowski and Ellen Furlough's *Being Elsewhere* (2001) offers a comprehensive collection of more contemporary scholarship that examines tourism's significance to a variety of historical developments in modern society, from consumer culture to political

¹³ Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958); Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Random House, 1961); Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

mobilization.¹⁴ These works are essential to establishing the significance of tourism studies as a discipline.

Historians John Sears, Dona Brown, and Cindy Aron were the first to address the ways in which nineteenth-century tourism impacted American culture and society. Sears's *Sacred Places* (1989) delves into the cultural significance of tourism throughout the century, examining the tension between the role of tourist sites as both symbolic religious spaces and locations for consumption and profit.¹⁵ In *Inventing New England* (1995), Brown argues that nineteenth-century tourism played a critical role in the development of a consumer-driven, middle-class society.¹⁶ Finally, Aron's *Working at Play* (1999), an examination of tourism through the nineteenth century to the Great Depression, examines the evolving conception of leisure in America, and the struggle to reconcile leisure travel with Victorian middle-class values.¹⁷

Despite the cultural importance of the antebellum middle-class tourist industry, only recently have scholars begun to explore the subject. Scholars looking to identify a point of origin for the consumer-driven, mass-produced tourism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have continually looked instead to the late nineteenth century. Jeffrey Alan Melton encapsulates this vein of scholarship in his book *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism* (2002), in which he identifies the 1870s and 1880s as “an emergent

¹⁴ Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, eds., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

¹⁵ John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁶ Brown, *Inventing New England*.

¹⁷ Cindy S. Aron. *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Tourist Age.”¹⁸ While scholars of nineteenth-century tourism have acknowledged the presence of tourist sites dating from the 1830s and even 1820s – Sears discusses the rising popularity of Niagara in the antebellum era, Brown notes the rise of the Fashionable Tour during the same period, and Aron examines camp meetings of the 1820s as an early form of mass tourism – only relatively recently have historians begun to identify this period as critical in the emergence of a longer narrative of middle-class, consumer-driven tourism. Richard Gassan is one of the first scholars to focus solely on antebellum tourism, locating the origins of modern middle-class tourism in the travel infrastructure of the Catskill Mountains in the 1820s and 1830s. In *The Birth of American Tourism* (2008), he defines this early infrastructure as one of “almost pure consumption,” identifying it as a key element in a “consumer revolution” that evolved into the modern consumer society of the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁹ More recently, Will Mackintosh has explored the transition from eighteenth-century elite leisure travel to this early nineteenth-century tourist industry, noting specifically the evolution from active traveller to passive consumer.²⁰ Yet despite these recent works on the early tourist industry, this scholarship remains underdeveloped, particularly in comparison to the plethora of scholarship on late nineteenth-century leisure, travel, and tourism. *A Place ‘Rendered Interesting’: Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of Middle-Class Tourism* seeks to enter and expand the conversation about this early form of consumer-driven tourism. I continue to distinguish antebellum tourism from earlier forms of elite travel, and to

¹⁸ Jeffrey Alan Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism: The Tide of a Great Popular Movement* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 3.

¹⁹ Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 166.

²⁰ Will Mackintosh, “‘Ticketed Through.’”

highlight its relationship to later forms of large-scale tourism that continued through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and persist even today.

Beyond simply entering into this nascent scholarly conversation, however, my project complicates the relationship Gassan, Brown, Mackintosh, and others have acknowledged between tourism and consumerism. Rather than focusing primarily on the relationship between tourism and consumerism, my project centers on the relationship between tourism and the “communications revolution” as defined by Daniel Walker Howe in *What Hath God Wrought* (2009).²¹ Howe claims that the most significant change in the antebellum period was the transformation of communication, spurred by a booming economy and improvements in transportation, and that these advancements helped facilitate larger political and social changes. Rather than simply linking the rise in tourism to the emergence of a general consumer revolution, my project delves into the specific relationship between tourism and a critical element of the “communications revolution” – the production and consumption of mass print. Only an examination of the relationship between print culture and tourism can demonstrate both the codified and commodified nature of middle-class tourism – two elements that I deem critical in the distinction between eighteenth-century elite travel and popular nineteenth-century tourism.

²¹ Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought The Transformation of America, 1815-1849* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7. Mackintosh concisely summarizes Howe’s “communication revolution” in “Ticketed Through,” 64-65. While Gassan also engages with Howe, he focuses on the “consumer revolution” of the antebellum era that he claims led to the rise in tourism. Gassan, *Birth of American Tourism*, 165-166.

Moreover, unlike other tourism scholars, I analyze the “cultural infrastructure” of the tourist industry at the level of discourse. I explore the production and reception of tourist literature, as well as authors’ use of touristic language, their citations and appropriations of other literature and lore, and their deployment of techniques from multiple literary genres. Rather than examining what touristic print culture reveals about tourism, I examine what touristic print culture reveals about broader antebellum culture.

Literary and print culture scholars have recently begun to explore the relationship between nineteenth-century American literature and tourism, particularly picturesque tourism. One of the first works on the subject of picturesque tourism in American literature, Beth Lueck’s *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour* (1997) examines the way in which early American authors depicted picturesque travel and engaged with the picturesque aesthetic in their own writings.²² In *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel* (2012), Robin Jarvis turns his focus towards readership (with a focus on British readers) examining how the reading of travel literature – here referring solely to factual accounts of travel – shaped readers’ conceptions of America.²³ While these studies are critical to understanding how authors and readers interpreted and depicted the picturesque aesthetic, these scholars ignore the role literature played in directly shaping the tourist industry and the tourist experience at specific sites. More significantly, they fail to address the way these texts move beyond depictions of leisure travel to engage with larger social and political issues of the period. Those who have studied literature’s role in

²² Lueck, *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour*.

²³ Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel: Expeditions and Tours in North America, 1760-1840* (London: Aldershot Ashgate Publishing, 2012).

the tourist industry have focused primarily on one form of tourism, literary tourism, in which locations relating to an author or his or her fictional works become the tourist sites. Nicola Watson's *The Literary Tourist* (2006) focuses on this particular type of tourism in Victorian Britain, while Paul Westover's *Necromanticism* (2012) is one of the latest texts to focus on how antebellum reading practices led tourists to venture on literary pilgrimages throughout America.²⁴

A handful of scholars have begun to document and analyze the presence and role of various print forms in the antebellum tourist industry. Mackintosh, for example, demonstrates how the rise of purchasable print within the industry – including stagecoach, railroad, and steamboat tickets, and guidebooks detailing transportation routes – represents the larger trend towards consumer-driven travel practices in the 1820s.²⁵ Gassan offers a more expansive (albeit still quite brief) chronicle of the development of the American guidebook industry in the 1820s, arguing that the rise in publications signifies the rising popularity and specialization of the tourist industry throughout the decade.²⁶ These scholars have used print archives as evidence for particular arguments about social or cultural aspects of the tourist industry, including the rising commercial nature of tourism, the increased availability of tourist experiences, and the distinct factions of the tourist population. My project inverts the place of print culture in the study of tourism, placing print at the center of the antebellum tourist narrative,

²⁴ Nicola Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic and Victorian Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Paul Westover, *Necromanticism: Travelling to Meet the Dead, 1750-1860* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

²⁵ Mackintosh, “‘Ticketed Through.’”

²⁶ Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 112-124.

rather than turning to print archives as supplementary evidence. I expand upon the crucial scholarship of Gassan, Mackintosh, and others, pivoting the conversation to examine the history of antebellum American tourism from the point of view of print culture and print productions. My project most closely draws on the methodology employed by James Buzard in his text on British tourists and tourism in Europe, *The Beaten Track* (1993).²⁷ Buzard demonstrates the key role various forms of print (including novels, guidebooks, and periodicals) played in democratizing travel in Europe throughout the nineteenth century. Like Buzard, I focus on the way in which authors became arbiters of culture and readers engaged with text as a way to join a particular social class.

Art historians have also examined the role of visual culture, particularly works by Hudson River School artists, on the tourist industry of the early nineteenth century. Kenneth Myers in particular has examined the relationship between the tourist industry and landscape art, arguing the industry and art had a “reciprocal” relationship in which the popularity of tourism led to an increase in visual culture depicting various sites, and vice versa.²⁸ While his work focuses in particular on the Catskill Mountains, his claim (along with similar claims about other tourist locations by art historians such as Linda Ferber and Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser) is critical to my decision to study print and visual culture in conjunction with one another.²⁹

²⁷ James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁸ Kenneth Myers, *The Catskills: Painters, Writers, and Tourists in the Mountains 1820-1895* (Hanover, MA: University Press of New England, 1987), 40.

²⁹ Ferber, Linda S. *The Hudson River School: Nature and the American Vision* (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2009); Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, “Introduction,” in *Hudson River School:*

Such a study necessarily engages with scholarship that examines the history of print during the antebellum period. Meredith McGill's *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (2003) offers a comprehensive analysis of antebellum print culture that complicates earlier narratives, including William Charvat's still canonical *Literary Publishing in America* (1959).³⁰ McGill turns away from an author-centric narrative of print culture, and instead demonstrates the complex nature of authorship in the antebellum period. Rather than being victims of a marketplace rife with reprintings, McGill explains that authors were not seen as the "owner[s]" of their texts, but rather, their texts were seen as belonging to the larger public sphere, open to reprinting and wide circulation."³¹ McGill's work has helped reshape the conception of antebellum print culture from one that was national and increasingly centralized to one that was transnational, regional, and decentralized. The *History of the Book in America* series has continued to emphasize this conception of print as simultaneously regional, national, and transnational (Robert Gross's definition of early America as an "extensive republic" epitomizes this notion).³² This interpretation of print culture is key to my project, which examines the transatlantic, national, and local patterns of print circulation.

Finally, my project draws on the work of various print culture theorists to shape the way I engage with the print archive. I rely on Robert Darnton's model for studying

Masterworks from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 3-18.

³⁰ McGill, *American Literature*; William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850* (Amherst: University Press, 1993).

³¹ Meredith McGill, *American Literature*, 45.

³² Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley, eds. *A History of the Book in America Volume 2: An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

the history of the book, which he defines as a “communications circuit.”³³ This circuit, which marks the circular journey and evolution of a text from author to publisher to printer to shipper to bookseller to reader (and back to author), emphasizes the conception of print as a process, each phase of which, coupled with outside cultural forces, impacts the development of a given text. In my effort to study the impact of print culture on the tourist industry, I examine the “communications circuit” of texts, examining not only the content of each work, but also the production history and the way in which readers interacted with the text. Following Pierre Bourdieu’s definition of texts in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993), I examine texts as cultural productions that are shaped by writers, publishers, critics, readers, and others in order to understand each print production’s role in not only the shaping of the American tourist industry, but also in shaping and responding to critical antebellum issues.³⁴

Chapter Outline

A Place ‘Rendered Interesting’: Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of Middle-Class Tourism is divided into a series of case studies, each of which focuses on the print archive surrounding a particular tourist site from the antebellum era. Each chapter takes up one author (sometimes two) and his or her works as a means of exploring the larger treatment of the site. I have selected authors whose works either directly contributed to the development of the tourist industry surrounding the site (through the development of an aesthetic or literary narrative for the landscape) or

³³ Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books?,” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 67.

³⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” in *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 40-73.

contended with issues related to the effects of the already burgeoning industry. Each chapter reveals critical ways in which the codified and commodified tourist landscape became a contentious space for addressing a social or political issue of the antebellum era. Ultimately, these chapters demonstrate how the intersection of antebellum print culture and tourism reveal new ways of examining nineteenth-century America.

While I call each chapter a “case study,” I organize the chapters in such a way as to roughly follow the itinerary of what antebellum tourists called either the Fashionable or Northern Route. Tourists on the Fashionable Route typically began their journey in New York City, traveling up the Hudson to the Catskills, west to Niagara Falls, northeast into Canada (commonly traveling through Montreal and Quebec City), and then heading east (sometimes through the White Mountains of New Hampshire) to Boston and the Connecticut River Valley.³⁵ By the 1830s and 1840s, as both transportation and print culture expanded the American tourist infrastructure, tourists could follow an extended route either into the south (particularly through Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as Kentucky) or further westward (typically no further than Missouri). Following the most popular route through my project’s structure highlights the fact that antebellum tourism cannot be neatly divided into northern and southern routes, local and national sites, or picturesque and educational travel. Just as nineteenth-century tourists did, *A Place ‘Rendered Interesting’: Antebellum Print Culture and the Rise of Middle-Class Tourism* pushes against the boundaries of these categories, demonstrating the complexities and ambiguities of the industry.

³⁵ Brown, *Inventing New England*, 3-4.

In my first chapter, “Writing Whiteness: Antebellum Guidebooks and the Codification of the Landscape in Catskill Tourism and Print.” I posit that guidebook authors marginalized non-white, non-middle-class populations through text and image. In particular, I argue that guidebook authors quote and cite Irving’s stories to create a mythology for the Catskills that marginalizes non-white people and encourages their removal: by imagining Native Americans as belonging exclusively to a mythic past, Irving provides a metaphorical framework for Manifest Destiny. This chapter exposes how deeply embedded tourism print culture was in antebellum ideologies of (white) progress and empire.

The second chapter, ““Oh, What a Scene!”: Class and Conflict at Niagara in Sedgwick’s *The Travellers* and Willis and Bartlett’s *American Scenery*,” situates tourism within the broader context of antebellum class identity. I explore how authors’ concerns about the rise of lower class tourists reveal larger concerns about the precarious nature of the white, bourgeois middle class. I analyze Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s rarely examined children’s book, *The Travellers* (1825), and Nathaniel Parker Willis’s travel-themed gift book, *American Scenery* (1840), arguing that both texts employ the tourist setting of Niagara Falls to invoke concerns about the commercial practices of American tourism and their effect on the concept of middle-class morality. As lower-middle-class tourists increasingly came to Niagara Falls (a tourist site once available only to the elite), these authors faced anxiety about an infiltration of supposedly upper-class spaces, causing them to more clearly define what they saw as the critical marker of middle-class identity: an ability to exact a religious, moralistic experience from a natural landscape.

Chapter three, “Purchasing Romance: Print, Capitalism, and Romanticism in Hawthorne’s *White Mountain Tales and Sketches*” explores the way authors used touristic writing as a way of contending with the rise of mass-market consumerism. In particular, I examine tourism in the White Mountains through a study of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s travel sketches and short stories from his 1832 journey through the region. Before he was a prominent novelist and mythmaker, Hawthorne was a successful writer of regional short fiction and travel sketches tied to specific geographic spaces. I argue that these texts reveal that Hawthorne actively participated in the American tourist industry to further his writing career. The production and circulation of Hawthorne’s White Mountain narratives reveal the way in which many well known American authors and artists who participated in national mythmaking struggled to reconcile the consumer-driven, localized, reproducible (and thus inherently unromantic) tourist experience with their own literary and artistic projects, which typically sought to resist such codification.

Chapter four, “‘Over the Border-land’: Race and Authority in *Mammoth Cave*,” examines antebellum print publications depicting tourism at Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. While seeking to develop a systematized aesthetic for the southern landscape that matched that of the North, writers and tourists contended with the presence of slaves and freed blacks. As a site defined by contemporary writers as simultaneously northern, southern, and western, and as a location within a slave state that eventually sided with the Union during the Civil War, Mammoth Cave is a geographically and politically liminal space. I argue that authors and artists use this liminality to express their own political and ideological beliefs. In particular, I examine *Letters from New-York* (1841-1843), in which

Lydia Maria Child develops fictional narratives of a Mammoth Cave tour to express her abolitionist beliefs. Through descriptions of the sublime, otherworldly nature of the cave, along with a voyeuristic narrative voice, Child encourages readers to consider the possibility of reorganized society – specifically, a society without slaves – through the imaginative possibilities of the cave aesthetic.

I ultimately seek to revise scholars' understanding of tourism texts. Guidebooks, travelogues, travel-related short stories, and the like are deceptively powerful cultural artifacts; in fact, sometimes their codified and even repetitive nature was a means of emphasizing an author or authors' deepest fears. In this project, I articulate how authors and artists used potentially escapist discourses of leisure travel to engage with the most pressing problems of the antebellum moment.

Chapter 1: Writing Whiteness: Antebellum Guidebooks and the Codification of the Landscape in Catskill Tourism and Print

In the opening lines of “Rip Van Winkle, a Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker” from *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1820), Washington Irving describes a geographically explicit landscape:

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky, but, sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.³⁶

An antebellum reader would likely recognize this passage about the Catskill Mountains in New York. Irving’s *Sketch Book* (which contains another popular story set in the Catskills, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”) was an unprecedented literary success, published in both the United States and Great Britain, and republished, with a new introduction by Sir Walter Scott, in 1840. In the years between these editions, other authors and artists depicted the Catskills in text and image: James Fenimore Cooper’s wildly successful *The Pioneers* (1823) takes place in the same mountains as “Rip Van Winkle,” and Hudson River School artists like Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand shaped their careers around the region. In the early nineteenth century, American and British cultural consumers had a strong visual and literary code for the Catskill Mountain region.

³⁶ Washington Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 1820-1821, ed. Susan Manning (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 34.

With this popularity in Catskill print culture came a near simultaneous rise in the Catskill Mountain tourist industry. The Catskill region, located about 100 miles north of New York City along the Hudson River, was one of the earliest stops along the American Grand Tour or the Fashionable Tour, a leisure journey throughout the United States that included stops in prospering cities like New York and Philadelphia as well as picturesque and sublime scenic sites such as Niagara Falls in New York and the White Mountains in New Hampshire.³⁷ By the mid-1820s, the Catskill region housed America's first large mountain hotel, as well as various steamboat and stagecoach routes leading to the site. Yet the hotel owners and transportation operators did not simply rely on the beauty of the Catskills and various luxurious amenities to attract tourists. Instead, they emphasized the region's literary and visual culture, and even military history, to develop a mythology for the region.

Perhaps the most pervasive way the tourist industry sought to use this print and visual culture to attract tourists was through guidebooks. Geared towards the rising influx of middle-class tourists, antebellum guidebooks served to assist the traveler, pointing out particular sites and scenes established as worthy of visiting. Along with logistical information, guidebooks also included quotations, citations, and summaries of well-known texts and historical events that tourists would recognize. In so doing, guidebook

³⁷ The definition of this region varies based on whether one refers to the town Catskill, New York, the Catskill Mountains themselves, or the contemporary Catskill Forest Preserve (which encompasses 300,000 acres). Broadly speaking, the Catskills are a mountainous region in southeastern New York. My definition of the Catskill region will be a bit broader than other scholars. I choose to include sites that tourists would pass along the Hudson River on their way to and from the Catskill Mountains. My scope therefore expands from just north of New York City (the typical start of a journey to the Catskills) to just south of Saratoga Springs (a common stop after the Catskills).

authors participated in a form of cultural politics, defining the Catskill region as a space existing solely for white American leisure. Through text and images, guidebooks codified the landscape, highlighting only what their audience of middle-class tourists recognized as leisurely and pleasurable, noting only sights that, as one guidebook author explains, “deserve [the tourist’s] notice and regard.”³⁸ In this manner, these guidebooks – and the tourist industry itself – occluded the presence of other peoples, cultures, and landscapes within antebellum America. Non-white, non-middle-class peoples outside of the tourist industry had no place in an antebellum guidebook narrative, because they were removed from the tourist’s purview. Guidebooks were thus far from ideologically neutral descriptions of geographical wonders; instead, they were active tools of white cultural authority.

Other historians have acknowledged the guidebook’s role in the tourist industry.³⁹ Richard Gassan is the first scholar to study these guidebooks in great depth, arguing that guidebooks helped develop the “cultural infrastructure” of tourist sites.⁴⁰ In the nineteenth century, a site’s cultural infrastructure consisted of the historical, literary, and aesthetic mythology of the landscape. Developed by authors and artists, and promoted by those in the tourist industry, this cultural infrastructure provided each site with a history and story that attracted middle-class travellers. While Gassan’s work lays a critical foundation for the study of antebellum guidebooks, this chapter explores how guidebook

³⁸ Gideon Davison, *The Traveller’s Guide Through the Middle and Northern States* (Saratoga Springs, NY: G.M. Davison, 1840), introduction.

³⁹ See Sears, *Sacred Places*; Brown, *Inventing New England*; Aron, *Working at Play*; Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*.

⁴⁰ Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 6.

authors established this cultural infrastructure in the Catskills at the level of discourse. I examine both the production of these books, and their authors' citations and appropriations of other literature and lore, including Revolutionary War histories, Native American folklore, and Washington Irving's short stories. I also analyze a popular 1828 satirical guidebook by James Kirke Paulding, which highlights the pervasiveness of the genre. I argue that antebellum guidebooks were a distinctive literary genre that stood on the cusp of multiple forms of popular nineteenth-century publications, including almanacs, gazetteers, road books, travel narratives, and even novels. Yet the genre was unique in its role within a larger nationalist project that celebrated white American expansion and settlement. Just as antebellum politicians, industrialists, and writers touted the value of white westward development and settlement across what they depicted as an empty, uninhabited continent ready for the taking, guidebook authors also promoted these ideals through a similar narrative within the leisure landscape. In developing a cultural and historical narrative geared towards white middle-class tourists, guidebook authors helped write whiteness into the American landscape, textually and visually marginalizing local peoples and histories outside of their narratives.

Codification and Commodification in Print: The Guidebook Genre

As leisure travel in America evolved from the elite leisure travel of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the commercialized, middle-class tourism of the antebellum era, guidebooks served as useful transitional texts.⁴¹ In the early nineteenth century, the gentry of the eighteenth century gave way to what Richard

⁴¹ For more on this transition to commercialized tourism, see Mackintosh, "Ticketed Through."

Bushman has called a more “dilute gentry associated with respectability.”⁴² This new middle or middling class, made up of successful farmers, artisans, small merchants, schoolteachers, and a variety of professionals, sought to clearly distinguish themselves from the lower classes, who they feared would infiltrate and disrupt their social station. One way of displaying one’s socioeconomic position was through participating in the most popular forms of tourism, and a guidebook provided a manual for those entering a form of leisure once reserved for the elite.

Guidebooks were printed and published with a middle-class tourist audience clearly in mind. These were inexpensive, pocket-sized products; tourists were supposed to carry their guidebooks with them not only while planning their trips, but also on the trips themselves. While their size and rough quality (they often had light cardboard bindings and cheap, uncut paper) made them easily transportable, the inexpensive productions were also affordable for the middle-class tourist. These texts served as useful guides for the middle-class tourist who sought to enter the unfamiliar and once solely elite practice of touring. As Gassan explains, early guidebooks targeted “the striver, a newly wealthy traveler unfamiliar with the ‘fashionable’ routes and sites...not a member of the polished elite.”⁴³ Gideon Davison’s 1821 guidebook title, *The Fashionable Tour*, suggests that the book is aimed at those unfamiliar with but desirous to become part of the “fashionable,” leisure tourist society.⁴⁴ Theodore Dwight even identifies these up-and-coming tourists in the preface to his guidebook, explaining that the book is for

⁴² Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), xv.

⁴³ Gassan, “The First American Tourist Guidebooks,” 55.

⁴⁴ Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 76.

tourists who, “during the pleasant seasons of the year, are strangers of wealth and taste,” and are looking for useful information to help them navigate the leisure landscape.⁴⁵

Guidebook authors wrote with the goal of engaging a new class of tourists, thereby expanding the recreational tourist industry to accommodate those who sought entry into “fashionable” society.

Through a structure that drew on other trusted nineteenth-century genres, and with a particular emphasis on authority and accuracy, guidebooks developed into a distinctive literary genre that provided novice travelers with the information and skills needed to navigate the new touristic landscape. Yet, perhaps counterintuitively, the guidebook genre of the antebellum period bears little resemblance to the contemporaneous, wildly popular travel narrative genre of the same era. By the 1820s, both British and American writers had published dozens of books detailing their tours of the United States, and the *Fashionable Tour* in particular. These travel writings typically offered a chronological narrative of an individual’s journey through various towns, cities, and scenic sites.⁴⁶

While travelers could read these narratives on their own trips as a way of learning what sites to visit, the texts were also read by “armchair travelers” – those who wished to read about, but not visit, the sites described. Their narrative structure allowed travel literature to blur the line between informative text and entertaining story.

⁴⁵ Theodore Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (New York: Wilder & Campbell, 1825), iii.

⁴⁶ Both Jane L. Mesick and, more recently, Robin Jarvis, provide extensive account of travel books on North America, with a focus on their reception by British readers. Jane Mesick, *The English Traveller in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970), Jarvis, *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel*.

Guidebook authors of the early nineteenth century either eschewed or drastically altered many of the literary conventions of the travel narrative. For example, antebellum travel narratives are typically first-person accounts of a particular travel experience; these texts place the recording consciousness at the center of their narratives, dwelling at length on sense impressions and idiosyncratic reflections. In these texts, the tour is important, but the *traveler* is the central subject. In contrast, guidebook authors eliminated themselves almost completely from the narrative, placing the *tour* at the center of the text. Written primarily in third person, guidebooks offer advice for the reader's tour, rather than recounting their own tourist experiences. Typical passages give guidance explicitly to the traveller-reader, such as "[the site is] worthy of [the traveller's] attention," or "after gratifying his curiosity and taste with scenes ...the traveller will return to Catskill, to take the next steam-boat."⁴⁷ Occasionally, authors shift the narrative voice into first-person plural, such that the narrator becomes a literal companion for the reader on his journey. Henry Dilworth Gilpin's *A Northern Tour*, for example, fluctuates between explicit instructions such as "the traveller may proceed to New-York" and descriptions of a mutual experience: "the country-seats and farms...rise successively into view, as we pass along [the Hudson]."⁴⁸ Here, the guidebook becomes the reader's companion on his journey, the "we" representing a print version of a tourist and his hired guide. This occasional use of first-person plural is thus distinct from the first-person-singular narration of travel narratives, in which the "I" is the traveller recounting his

⁴⁷ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825) 12, 18.

⁴⁸ Henry Dilworth Gilpin, *A Northern Tour: Being a Guide to Saratoga, Lake George, Niagara, Canada, Boston, &c. &c.* (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1825), 12, 38.

previous journey, which excludes the reader.⁴⁹ What might appear to be a confusing or unreliable narrative voice in fact established the guidebook's authoritative tone. Rather than serving as an entertaining narrative of a past experience for an armchair traveller, guidebooks performed as guides for a reader's current journey, typically serving as informative companions.

As a genre that embraces authority and information, the guidebook's closest historical antecedent is not the travel narrative, but the gazetteer. Gazetteers were extremely popular in the early national and antebellum periods. Like guidebooks, gazetteers define specific geographic regions through historical, geographic, and cultural information. Gazetteers break a particular region into sub-regions (counties, states, or countries), providing a paragraph or more of description on each. Similarly, guidebooks provide essential information and data to inform the reader's own tourist experience. Most guidebook authors followed a well-regulated formula for the type of information provided on each location of the Tour. For example, for every city and town mentioned, guidebook authors include empirical details related to the touring experience, including times and fares for transportation, descriptions of hotels and boarding houses, and recommendations for local tourist sites. Dwight's description of Albany in his 1825 edition of *The Northern Traveller* is a typical example. The one-page summary is divided into three sections, each related to a different aspect of the tourist industry: one on local

⁴⁹ Occasionally authors did struggle to navigate the difference between the guidebook genre and the travel narrative. As Gassan points out, the first edition of Davison's *The Fashionable Tour* included the subtitle "A trip...in the summer of 1821," reflecting the author's attempt to place the text within the travel narrative genre. However, he eliminated the subtitle in all subsequent editions, removing this vestige of the travel narrative genre from the guidebook. Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 117.

inns, another on transportation routes to and from Albany, and a third on recommended tourist sites (the State House and a local bank with a nearby museum).⁵⁰ An excerpt from his description of various inns demonstrates his straightforward writing style and his focus on both comfort and practical, monetary concerns:

[After a list of names of inns in the area] The best houses in Albany are large and well kept, and the stranger will find excellent accommodations, provided the city is not too much filled by the session of the legislature, or some other extraordinary occurrence. The charges however are very high in this city, and form a mighty contrast with the moderate demands for food, lodging, &c. in the inns along the course of the canal, and in the canal boats themselves.⁵¹

In two sentences, Dwight describes the quality of the accommodations, the ease of finding an available room, and the costs in the city as compared to other locations. This kind of concise, pragmatic description permeates the guidebook.

Guidebook authors occasionally conveyed the informative nature of their texts through the sheer detail of maps and images. Dwight's 1828 edition of *The Northern Traveller*, for example, contains multiple maps detailing route of the Fashionable Tour. Each map includes not only the locations of nearby towns and tourist sites, but also mileage from New York City, so that tourists could plan their journey from the most common starting point of the Tour (Figure 1.1). These maps work much in the same way as the multiple charts in Dwight's book, which document distances from various cities. Both text and map focus on data and information to serve as an authority for the tourist.

Some guidebook maps were so informative as to be almost unintelligible for a tourist. While the first edition of Davison's *The Fashionable Tour* contains no images,

⁵⁰ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), 19-20.

⁵¹ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), 19.

the third edition from 1828 begins with a large fold-out map, “The Tourist’s Map of the State of New York” (Figure 1.2). While the map contains useful information to tourists, such as the location of the Catskills and the Pine Orchard Mountain House (a popular resort located in the Catskills), it also holds a variety of extraneous information. The map is hand-colored to highlight each county in New York, and the main towns within each county. Also included are roads between each labeled town. The bottom of the map contains profiles of both the Erie and the Champlain canals, with detailed chart mapping each canal’s height and distance. The result is a busy map that provides both useful and superfluous information to the tourist. While this might appear to be overwhelming and unnecessary, detailed maps allowed antebellum guidebook authors to tout the informative nature of their publications.

Some early guidebook authors felt the need to justify this emphasis on information over narrative. Dwight explains in his preface that he describes each location “with such brevity as not to be prolix,” unlike other previously published texts on tourist regions, which are “too prolix for the convenience of a traveller.”⁵² Dwight’s to-the-point narrative thus allowed the reader – who, as Dwight explains, is an active “traveller” – to easily access necessary information to prepare for his journey, without necessarily wading through extraneous detail.

In their focus on providing useful and concise information, guidebooks served as a manual for navigating the commercial world of tourism. The “market transactions” as described by Mackintosh, which came to define tourism beginning in the 1820s, are

⁵² Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), iii, iv.

entrenched in these guidebooks. Information on steamboat and canal packets, stagecoach schedules, and accommodations are all included to aid the reader in selecting the most affordable, convenient route. As noted previously in Davison's description of Albany, guidebooks provided detail on the costs of each accommodation, restaurant, and form of transportation. Guidebook authors even encouraged readers to consider guidebooks as commodities that were just as critical to the tourist experience as a steamboat or stagecoach ticket. Theodore Dwight introduces his guidebook with a list of books and maps related to the Fashionable Tour, encouraging readers to purchase "a supply of such books and maps as will be necessary on the route he intends to travel." He continues:

...and the advantages which they will afford him can hardly be estimated except by those who know their value by experience. By directing him to the best roads and inns they will contribute materially to his comfort; and by the information they contain, much expense is often avoided, so that the purchase will often prove friendly to his purse as well as to his time.⁵³

As texts that provided "value" and useful fiscal information, guidebooks became not only sources of information but strategies for cost-effective luxury in the novel world of American leisure travel. For a middle-class tourist, this was perhaps one of the most valuable assets of the guidebook. Guidebooks thus served as critical texts – sometimes even textual forms of human guides – for navigating the commercialized American tourist experience.

Guidebook authors adamantly insisted that the information in their texts is accurate, establishing a sense of authority and credibility for their readers. The promise of reliability was common in gazetteers in the previous decades. Gazetteer authors, like

⁵³ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), 5.

guidebook writers, presented their texts as informative, accurate works for those wishing to learn more about a particular region. They promised “authentic materials” and “accurate map[s].”⁵⁴ One gazetteer writer assures readers that, unlike other publications that were of “little dignity, and far less utility,” his text will provide the “best information” on every “County, Town, Village and Settlement.”⁵⁵ Like these gazetteers, nearly every guidebook contains a preface or introduction promising accurate travel information and truthful descriptions of the most popular tourist sites. Dwight’s 1825 preface to *The Northern Traveller*, for example, promises that “care has...been taken to collect the most recent accounts from that part of the country,” and that each tourist site will be described with “sufficient minuteness.”⁵⁶ In his introductory “Advertisement” to *A Northern Tour*, Gilpin insists on “accurately” collected information “formed from the best authorities on such subjects.”⁵⁷

Guidebook authors also plundered gazetteers to provide their own texts with the sense of authority promised in gazetteers. Guidebook writers often referenced, quoted, and directly lifted passages from some of the most popular American gazetteers and geographies from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the introductory advertisement to *A Northern Tour*, Gilpin praises gazetteer writer Spafford, noting the “vast mass of information in the works of Mr. Spafford, a gentleman who has collected, with extraordinary diligence and accuracy, an immense number of useful facts, relative at

⁵⁴ Horatio Gates Spafford, *Gazetteer of State of New-York* (Albany, NY: H.C. Southwick, 1813), title page.

⁵⁵ Spafford, *Gazetteer*, preface.

⁵⁶ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), iii.

⁵⁷ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), iii.

once to [the region's] history, antiquities, institutions, geography, and commerce."⁵⁸ He directly cites Spafford and information from his *Gazetteer* on topics ranging from the mineral deposits in West Bloomfield to the commercial success of Port Genesee.⁵⁹ George Temple's *The American Tourist's Pocket Companion* concludes with a list of specific travel itineraries "compiled from *Morse's Gazetteer*."⁶⁰ A.T. Goodrich's *The Traveller's Guide* even contains a passage about a local armory directly quoted from *Morse's Gazetteer*.⁶¹ Authors like Gilpin, Temple, and Goodrich all modeled their texts upon gazetteers, directly incorporated these texts into their own works, and even recommended maps from specific gazetteers for their tourist readers. For readers who had come to equate gazetteers with accuracy and authority, seeing references to the most popular gazetteers underscored the guidebook's own authority and reliability.

Guidebook authors also promised readers only the latest accounts of the sites along the Fashionable Tour. Dwight, for example, claims that previously published guidebooks, while "valuable works," had become "antiquated by time."⁶² By the end of his own guidebook, Dwight's guidebook becomes "antiquated" itself, and the author insists the reader purchase "future editions" that will be both more detailed and more up-to-date.⁶³ While many of these claims are obvious marketing strategies to encourage tourists to purchase a particular text, the promise of timeliness represents the guidebook

⁵⁸ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), introductory advertisement.

⁵⁹ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 54.

⁶⁰ George Temple, *The American Tourist's Pocket Companion* (New York: D. Longworth, 1812), 6.

⁶¹ Goodrich, A.T. *The Traveller's Guide, in New England* (New York: A.T. Goodrich, 1823), 4-5.

⁶² Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), iv.

⁶³ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), iv.

authors' attempts to define and codify the tourist landscape. In presenting their material as objective and timely, guidebook authors insisted that their texts were the ultimate authorities on the region. Thus, unlike travel literature, guidebooks were not meant to be permanent literary efforts. New annual editions (or at least the promise of new editions) made them obsolete each year. In this effort to provide accurate and timely information, guidebook authors were far more similar to the gazetteer than the travel narrative.

In spite of their pretense of objectivity, these systematic presentations of landscape data were anything but ideologically neutral.⁶⁴ In embracing the systematic and ephemeral format of the gazetteer, guidebooks embodied popular antebellum notions of settlement, improvement, and expansion. Guidebook authors insisted their texts were up-to-date in their depictions of the American tourist landscape, with the most current transportation timetables, descriptions of hotels and inns, and data on the geographic size and population of various towns and cities. The annual editions of guidebooks reflected this desire to continually define and redefine the American landscape and note its apparently continuous changes and improvements. As Dwight remarks in his sixth edition of *The Northern Traveller*, his new edition has “undergone a most thorough revision, as the numerous and important changes in the country required.”⁶⁵ Antebellum America was a period of “improvement” in all senses of the word – technologically, economically, and

⁶⁴ The gazetteer, by extension, is also a politically fraught genre. The cultural politics of the gazetteer remain to be explored in more detail by future scholars, although some have begun this work. See, for example, Conevery Bolton Valencius et al, “Science in Early America: Print Culture and the Sciences of Territoriality,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 36 (2016): 73-123.

⁶⁵ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (New York: John P. Haven, 1841), iii.

communicatively.⁶⁶ New and improved forms of transportation spread across the landscape, expanding further westward as Americans began to settle across the continent; national markets spread along these transportation lines, nationalizing ideas of capital and commodification; and information spread rapidly among cities, towns, and rural areas, transforming what people knew and how they knew it. Antebellum Americans hailed the concept of improvement, particularly what it meant for the concept of American nationalism and expansion. The term “manifest destiny” was not coined until 1845, but the concept of Anglo occupation of the North American continent became an important way to describe American nationhood in the antebellum era, as calls for an “empire for liberty” and the forced relocation of Native Americans marked the beginning of America’s acquisition and appropriation of the West.⁶⁷ The concepts of improvement, settlement, and expansion were thus firmly embedded in American culture by the 1820s. Guidebooks served as part and parcel of the early nineteenth century American ideology of the necessity and inevitability of white acquisition of the landscape in the name of improvement, Anglo settlement, and territorial expansion.

⁶⁶ While George Rogers Taylor explained this period as one of a “transportation revolution,” Daniel Walker Howe identifies the period as one of a “communications revolution” in which Americans embraced commercial, economic, and political change. Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*.

⁶⁷ There is still some conflict about who first coined the term “manifest destiny”: while typically it is credited to John L. O’Sullivan of the *Democratic Review*, others have begun to credit journalist Jane Storm. See Howe, Linda Hudson, *Mistress of Manifest Destiny* (Austin, TX: Texas State Historical Association, 2001). For more on the rise of the concept of manifest destiny in the antebellum era, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

With Pen in Hand: Guidebook Readership

While William Mackintosh accurately explains how antebellum tourism was passive in its commodified and standardized form, reading tourist guidebooks could in fact be a very active experience. Tourists were meant to incorporate their guidebooks into their own tourist experiences. Authors encouraged readers to bring the texts with them on their tours; Theodore Dwight, for example, promises readers that his guidebook is useful for “constant reference” on their tours, encouraging continuous use of his text. The catalogue of information on the tourist industry and the region - including tables with transportation information, reviews of hotels, and scientific descriptions of various natural wonders – all this was meant to provide tourists with on-the-ground information, rendering any other forms of research or planning unnecessary.

An examination of marginalia in a dozen guidebooks from the period reveals that readers did in fact actively engage with their guidebooks on their tours. While many readers wrote their names on the inside covers of their guidebooks, others went even further in their engagement with the text. For example, on the title page of one sixth edition copy of Dwight’s *The Northern Traveller*, the owner lists what appears to be a packing list for a particular tour, including “1 cotton waistcoat,” “8 pocket handkerchiefs,” and “4 pairs...socks.”⁶⁸ On the same page is a handwritten list of distances between various cities in New York, as copied from various pages within the guidebook. Other guidebooks contain handwritten stars and other marks denoting

⁶⁸ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1841), Massachusetts Historical Society.

particular cities or sites that readers either visited or planned to visit.⁶⁹ Some readers go beyond marking particular sites, and even underline particular passages within those site descriptions. One edition of Gilpin's *A Northern Tour* even contains a hand-drawn illustration of Table Rock at Niagara Falls.⁷⁰ It is unclear whether the small image was sketched while at the site or in anticipation of an upcoming tour, but the artist clearly had the guidebook's text on his mind as he made the illustration; the guidebook includes multiple paragraphs on Table Rock within a multi-page section on Niagara Falls. Readers thus consumed these guidebooks carefully, and engaged with them in ways that helped them prepare their own individual tourist experiences. They thus played an active role in defining the tourist landscape themselves. In checking off sites visited and even illustrating particular tourist scenes, readers put their own written mark on the text, identifying and claiming it for themselves.

Sometimes readers actively pushed against and questioned the way guidebook authors had codified the landscape. Some readers revised general reviews or descriptions of popular tourist sites. For example, in a fourth edition copy of Davison's *The Fashionable Tour*, a reader notes the various hotels he stayed at, some of which are not mentioned in the guidebook. He also notes in the section on Chester, Vermont, that the town has "bad dinners."⁷¹ One reader also revised a description of a particular tourist site

⁶⁹ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1841), Massachusetts Historical Society. Other texts marked with stars, asterisks, and other kinds of marginal notation include Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), Boston Athenaeum; and David Murdoch, ed., *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains* (Catskill, NY: J. Joesbury, 1847), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷⁰ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), The Rare Book Collection, Boston Athenaeum.

⁷¹ Gideon Davison, *The Fashionable Tour*, fourth edition (New York: G.M. Davison, 1830), 323, The Rare Book Collection, Boston Athenaeum.

in Dwight's *The Northern Traveller*. In a section called "Passage up the Hudson," Dwight includes a description of a monument placed where Alexander Hamilton fell in his duel with Aaron Burr. The reader places a handwritten asterisk next to this description, and then writes at the bottom of the page "but it has been removed within a few years to Trinity Church Yard."⁷² These readers used their own experiences of these tourist sites to expand and update information in their books.

Other readers directly rewrote or clarified the way the authors depicted the physical landscape – in particular, the distances between various tourist sites. In the same copy of Dwight's *The Northern Traveller* with the packing list, a reader has corrected a number of inaccuracies within the text, particularly related to distances between sites. In Dwight's table listing the distance from Schenectady to Utica, which reads "91 ½ miles," the reader has written above "90 miles only."⁷³ The almost alarming precision of this reader's revision speaks to the guidebook's critical role in providing accurate information for tourists. Other readers even restructured the tables of distances to clarify unclear or inaccurate information. In the same fourth edition of Davison's *The Fashionable Tour*, a reader revised a distances chart called "From Saratoga Springs to Boston," which lists distances between towns in New York and towns in Massachusetts. The reader penciled in a dividing line between the cities and towns in New York and those in Massachusetts, labeling each new subsection accordingly.⁷⁴ While these in-text revisions may appear to reject or rewrite the guidebook's depiction of the landscape, these moments of editing are

⁷² Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1841), 8, Massachusetts Historical Society

⁷³ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1841), 29, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁷⁴ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1830), 323, Boston Athenaeum

in fact a celebration of the guidebook's systematization of the tourist landscape. Correcting distances (even within 1 ½ miles) reflects a desire to view the landscape as a structured and uniform space, and reviewing a town's accommodations represents a desire to embrace and perfect a codified understanding of the tourist landscape. By making the guidebook even more accurate and up-to-date, readers were perfecting a system that held their faith.

Thus, the relationship between guidebook author and reader was at times a reciprocal one; authors offered a systematized description of the tourist landscape, which tourists actively engaged with and even perfected. Yet other guidebook readers did not engage in this kind of marginalia; they did not correct or expand upon information in the guidebook, and instead trusted guidebooks to provide all the necessary information on each site. For many novice, middle-class tourists, guidebooks were the only means of learning about the sites they visited. What authors chose to include and exclude, therefore, directly shaped readers' understandings of the American tourist landscape. So for the thousands of middle-class tourists traversing the American Grand Tour in the 1820s and 1830s, the tourist landscape was one that was easily understood, a place where every tourist site came equipped with one concise paragraph of essential information. Whether they relied blindly on their guidebooks or made detailed additions and revisions, tourists were critical to the success of the guidebook industry's ordering of the landscape.

Codifying History: Catskills Tourism and the Revolutionary War

While guidebook authors provided a variety of maps, tables, charts, and concise descriptions of tourist infrastructure for middle-class readers, these forms of brief and

objective information were not their only means of codifying the landscape for racially marked, nationalistic purposes. To encourage middle-class men and women to participate in the tourist industry in the first place, guidebook authors first needed to entice readers to visit particular sites. To do this, guidebook authors sought to develop the story, the “cultural infrastructure,” of the regions they promoted.

The primary way in which guidebook authors developed the story of tourist sites was to establish each site’s deep, white cultural history, and to celebrate the nationalistic action of white figures. By detailing a site or a region’s historical value, guidebook authors validated the site as worthy of visiting. In particular, guidebook authors included countless references to sites related to the Revolutionary War. This military history was critical to defining the landscape: not only was this history valuable in that it was a well-known and recent past, but it also embodied what the American tourist industry sought to do in the nineteenth century – to establish America as a culturally significant country with a vital role in transatlantic history and current events. The Revolutionary War sites and stories guidebook authors chose to include in their guidebooks provided entertainment and points of interest for tourists, while also fueling the rising patriotic sentiment that grew out of the War of 1812. As Dwight explains in the conclusion of his 1841 edition of *The Northern Traveller*, tourism allows Americans to “place a proper value on our national institutions and national union.”⁷⁵ In defining the American landscape for middle-class tourists, guidebook authors wholeheartedly embraced antebellum national sentiment.

⁷⁵ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1841), 243.

Often, references to Revolutionary War sites are no more than a brief footnote or parenthetical phrase. Davison's *The Fashionable Tour* relies entirely on Revolutionary War facts and mythologies to embellish the author's practical descriptions of each tourist location. For example, amid his descriptions of the springs, hotels, and social halls in Saratoga Springs, he briefly notes the date and location of the Battle of Saratoga.⁷⁶ Other times, however, authors include much longer narratives of various Revolutionary War events. One of the most popular stories of the Revolution reiterated by guidebook authors depicting the Catskill region was that of American defector Benedict Arnold, and British Major John André, who was hanged by the Americans for conspiring with Arnold to take control of West Point. Authors typically recounted this story within a larger segment in the guidebook on West Point, the United States Military Academy.

Longer guidebook accounts of these historical events often deviated from the typically concise, objective language of the guidebook. Unlike their general descriptions of towns and details on transportation and accommodations, guidebook authors created a "folk history" about the sites to which people traveled, embedding them in the rhetoric of oral tradition while still promising accurate history.⁷⁷ In the section on West Point in *The Fashionable Tour*, Davison includes a seven-page description (one of the longest narrative passages in the guidebook) of the traitorous meeting at West Point between the "sordid" Benedict Arnold and the British "gallant young officer" John André, as well as

⁷⁶ Gideon Davison, *The Fashionable Tour*, (G.M. Davison, 1822), 82.

⁷⁷ Helen Loschky has used the term "folk history" to define history steeped in folk, but often lacking in specific folk sources. Helen M. Loschky, "Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker's History of New York*: Folk History as Literary Form," Ph.D. diss. (Brown University, 1970).

André's ultimate capture and hanging outside of Tarrytown, New York.⁷⁸ While Davison's narrative begins with a number of basic facts surrounding André and his meeting with Arnold (including André's family history; details regarding his previous military successes; and the date, time, and location of his meeting with Arnold), Davison concludes the section with a story that slips from fact into folklore. He claims that André was buried in Tappan, New York under a "solitary cypress," and "on opening the remains, it was discovered that the roots of the cypress had entwined their branches around the skull of the deceased."⁷⁹ As Judith Richardson explains, this is a story of not only André, but also the cypress tree itself, which became a popular part of American mythology in the nineteenth century.⁸⁰ While André's body was in fact returned to Britain, as was the tree, the story of the roots entwining themselves around André's skull has little known basis in fact. This story, repeated in almost identical language in subsequent guidebooks, haunts and romanticizes an otherwise factual narrative of an historical event. Dwight's telling of the story in his 1825 guidebook similarly includes language common to romantic folklore. Dwight concludes the passage with the phrase, "There is scarcely a child to be found at this day" who hasn't mourned "the sorrowful tale" of André.⁸¹ As Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* and Robert Burns's "The Battle of

⁷⁸ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1822), 31, 34.

⁷⁹ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1822), 60-61.

⁸⁰ Although, as Judith Richardson explains, there is some discrepancy about the cypress. Some stories say the cypress in the story refers to the tree under which André was captured in Westchester, and others say it was the tree under which he was buried in Tappan. Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 146.

⁸¹ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825) 14.

Sherramuir” did for European landscapes, this story of André’s death created a romanticized mythology surrounding the American tourist landscape.⁸²

Guidebook authors use this folkloric language to depict events from other wars as well. In his description of a battle site from the French and Indian War just north of the Catskills, Davison describes a site called “*Bloody Pond*,” which he says is “so called from its waters having been crimsoned with the blood of the slain who fell in its vicinity, during a severe engagement in 1755. It is said, that skulls are found in the neighborhood of this pond, and the numerous others may be taken from the bottom.”⁸³ Like the legend of John Andre, this narrative slips quickly from fact – with the detail of the specific year of the battle – into folklore, particularly with the haunting legend of a lake of skulls. Drawing on the history of colonial America, this narrative provides a brief yet poignant legend to attract tourists to New York.

Authors also included descriptions of particular Revolutionary War battles whose sites lay along the Fashionable Route. While some of these passages contained descriptions of actual battles, many did not even emphasize the events of the battle, but instead focused on the physical details of the surrounding landscape. Part of the reason for this may have been to emphasize the antiquated quality of these sites and stories, to create some distance between the present and the not-so-distant past. For example,

⁸² The story of John André was simultaneously popularized and romanticized by contemporaneous publications such as Cooper’s *The Spy*, which tells a similar story to that of Arnold and André, which readers would instantly recognize. Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” even directly references André’s hanging and burial. Thus, guidebook authors both created lore around historical events, and emphasized the lore that readers would have already recognized through previous popular publications.

⁸³ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1825), 92.

descriptions of Fort Putnam as “ruins” that have become “silent and dilapidated” demonstrate the self-conscious desire to create an antiquated cultural infrastructure that paralleled the rich history of Europe and England’s historic sites along their own Grand Tours.⁸⁴ People visited battlegrounds because they were both picturesque and historical – one could express one’s national identity through an aesthetic appreciation of the landscape rather than a detailed knowledge of battlefield history.⁸⁵ Guidebook authors made Revolutionary War history into ancient folklore, and Revolutionary War battlefields and forts into ancient ruins, all in the attempt to develop a rich cultural infrastructure that celebrated the nationalistic actions of white, American figures.

Guidebook authors also explained directly to tourists why these sites from the Revolution would, or should, be of interest to them. Davison, Dwight, Gilpin, and others emphasized the symbolic nature of these sites as representations of American nationhood and the successful settlement of the landscape. In *The American Tourist’s Pocket Companion* (1812), George Temple explains that all readers should visit the Saratoga battlefield, “where the American bosom while glowing at the former success of his country, will if possessed of generous feeling, also heave a sigh to the memory of both those nations, who there ‘sleep the slumber of the brave.’”⁸⁶ Philip Stansbury similarly claims in his guidebook *A Pedestrian Tour* (1822) that “every American who loves his country, will view [historic battlegrounds] with interest, and either glory in the successes

⁸⁴ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 32.

⁸⁵ For more on battleground tourism, see Thomas A. Chambers, *Memories of War: Visiting Battlefields and Bonefields in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

⁸⁶ Temple, *The American Tourist’s Pocket Companion*, 58.

of his countrymen, or feel for the misfortunes.⁸⁷ Battlefields become spaces of reflection on American losses and successes, and places to recognize American national pride and sentiment. Rich narratives and picturesque depictions of Revolutionary War sites became another means of defining the landscape for the patriotic middle-class American.

Just as folklore is typically transmitted through oral communication, Revolutionary War stories in guidebooks were “passed down,” told as a compilation of quotations and citations of works by other authors.⁸⁸ For example, Davison embeds a paragraph-long quote about Captain André from William Allen’s 1809 biography in *The Fashionable Tour*’s description of André, and Gilpin quotes five paragraphs from historian David Ramsay’s 1789 *History of the United States*.⁸⁹ Davison’s passage on the surrender of the British at “Bemus’ Heights” (now known as Bemis Heights) is in fact a ten-page excerpt from General Wilkinson’s 1816 memoir.⁹⁰ Similar to the way in which authors referenced and quoted geographies and gazetteers to establish authority, citations, references to, and direct quotations of previously published texts lent credibility to these stories. And yet these quotes and citations go beyond establishing an accuracy and authority. This citation in fact emphasizes the folkloric nature of these narratives, suggesting (like oral lore) that this material belongs to nobody. It instead emerges from

⁸⁷ Philip Stansbury’s text is a cross between a first-person travel narrative and a guidebook. While the text is in first person and recounts one person’s travels through the United States (much in the way of a travel narrative), the text has a table of contents and paragraph-long descriptions of each tourist site, similar to a guidebook. Philip Stansbury, *A Pedestrian Tour of Two Thousand Three Hundred Miles in North America. To the Lakes—The Canadas—And the New-England States. Performed in the Autumn of 1821*. (New York: J.D. Myers & W Smith, 1822), v.

⁸⁸ See Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens, *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and their Traditions* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005), 1-2.

⁸⁹ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1822), 75; Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 58.

⁹⁰ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1822), 74-84.

the people, from the landscape, without a singular author. Through this combination of citation and folk language, the region's white, nationalist history became American lore.

Imposing a structure on the tourist landscape thus did not mean simply converting sites into dry statistics and concise descriptions of complex landscapes. It meant systematizing the landscape through the creation of a deep history steeped in lore; it meant developing and promoting a cultural infrastructure that tourists could recognize as distinctly American. This history-making functioned as a form of what Richardson calls "social memory" – a human history that created a sense of cultural infrastructure within the tourist landscape.⁹¹ Authors emphasized and romanticized the Revolutionary War history as a means of defining the landscape for the nation.

Codifying Native American Lore for the White American Landscape

By defining the landscape through the history of the Revolution, guidebook authors inherently excluded histories of peoples living in and engaging with the landscape before the creation of the United States. Authors packaged a tourist landscape that celebrated the presence of white, middle-class American tourists at the expense of others. Yet ironically, one of the other most common ways they promoted this landscape was through the telling and retelling of Native American lore related to tourist sites. As Richard Slotkin and others have argued, nineteenth-century Americans appropriated Native American culture as a means of defining the United States.⁹² An examination of guidebook authors' appropriation of multiple Native American legends surrounding the

⁹¹ Richardson, *Possessions*, 3.

⁹² Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973).

Catskills reveals the way authors appropriated Native American mythology as a means of claiming the region for the white, middle-class tourist.

Guidebook authors' tendency to romanticize Native American legends was part of a common nineteenth-century trope of crafting what Gordon Sayre calls a "sense of precious melancholy," an aestheticization of sympathy of Native Americans.⁹³ By crafting a romantic narrative from the realities of Native American removal policies, authors created a literary catharsis, a recognition and ultimate erasure of past injustices. Like the story of John André and the cypress tree, most of these stories have little basis in fact, but take place in particular tourist locations. For example, both Davison's and Gilpin's guidebooks contain legends of Native Americans perishing at Cohoes Falls, a popular tourist site along the American Grand Tour route. In *The Fashionable Tour*, Davison tells a story of a lone Indian perishing "with true Indian heroism" in the Falls, while Gilpin's *A Northern Tour* details the narrative of a Native American's wife and child dying while he survives.⁹⁴ As stories of death (both of which became common in later guidebooks), these narratives place Native Americans, and the injustices done to them, decidedly in the past. Tales of Native American ghosts helped to absorb Native Americans into the lore of United States, thereby erasing Native Americans from the physical and cultural space.⁹⁵ Moreover, this narrative of sympathy provides a space for

⁹³ Gordon M. Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Montezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 4.

⁹⁴ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1822), 49; Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 58-59.

⁹⁵ As Renee Bergland explains in her analysis of "the Frontier Romance" in American literature, "Indian spectralization is the literary corollary to Indian Removal, removing Indians from American culture as they are removed from American territory." Renee L. Bergland, *The*

literary catharsis, what Sayre calls the “raising and casting out of emotion.”⁹⁶ This moment of sympathy followed by erasure ultimately casts Native Americans as symbols of a vague historical period, rather than living figures.

Guidebook authors also emphasize that these stories are embedded within the deep history of the region, further underscoring the Native Americans’ place in the past rather than the present. This language is common at the beginning of each narrative: Davison begins his Cohoes Falls story in *The Fashionable Tour*, “An old tradition states,” while Gilpin begins with “It is said that...”⁹⁷ These introductions insist that both stories have been told repeatedly through time, in the fashion of an ancient mythology or folklore. These narratives defined Native American identities as historical, timeless symbols, which bore little or no resemblance to their lived experiences.

In reality, Native Americans continued to live in the Catskill Mountain region, and other areas popularized by the tourist industry, throughout the antebellum area.⁹⁸ However, like the Cohoes narratives, most references to Native Americans in guidebooks emphasize their historical presence in the landscape, and their ultimate vanishing. Many of these historical references represent a complex, or at least sympathetic, depiction of Native Americans of the past. Gilpin, for example, includes a paragraph on the “magnanimous spirit” of Mohawk people who allied with white settlers in Albany after

National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects (Hanover, MA: University Press of New England, 2006), 65.

⁹⁶ Sayre, *The Indian Chief*, 4.

⁹⁷ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour* (1822), 75; Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 58.

⁹⁸ For more information on the complex history of Native Americans in the Catskill region, see Richardson, *Possessions*, and for details on the history of Mohicans in the region, see Shirley W. Dunn, *The River Indians: Mohicans Making History* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2009).

the 1690 massacre in Schenectady.⁹⁹ However, after noting the Mohawk's "affectionate sympathy" and "eloquence," Gilpin quickly notes that "The Mohawks, however, then the most powerful tribe of a powerful nation, have now disappeared from the world."¹⁰⁰ Similarly, guidebook authors point out cave drawings, carvings, earthenware, and other remains of ancient Native American culture, emphasizing the historical rather than the continued presence of Native Americans in the region. Gilpin describes a region where Algonquians "once had a village," the remains of which are only a few burying grounds and "hieroglyphics, cut on the trees."¹⁰¹ While guidebook authors occasionally admitted to the continued presence of Native Americans in the tourist region, these writers typically chose to either romanticize and make nostalgic their role as historical allies to white settlers, or simply convert them into ancient ruins within the landscape, placing them irredeemably in the past.

When authors did acknowledge present-day Native Americans in their depictions of tourist landscapes, it was only to explain how well particular Native Americans had assimilated to white, middle-class society. For example, in Dwight's description of the Oneida Nation in *The Northern Traveller* (1825), he explains that "while their decrease has been great," they have acquired the cultural and commercial habits of white settlers, now living in "decent and comfortable frame homes" and "gradually improving, by betaking themselves to agriculture."¹⁰² All that remains of the Nation, according to Gilpin, is "the name of the beautiful stream upon which is situated the town of

⁹⁹ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 85.

¹⁰⁰ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 85.

¹⁰¹ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 198.

¹⁰² Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), 36.

Schenectady.”¹⁰³ This portrayal of contemporaneous Native American culture served the guidebook authors’ depictions of the tourist landscape as one controlled and dominated by the white, middle-class tourist. Native Americans either existed as people well acculturated to the tourist’s own way of life, as archaeological sites worthy of the tourist’s gaze, or as scenic landmarks imbued with ancient history.¹⁰⁴ These narratives completely disavowed the very real, continued presence of Native Americans throughout the United States, and in the Catskill Mountain region in particular.

One example far to the northwest of the Catskills provides an apt illustration of how guidebooks visually disavowed the presence of Native Americans. A map of upstate New York from Dwight’s *The Northern Traveller* includes a Native American reservation for members of the Tuscarora tribe (Figure 1.3).¹⁰⁵ Whereas cities and large towns are marked with a cluster of small black squares, this reservation is labeled with an empty rectangle – the only use of such a symbol throughout the guidebook. This choice of symbols simultaneously recognizes and rejects the continued presence of Native Americans – they are set off from the rest of the region, existing in a blank space. The text describing the reservation is similar to the examples mentioned above – Dwight explains that “Christianity has been voluntarily adopted by them” and they have “handsome and well cultivated farms,” again emphasizing their integration into white

¹⁰³ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 85.

¹⁰⁴ Even when guidebook authors note the continued presence of Native Americans living on reservations, separate from white American culture and society, they depict their continued presence as a reminder of their slow and steady erasure from the region. Gilpin, for example, notes the presence of Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca reservations in the Hudson Valley region. However, he describes these as “few” and “small,” mere “remnants” of once much larger populations. As Gilpin concludes, these reservations demonstrate that “The Six Nations have lost their high character and elevated standing.” Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825) 112-113.

¹⁰⁵ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1826), 78.

American culture.¹⁰⁶ Yet the visual symbol reminds readers of their separation from the rest of American society. The reservation is a part of the tourist landscape only in so much as it is a place to admire the “preserve[d]...Indian fashions,” again emphasizing the *history* of Native Americans rather than their continued presence; the reservation is described as part of the past rather than a part of contemporary American culture.¹⁰⁷

Even when authors provided more detailed histories of Native Americans, they couched these Native American histories within the controlled language of white historians. For example, almost every antebellum guidebook quotes passages from Cadwallader Colden’s 1727 *History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, a detailed history of the Iroquois Confederacy of New York, which was popular throughout the nineteenth century. As a physician, scientist, and later politician (he would serve as colonial governor of the province of New York in the 1760s), Colden became the authority on the history of Native Americans in New York, and this authority extended into the nineteenth century with new editions of his book. Authors often quote passages or refer to the text to substantiate their own claims about the history of Native Americans. In his 1825 description of the Oneida nation, for example, Dwight summarizes Colden’s text, explaining that it is “the best and most interesting account of [the Oneida].”¹⁰⁸ Dwight also lists Colden’s book in his introduction, in a list of books “for those who may wish for more details concerning this state and Canada.”¹⁰⁹ Even a simple reference to

¹⁰⁶ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1826), 78.

¹⁰⁷ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1826), 78.

¹⁰⁸ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), 34.

¹⁰⁹ Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (1825), 6.

Colden's account provided guidebook authors with the authority and accuracy they desired when depicting Native American history.

Occasionally, guidebook authors turned to Colden to cite particular Native American speeches or language. Henry Gilpin includes a description of a speech by a group of Mohawk chieftains, whose language is "preserved by Mr. Colden."¹¹⁰ In the speech, Mohawk people who were allied with the colonists encourage the colonists of Albany to remain in town rather than leave after the attack on Schenectady by allied French and Native American warriors. Rather than naming the chieftains giving the speech, Gilpin includes direct quotes of Colden's own citations of the Native American speakers, even though Colden himself does not acknowledge where he discovered these passages. Gilpin even misquotes the speech as recorded by Colden, reordering sentences and clauses, and changing pronouns. For example, he changes Colden's quote, "this will give Heart to a dastardly enemy" to "this will give courage to your dastardly enemy."¹¹¹ These seemingly minute revisions emphasize the complete removal of Native American voices from Native American history; the chieftains' speech is enveloped in not one, but two layers of white authors' editing and revisions. This literary act aesthetically dispossesses Native Americans, both historic and contemporary, from the landscape, emphasizing white possession of not only the region, but of language as well.¹¹² Native

¹¹⁰ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 85.

¹¹¹ Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, vol.1 (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1904), 145; Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 85.

¹¹² For more on the "aesthetic of dispossession," see Laura Murray, "The Aesthetic of Dispossession: Washington Irving and Ideologies of (De)Colonization in the Early Republic," *ALH* (1996): 205-31.

Americans were a part of regional lore, a piece of history to be retold through the lens of white authors.

Guidebook authors included this Native American lore, history, and even references to their contemporaneous presence within the landscape for multiple reasons. An emphasis on the demise or decreased presence of non-white populations in the region helped authors sell the landscape to tourists as one that was uninhabited, existing only for the tourist's pleasure. It also offered reassurance to anxious travelers who feared the presence of the hostile, "violent savage" in the tourist landscape. Gilpin even feels the need to promise his readers that, while "the history of our frontier still presents us, from time to time, with...scenes of ferocious warfare; but we trust that the period is rapidly approaching, when the tomahawk shall for ever be buried, and the red and the white man will know each other only as brothers."¹¹³ While the beginning of this passage provides a titillating tale of potential violence and danger, the second half reassures tourists of their general safety and security. Although the idea of white travellers and Native Americans being "as brothers" seems to encourage coexistence between the two races, Gilpin's hope that "the tomahawk shall for ever be buried" emphasizes an end to Native American violence and destruction, rather than an end to white settlement, expansion, and destruction of traditional Native American ways of living.

Yet beyond allaying fears, Native American mythology also provided guidebooks with rich, historical lore. Like stories of Revolutionary War battles and events, Native American tales provided a deep history for the region. Guidebook authors applied the

¹¹³ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 84.

language of Anglo-American folklore to Native American stories and emphasized tales of contemporary Native American assimilation. Native American histories through white publications, histories told by white writers, narratives couched in the deep past or celebrated as embedded in white culture – these stories provided cultural infrastructure for tourists without disrupting the white, middle-class domination of the tourist landscape. As Sayre has said of Native American tales in American theater, stories of Native American loss and tragedy were “opposed to the manifest destiny of the American republic yet inspirational for it.”¹¹⁴ Guidebook authors told stories of Native American loss and death as a means of defining and packaging the contemporary landscape for the white, middle-class tourist.

The Codification and Commodification of Irving

Guidebook authors relied on Revolutionary War lore and Native American mythology to establish the tourist landscape for the white, middle-class tourist. Along with Native American and Revolutionary War narratives, guidebooks included excerpts and allusions to American literature that took place in particular tourist regions. Throughout the antebellum era, guidebook authors most frequently made use of Washington Irving’s tales that were set in sites along the American Grand Tour, particularly “Rip Van Winkle,” which takes place at the base of the Catskill Mountains, and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” set in a valley just beyond Tarrytown, New York. This emphasis on Irving’s texts is due in large part to Irving’s celebrity during this early period of guidebook publication. By 1825 – the year of the first guidebook’s reference to

¹¹⁴ Sayre, *The Indian Chief*, 35.

Washington Irving – Irving had become the most prominent American writer, both within the United States and abroad. Middle-class guidebook readers would have been familiar not only with Irving’s *Sketch-Book* (which included “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”), but also his satirical magazine *Salmagundi*, and other popular works like *Bracebridge Hall* and *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. Thus, part of the reason for Irving’s textual presence in these guidebooks is simply because of his celebrity and the familiarity readers would have had with his name and stories.

Moreover, “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” are particularly useful texts for developing a Dutch – and thus white – cultural history for the tourist region, similar to the Revolutionary War stories and Native American lore. Irving places both texts not only in specific American locations, but also in a deep, distant past. Irving immediately establishes the historicity of “Rip Van Winkle” with a proclamation that the story was researched and recorded by an historian, Diedrich Knickerbocker. Knickerbocker begins the tale by explaining the following story took place “many years since,” immediately placing the story in the region’s history.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Irving attributes “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” to “the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker.”¹¹⁶ Like the beginning of “Rip Van Winkle,” the narrator states that the tale takes place “in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since.”¹¹⁷ This statement is an overtly tongue-in-cheek attempt to create a history surrounding an emerging country; nonetheless, it establishes the Catskill Mountain region

¹¹⁵ Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 34.

¹¹⁶ Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 291.

¹¹⁷ Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 291.

as a place with an authentic American history. Irving even embeds other popular mythologies surrounding the landscape into “Sleepy Hollow.” The narrator, for example, explains that the cypress tree under which John André was buried had become a “kind of landmark,” a site which had accumulated a number of myths of “strange sights and doleful lamentations.”¹¹⁸ Irving sought to make his fictional stories appear truthful so that they would “proliferate in regional imaginations,” as Richardson explains.¹¹⁹ Just as Rip Van Winkle becomes what James Buzard calls a “maker of legends, a teller of tales about timeless times,” so does Irving, weaving together make-believe regional lore to create an authentic national mythology that actively marginalizes non-white people.¹²⁰

Guidebook authors used a number of literary techniques to embed these mythological stories into the history of specific tourist sites in order to attract tourists. One common, although seemingly counterintuitive, strategy employed by guidebook authors involved dissociating Irving’s stories from the author and the original publication. Of course, readers would instantly recognize Irving’s stories even if authors did not attribute the passages to him. However, removing Irving from the narrative allowed authors to embed Irving’s mythologies into the history of specific tourist sites, increasing the apparent authority and authenticity of the stories. Thus, “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” transformed from fictional stories published in Irving’s *The Sketch-Book* to legends of the Catskill Mountain region. For example, guidebook authors often simply embed a passage from the story into the text of the guidebook, without

¹¹⁸ Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 292.

¹¹⁹ Richardson, *Possessions*, 77.

¹²⁰ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 71.

acknowledging Irving as the original author. Gilpin does just this in his description of Tarrytown in *A Northern Tour*. He begins his portrayal of Tarrytown with the following:

Ten miles above Phillipsburg is *Tarrytown*, a village of considerable trade with New-York. The name was given to it, we are told,* in former days, by the good housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. And its neighbourhood is now familiar to the traveller, as the scene from which the hapless Ichabod Crane was driven, by the haughty frowns of the beautiful but hard-hearted Katrina Van Tassel, the blustering rivalry of Brom Bones, and the more than mortal vengeance of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.¹²¹

The second sentence of this passage is almost a direct quote from the opening paragraph of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” yet Gilpin does not include quotation marks, or even mention Irving or the story title. The only reference to the story’s original author is the asterisk after “told,” which leads the reader to a note at the bottom of the page that simply states “Sketch Book, II. 55.” This reference is removed from the body of the text, and does not even specify which, if any, part of the text is a direct quote. Flowing seamlessly into the rest of the paragraph, Irving’s sentence appears to be Gilpin’s own. With a lack of quotation marks and direct references to Irving, the audience of the text changes: the “we” in the sentence is no longer Diedrich Knickerbocker and his readers, but Gilpin and *his* readers, the tourists. Thus, Irving’s fictionalized history of Tarrytown becomes a part of Gilpin’s history of the tourist region. Richardson has argued that Irving removes himself from his Catskill Mountain region stories through frame narratives in order to set up the perpetuity of his stories.¹²² Guidebook authors took this one step further, removing the narrator from the text, and embedding the story in the language of the guidebook. In

¹²¹ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 22.

¹²² Richardson, *Possessions*, 76.

becoming part of a supposedly accurate, factual text, Irving's tale becomes indisputable, authentic history.

Guidebook authors would embed Irving's stories into the history of the region by removing Irving from the narrative, but maintaining the narrator's presence as a means of identifying an authentic historical source. For example, in his multi-page descriptions of the passage up the Hudson River from New York City to the Catskills, Gilpin explains his decision to cite a passage from Irving's *History of New-York*:

The passage, of eight miles, through this lake [the Tappan Sea] is exceedingly interesting, and might demand at our hands some delineation of its beauties; but this has been already done by the enchanting pen of the venerable historian of New-York, who imparts a classic feeling to every scene he has described, and whose description the traveller will thank us for inserting.¹²³

At the end of a two-paragraph quotation from Irving's description of Peter Stuyvesant's voyage up the Hudson, an asterisk leads the reader to the note at the bottom of the page, “*Knickerbocker, II. 103.”¹²⁴ The “venerable historian of New-York” in this case is not Washington Irving, the author of *History of New-York*, but instead Diedrich Knickerbocker, the ostensible narrator of Irving's text. Removing Irving from the text, Gilpin relies on the popularity of *A History of New-York* to interest tourists in the passage; as a popular American publication of the 1820s, readers would have recognized the reference to the historian Knickerbocker and Gilpin's tongue-and-cheek reference to his venerability. At the same time, the footnote simultaneously gives credibility to the Knickerbocker's history by emphasizing the historical nature of the text, rather than its fictional nature and true author. This method of partially citing Irving's works served to

¹²³ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 17.

¹²⁴ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 18.

develop a history for the Catskills while also selling the region to tourists through the connection to a popular cultural text.

Not all guidebooks from the period followed these strategies in their use of Irving's works. Unlike other guidebooks from the period, David Murdoch's *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains* consists largely of previously published articles and stories relating to the Catskill Mountain Region.¹²⁵ Along with essays and poems depicting tourists' experiences at the Catskill Mountain House, the guidebook also contains the entirety of "Rip Van Winkle." However, like Gilpin, Murdoch carefully formats the short story so as to disassociate the text from its original author. In the table of contents, Murdoch lists the name of every author after the title of each piece, with Irving being an exception.¹²⁶ While Murdoch deliberately omits Irving's name in the table of contents, he includes the full title of the short story: "Rip Van Winkle – A Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker."¹²⁷ The author of the story becomes the fictional narrator, historian Diedrich Knickerbocker. Like Gilpin's choice to remove Irving from his quotation of *A History of New-York*, Murdoch may in part have been relying on the fact that his readers would have recognized the story and known the true author. However, by insisting that a historian (albeit a fictional one) is the author of "Rip Van Winkle,"

¹²⁵ Some scholars, particularly David Stradling, have argued that the guidebook should instead be called a "pamphlet," because it lacks much of the fact-driven, statistical information of other guidebooks (58). However, I include it in my research because the text includes a number of references to Irving, and focuses on one of the most popular tourist sites of the period. David Stradling, *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 58.

¹²⁶ A few pieces originally published anonymously are also listed in the table of contents without their authors' names.

¹²⁷ David Murdoch, ed., *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains* (Catskill, NY: J. Joesbury, 1846), 3.

Murdoch further embeds Irving's story in the history of the region rather than that of its actual author.

Occasionally, guidebook authors even insert figures from Irving's stories into other local histories, further entrenching Irving's works in the history of the region. For example, Gilpin claims he heard his story of a Native American's wife and child perishing in Cohoes Falls from "old Vander Donck."¹²⁸ As Gassan notes, this is a "tip of a hat" to Irving; in "Rip Van Winkle" Peter Vanderdonk, a fictionalized descendent of historian Adriaen van der Donck, recognizes Irving and corroborates his story.¹²⁹ As a character "well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood," Vanderdonk represents historical accuracy.¹³⁰ In what seems a counterintuitive move, Gilpin implants a fictional figure from Irving's literature into other regional mythologies in order to bestow these mythologies with a sense of authenticity. Moreover, Irving's story of Native American death and loss does the same cultural work as the Native American lore guidebook authors included. Both types of narratives celebrate the concept of the vanishing Indian, thereby whitewashing the landscape for the white Anglo population.

Guidebook authors like Murdoch and Gilpin thus successfully appropriated Irving's stories, quoting "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" to craft their own histories of the tourist regions. Yet guidebook writers occasionally exploited Irving's celebrity instead. Some authors made brief reference to Irving's tales at tourist

¹²⁸ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 58-59.

¹²⁹ Gassan, "The First American Tourist Guidebooks," 62.

¹³⁰ Irving, *The Sketch-Book*, 46.

sites connected to his works. In his guidebook *The Traveller's Guide*, Davison describes Sleepy Hollow, New York as “the place where Washington Irving locates the scene of his tale bearing that name in the “Sketch Book.”¹³¹ In Dwight’s 1830 *The Northern Traveller and Northern Tour*, a guidebook devoid of much of the romantic literary and historical associations of Gilpin and Davison’s texts, Dwight simply depicts Sleepy Hollow as a place “rendered interesting by Mr. Irving.”¹³² These references concisely provided the landscape with cultural references to attract and intrigue the tourist.

Irving and his Catskill Mountain region stories thus function in the manner of the Revolutionary War lore and Native American mythology common in guidebooks from the period. Like stories of Major John André and Native American lore, Irving’s literature became a means of dispossessing non-white peoples of the tourist landscape, and placing it squarely in the hands of the white middle class.

“Yet Pursuing Their Unearthly Game”: Irving’s Stories as Commodity

The tourist industry refused to let Irving’s stories remain simply a static, inaccessible part of the region’s distant past, however. Throughout the early nineteenth century, people involved in the tourist industry developed a number of sites associated with figures and scenes from “Rip Van Winkle” and “Sleepy Hollow.” Visitors traveled up a carriage road called the “Sleepy Hollow Route” on their way to the Catskill

¹³¹ Davison, *The Traveller's Guide* (1840), 104.

¹³² Theodore Dwight, *The Northern Traveller and Northern Tour with the Routes to the Springs, Niagara, Quebec, the Tour of New England, and the Routes from the South* (New York: Goodrich & Wiley, 1835), 20. In 1828, Dwight bought the rights to Gilpin’s *Northern Tour*, and incorporated details from the book into his own in order to eliminate Gilpin’s book from his market competition. Gassan, “The First American Tourist Guidebooks,” 65.

Mountain House, passing “Rip Van Winkle’s Glenn” along the way.¹³³ Perhaps the most famous site from the period was a small shanty known as the Rip Van Winkle House, built in 1828 along the stagecoach path to the popular Pine Orchard House. The site offered tourists a respite during the tourist’s journey from his steamboat on the Hudson River to his accommodations at Pine Orchard. Shortly after construction of the House, stagecoach drivers (who were employed by Charles Beach, proprietor of the Mountain House), began to stop at the Rip Van Winkle House with regularity, encouraging tourists to purchase a drink or meal before continuing their journey.¹³⁴ Hotel owners, transportation moguls, and locals thus collectively encouraged tourists to visit and engage with sites from Irving’s tales – for a price, of course.

Guidebooks tried to “sell” places like the Rip Van Winkle House to tourists by insisting that these sites offered visitors the chance to actively engage with Irving’s stories. In *A Northern Tour*, for example, Gilpin’s segment on the Catskills promises readers that they can witness scenes from Irving’s tales firsthand. When describing the view from the Catskill Mountain House, Gilpin explains that:

At the foot of these fairy hills is said to be the little ancient village, where Rip Van Winkle passed his days, patiently bearing the unceasing eloquence of his dame, or reposing beneath the shade of the large elm, with the august Nicholas Vedder, and the learned Derrick Van Bummel. It was in these hills, that he beheld the short square-built ghosts of the renowned Hendrick Hudson and his companions, as they played at ninepins, in their red stockings and high-heeled shoes; and the thunder that rolls over the lofty peaks on a summer afternoon, still reminds the passing traveller, that the sturdy spirits are yet pursuing their unearthly game.¹³⁵

¹³³ Roland Van Zandt, *The Catskill Mountain House* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1966), 92-94.

¹³⁴ Van Zandt, *The Catskill Mountain House*, 92-94.

¹³⁵ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (1825), 43-44.

The phrase “yet pursuing” insists on the continued presence of Irving’s characters – particularly, the ghostly, ancient Dutchmen – in the tourist landscape. The guidebook author implies that tourists will be able to hear – and potentially see – the “unearthly” figures and events from “Rip Van Winkle” on their own tour of the Catskills. Irving’s short story, of course, lends itself well to this promise Gilpin makes of the perpetuation of the story into the present. Set in multiple layers of time – the colonial period, the Revolutionary period, and a reference to “this day” – the narrative straddles past and present. Rip himself becomes a kind of eternal figure – possessing the ability to sleep through decades, and with no declaration of his death at the end of the tale, Irving lets linger the promise of Rip’s continual presence in the landscape. Gilpin can easily promise readers that, while the days of Dame Van Winkle and other colonial period characters are long gone, figures like the ghost of Hendrick Hudson, and even the possibly eternal Rip Van Winkle, remain figures within the region whom the tourist can actually see, or at least hear. While he does not mention a specific tourist site dedicated to Rip, Gilpin insists upon Irving’s presence in the landscape as an attraction for tourists.

Murdoch’s *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains*, which focuses solely on Catskill Mountain tourism, includes a number of references to the continued presence of Irving’s characters and settings in the tourist landscape. Charles Beach, owner of the Mountain House, hired Murdoch to edit this guidebook; Beach’s aim in publishing a guidebook was to encourage new tourists to visit the Catskills and his hotel. One way in which Murdoch sought to entice visitors was to include in his guidebook a number of essays that build on the presence of Irving’s characters in the tourist landscape

surrounding the hotel. One essay by writer and poet Elizabeth Ellet specifically for the guidebook, includes a detailed description of Kaaterskill Falls, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Catskill Mountains. In Ellett's description of the Falls, she claims that tourists "obtain the best view of all" from one particular rock. She explains that this rock is "the very rock on which Rip Van Winkle slept his long sleep."¹³⁶ Ellet thus promises tourists the chance to not only see where Rip Van Winkle slept, but to participate in the literary site themselves – to stand where he stood, and view the Kaaterskill Falls as he did. Visiting the Falls became a form of literary voyeurism in which tourists could witness the world of Irving's characters. By tying Irving's character to a popular tourist site, Ellet provided yet another reason for travelers to visit the Falls. While Beach did not own the land surrounding the Falls, his hotel was the largest and most popular in the region throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Promoting the Falls encouraged tourists to visit the site, and (as Beach hoped to imply) spend a night or two at the Catskill Mountain House. Irving's stories therefore became commodities by which Murdoch earned his living.

Another essay in *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains* more directly converts Irving's stories into tourist commodities. An 1828 *Atlantic Souvenir* article "A Visit to the Catskills," (the author is unidentified) depicts a tourist's experience traveling to the Catskill Mountain House. The article begins with the tourist's brief stop at the Rip Van Winkle House:

¹³⁶ Elizabeth Ellet, "The Fourth at Pine Orchard," in Murdoch, *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains*, 26.

The traveller sprung from his seat into the door way of Rip Van Winkle's shanty, which occupied a nook in that part of the mountain to which the stage had arrived. A species of wild cherry hung its ripe red fruit over a mass of rock, variegated with lichens and moss, through which the water of a clear spring trickled, and was collected in a long strop of bark; by this rustic expedient it was conveyed to Rip's dwelling, and afforded an unfailing fountain. The present Rip was not even a descendant of the mountain sleeper, but could show the spot from which the old man of the glen repeated "Rip Van Winkle," and the very hollow where Rip saw the "company of odd-looking personages playing at ninepins." When the visitor had refreshed himself by a draught from the cool fountain, he was confirmed in his resolution to "finish his journey alone."¹³⁷

The author encourages tourists to visit the shanty because of its direct connections to Irving's famous characters and scenes. While the owner is "not even a descendent" of Rip, he nonetheless possesses the authority to bring Irving's story into the present. With his assistance, tourists can drink water from the same stream as Rip, and can even visit the site where Irving first met the ghostly Dutchmen.

However, as this Rip Van Winkle House was a commercial site, visitors had to pay a price to participate in and witness scenes from Irving's stories. While the author of "A Visit to the Catskills" does not specify costs, his stop at the Rip Van Winkle shanty – particularly his drink of water – would have cost money. The tourist industry, with the help of these guidebooks, thus converted Irving's stories into commodities to attract, and ultimately be purchased by, tourists.

Satirization of Guidebooks: James Kirke Paulding's *The New Mirror*

James Kirke Paulding, a popular American writer (and friend of Irving), had spent many years observing and commenting on the development of American tourism during his own travels. In 1828, Paulding published a satirical guidebook, *The New Mirror for*

¹³⁷ "A Visit to the Catskills" in Murdoch, *The Scenery of the Catskill Mountains*, 38.

Travellers: and a Guide to the Springs, which mocked the cultural work of guidebooks. In Paulding's text, readers see in overt terms how guidebooks defined the landscape through the codification of information, the commodification of literature and history, and the relegation of various races and classes to a fictionalized past – or the elimination of them altogether from the textual and visual landscape.

In *The New Mirror*, Paulding deviates from the typical structure of the popular guidebook genre. Most of the guidebook is written in epistolary form, a series of fictionalized letters from “the members of a most respectable family from the south.”¹³⁸ However, in between these personal accounts of individual travels, Paulding adopts the typical, authorial voice of the guidebook author, offering an exaggeratedly systematized depiction of the landscape. Paulding promises his readers a “code of laws, and regulations for their especial government,” including information on tourist sites “most worthy of attention,” and “critical and minute instructions” on everything from appropriate dress to the best travel routes.¹³⁹ Like guidebooks by Davison, Dwight, Gilpin, and others, *The New Mirror* follows the first leg of the Fashionable Tour, beginning in New York, travelling up the Hudson River through the Catskill Mountains, and ending in Saratoga Springs. *The New Mirror* also emulates other guidebooks in its

¹³⁸ Paulding, *The New Mirror for Travellers and Guide to the Springs* (New York: G. & C. Carvill, 1828), 15. Members of southern high society typically came north for the Fashionable Tour, so Paulding's choice of characters is apt. Paulding might also be satirizing the aristocratic pretensions of Southern elite, who sought to participate in the Fashionable Tour as a means of displaying their status.

¹³⁹ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 6.

primary audience. The narrator continuously addresses the audience as “the fashionable tourist” and “travellers of taste,” emphasizing the middle-class readership.¹⁴⁰

Paulding infused his guidebook with satirical comments about the way guidebook authors prescribed the landscape. Paulding clearly recognized the way in which authors described various tourist landscapes at the expense of the realities of those landscapes. Firstly, he ridicules the dependency of tourists on the guidebooks – or, at least, the desire of guidebook authors to make their readers dependent. As “Colonel Culpeper” explains in one of his letters in the guidebook, he is “firmly of the opinion that no person ought to make the Grand Northern Tour who has any better use of his money than in buying, or for his time than in reading, this book.”¹⁴¹ Culpeper directly links the American Grand Tour to the purchasing and reading of a guidebook; one cannot do one activity without the other. Paulding then emphasizes the absurdity of this dependency, due to the fact that much of the information is either secondary, or missing critical data. As the author notes as a justification for the lengthiness of his own text, “to make a book, it is necessary to tell all that other people have told before.”¹⁴² As he later explains, “For this purpose we have with great pains, and at the expense of a vast deal of actual observation, collected, digested, and codified a system of rules and regulations, derived from the best sources...”¹⁴³ Here, Paulding highlights the failure of the guidebook’s depiction of the tourist landscape to provide any information about the sites based on actual research on

¹⁴⁰ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 195, 6.

¹⁴¹ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 43.

¹⁴² Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 208.

¹⁴³ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 220.

or experience of those locales. Guidebooks, according to Paulding, offered only regurgitated depictions of the landscape, many of which were far removed from reality.

Paulding critiques the guidebook authors for their dependence on outside texts for information, but also condemns the tourists themselves, and their absolute dependency on guidebooks to appreciate particular scenes. When describing the passage up the Hudson River towards the Catskills, he recommends to the fashionable tourist, “Whenever you are on deck by day, be sure to have this book in your hand, and instead of boring yourself with the scenery, read the descriptions which will be found infinitely superior to any of the clumsy productions of nature.” As he later adds, “Keep your eye on the book for your life.”¹⁴⁴ Here, Paulding highlights the codependent relationship between guidebook author and reader: readers depended on the guidebook to define their experience of the landscape, and authors depended on readers to desire, even need, that pre-packaged experience.

Like the guidebook authors he satirized, Paulding drew on Native American lore to attract tourists to particular landscapes. Paulding’s lore mocked the stories guidebook authors told about Native American culture and history, specifically those that emphasized the inevitable passing of Native Americans from the landscape. For example, as the narrator explains through a quote from the fictional Alderman Janson, there is “not a word of truth in the story” that the Dutch violently took land from Native Americans, and that instead the Native Americans simply agreed to the loss of their land “without

¹⁴⁴ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 117.

exchanging a word.”¹⁴⁵ The satire of this passage is clear when juxtaposed against other guidebook author’s insistence on the credibility of their Native American lore (either through citation or the language of folklore), particularly when detailing the disappearance of Native Americans from the region. Here, Paulding highlights both the guidebook authors’ promise of accuracy in historical narratives, as well as their promise of a landscape lacking a history of unsettling internal conflict and strife.

Paulding also pokes fun at guidebook authors’ use of Irving to sell the Catskill Mountain region to tourists. Like other guidebooks, *The New Mirror* includes a description of Irving’s stories in the passage on the Catskills. However, rather than embedding these stories and characters seamlessly into the tourist industry, he instead depicts a dramatic clash between Irving’s characters and the tourist industry. He tells a story (again through the words of Alderman Janson) of the way in which the “old Dutch families” have been corrupted by “canals and great state roads; and above all by locating a fashionable hotel in the very centre of their strong hold, the Kaatskill Mountain.”¹⁴⁶ Paulding describes how “a young fellow – a genuine descendant of Rip Van Winckle [sic] – being out shooting, met a Dutch dame in a fashionable bonnet, whereat he was so frightened that he fired his gun at random, and ran home to tell his mother that he had seen a strange wild beast.”¹⁴⁷ While the lady might be a Dutch local, her “fashionable” hat suggests the influx of middle-class “fashionable” tourists into the landscape, importing their ideas on taste and style. This story thus humorously pits history against

¹⁴⁵ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 166.

¹⁴⁶ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 146.

¹⁴⁷ Paulding, *The New Mirror* 146.

the commercialized tourist industry, which is reduced to commodities: transportation, hotels, even fashionable clothing, all of which Paulding's character refers to as "the horrible enormities of the improving age."¹⁴⁸ In depicting the Catskill landscape as existing purely for the tourist, guidebook authors made the introduction of the tourist industry to the region appear seamless. Paulding's story of the Catskills highlights how the rise of the tourist industry in fact led to drastic changes in the physical and cultural landscape: from the influx of steamboats and stagecoach roads to the presence of mountain resorts crowded with fashionable and consumer-driven tourists, Catskill Mountain tourism brought drastic changes to the once lightly populated farming region.

Paulding's story of the Catskills also speaks to the impossibility of what guidebook authors promised: the chance to experience history and witness the continued presence of folkloric narratives. Dwight, Gilpin, and others used Irving's stories as a means of selling this region to tourists, promising them the chance to visit sites from his tales and even meet some of his characters in person. However, Paulding's story addresses the impossibility of converting these stories into pre-packaged experiences, into sites tourists could engage with through monetary transaction. While the chance of being shot by Rip's descendant was not an actual threat, the threat of an incomplete experience certainly loomed. Tourists could not actually see a descendant of the fictional character Rip, despite claims made by guidebooks in their descriptions of the proprietor of a local watering hole. Similarly, tourists could not witness the deep history conveyed in Irving's Dutch folklore, in large part because that history was exaggerated and even

¹⁴⁸ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 147.

fictionalized. Paulding's narrator lauds the "noble trio of virtues" of the old Dutch families, who are slowly corrupted by the influx of transportation, commodification, and tourism. However, his exaggerated praise – calling them "honest, industrious, and sober" people who would "continue to [be] so for generations to come" – emphasizes the impossibility of guidebook histories.¹⁴⁹ In reality, Dutch people were not all people of noble virtue, and tourists were not corrupting an ancient way of life. Paulding's satire pinpoints the true complexity of the relationship between history, literature, and the landscape, and the way in which guidebooks failed to completely convey the complexity of these entities.

According to Gassan, readers often used this satirical text as an earnest guidebook: on the surface, it provided much of the same information as Davison, Dwight, Gilpin, and Murdoch's guidebooks.¹⁵⁰ However, Paulding's text provides an exaggerated example of the way in which these other guidebook authors defined the landscape for tourists. In Paulding's text, readers see in overt terms how guidebooks defined the landscape through the codification of information, the commodification of literature and history, and the relegation of various races and classes to a fictionalized past – or the elimination of them altogether from the textual and visual landscape.

Moreover, Paulding highlights and critiques the whitewashing of the Catskill landscape. The narrator of *The New Mirror* explains the tourist's perception of the region, and his place in it, saying, "All that we see is delightful; and as to what we don't see, it exists not to us. We travellers belong to the world, and with the exception of its cares and

¹⁴⁹ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 146.

¹⁵⁰ Gassan, "The First American Tourist Guidebooks," 65.

troubles, it belongs to us.”¹⁵¹ This follows a detailed list of supposedly unattractive elements of the Fashionable Tour that tourists do not want to see or learn about, including any history of economic hardships or violence. The narrator explain that these topics “are not the polite studies of us men of pleasure, nor have we any concern with the insides of houses or the secrets of domestic life, so long as the streets look gay, and every body in them *seems* happy.”¹⁵² Paulding demonstrates an acute awareness of guidebook authors’ desire to suppress “cares and troubles” of the tourist industry, which included those that may have coded as non-white. In this way, *The New Mirror* provides a satirical critique of the agenda of the guidebook genre’s cultural politics.

This examination of guidebooks reveals how antebellum tourism manipulated readers’ conception of the landscape at the level of discourse. Through a promise of authority and accuracy, and the creation of a cultural infrastructure, tourist guidebooks encouraged readers to perceive the tourist landscape in a particular way. This vision – one that celebrated the white, middle-class traveller, and Anglo-American culture – fit perfectly with the dominant vision of America at the time. A landscape existing solely for the tourist underscored popular conceptions of white settlement, ownership, and expansion of the nation.

¹⁵¹ Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 146.

¹⁵² Paulding, *The New Mirror*, 146.

Chapter 2: “Oh, What a Scene!”: Class and Conflict at Niagara in Sedgwick’s *The Travellers* and Willis and Bartlett’s *American Scenery*

In July 1821, as part of a summer-long journey through New York and Canada with her brother and his family, Catherine Maria Sedgwick stopped for a week at Niagara Falls. In her diary, she made observations about the sublime vistas she encountered at the famous tourist site. She also astutely, even biting, commented on the people she encountered:

[There was] a party of Greenwich street shopkeepers we met at Niagara. They have come into this picturesque world, for what...I cannot tell – Well here they have come to spend all the profits of their patient labor in measuring tape and dealing out pins and needles for the last 20 years. Yesterday I heard them say they had been dreadfully disappointed in their journey, they had not seen a boiled chicken, nor a roast-pig since they left New York!!¹⁵³

Sedgwick’s comments about Niagara tourists embody a growing concern among genteel travelers in the early nineteenth century. As scenic tourism became both more standardized and more affordable, it opened up to not only the wealthiest American and international travellers, but also those of the aspiring masses in America: men and women of some financial success (retailers, manufacturers, shopkeepers, clerks) who sought entry into the world of the middle class. This middle class they sought to become a part of was a world defined by both financial success and by parameters such as race, religion, and geography.

It is almost impossible to clearly define the middle class in the antebellum era, in part because so many people sought to enter middle-class society. People used the term to describe a wide variety of men and women of various religions, races, and geographic

¹⁵³ Catharine Maria Sedgwick, “Journal of a Trip to New York and Canada, 1821,” Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, 11.4.

regions, and scholars today still disagree on the parameters of this class.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, most nineteenth-century theorists of the middle class (including the authors mentioned in this chapter) had a particular kind of middle-class person in mind when using the term. This nineteenth-century middle class was composed primarily of free, white, Anglophone Protestants, who generally resided in cities and substantial towns, primarily in the Northeast. This class came to be associated with particular consumption habits and behaviors. Among other things, this middle class was known for reading particular forms of print culture (including particular newspapers and magazines), specific styles of dress (including what etiquette books sometimes called “sentimental dress”), and certain ways of ornamenting their domestic spaces, among other behaviors. They also had polite habits and rituals surrounding activities ranging from socializing with others to wedding ceremonies to mourning and funerals.¹⁵⁵

Along with these habits and behaviors, middle-class men and women also came to be associated with particular moral values. They identified themselves and their class through moral values rooted in liberal Protestantism, including what Paul Johnson calls examples of “Christian self-control”: attending church, domesticity, gentleness towards

¹⁵⁴ For more on the rise of the middle class in the antebellum era, see Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982); Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1769-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Catherine Kelly, *In the New England Fashion: Reshaping Women's Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Amy Schrager Lang, *Syntax of Class: Writing Inequality in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 2003); Sarah Wadsworth, *In the Company of Books: Literature and its “Classes” in Nineteenth-Century America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006);

¹⁵⁵ For more on the rituals and behaviors associated with the nineteenth-century middle class, see Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.

family, frugality, and a steady work ethic.¹⁵⁶ Middle-class men and women also promoted reform connected to Christian self-control, participating in and even initiating reform movements related to abolition, temperance, prison reform, and more. Taken altogether, these values comprised a Christian morality with which middle class people sought to be identified. In turn, those that sought entry into this Northern bourgeois class did so through a performance of this Christian morality.¹⁵⁷

The term “Christian morality” is a broad one, and many corners of nineteenth-century society – including people belonging to various reform movements ranging from abolition to collective living, and proponents of concepts like manifest destiny and imperialism – used the concept of Christian morals to defend their specific beliefs. Yet for this broad, sometimes indistinct middle class, such a vague term served as an easy means of demonstrating middle-class values: by portraying one’s Christianity in the ways mentioned above, a person could more or less declare entry into the middle class.

One way to display one’s general Christian morality was by engaging in scenic tourism. By the 1820s and 1830s, the publication of informative and inexpensive guidebooks, and the development of affordable transportation and accommodations, opened up tourism to those people for whom leisure travel had never been a viable option. In the above passage from Sedgwick’s journal, the author derides these socially mobile tourists both for their imprudent extravagances and their inability to focus on the supposed purpose of touring – a true admiration of the “picturesque world” they tour.

¹⁵⁶ Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, 1978 (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 8.

¹⁵⁷ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*.

Sedgwick juxtaposes this description of the aspiring middle-class tourists (who focus on supposedly frivolous elements of tourism, such as the opulence of their meals), with a description of decidedly genteel tourist such as herself, who focuses on admiring the scenery and recognizing the presence of God within the landscape. Her reflection on her own experience at Niagara has nothing to do with chicken dinners:

Every thing is so vast that you seem introduced to a new state of being, and almost doubt your identity. The heights and the depths, the moisture of the atmosphere, which gives to every leaf and spear of grass in the crevices of the rocks a tender green; the fishermen below, who seem dwindled to children, all combine to form a scene as new as it is imposing. But it is not these banks of rock...it is not that solitary and eternal torrent that produces the awe you feel, inspiring devotion amidst these objects, but it is the 'Spirit of God moving on the waters.' It is the vastness of every object, expressing the infinity of the Creator, and thus bringing you into his visible presence.

For Sedgwick, an identifying marker of a middle-class person was Christian morality. As this passage reveals, part of Christian morality involved embedding God into one's daily life. This meant regular church attendance, practicing supposedly Christian virtues such as temperance and frugality, and imparting religious instruction on one's children. However, it also meant seeing God's presence in the everyday landscape. It meant that a well-to-do person like Sedgwick could, for example, look at the gushing waters of the Falls and immediately see "the infinity of the Creator." A truly middle-class person was supposed to be able to observe God's presence and power in even a leisure landscape like a tourist site.

Supposedly, middle-class tourists naturally embodied Christian morality, which was less likely to be inherent in lower-class tourists. Sedgwick's critiques reveal a fear of the ambiguity characteristic of a socially mobile society – one in which people could

climb their way into society's upper echelons through a mere *performance* of virtue, rather than a true *essence* of middle-class values. For people who saw a link between moral virtue and class, shifts in antebellum class structure seemed dangerous, even threatening to the social and moral order. If men and women could enter this middle class through a mere performance of particular values, the concept of a stable middle class would quickly fall apart.¹⁵⁸ The precariousness of the bourgeois middle-class was an existential terror – as Karen Halttunen explains, there was a “middle-class fear that success among [non-middle-class] strangers demanded not character formation, but a manipulation of those surface impressions of dress and conduct that were so crucial in urban life.”¹⁵⁹ If entry into the middle class did not require the actual, essential embodiment of characteristics that the middle-class so assiduously touted, than what did it mean to be middle class? Bourgeois men and women feared that, without a clear definition of middle-class identity, people of all backgrounds could simply feign entry into the middle-class through performing those “surface impressions of dress and conduct.”

This concept of performance versus essence structured the antebellum tourist industry. Scenic touring was all about observing America's most sublime and picturesque sights, and authentically responding to those sights with particular, spiritually-laden, reactions. To the northeastern middle-class tourists, those who merely performed these responses were not true tourists, and therefore were not true members of the middle class.

¹⁵⁸ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, introduction.

¹⁵⁹ Halttunen, 193.

Tourism is thus representative of the middle-class's deep-seated anxieties about surreptitious class mobility.

In this chapter, I examine works by two antebellum authors who grappled with the growing popularity of leisure travel among the lower classes: Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Nathaniel Parker Willis. Neither author would necessarily be considered middle-class based on the definition given above – the authors were from families with both wealth and longstanding social and political power (Sedgwick in particular). They might more easily fit into the category of “genteel” men and women who were able to afford travel long before the middle class could do so.¹ However, both authors promote the ideals of the middle class in their writing, and in so doing, identify with their supposed values. Both authors depict lower-class tourists as incapable of the complex religious and moral engagement with the landscape supposedly required of middle-class tourists. Yet at the same time, these authors imply (to varying degrees) that middle-class Christian morality can be learned; their texts provide readers with instructions on how to achieve a more virtuous engagement with the landscape. Within this liminal space of rejecting and educating socially aspirational tourists, these authors express their anxieties about the concept of a socially mobile democracy. Moreover, they do so within distinctive antebellum genres: children's literature and the gift book. Both manipulate the conventions of their genres to emphasize their ambivalence towards class mobility, and their anxieties about the precariousness of their own social identities.

This chapter also focuses specifically on literature about Niagara Falls. Like the Catskills, Niagara Falls was one of the earliest tourist sites in the United States, and one

of the first to develop an established tourist infrastructure. A series of three falls located on the border of Canada and the United States (near Buffalo, New York), Niagara Falls housed numerous hotels, various forms of entertainment (from billiard halls to taverns), and multiple modes of transportation around the area (including ferries, stagecoaches, and bridges over the Falls). As a lively and relatively affordable tourist location, it was a popular antebellum site for socially mobile travelers. The Erie Canal made the trip more affordable and timely for tourists with limited travel time: tourists could take the Canal to Buffalo, New York and then travel a mere twenty miles to the Falls, thus reducing a trip across New York from a couple of weeks to mere days.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the rise of a substantial, commercialized tourist industry at the Falls – including luxury hotels, museums, curiosity and souvenir shops, and circus entertainments – made it a site at which tourists were constantly aware of the infiltration of money and goods on what was supposedly a virtuous, moral touring experience. An exploration of the touristic print culture related to a popular tourist site like Niagara Falls reveals how tourism could serve as a proxy for class anxiety and a reflection of middle-class instability across the country.

“An Avid Traveler”: Catharine Maria Sedgwick as Traveler and Travel Writer

American novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick was what Bridgette Bailey has called an “elite woman tourist” of the early nineteenth century.¹⁶¹ Sedgwick was born in the late eighteenth century to parents from reputable New England families: her mother,

¹⁶⁰ William Irwin, *The New Niagara: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls, 1776-1917* (State College: Penn State University Press, 1996), 13.

¹⁶¹ Bridget Bailey, “Letters from Abroad,” in *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Lucinda L. Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 216.

Pamela Dwight, was the daughter of a well-known general and judge, and her father Theodore Sedgwick was a successful lawyer and politician. Solidly situated as part of the American elite, Catharine Maria Sedgwick could afford to spend months at a time travelling with her family. She toured throughout the Northeast, visiting New Hampshire, Vermont, Albany, and Quebec. She journeyed further south, spending time in Washington, D.C. and Virginia. She also traveled westward along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Later in life, she toured through Europe for fifteen months, though most of her other travels were confined to the United States.¹⁶²

Throughout her 44-year career as a writer, Sedgwick published dozens of novels and short stories, as well as nonfiction writing including sketches, religious tracts, and advice manuals.¹⁶³ Notwithstanding the variety of her literary genres, travel was a constant topic and theme. One of her novels, *Clarence* (1822), for example, follows a young wealthy woman on her various travel excursions, including a tour of upstate New York that includes stops at resort cities such as Saratoga Springs and Trenton Falls. She also published short stories about travels throughout the United States in gift books, annuals, and magazines. While Sedgwick incorporated tourism at least peripherally into many of her publications, her children's novel *The Travellers* (1825) focuses entirely on a visit to Niagara Falls and surrounding tourist sites. In this, her first children's book, Sedgwick addresses her greatest hopes for the potential moral and religious rectitude of the tourist industry. Yet she also expresses her concerns about the industry's growing availability to all social classes.

¹⁶² Damon-Bach and Clements, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick*, xxi-xxiv.

¹⁶³ Damon-Bach and Clements, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick*, xxi.

Most scholars have all but dismissed *The Travellers* as a text unworthy of literary study. Forty years ago, Edward Halsey Foster even boldly claimed, “It is unlikely today that her didactic tales and her volumes of moral instruction for children will receive any serious consideration in studies of early American literature.”¹⁶⁴ While scholars have begun to analyze her works more earnestly than Foster anticipated, most scholarship on Sedgwick still focuses on her novels, particularly *A New-England Tale* (1822) and *Hope Leslie* (1827). Much of this scholarship emphasizes Sedgwick’s relatively radical attitude towards issues of race and, in particular, gender.¹⁶⁵ Her novels emphasize a degree of female independence that was seen as quite progressive for the time – while she espoused the concept of separate spheres for men and women, she also promoted a degree of equality between men and women, and developed characters and referenced historical figures in her texts that touted what Judith Fetterly has called “the radical possibilities for women” of America.¹⁶⁶

Some scholars have also noted her critique of rigid class structures and her encouragement of sympathy towards the poor. For example, she is known for deriding the manners of New York gentility, and has been acknowledged for her embrace of democratic ideals – in particular, the concept that America was a classless society, a socially fluid world in which one achieved success by merit rather than heredity or wealth. Carolyn Karcher, for instance, has examined how Sedgwick’s *A New-England*

¹⁶⁴ Edward Halsey Foster, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick* (New York: Twayne, 1974), 1.

¹⁶⁵ See, for example Judith Fetterly, “‘My Sister! My Sister!’: The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*,” *American Literature* 70 (Sept 1998): 491-516; Susan K. Harris, “The Limits of Authority: Catharine Maria Sedgwick and the Politics of Resistance” in Damon-Bach and Clements, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick*.

¹⁶⁶ Fetterly, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*, 96

Tale celebrates the fluidity of society, as the heroine Jane Elton moves through three different social classes throughout the novel, working her way up from a servant to an elite woman.¹⁶⁷ Yet, like her opinions on gender, Sedgwick did not necessarily advocate sweeping changes to America's social makeup: as Mary Kelley notes, a "lingering elitism...qualified her support for egalitarian democracy."¹⁶⁸ In fact, as Karcher explains, Jane Elton moves from a position of wealth and status at the beginning of *A New-England Tale* to a position of servitude, suggesting there is both potential success and danger of tragedy in the mobility of American society.

Despite her recognition of social fluidity, Sedgwick also emphasized clear correlations between class and virtue, linking those of the middle and upper classes with an inherent moral refinement apparently missing from the lower classes. In this way, Sedgwick was similar to many elite and middle-class Americans of the period. In the early nineteenth century, the gentry of the eighteenth century gave way to what Richard L. Bushman calls a more "dilute gentry associated with respectability." This new middle or middling class, made up of successful farmers, artisans, small merchants, schoolteachers, and a variety of professionals, identified their class with particular moral values as a way of distinguishing themselves from the lower classes, whom they feared would infiltrate their social station.

¹⁶⁷ Carolyn L. Karcher, "CMS in Literary History" in Damon-Bach and Clements, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick*.

¹⁶⁸ Mary Kelley, ed., *The Power of Her Sympathy: The Autobiography and Journal of Catharine Maria Sedgwick* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), 31.

In her publications, Sedgwick clearly expresses a similar anxiety about the social mobility of lower classes, who sought entry into middle-class and elite social spheres.¹⁶⁹ In particular, *The Travellers* reveals a connection between Sedgwick's ambivalence towards social mobility and her ambivalence towards tourism. Through the narrative of a touring family, Sedgwick explores the potential of tourism to promote the values of the middle class, particularly Christian morality. However, she also expresses concern that tourism's potential to positively influence tourists was obscured by the democratization of the tourist industry, and the well-established Niagara Falls tourism industry in particular. The increasingly codified and commodified industry, fueled in large part by mass-produced guidebooks and illustrations, offered the possibility for what Sedgwick and some other middle-class travelers saw as a superficial touristic experience. Travelers with no real understanding of the connection between religion and landscape, or with only superficial knowledge of aesthetics, could purchase guidebooks cheaply and participate in an approximation of the same travel experience without the moral and religious components. They could perform the rites and rituals of tourism, and (more dangerously) feign a superficial understanding of middle-class virtue, without truly understanding the supposed essence of the relationship between God and the landscape. While tourists of any class could ostensibly experience this amoral form of touring, Sedgwick and other middle-class travelers feared a direct link between the

¹⁶⁹ Scholars have particularly teased out this ambivalence in her novels. See, for example, Fetterley, "My Sister! My Sister!," Harris, "The Limits of Authority," Kelley, *The Power of Her Sympathy*.

democratization of tourism and the declining morality of not only the tourist industry, but also the nation.¹⁷⁰

Middle-Class Virtue in *The Travellers*

The Travellers centers on the story of an idealized upper-middle-class touring family, similar in socioeconomic background to Sedgwick's own household. In 1818, the Sackvilles – consisting of a father (a lawyer), wife, and two children, Edward (Ned) and Julia – go on a month-long “grand tour” of the Northeast.¹⁷¹ The tour follows the general pattern of the Fashionable Tour route: they journey north up the Hudson River, along the Erie Canal into western New York, north again into Canada and then finally they return back home to their estate in the generic “countryside.” The apex of their journey, like that of many antebellum tourists, is Niagara Falls. Representing Sedgwick's ideal touring family in both socioeconomic status and social values, the Sackvilles seek to tour solely for religious and moral purposes. They hope to achieve religious and moral enlightenment primarily through an appreciation of the natural landscape. As Mrs. Sackville tells her children when describing the countryside, “nature has her museums every where: her productions are all curiosities, and the more you study them, the more you will admire the wisdom and goodness of their creator.”¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Richard Gassan is the one scholar who has examined the trope of tourism in *The Travellers*, albeit briefly. He argues that her book criticizes tourism for being representative of the “speed, commercialism, and superficiality of her times.” I go beyond his brief study in my analysis. I emphasize the ambiguity of her critique of tourism that Gassan notes, and explore what this critique reveals about class relations in antebellum America. Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 134.

¹⁷¹ Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *The Travellers, A Tale: Designed for Young People* (New York: Bliss and White, 1825), 2.

¹⁷² Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 16.

Like countless tourists along the Fashionable Tour, the Sackvilles plan to admire the scenery along their route. While the Fashionable Tour included stops at cities and towns, appreciation of the landscape was the most important moralizing element of the experience. Tourists sought out and admired landscapes touted as sublime or picturesque – two extremely popular aesthetic modes in the nineteenth century. In both Europe and America, sublime and picturesque modes were seen as capable of drawing out some kind of religious reaction from viewers. Eighteenth-century philosopher Edmund Burke famously defined the sublime as a quality of art that produces “the strongest emotion that the mind is capable of feeling,” in particular, a site that causes “horror” and “terror.”¹⁷³ Sublime scenes emphasized the awesome power of the natural landscape – and, by extension, the power of God – over man. The picturesque scenes, in contrast, conveyed a sense of tranquility, and presented a tamed scene that demonstrated man’s adherence to the biblical mandate of taming the earth. As British author, artist, and priest William Gilpin defined it, a picturesque scene was “that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture.” This frustratingly vague definition referred, in part, to rough, irregular landscapes, ones that did not terrify viewers with natural phenomenon, but rather had a pleasing, calming quality. A picturesque vista might include a small cottage or pastoral scene, suggesting man’s presence (albeit limited) in nature. In a picturesque image, man does not drastically alter nature, nor does nature present a terrifying threat to man.

Gilpin encouraged the English tourist to explore picturesque landscapes as a means of turning one’s “amusements to a higher purpose” and seeing if nature’s scenes

¹⁷³ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. 1757 (London: N. Hailes, 1824), 34.

“can inspire him with religious awe,” leading him towards “moral tendency.”¹⁷⁴ This kind of touring with aesthetic, moral, and religious purposes (sometimes known as scenic tourism or picturesque tourism) became particularly popular in America in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the rise of American landscape artists like Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand, who promoted touring and admiring the American landscape through their art and written works. Travelers drew inspiration from the works of philosophers, writers, artists, and travelers in Britain and the United States.¹⁷⁵ These aesthetically minded travelers emphasized the moral and religious potential of scenic travel throughout this period. Sedgwick wrote *The Travellers* with the concepts of the picturesque and the sublime clearly in mind.

Sedgwick’s narrative emphasizes that tourists should appreciate the sanctity of the landscape and use a tour as an opportunity to improve their own moral and religious character. The Sackvilles consistently make connections between the aesthetic beauty of the tourist landscape and Christian morality. For example, the Sackvilles only view Niagara Falls after spending the afternoon aiding a poor woman with an ill child. This moment of moral goodness helps “reconcile [the family] to the delay of the sight of the Falls.”¹⁷⁶ After doing all they can for the “poor woman,” their charity “gradually gave place to their admiration of the beauties of their ride, and the animated expectation of

¹⁷⁴ William Gilpin, *Three Essays* (London, R. Blamire, 1792), 47.

¹⁷⁵ A number of scholars have detailed the rise and expansion of picturesque tourism in America throughout the 1800s, including Lueck, *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour*, Sears, *Sacred Places*, and Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*.

¹⁷⁶ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 72.

seeing the Falls.”¹⁷⁷ While this delay might seem to represent the value of charity *over* aesthetic appreciation, the two are inextricably linked. Only after experiencing “concern...for their protégée,” the impoverished woman, can the family truly admire the Falls.¹⁷⁸

Upon arriving at the Falls, the family comes to comprehend even more acutely the connection between God, morality, and the landscape. For example, when Edward asks Mrs. Sackville at the Falls, “What is it, mother, that makes us all so silent?” she answers, “It is the spirit of God moving on the face of the waters—it is this new revelation to our sense of his power and majesty.”¹⁷⁹ She explains to them that they can only appreciate the view because of their “religious sentiment that is to [them] a second sight, by which [they] see in all this beauty the hand of the Creator.”¹⁸⁰ To Mrs. Sackville and her children, touring famous American scenery like Niagara Falls offers a way to become closer to God.

This message is remarkably similar to Sedgwick’s reflections on her own tourist experiences. Upon her first sight of Niagara Falls in 1821, for example, Sedgwick notes that the Falls “seemed to be pouring from the Heavens,” and that they reflected “the power of God.” She continues, describing her view of the Falls:

The beautiful indented hill, with its rounded projections, that skirts the ledge of rocks, the quiet little habitations all along the margin of water...in all this uproar, as if the Creator had said “It is I, be not afraid.” The beautiful rainbow! That looks

¹⁷⁷ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 76.

¹⁷⁸ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 76.

¹⁷⁹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 79.

¹⁸⁰ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 79.

like the smile of God upon his own work. Oh...what may we not hope to see when the glory of God shall be revealed.¹⁸¹

Sedgwick begins her description with an account of the picturesque landscape surrounding the Falls, and the sublime aesthetic of the Falls itself (in particular, her emphasis on the “uproar” of the water). She then transitions from her aesthetic account of the Falls into a description of the religious meaning invoked by the scene. This combination of picturesque tourism and religious uplift is exactly what Sedgwick wanted other tourists to experience on their journeys along the Fashionable Tour. Thus, her depictions of the Sackvilles’ “successful” interactions with nature reflect her idealized vision of elite and middle-class tourism.

Sedgwick links these “successful” interactions with nature to the Sackvilles’ socioeconomic class. As Mrs. Sackville notes, their way of touring does not come naturally to everyone; as a religious, moral upper-middle-class family, the Sackvilles can appreciate the connection between landscape and God as a “second sight.”¹⁸² This “second sight” comes easily to those familiar with middle-class values of “religious sentiment” and morality. Yet the Sackvilles occasionally struggle to have the supposedly authentic moral and religious experience with nature. They are simultaneously naturally inclined to see God in nature and in need of training in how to do it. For example, after her children proclaim they prefer museums and other cultural institutions to exploring the scenic countryside, Mrs. Sackville explains to them the virtues of the outdoors:

¹⁸¹ Sedgwick, “Journal of a Trip to New York and Canada, 1821,” 11.4. Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹⁸² Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 79.

Every vegetable that springs from the kind bosom of the earth – the earth itself – the rocks – the pebbles – living creatures, their instincts and habitudes – are all a study for you. The volume is open and outspread before you: God grant me grace to train your minds and hearts, that you may read therein – read with the enlightened understanding and benevolent spirit...¹⁸³

The connection between nature and religious enlightenment is thus one that has to be instilled through “training.” The family’s struggles reveal the difficulty of attaining this sense of Christian morality through nature. According to Sedgwick’s narrative, this kind of tourist experience required effort and practice, as well as proper education. As Mr. Sackville says to his children, “the language of nature sometimes needs an interpreter.”¹⁸⁴ On the one hand, Mr. Sackville’s claim seems to celebrate the democratic nature of tourism, implying that every tourist has difficulties finding a connection between scenery and Christian morals. However, the only Sackvilles who truly struggle with this task are the children. Mr. Sackville says Edward and Julia are such “young observers” that they need a guide to help them decipher nature’s “celestial influence.”¹⁸⁵ Of course, this “guide,” is not a guidebook of the sort that lower-class tourists might rely on in their performance of Christian responses to the landscape. According to the Sackvilles, middle-class morality cannot be contained in a flimsy commercial object. Instead, Julia and Edward require familial instruction and supervision, which also emphasizes the middle-class values of family and domesticity. Sedgwick thus insists that, as adults, elite and middle-class people will be able to attain these levels of appreciation and

¹⁸³ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 17.

¹⁸⁴ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 81.

¹⁸⁵ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 80, 81.

understanding of the landscape, after they have received rigorous guidance from their elite and middle-class parents.

The Travellers: Commodification, Codification, and Christian Morality

In her children's book, Sedgwick typically links the touristic failures of the Sackville children, as well as other characters, to the rising codification and commodification of tourism. As detailed in chapter one, the rise of middle-class tourism also saw the rise of mass print culture related to that tourism. Guidebooks, brochures, pamphlets, and other promotional materials increasingly provided a quasi-instructional manual for what scenes to view and how to view them. Niagara Falls provides a perfect case study for the way guidebook authors embedded responses to scenes that readers could then repeat. In his *A Northern Tour* (1825), for example, Henry Dilworth Gilpin first suggests which route the tourist should take, arguing that one in particular will "surpass all others in sublimity and beauty."¹⁸⁶ He then describes the view of the Falls using standard sublime language; he explains that the reader will come upon "a vast body of water, whirling and fretting and foaming among the rapids above—the deep and death-like stillness with which it approaches the precipice, then, gathering all mighty force, the plunge which it makes into the abyss..."¹⁸⁷ Gilpin even provides readers with the language to make connections between the landscape and God's power, noting that the "ungovernable awe" of the Falls is a reminder of the "busy insignificance of man" and the power of "nature's mighty works."¹⁸⁸ With the language for response readily

¹⁸⁶ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour*, 1825, 145.

¹⁸⁷ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour*, 1825, 145.

¹⁸⁸ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour*, 1825, 148.

available, tourists did not need to actually experience a connection to God, but could instead simply feign entry into the world of middle-class tourism through a careful adherence to the language of guidebooks.

Sedgwick's decision to set her tale in 1818 aptly reflects this concern about the rise of a codified, commodified tourism. In 1818, this form of tourism was in its most nascent phase; in fact, none of the guidebooks of the antebellum era had yet been published. Most tourists were still primarily wealthy, elite families. As Will Mackintosh explains, many tourists at the time were similar to the eighteenth century leisure travelers – those whom Mackintosh calls “active” travelers.¹⁸⁹ Without an established tourist infrastructure, these travelers had to gather and rely on the advice of friends and locals to select the fastest transportation routes, the most fashionable accommodations, and the most popular sites. However, by the mid-1820s, when Sedgwick wrote *The Travellers*, this idiosyncratic, “active” travel gave way to more standardized, “passive” travel as tourist industry became more established.¹⁹⁰ The Fashionable Route had become a fully codified itinerary with established travel routes, respectable hotels, and publications providing detailed information on the best ways to experience the Tour. As such, aspirational middle-class families began to follow the Fashionable Route, if only for a few days at a time. Sedgwick thus imposes an 1820s anxiety about the influx of tourism on the largely unaware American society of the 1810s.

¹⁸⁹ Mackintosh, “The Commodification of Travel,” 77.

¹⁹⁰ Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 114.

Part of what Sedgwick appears to admire about “active” travel is the traveler’s supposed ability to appreciate the moral and religious value of the landscape – something tourists did not have to do when they had a guidebook handy to teach them what views to appreciate and how to respond to them. Sedgwick notes the subtle distinction between simply recognizing and repeating common depictions of the landscape, and truly appreciating its moral and religious value. In *The Travellers*, Edward and Julia both strive, through the assistance of their mother, to go beyond rote statements depicting the aesthetic beauty of the tourist landscape. When watching their mother sketch a scene along the banks of the Mohawk River, for example, Edward notes that she must “mark the deep shadow [an elm tree] casts on that pier...and that taper church spire that stretches above the thick wood on the left....and see...what a golden mist there is in the topmost branches of that tree.”¹⁹¹ This language is remarkably similar to aesthetic descriptions in the earliest guidebooks. Henry Dilworth Gilpin, for example, describes the approach of Niagara using similar language that embraces the sublime and picturesque elements of the scene: “As you proceed, a partial glimpse of the cataract may be caught, but it is soon lost behind the forests, leaving merely the cloud of mist which rises high into the air, and the thunder which reverberates for ever upon the ear.”¹⁹² However, Mrs. Sackville reminds her children of the need to go beyond recitation of aesthetic terminology, or hackneyed illustrations of these picturesque and sublime scenes. She explains “Oh, my children, it is an easy task to draw these lines so as to convey a correct idea of forms and distances, but very difficult to imitate the colouring of nature, the

¹⁹¹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 29.

¹⁹² Gilpin, *A Northern Tour*, 1825, 147.

delicate touch of her skillful hand...the freshness and purity that marks the youth of the year.”¹⁹³ Mrs. Sackville might simply be noting the distinction between the ease of drawing a scene in pencil (as opposed to painting a scene in color). Yet the distinction serves as a useful metaphor for the difference between a superficial understanding of nature, and a true, deep appreciation of the connection between the landscape and God. She consistently urges her children to go beyond rote description and language – beyond the mass-produced aesthetic terminology of the guidebook – to obtain a deeper understanding of the scenic landscape.

Mrs. Sackville’s claims about the imperfection of mass-produced guides runs counter to Mr. Sackville’s earlier assertion that some tourists, including his children, need an “interpreter.” Yet when the Sackvilles do choose to rely on a guide, it is a human one rather than one in print. For example, earlier in the text, Edward visits Quebec’s Cape Diamond alone, and fears that “without any one to explain it to him, [he] must leave it as ignorant as he had entered.”¹⁹⁴ He seeks information about the site from a former soldier who had once fought at the fort. The soldier describes the site, and the battles that took place there, in language distinct from a typical antebellum guidebook. The English soldier describes the site with a passionate sense of English patriotism that borders on hostility towards other nationalities. He calls the French “poor ignorant superstitious deluded creatures, far enough behind us English, or even the Americans.”¹⁹⁵ When he takes Edward to see a Martello tower (a common British structure used as a fort), and the

¹⁹³ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 29.

¹⁹⁴ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 158.

¹⁹⁵ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 160.

boy claims “I do think we [the Americans] could take it,” the soldier lashes out at Edward, “dashing” the money Edward paid him on the ground.¹⁹⁶ The guide’s emotional, personal language and his rejection of Ned’s money places him outside of the commodified tourist industry that produced guidebooks. Instead, Ned’s attempt to extract information from a knowledgeable local harkens back to Mackintosh’s “active traveller” of the eighteenth century. Rather than rely on the reproduced language of a guidebook, the Sackvilles sought more direct connections to the scenic landscape through discussions with locals – even if that local was volatile.

While the Sackvilles (especially the children) occasionally strain to extract Christian morality out of their tour, they are more often the idealized middle-class family, capable of understanding the connection between touring and Christian morality, and rectifying any failures of their children. In fact, part of what makes the Sackvilles so successful is their ability to avoid the moral dangers of the commodified, codified tourist experience; in particular, the tendency to focus on the commercial elements of touring. For instance, although Edward and Julia’s father gives them each five dollars to purchase “Canada curiosities,” they ultimately decide to give this money to an impoverished woman who needs money to travel to Quebec City to find her husband.¹⁹⁷ Mrs. Sackville proudly explains that, by choosing not to participate in the consumerist tourist economy, the children would “associate with the more selfish and transient pleasure of their journey, the pure and enduring sentiment of benevolence.”¹⁹⁸ This idea is underscored in

¹⁹⁶ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 162.

¹⁹⁷ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 95.

¹⁹⁸ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 99.

the conclusion of the novel, in which Sedgwick notes that the Sackville children will ultimately forget the “delightful but evanescent pleasures of their jaunt,” while they will forever retain “the consciousness of having rendered an essential service to a fellow-creature.”¹⁹⁹ Demonstrating Christian morality as a tourist, it seems, comes from rejecting or at least deemphasizing the consumerist nature of tourism itself. Thus, in many ways, the Sackvilles are the “active” travelers that Mackintosh describes, rather than “passive” tourists. Straddling the line between traveler and tourist, between 1818 and 1825, the Sackvilles provide an idealized example of a moral tourist, while also addressing antebellum anxieties.

The Travellers: Class and Christian Morality

Sedgwick clearly emphasizes the role of commodified, codified tourism in the loss of (or difficulty in obtaining) a moral, Christian travel experience. Yet her critique goes beyond the tourist industry itself, to address how changes in the industry reflected class conflict and anxiety. The rise of a systematized tourist infrastructure allowed more people to afford to travel, leading to an unsettling mixing of classes along the more popular routes. Sedgwick makes a clear distinction between three types of touring classes that are separate from the more established middle-class tourists like Sedgwick: local laborers; lower-class tourists; and the parvenu travelers. According to Sedgwick, people in these three classes lacked the moral qualities of a true middle-class tourist. Unequipped with the moral character of middle-class society, these groups were supposedly more likely to struggle with the complex relationship between touring and Christian morality

¹⁹⁹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 171.

than tourists of the Sackvilles' status. In her division and critique of these three groups, we see Sedgwick struggling to stabilize and clarify an increasingly ambiguous class system.

In *The Travellers*, lower-class, local laborers struggle to adhere to the proper middle-class, touristic appreciation of the landscape. Sedgwick in particular singles out local farmers for their inability to recognize the godliness of scenic upstate New York. On their journey up the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, Edward chides the “dronish farmers....That groupe [sic] of men, black and white, all leaning on their hoes, and staring at us....they seem to have no more soul than the clods they stand upon.”²⁰⁰ Here, Sedgwick's own words directly counter scholarly claims about her radical perspective on race and gender. To Sedgwick, working-class men are inert, no more human than the tools they hold. While she unites black and white farmers here, they are brought together not in egalitarianism, but in indolence. Both “black and white” farmers stand idle while their “corn is trying in vain to shoot above the weeds and choke it” – the farmers literally make their plants do the work of men.²⁰¹ This description of working-class men directly follows multiple paragraphs extolling the beauty of the landscape, and the presence of God within that landscape. Julia describes the scene as the “perfect picture,” and the narrator praises the view of “clear heaven” up above.²⁰² The lesson for readers is therefore that there are correct and incorrect ways to value the landscape, and that the failure of the farmers is in direct opposition to the success of the middle-class tourists.

²⁰⁰ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 24.

²⁰¹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 24.

²⁰² Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 24.

Sedgwick emphasizes the failure of working-class locals living near Niagara Falls to appreciate the aesthetic, religious, and moral value of their home. Edward laments that a man living near one of the Niagara hotels says he is “sick enough” of living in the area, due to the noise of the Falls and the heavy ice in winter.²⁰³ Yet impoverished locals like this man are largely forgiven by the Sackvilles for their inability to understand the connection between the landscape and religion. As Mr. Sackville explains to Ned, the locals’ distaste for Niagara is to be pitied in the “laborer” who is unable to appreciate aesthetic beauty.²⁰⁴ This pity arises from a belief in the stark class differences between tourists and laboring locals. As people desperate only for what is “useful,” as Mr. Sackville describes them, they lack the ability to even attempt to appreciate the aesthetic value of the landscape.²⁰⁵ These are the poorest Americans, those only looking to survive, inevitably unable to see that “which is beautiful.”²⁰⁶ Because the Sackvilles see aesthetic appreciation, Christian morality, and class as linked, they believe those without an aesthetic appreciation (like the working-class locals they mention) also lack the supposed Christian morality of the middle class. The Sackvilles thus link poverty with ignorance of Christian morality, and therefore constantly are surprised when an impoverished person demonstrates Christian or moral values similar to that of their middle-class family. Yet impoverished locals did not threaten the Christian morality of the tourist experience, as they were part of an easily identifiable lower class, clearly discernable and segregated from the touring classes.

²⁰³ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 81.

²⁰⁴ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²⁰⁵ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²⁰⁶ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

While impoverished locals are “pitied” by the Sackvilles for their inability to understand the landscape’s connection to God, lower-class tourists are more directly derided by the Sackvilles. The family learns this lesson at Niagara Falls, in a scene remarkably similar to Sedgwick’s own experience mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. Edward harshly critiques a “party of city shop-keepers” touring the Falls.²⁰⁷ As shop-keepers, these men and women would have been considered among the socially mobile lower class, seeking to enter the middle class – just those sorts of people who were increasingly touring the United States in the antebellum era. Edward overhears these tourists complain that the Falls are a “disappointment” for their lack of amenities, including lavish food items – much like the tourist experience Sedgwick describes during her own tour of Niagara.²⁰⁸ Mr. Sackville defines these tourists as the “vulgar poor,” those who travel solely “because others do.”²⁰⁹ The “vulgarity” of these tourists lies in their desire to travel for appearances, to perform as one who is a part of fashionable society, rather than to obtain any connection to “the Divine Original.”²¹⁰ While the laboring poor remain a distinct class, supposedly incapable of achieving this sort of connection to the landscape, the “vulgar poor” are detested by upper-middle-class people like the Sackvilles for their social aspirations. They seek to enter middle-class and elite society without adhering to the moral trappings supposedly required of these classes. Instead, they perform middle-class morality absent of content: they demonstrate interest

²⁰⁷ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²⁰⁸ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²⁰⁹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²¹⁰ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 80.

and “pleasure” only in commodities like food.²¹¹ Yet they look indistinguishable from middle-class tourists when they stand and look out over the edge of the Falls; it is impossible to know who is having a religious experience, and who is thinking about his or her next broiled chicken dinner. It is this uncertainty of who belongs to what class, of who is faking and who is sincerely practicing Christian morality, that so frustrates and even frightens the Sackvilles, and Sedgwick herself. This ability to appear to be of the middle class through mere performance revealed to the Sackvilles and Sedgwick the precarious reality of middle-class identity.

Occasionally, it is the wealthier socially mobile tourists who struggle to appreciate the Niagara landscape in Sedgwick’s novel. These are not the established elite, like Sedgwick’s own family, but in fact those who made money within a generation or two through participation in the American capitalist economy. As Karen Halttunen explains, the antebellum era saw the rise of “aspiring men and women who hoped to fulfill the promise of the allegedly open society of Jacksonian America, either by entering the ranks of the middle class from below or by rising within those ranks to higher and higher levels of gentility.”²¹² This latter group could feign elite status through performance, including touristic practices, which proved unsettling to upper-middle-class tourists who sought to, as Halttunen explains, “establish and recognize social identity.”²¹³ According to Mr. Sackville, while the “vulgar poor” are to be “pitied,” these “vulgar

²¹¹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 95.

²¹² Halttunen, *Confidence Men*, xv.

²¹³ Halttunen, *Confidence Men*, xvi.

rich” are far worse.²¹⁴ Sedgwick provides an example of the vulgar rich in Mrs. Hilton, a woman as “rich as Croesus” and a visitor to Niagara Falls. Edward and his father critique her desire to bypass the Falls and spend more time in Saratoga Springs.²¹⁵ Edward says to Mr. Sackville, “I heard her say to a gentleman, that if she could have remained at the Springs, and then could have gone home and *said* she had been to the Falls, she should have been glad; for she was sure no one came here but for the name of it.”²¹⁶ Unlike Niagara Falls, which was popular as a scenic tourist destination, Saratoga Springs was considered the most fashionable resort town of the antebellum period. Mrs. Hilton’s claim reflects a common desire to participate in the tourist experience in order to socialize with the upper-middle classes, rather than to experience breathtaking, morally edifying views. Mr. Sackville responds to his son’s comments about Mrs. Hilton by saying that she “is one of the class of the vulgar rich, among whom vulgarity is quite as obvious, and much more disgusting, than with the vulgar poor.”²¹⁷ For Mr. Sackville, the biggest concern while touring was the newly rich who lacked the moral Christianity of the middle class, but could easily stand among them at the same tourist locations, due to their wealth.

Sedgwick’s critique of the commodified, codified tourist industry is ultimately a critique of an effect of the covetous lower classes and the newly rich: the rise of “fashion.” Fashion, according to Anne Scott Macleod, is “the abandonment of traditional

²¹⁴ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²¹⁵ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 82.

²¹⁶ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 83.

²¹⁷ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 83.

values for new styles of living.”²¹⁸ Through “empty forms of false etiquette” and other means of performance, such as attire, the fashionable could feign entry into the upper classes.²¹⁹ Tourism itself became a form of fashion, as noted by the common label “The Fashionable Tour.” Knowing how to *appear* while touring – how to dress, how to travel, how to respond to particular scenes – became critical to performing the role of one in fashionable society. Whether or not one *felt* the correct way was far less important. “Fashion” is in many ways directly linked to class; it was in fact a prominent way of entering into middle-class society – a means of “passing” along class lines. The accessibility of various social practices (including touring) promoted a fear that men and women could simply perform as part of another class (sometimes dubbed the “confidence man” and the “painted woman,” as Halttunen notes), thus threatening traditional hierarchical values. Any embrace of the fashionable and social mobility was seen as a vulgar attempt to appear as something other than oneself. This concept conveyed in tourism – that class could be performed rather than being something inherent in a person – indicates what was terrifying instability about the concept of status for middle-class people. Not only were the middle and upper-classes being invaded by the lower classes and the parvenus, but these striving people also made it impossible to know who was truly a moral, upper-class citizen and who was not. For Sedgwick, this was not merely an issue of class infiltration: it was an existential crisis.

²¹⁸ Anne Scott MacLeod, *A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture, 1820-1860*, (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 150.

²¹⁹ Halttunen, *Confidence Men*, xv.

The Travellers: A Guidebook for Children?

Despite Sedgwick's clear concerns about a superficial tourist experience and its implications for the stability of the American class structure, *The Travellers* on occasion ironically reads like a codifying, commodifying guidebook from the 1820s or 1830s. These similarities reveal the tension between Sedgwick's desire for a moral, Christian travel experience, and the reality of commercialized antebellum tourism.

The physical publication itself corresponds to the guidebook genre in many ways. The structure of the text resembles that of a guidebook. Guidebooks were typically small publications – pocket-sized – so that tourists could carry them and use them as references throughout their journeys. The first edition of *The Travellers* is almost identical in height and length to these early guidebooks. Published by E. Bliss and E. White in 1825, *The Travellers* stands 15 centimeters tall. This first edition was small enough for readers to treat it similarly to a guidebook. Like many guidebooks, this was produced using relatively inexpensive materials, including a marbled cardboard cover and back. Placing it within a pocket, a young reader could read this on his or her own journey up the Hudson River and west to Niagara Falls.²²⁰

Similarly, Sedgwick's narrative voice resembles a narrative technique used by many early American guidebooks. As mentioned in chapter one, many guidebook authors occasionally shifted from first- or second-person singular into first-person plural, transforming the narrator into a literal companion for the touring reader. Phrases like “we pass along [the Hudson],” from Henry Dilworth Gilpin's 1825 guidebook, led readers

²²⁰ Many children's books from the period were of a similarly diminutive size, typically no more than fifteen centimeters tall.

along the Fashionable Tour, with the narrator as a textual guide.²²¹ Sedgwick's narrator also shifts into this first-person plural voice often, particularly as the Sackvilles begin their tour. For example, after the family stops to sketch a scene along the Mohawk River, the narrator assures readers that "we shall make but one stage of it from Palatine to Oneida, not once halting."²²² The use of "we" in *The Travellers* serves the same purpose as Gilpin's use of "we": it provides a clear link between the tour in the book and the tour that the reader is supposedly taking.

Not only are the physical format and narrative voice of guidebooks and Sedgwick's novel similar, but descriptions of tourist sites in *The Travellers* also are similar to that of early guidebooks. Sedgwick provides concise information about each of the sites the Sackvilles visit, much in the way guidebook authors provided paragraph-long descriptions of each tourist location. Rochester, New York, for example, is described as a town with "fine houses, shops, and warehouses" in what "years before was a complete wilderness."²²³ This is similar to many town descriptions in guidebooks from the period; Theodore Dwight's *The Northern Traveller*, for example, describes one town as containing "some houses, as well as a court house, jail, and two churches."²²⁴ Other sites are described by Sedgwick using the same concise language, but with an emphasis on the geographic descriptions; the narrator describes a spot on the St. Lawrence River: "Waters passing St. Vincent on one side, and Grand Island on the other, contract their

²²¹ Gilpin, *A Northern Tour*, 12, 38.

²²² Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 30.

²²³ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 42.

²²⁴ Theodore Dwight, *The Northern Traveller*, 1828, 377.

channel, and assume the form of a river.”²²⁵ As noted in chapter one, many guidebooks drew inspiration from (or directly referenced or quoted) antebellum geographies and gazetteers, which provided this kind of geographic information for sites throughout the United States. Thus, despite critiquing the superficial nature of the codified and commodified tourist experience, Sedgwick’s own narrative embodies many of its distinct features.

Like guidebook authors, Sedgwick also develops the “story,” the “cultural infrastructure,” of the region she describes.²²⁶ In particular, Sedgwick emphasizes the Revolutionary history and lore that peppers the Sackvilles’ tour. Mr. Sackville, for example, encourages his family to visit sites of Revolutionary battles – a common tourist activity in the antebellum era. He visits a series of fortifications in Quebec “in quest of the spot where the gallant Montgomery fell in our cause” – the “cause” being the Revolutionary War.²²⁷ Like guidebook authors, Sedgwick understands one of the many reasons that tourists (and readers) are attracted to a particular site: the ability to connect the site with particular historical associations.

Yet some of the historical associations in both guidebooks and *The Travellers* reveal a darker desire among American tourists: the need to define the landscape as existing solely for the white, middle-class person. For example, in *The Travellers*, Sedgwick emphasizes the rich Native American lore associated with sites along the Fashionable Tour. Edward witnesses a piece of lore in the making, of sorts, when he spies

²²⁵ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 107.

²²⁶ Gassan, *Birth of American Tourism*.

²²⁷ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 157.

a Native American “warrior chief” saying goodbye to his lover, a French and Native American woman whose father is taking her to France.²²⁸ Similar to the Native American lore recounted in guidebooks, this story highlights the loss of Native American culture to the social and political dominance of a hegemonic white America. The goodbye that Edward witnesses symbolizes the end of the Native American people: with the woman in France, the Native American warrior is left with no one to marry or with whom to raise children. Here, Sedgwick goes beyond providing readers with historical associations: she also reaffirms their vision of America and its citizens. This is something that guidebook authors did as well, as discussed in chapter one. Middle-class white tourists wanted to see the trope of the Vanishing Indian confirmed; they wanted to feel confident that the American tourist landscape was one that existed solely for them.

One story that entices the Sackvilles to a particular tourist site combines lore from both military history and Native American culture. When visiting Ogdensburg, a fellow tourist tells the family (and thus the readers) about a “traditionary” story regarding the “remains of a French fortification” near the town.²²⁹ The tourist recounts a tale about a commandant of a fort who married a young Iroquois woman, and her brother’s attempt to kill her for abandoning their people and converting to Catholicism. Ultimately the brother is stopped and, according to the narrator, “there too is a tradition that the pious sister converted him to the catholic [sic] faith.”²³⁰ This story provides both another reassuring narrative of the Vanishing Indian (discussed in chapter one), as well as military history.

²²⁸ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 35.

²²⁹ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 124.

²³⁰ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 136.

Significantly, the story's violence centers on the acts of the Native American brother, whose transition from aggression to peacefulness comes with a transition from "heathenism" to Christianity. The brother's initial violence and supposed godlessness implicitly suggest the contrast: the Christian morality of the white bourgeois.

Despite these similarities in their vision of the tourist landscape and in their celebration of the white, middle-class tourist, guidebooks and Sedgwick's novel differ in their ultimate purposes. Unlike guidebooks, which typically provide a superficial overview of how to engage with the tourist landscape, *The Travellers* serves as an in-depth instructive manual for how to achieve the most religious and moral enlightenment on one's tour. The instructive nature of the book has much to do with the audience for *The Travellers*: young adults. Children's literature in America only became widespread in the 1820s, becoming a "steady stream" in the 1830s, and only continuing to increase in number and popularity with each passing decade.²³¹ Throughout the antebellum era, children's literature – in the form of short stories published in magazines, anthologies, and as stand-alone novels – embraced didacticism and moralizing to the young. As Anne Scott MacLeod notes in her work on nineteenth-century children's fiction in America, antebellum children's literature "mirrored the conventional thought of the dominant middle class in their time" and became a means of disseminating those ideologies to offspring.²³² Literature shaped, even policed, the moral character of the youngest American citizens. Sedgwick firmly believed in the need to shape the moral development of American youth, explaining that "the safety of the republic depends on the virtue of

²³¹ MacLeod, *A Moral Tale*, 20-21.

²³² MacLeod, *A Moral Tale*, 34.

the people is a truth that cannot be too assiduously taught; and that it is the business of the young, as well as of the old, to help on the cause of goodness, cannot be too strongly impressed.”²³³

Like other children’s literature of the period, *The Travellers* addresses cultural anxieties of the time through the didactic tone of a parent or a teacher. As MacLeod explains, “rapidly changing social conditions accelerated and intensified the process that made children the objects of so much adult interest, hope, and anxiety.”²³⁴ From issues of nationalism to temperance to the role of the household, children’s literature became a space for addressing the most pressing middle-class *adult* concerns of the period. Sedgwick’s *The Travellers* embraces this role of children’s fiction, addressing deep-seated concerns regarding tourism and class mobility. In incorporating formal and stylistic elements of the guidebook, the book fuses didactic modes: it offers children a guide for both physical and spiritual, moral journeys. Just as a guidebook seeks to provide an overview of correct behaviors and responses of the tourist, *The Travellers* seeks to guide the child to the correct behaviors, both on a tour and in the home. It is in many ways the guidebook she wished authors like Davison and Dwight would have written for adults.

Sedgwick’s publication addresses many themes common in antebellum children’s literature. As MacLeod and others have argued, works for children typically expressed ambivalence towards particular classes and towards democracy more generally, as

²³³ Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *The Boy of Mount Rhigi*, (Boston: Crosby, Nichols and Company, 1857), 6, quoted in MacLeod, *A Moral Tale*, 25.

²³⁴ Macleod, *A Moral Tale*, 9.

Sedgwick's *The Travellers* does. Most often told through the lens of middle-class society, children's literature expressed both a disapproval of the fashionableness that Sedgwick critiques, as well as a continued condescension towards the poorer classes. As MacLeod explains, distinctions were made between characters "based on merit, not money."²³⁵ And yet those worthy of merit were typically of the middle class. Sedgwick's concerns about class and morality at the Falls were part of a larger concern about class and morality as expressed throughout children's literature.

Thus, through content and genre, Sedgwick's *The Travellers* embodied the anxieties of middle-class society. With the increasingly commodified and codified system of travel came the ever-present fear that someone of a different class could be feigning appreciation for God's wonders right beside you, thus evincing a moral probity that he or she did not in fact have. Without any physical markers to distinguish tourists by class, bourgeois travelers like Sedgwick recognized the ultimate precariousness of not only the white middle-class, but also this class's value system. If, as Sedgwick stated in *The Boy of Mount Rhigi*, "the safety of the republic depends on the virtue of the people," then what happened if there was no distinct middle class, to maintain and promote American virtue? Moreover, without virtue, what did it mean to be an American?

A Solution for Sedgwick? Gift Books, American Tourism, and Class

Only one year after *The Travellers*, Sedgwick published a very different kind of travel narrative, both in genre and in content. The short story "The Catholic Iroquois" describes the career of a French missionary who is devoted to converting two Iroquois

²³⁵ Macleod, *A Moral Tale*, 94.

children to Christianity. While not explicitly about tourism, the story is framed around the narrative of a tourist who comes across the missionary's manuscript while on the Fashionable Tour. Some of Sedgwick's messages about tourism and class, which are prevalent in *The Travellers*, reappear in "The Catholic Iroquois." Sedgwick lightly mocks the tourist, a newly wealthy man, whom she describes as being "of that fastidious class that do not patiently submit to inconveniences"; he spends more time trying to find luxurious accommodations than appreciating the scenic vistas around him. She also critiques the locals (who self-identify as "simple peasants") for failing to understand the potential Christian, moral benefits of tourism. They dismiss travelers as those who journey merely "just to look at rapids and waterfalls."²³⁶

The similarities between *The Travellers* and "The Catholic Iroquois" end there. In fact, in some ways, the publication history of "The Catholic Iroquois" goes against everything Sedgwick champions in *The Travellers*. Sedgwick published the short story in *The Atlantic Souvenir* (1826), the first of a new genre of antebellum print culture, the gift book. Popular in America from 1826 until the Civil War,²³⁷ these ornate, lavish collections of literary miscellany and detailed engravings are considered the beginning of the industrialization and commodification of print culture – something Sedgwick

²³⁶ Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Travels and Sketches by Miss Sedgwick* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1835), 49.

²³⁷ The number of gift books published in American was highest in 1848, 1850, and 1851, with 31 gift books published each year. Kevin MacDonnell, "The American Gift Book," The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, <http://www.abaa.org/member-articles/the-american-gift-book>.

critiques in *The Travellers*.²³⁸ As Paula R. Feldman argues, gift books were the “embodiment of social aspiration” – books purchased by those hoping to enter the middle class. These were lavish, ornate publications commonly given to loved ones (typically women) at Christmas and other holidays. With a combination of elaborate binding, detailed prints, and a miscellany of texts, gift books were considered “luxurious literature.”²³⁹ Often given as gifts and displayed on parlor tables, they served as a visual marker of one’s social status – or one’s aspirational status. Commonly including images and literature related to American scenery and tourism, gift books represented the commodification of literature, art, and tourism, and the democratization of aesthetic values. Gift books provided a means by which people could gain the visual vocabulary necessary to enter into the middle or upper classes through the mere purchase of consumer goods, rather than through an education on the relationship between class and morality. Like touring, gift books were a way to *perform* a middle class identity, rather than exude its supposed *essence*.

Yet despite the potential of the genre to aid cursory performances of morality and Christianity, the gift book simultaneously served as a sort of solution to the problems Sedgwick explores and expresses in *The Travellers*. While readers could engage with gift books superficially, or purchase them merely for display, a gift book like *The Atlantic Souvenir* could also serve as a more thorough, respectable guide than the superficial,

²³⁸ For more on the role of gift books in the commercialization of print culture, see Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Books, 2003).

²³⁹ Lydia Sigourney, qtd. in Ralph Thompson, *American Literary Annuals and Gift Books, 1825-1865* (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1936), 9.

cheaply made guidebooks discussed in chapter one. Although gift books provided less ostensibly “useful” information, such as a schedule of stage coach times or the cost of lodging at a particular inn or hotel, they offered readers detailed advice on how to properly respond to particular aesthetic views. As Sedgwick sought to do in *The Travellers*, gift book authors and illustrators guided readers on how to best achieve a Christian, moral response and reaction to a landscape. Through purchasing and consuming a gift book, readers could have a respectable, middle-class armchair touristic experience.

The gift book represented a tension in antebellum America (and antebellum tourism in particular) between the culture of middle-class respectability and the rise of a democratized commercial culture. As gift book scholars have noted, these books straddled the line between embracing sincere moral lessons and blatant commercialism. While they aimed to serve “the religious and moral classes of society,” they were purchasable luxury items, made for the socially mobile who sought to *appear* as part of those classes. Anyone with the money to afford such a book could very well absorb the lessons within it. The distinction between those of the “religious and moral classes” and those who simply wanted to purchase the trappings of that class became unsettlingly vague, particularly for those like Sedgwick who desired clear class distinctions.

Nathaniel Parker Willis’s gift book *American Scenery* (1840) exemplifies the tensions inherent within the gift book. With essays and vignettes by Willis, and engravings by British artist William Henry Bartlett, *American Scenery* reveals how gift books could both resolve and exacerbate issues related to the democratization of tourism

and the rise of supposedly superficial, amoral touristic experiences.²⁴⁰ Published at the height of popularity of the American gift book genre (in 1840, U.S. publishers issued at least 13 gift books, with up to 10,000 imprints per edition), devoted entirely to descriptions of scenic American tourist sites, *American Scenery* embodied the simultaneous crazes for tourism and gift books. While not the first gift book to focus entirely on American tourist sites, scholars claim it was “certainly the most beautiful and successful in the genre to date.”²⁴¹ A study of the production and publication of *American Scenery*, as well as an analysis of the text and images, reveals the ways in which this gift book served as both a corrective to and promoter of the democratized, pre-packaged tourist industry that threatened to undermine the relationship between class and Christian morality – a relationship that people like Sedgwick held so dear.

American Scenery as a Corrective

Tourists were not meant to travel with gift books like *American Scenery* in tow. In fact, *American Scenery* completely rejected the practical, ordered nature of guidebooks. Instead, it was ornate, and even burdensome. *American Scenery* was originally published in multi-part lavish pieces: first released serially in thirty portions, each bound in paper, consumers could later purchase the book in two bound volumes. Done up in purple morocco, with elaborate embossing and gilt spines, the volumes represent some of the most stylish print and binding trends of the period. The two volumes also include 127

²⁴⁰ All but two of the engravings (the portrait of Bartlett and the map of Bartlett’s travels) are engraved from images by Bartlett. Bartlett Cowdry, “William Henry Bartlett and the American Scene,” *New York History* 22, no. 4 (Oct. 1941), 393.

²⁴¹ Gregory Pfitzer, “Eden’s Artist: William H. Bartlett as the First Popularizer of Hudson Valley Images,” in *Lives of the Hudson*, ed. Ian Berry and Tom Lewis (Saratoga Springs, NY, 2010), 74.

plates from illustrations by William Bartlett, each accompanied by text by Willis. These steel-engraved images also represented the latest printing technologies; steel plates could provide great detail while also producing more impressions than copper or wood engravings.²⁴² Although Willis wrote all of the text (whereas typical gift books included stories, essays, and poems by a variety of authors), he quotes passages from other authors and poets within his own writing, creating a sort of pseudo-miscellany. People could thus treat *American Scenery* as a gift book, purchasing a volume to give as an ornate gift to a friend or family member.

Unlike guidebooks, *American Scenery* offered no practical information. Gone were charts mapping distances between routes, and costs of different inns and hotels. Instead, *American Scenery* served as a “cultural guide,” instructing readers on not only what picturesque and sublime views were worthy of admiration, but also how to appreciate and respond to that scenery. As a cultural guide, *American Scenery* provided a means by which middle-class armchair travelers could learn to have a Christian, moral touristic experience through the proper appreciation of the sublime and picturesque aesthetics. The book in many ways served as a solution to Sedgwick’s concerns about superficial travellers – it rejected the shallow, commercial nature of tourism that people like Sedgwick so harshly critiqued.

As noted previously, guidebooks, like *American Scenery*, did employ contemporaneous aesthetic language. Yet the guidebook author typically abbreviated this type of language and description, providing readers with only a superficial understanding

²⁴² Georgia Barnhill, “Transformations in Pictorial Printing,” in *A History of the Book in America*, vol. 2, 422-439.

of the sublime and picturesque aesthetic – something that Sedgwick vocally critiqued. For example, Gideon Davison’s description of the scene at Niagara Falls concisely touches on the popular sublime aesthetic: “The emotions and grandeur that fill the mind, on beholding this greatest of the wonders of nature, can scarcely be felt from any effort of description....The mind can feel the real grandeur inspired by this truly magnificent and sublime prospect.”²⁴³ Davison goes on to provide a bit more detail, describing:

The lofty banks and immense woods which environ this stupendous scene—the irresistible force, the rapidity of motion displayed by the rolling crowds of foam—the uncommon brilliancy and variety of colours and of shades—the ceaseless intumescence and swift agitation of the dashing waves below—the solemn and tremendous noise, with the volumes of vapour darting upward into the air, which the simultaneous report and smoke of a thousand cannon could scarcely equal.²⁴⁴

This more detailed reaction to the landscape is not even the guidebook author’s own response: it is a quote from George Heriot’s travelogue, *Travels Through the Canadas* (1807).²⁴⁵ The guidebook author himself can only regurgitate emotional responses from other writers. Readers, in turn, could easily consume and regurgitate the terminology in this passage – words like “grandeur,” “magnificent,” and “sublime” – without actually understanding the philosophy behind these aesthetic values, and the connection to Christian morality that Sedgwick emphasized.

At first glance, Willis’s descriptions of popular tourist sites might appear similar to Davison’s. For example, in the essay “The Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara,” Willis explains that “No one who has not seen this spectacle of turbulent grandeur can conceive

²⁴³ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour*, 1825, 121-2.

²⁴⁴ Davison, *The Fashionable Tour*, 121-122.

²⁴⁵ George Heriot, *Travels Through the Canadas* (London: R. Phillips, 1807), 160-161.

with what force the swift and overwhelming waters are flung upwards.”²⁴⁶ Like Davison, Willis insists on the impossibility of a detailed description for readers, and then reduces the scene to words that evoke the sublime, such as “spectacle,” “grandeur,” and “overwhelming.” However, part of the distinction between the aesthetic language in both types of texts is simply the *amount* of aesthetic description. The entirety of Willis’s writing in *American Scenery* is strictly devoted to this kind of language, whereas this occupies a small space in the typical antebellum guidebook. Because the guidebook’s primary purpose was to serve as a condensed informational manual, this terminology was used sparingly, leaving plenty of room for details on travel routes, accommodations, and concise descriptions of sites. Unlike Davison’s passage on Niagara, Willis’s description in “The Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara” focuses almost entirely on identifying and explaining the sublime elements of the scene:

There is a violence and a power in [the rapids’] foaming career, which is seen in no other phenomenon of the same class....The rocks, whose soaring points show above the surface, seem tormented with some supernatural agony, and fling off the wild and hurried waters, as if with the force of a giant’s arm. Nearer the plunge of the Fall, the Rapids become still more agitated; and it is almost impossible for the spectator to rid himself of the idea, that they are conscious of the abyss to which they are hurrying, and struggle back in the very extremity of horror....The torture of the Rapids, the clinging curves with which they embrace the small rocky islands that live amid the surge, the sudden calmness at the brow of the cataract, and the infernal writhe and whiteness with which they reappear, powerless from the depths of the abyss, all seem, to the excited imagination of the gazer, like the natural effects of impending ruin, desperate resolution, and fearful agony, on the minds and frames of mortals.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Nathaniel Parker Willis, *American Scenery: or, Land, Lake, and River, Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature*, vol. I (London: George Virtue, 1840) 17.

²⁴⁷ Willis, *American Scenery*, vol. I, 17.

Willis not only includes key terms commonly linked to the concept of the sublime (“grandeur,” “violence,” “horror”); he also encourages readers to feel completely immersed in the Falls, enveloped in the utter terror that the sublime supposedly evokes. Willis anthropomorphizes the Falls: they are “tormented,” “agitated,” and even “conscious”; they “embrace” and “writhe.” Willis also uses simile and metaphor throughout the passage, comparing the force of the Falls to “a giant’s arm.” For over a half dozen sentences, the reader is trapped in the “foaming center” of this animated Falls, watching the water apparently suffer as it approaches an impending demise. This figurative language places the reader squarely in the emotional mindset required to appreciate the sublime aesthetic. Yet Willis pushes the instructional nature of passage even further, explaining exactly what the “spectator” feels when admiring this view: he or she is “conscious of the abyss” and can imagine that he is viewing “impending ruin.” The reader seamlessly places him or herself in the position of the viewer: while reading this passage on the right side of the page, the reader can also view Bartlett’s illustration of the scene on the left. In viewing Bartlett’s image the reader becomes the “spectator,” experiencing the emotions that Willis describes. Willis’s narrative thus serves as a detailed manual for not only the language to use at the Falls, but how to feel and what thoughts to consider upon viewing the Falls.

Yet while Willis provides instructions on how to feel when viewing Niagara Falls, he significantly does not make the direct connection between feeling terror and appreciating the “infinity of the Creator,” as Sedgwick does. That gesture is missing in his text, and the reason for it is unclear. Perhaps Willis assumed that middle-class readers

could make this connection themselves, or he deliberately sought to widen his audience by focusing less on Christian morality and more on tourism itself. Either way, Willis clearly saw the text as a chance for didacticism, but with less of a religious component than Sedgwick's children's book.

Readers of *American Scenery* could, of course, still passively absorb the visual and written vocabulary of scenic tourism as they typically did in guidebooks. One could simply read *American Scenery*, visit Niagara Falls, and speak vaguely of the "grandeur" of the scene as a means of performing middle-class respectability. Yet Willis goes beyond simply using the terminology of the picturesque and sublime, demonstrating for readers a connection between these aesthetics and spirituality. Like Sedgwick in *The Travellers*, Willis associates the sublime scenery of the Falls to God's presence in the landscape. In his vignette "Horse-Shoe Fall, At Niagara," Willis describes the Fall as an "almighty wonder," and encourages the viewer to conceive of the Fall as a metaphor for life and death.²⁴⁸ After declaring Horse-shoe Fall to be the "sublimest thing in nature," Willis goes on:

The broad flood glides out of Lake Erie with a confiding tranquility that seems to you, when you know its impending destiny, like that of a human creature advancing irresistibly, but unconsciously, to his death. He embraces the bright islands that part his arms for a caress.... Suddenly the powerful stream is flung with accumulated swiftness among broken rocks; and, as you watch it from below, it seems tossed with the first shock into the very sky. It descends in foam, and from this moment its agony commences. For three miles it tosses and resists, and, racked at every step by sharper rocks and increased rapidity, its unwilling and choked waves fly back, to be again precipitated onward, and at last reach the glossy curve, convulsed with supernatural horror.... The laws of gravitation seem suspended, and the sublimity of the tremendous gulf below seems to check the descending victim on the verge, as if it paused in awe.

²⁴⁸ Willis, *American Scenery*, vol. I, 33.

Like the passage in “The Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara,” this passage places the reader in the position of the tourist. Yet along with anthropomorphization (the stream’s “agony”) and simile (“like that of a human creature”), Willis directly addresses the reader. “You” know of the “impending destiny” of the waters, “you” connect the view of the Fall with contemplation of life and the inevitability of death. In so doing, Willis forces the reader to understand not only the sublimity of the scene, but also its spirituality. This again reveals a connection between Willis’s and Sedgwick’s goals for their readings. Both authors demonstrate through their texts that the apprehension of the sanctity of nature was one way to convey true middle-class respectability.

American Scenery also presents this relationship between aesthetics and Christian morality visually, in a way that differs from guidebooks. As explained in chapter one, the most common images in the earliest guidebooks were maps, which detailed various transportation routes along the Fashionable Tour. Serving as informative images, these topographical pictures did little to promote and explicate the complexities of the picturesque and sublime aesthetics.²⁴⁹ Bartlett’s steel engravings, on the other hand, provide a cultural guide for readers that complements Willis’s text. Their publication history alone accounts for much of the cultural significance of the images. As Gregory Pfitzer has argued, Bartlett’s images of the Fashionable Tour were, for many middle-class Americans (as well as many transatlantic readers), their first encounter with depictions of

²⁴⁹ Later guidebooks (and subsequent editions of the earliest guidebooks) often included engravings after some of the most popular American artists, even occasionally reproducing images from *American Scenery*. Yet guidebook publishers produced these more cheaply than Virtue, resulting in poorer quality (and smaller size, due to the small size of guidebooks).

American tourist sites.²⁵⁰ While Hudson River School painters like Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand had been painting sites along the Catskills and Niagara Falls since the 1820s, few people had the financial means to visit these paintings at the museums, galleries, and private homes in which they were located. *American Scenery* provided a relatively affordable way for middle-class readers – and presumably future tourists – to absorb a “visual vocabulary” of the Fashionable Tour.

Bartlett’s Niagara images provide an apt case study of how his engravings served as a tutorial in the visual vocabulary of the sublime and picturesque. Of the 133 engravings in *American Scenery*, thirteen of them depict Niagara Falls or a site near the Falls. To an extent, Bartlett embraces the sublime depiction of the Falls that Willis offers in the accompanying text. Bartlett’s engraving for “The Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara,” for instance, provides a pictorial match for Willis’s sublime literary descriptions (Figure 2.1). A vortex of water swirls dangerously in the foreground of the image, occupying over two-thirds of the engraving. Three small islands of trees rest above the water; their dark coloring and the rough, disarrayed shrubbery contribute to the wildness of the scene. A small bridge in the right corner emphasizes the magnitude of the water, reminding the viewer of the insignificance of man and man-made objects at the hands of such powerful natural forces.

“View Below Table Rock” (Figure 2.2) offers a similarly sublime view of the Falls, from another perspective. Rather than depicting the Falls from above, this image portrays the grandeur and height of the Falls from a ledge below. One of the few vertical

²⁵⁰ Gregory Pfitzer, “Eden’s Artist.”

engravings in *American Scenery*, “View Below Table Rock” shows readers the awesome height of the Falls. The falling water dominates two-thirds of the picture, with a jagged cliff framing the right side. A small outcropping of rock at the bottom, with a handful of people standing on it, emphasizes the size of the Falls and the cliff. The dark shadow on the underside of Table Rock helps illuminate the bright light coming off of the waterfall. As Barbara Novak has argued, this use of light in Hudson River School images symbolized the manifestation of God in the landscape.²⁵¹ The waterfall, which Willis describes as the work of the “almighty,” is depicted in brilliant white, further offset by the darkness of the cliff.²⁵² Sublime images often made use of the contrast between light and shadow to reveal the sanctity of a scene.²⁵³ Thus, both image and text work together in *American Scenery* to demonstrate the connection between scenic landscapes and religion for the middle-class reader.

Yet, as other scholars of *American Scenery* have noted, most of Bartlett’s engravings embrace the tamed, picturesque aesthetic far more than the wild, turbulent sublime. As Pfitzer explains, rather than representing awe and terror, many of Bartlett’s images proved that “nature was something to be studied and contemplated rather than avoided and feared.”²⁵⁴ This is true even of Bartlett’s images of Niagara Falls. “Niagara Falls, From Clifton House” (Figure 2.3), for example, presents a domesticated, subdued vision of the Falls. The horizontality of the picture, and the location of the Falls far

²⁵¹ See Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

²⁵² Willis, *American Scenery*, vol. I, 33.

²⁵³ For more on the use of light in the sublime, see Novak, *Nature and Culture*.

²⁵⁴ Pfitzer, “Eden’s Artist,” 77.

beyond the foreground, remove any sense of terror or awe that an antebellum viewer might feel when observing a sublime image. Like many picturesque images, this one contains a scene varied in color, texture, and content; the smooth, white Falls are framed by dark, craggy (but not terrifying) cliffs, trees, and human figures. It is these human figures that make this picturesque scene particularly distinct from a sublime image. The foreground, which frames the entire bottom and lower sides of the engraving, offers a lively scene of human activity. At least a dozen tourists stand on a cliff side. Some stand (or sit) and view the Falls, while others stand by the shore, or even row a boat in the calm waters around the Falls. “Niagara Falls, From Clifton House” is not Bartlett’s only engraving to contain human figures. Even Bartlett’s sublime engravings of the Falls contain tourists. For example, two women stand on the small bridge on the right side of “The Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara,” viewing the sublime scene from close by. While the presence of these human figures serves in part to provide scale and demonstrate the grandeur of the scene, it also reminds viewers that these sites are sublime yet accessible – places in which to experience the awesomeness of nature, but not to avoid out of fear.

This emphasis on the picturesque, and the inclusion of tourists in almost every Bartlett image, also served an important didactic purpose in the antebellum era. At a time when, until quite recently, people considered the wilderness as something to be feared or tamed, Bartlett’s images served as a reminder of the potential of natural scenery to serve the middle-class American: nature could provide both a sense of pleasure and a connection to God. His images promised a domesticated wild, one that offered the luxury

of civil society with the visual pleasure of the natural landscape. Thus, the images in *American Scenery* served not only to teach readers about the picturesque and the sublime, but also to simply embrace the idea of traveling to scenic sights as something pleasurable.

Before readers had even glanced at Bartlett's images or read Willis's text, they would have known they were purchasing an object with a didactic purpose. As a gift book, *American Scenery* would have been inherently understood to have some educational value. Antebellum gift books, regardless of topic, were considered "important tools in the moral and religious education of a family."²⁵⁵ Occasionally these educational messages were explicit, particularly in gift books with specific agendas like abolitionist gift books and gift books promoting political campaigns. Yet even generalized gift books like *The Atlantic Souvenir* and *The Token* were known for their moral lessons. As explained in the introduction to *The Opal*, a British gift book first issued in 1843, gift books "serve the religious and moral classes of society."²⁵⁶

The materiality of the gift book further enhanced the message Willis and Bartlett sought to promote in *American Scenery* – that viewing scenic vistas "properly" could provide one with not only pleasure, but also a connection to God. As an ornate luxury object itself, *American Scenery* directly linked aesthetic beauty to moral goodness. As Isabelle Lehuu has argued about gift books more generally, these objects revealed that the "power of art to contribute to moral uplift."²⁵⁷ Antebellum Americans ranging from

²⁵⁵ Katherine Martinez, "'Messengers of Love, Tokens of Friendship': Gift-Book Illustrations by John Sartain, in *The American Illustrated Book in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Gerald W.R. Ward, (Winterthur, DE: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1987), 96.

²⁵⁶ Qtd. in Thompson, *American Literary Annuals*, 25.

²⁵⁷ Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 98.

Hudson River School artists to transcendentalists to religious leaders equated beauty and goodness.²⁵⁸ A beautifully bound and decorated book that focused on beautiful landscapes provided an exceptional opportunity for readers to experience morality through the page. *American Scenery* thus embraced and encouraged a connection between aesthetics and morality in two ways, through a celebration of American scenery and its power for moral and religious influence, and through its publication as an ornate yet didactic gift book. The elaborate detail of the steel engravings, the decorative gilding along the binding of the two volumes, and the lush purple morocco leather cover did not contradict the instructive nature of the book, but in fact contributed to it. The materiality of the book thus emphasized the connection between aesthetic beauty and morality.

Therefore, through didactic language and images, *American Scenery* served to teach readers how to properly respond to scenes in the way that Sedgwick so desired. And, like Sedgwick emphasizes in *The Travellers*, *American Scenery* offered this educational experience only to the middle-class readers who could afford such a luxuriously packaged text. As Lehuu explains, “Gift books precluded a lower middle-class public and below. They remained signs of social distinction, catering to only a stratum of the reading public.”²⁵⁹ There was a clear desire to educate and refine readers, but only those within a particular social class. *American Scenery* could thereby serve to educate only a specific class of readers on how to appreciate picturesque and sublime scenes appropriately. Upper- and middle-class tourists, like Sedgwick, walked a fine line

²⁵⁸ For more on the link between morality and beauty in the antebellum era, see Martinez, “Messengers of Love.”

²⁵⁹ Isabelle Lehuu, *Changes in the Word: Reading Practices in Antebellum America*, Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1992, 98.

between desiring that all travelers would more thoroughly engage with natural scenery, and doubting the ability of many lower-class readers to achieve that kind of engagement. *American Scenery* offered an ideal solution – a thorough didactic tool that precluded those supposedly unworthy of, or unable to grasp, this education.

***American Scenery* – Just Another “Confidence Man”?**

American Scenery offered a potential solution to the democratized, packaged tourist industry that elite and middle-class tourists feared lessened “proper” appreciation of scenery, and led to too much mixing among lower and middle classes. And yet, ironically, gift books like *American Scenery* were just as much a part of the codified, commodified tourist industry as the guidebook that writers and illustrators sought to distinguish it from. While Sedgwick’s Sackville parents served as Christian moral guides for their children, *American Scenery* failed to serve as a similar moral guide for readers.

Despite the luxurious formatting of the book, and the detailed aesthetic descriptions of the landscape, *American Scenery* is remarkably similar to a guidebook in a number of ways. Bartlett and Willis (presumably with the help and suggestion of publisher George Virtue) focus their visual and textual descriptions on sites popular along the American Fashionable Tour. While Virtue published the images in a seemingly random order (Figures 2.4 and 2.5), nearly every popular stop on the tour is included, from the Catskills to Niagara to the White Mountains, as well as sites further south, including sites in Washington, D.C. and Virginia. In this way, the table of contents for *American Scenery* reads much like a jumbled guidebook index – readers could plan an itinerary along the sites depicted by author and artist.

Moreover, while Willis's essays reject the clichéd, empty responses to scenic tourist sites common in guidebooks, he embraces other characteristics of the guidebook in his essays. Despite the fact that *American Scenery* was a decorative book meant for display on one's parlor table, the text still contains a surprising variety of practical, factual information useful for planning a tour along the Fashionable Route. For instance, Willis occasionally even recommends particular tourist attractions and accommodations to readers. In a description of Genesee Falls, Rochester, east of Niagara Falls, Willis explains that "The hotels are excellent, and the inhabitants famed for their public spirit, hospitality, and enterprise."²⁶⁰ He also praises the Clifton House hotel, arguing that it has "the most comprehensive view of Niagara" and is "kept in the best style of hotels in this country."²⁶¹ These reviews are remarkably similar to guidebook descriptions of hotels.²⁶² Bartlett also markets various elements of the tourist industry, including images of transportation (such as ferries taking tourists across the Falls), and views from well-known hotels.

Willis and Bartlett also embrace the codified "cultural infrastructure" of guidebooks. Just as guidebook authors embedded a tone of nostalgia to develop a lore for the tourist region, Willis also embraces this nostalgic tone through references to Native American legends. In his vignette "The Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara," Willis tells a story from "many years since," about a Native American chief who was killed when his

²⁶⁰ Willis, *American Scenery*, vol. I, 90.

²⁶¹ Willis *American Scenery*, vol. I, 45.

²⁶² See, for example, Henry Dilworth Gilpin's description of a hotel in upstate New York: "The hotel is large, commodious and well furnished, so that travellers who visit...will not suffer for want of accommodation." Gilpin, *A Northern Tour*, 1825, 73.

canoe went over the Falls. In his description of a town along the Mohawk River (which tourists would cross to reach Niagara Falls), Willis describes in detail a 17th-century conflict between two Native American peoples. The author even assures readers of this American folklore in his introduction, promising to include “the legendary traditions and anecdotes, events of the trying times of the Revolution, Indian history, &c. &c.” Willis clearly understands that this lore entices tourists to visit particular sites; he even promises that, along the Mohawk River, “the soul of the banished Mohawk might return and haunt with comfort the bold precipices and impassive rocks that frown down upon his ancient abode.”²⁶³ This promise of a persistent, living legend in a tourist landscape is remarkably similar to the promise of guidebook authors that tourists could see characters from Washington Irving’s stories still wandering around the Catskill Mountain region.

By adopting elements of the guidebook genre, Willis and Bartlett could reach a wider audience, attracting both tourists desiring straightforward touristic information, and armchair travellers who sought moral and religious uplift through lofty text and imagery. In the moments when Willis and Bartlett embrace the content, narrative voice, citational practices, and cultural infrastructure of guidebooks, they embody the codified nature of the tourist industry, while still seeking to go beyond its rote boundaries.

Of course, as a mass-produced luxury item, *American Scenery* itself embodied the consumerism and commercialism of the tourist industry. As Stephen Nissenbaum explains, gift books were “an agent of commercialization, an instrument with which to

²⁶³ Willis, *American Scenery*, vol. II, 40.

enmesh Americans in the web of consumer capitalism.”²⁶⁴ Like the tourist industry itself, gift books like *American Scenery* reflect the rise of consumer capitalism, and the middle class’s embrace of that capitalism. One could even argue that *American Scenery* packaged tourism even more effectively than guidebooks. With the gift book, which Christopher Nesmith calls “another form of ‘traveling,’” readers could ostensibly experience the tourist landscape in one commercial object, without even having the experience of actually going on the Fashionable Tour.²⁶⁵ Nesmith explains further that “works of travel literature were more important to the overall cultural imagination than even traveling itself,” and that they can create a “unified point of view” through widespread circulation.²⁶⁶ Perhaps even more so than a guidebook, gift books like *American Scenery* helped to develop an idealized Anglo-American tourist landscape that could be recognized by a wide audience – even if that audience had no intention of ever leaving home.

Even attempts to preclude various classes from consuming *American Scenery* were imperfect. The “vulgar poor” whom Sedgwick derides were unable to pay for – and therefore unable to participate in – the world of Christian, moral scenic tourism promoted in *American Scenery*. However, the gift book was certainly an affordable purchase for the “vulgar rich” and those just entering the middle class. Purchasing and displaying a gift book in one’s parlor room was part of a larger pattern of consumption that signaled a shift in class status; the text embodied the social aspirations of its readers. Thus, while the text

²⁶⁴ Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 144.

²⁶⁵ Christopher Nesmith, *American Eyes: Travel Literature for Children and the Construction of National Identity, 1815–1898*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 2002, 22.

²⁶⁶ Nesmith, *American Eyes*, 22.

precluded one class, it could do little to resolve the concern of Sedgwick and other elites about social climbers feigning their way into the middle and upper classes.

The commercial nature of *American Scenery*, and its embrace of democratic tourism, is perhaps not so surprising. After all, *American Scenery* was published fifteen years after the first guidebook. Tourism had become systematized, at least throughout the Northeast, and affordable transportation and accommodation costs made the experience increasingly available to those with less means. In her book on the history of Niagara Falls tourism, Elizabeth McKinsey argues that “with the rise in consumerism [there was] less interest in the sublime emotion of the spectacle than on the ‘egocentric consumerism’ of the spectator.”²⁶⁷ *American Scenery* demonstrates this embrace of consumerism, and yet also reveals a simultaneous desire to hold fast to the “sublime emotion” – the traditional aesthetic, moral, and Christian values, associated with the earliest forms of tourism.

Witty Willis: A Critique of Tourism?

Like Sedgwick’s *The Travellers*, *American Scenery* thus occupies a liminal space between offering a critique of the commercialized, democratized tourist industry and actively participating in it. Another layer to this complex story is Willis’s own satiric treatment of the tourist industry, both in *American Scenery* and his other popular publications. Willis’s writings on tourism express his own critical stance on socially

²⁶⁷ Elizabeth McKinsey, *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 150.

mobile tourists.²⁶⁸ Willis wrote a number of short stories that satirized the rampant commercialism of the tourist industry. His 1836 book of travel vignettes, *Inklings of Adventure*, contains a particularly tongue-in-cheek story about a visit to Niagara Falls. The narrator approaches Niagara, but his view is interrupted by “a vast-white—hotel! which suddenly interposed between the cloud and our vision.”²⁶⁹ The hotel fence blocks the viewer from accessing the Falls; the characters can only see and admire the Falls upon entering the “back-door” of the hotel (implying that they must pay for a night at the hotel before viewing the scene). In this story, and others, he mocks the dominance of the tourist industry over the scenic sites themselves. Willis also pokes fun at the social-climbing agenda of tourists in this story and others. Known for his descriptions of the society he defined as the “Upper Ten Thousand,” Willis would mock these aspiring middle-class travelers and their obsessive concern with performing their social status – through proper dress, staying at the right hotel, and engaging with fellow tourists of the same class.²⁷⁰ For example, in *Inklings of Adventure*, he quotes poet Fitz-Greene Halleck’s humorous verses on a tailor touring the Falls: “The tailor made one single note-
-/Gods! What a place to sponge a coat!”²⁷¹ Willis speckles his stories with amusing

²⁶⁸ This is particularly surprising in light of the portrait that Fanny Fern paints of Willis in *Ruth Hall* (through the character of Hyacinth Ellet), who places concerns with money and social status above human feeling and morality.

²⁶⁹ Nathaniel Parker Willis, *Inklings of Adventure*, vol. I, second edition (New York: Saunders and Otley, 1836), 26-27. For a detailed analysis of this story (and this passage in particular), see Brown, *Inventing New England*, 15.

²⁷⁰ Sandra Tomc, “An Idle Industry: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Workings of Literary Leisure,” *American Quarterly* 49:4 (Dec. 1997), 783.

²⁷¹ Willis, *Inklings of Adventure*, 30.

anecdotes of these sorts of middling travelers who focus only on the fashionable nature of travel, revealing the “incapacity of their own conception.”²⁷²

This critique seeps into *American Scenery*. Willis’s vignette “Niagara Falls from Clifton House” mocks the tourist’s desire to view sublime scenery and his or her desire for commercial comfort and luxury. He describes the thoughts of a tourist upon waking up in Clifton House to the sound of Niagara Falls:

He rises and throws up his window, and there it flashes, and thunders, and agonizes—the same almighty miracle of grandeur for ever going on; and he turns and wonders—What the deuce can have become of his stockings! He slips on his dressing-gown, and commences his toilet. The glass stands in the window, and with his beard half achieved, he gets a glimpse of the foam-cloud rising majestically over the top of the mahogany frame....A vision of cold rolls, clammy omelettes, and tepid tea, succeeds these sublime images, and the traveller completes his toilet.²⁷³

This absurd juxtaposition of a wild, supposedly sanctified landscape and the mundane daily tasks points to the hypocrisy of tourists who claim to visit Niagara Falls for purposes of Christian morality while in fact focusing just as much time on their attire, their appearance, and their consumption. The tourist’s fear of unsatisfying food resonates with Sedgwick’s critique in *The Travellers* of tourists who complain about a lack of good food at Niagara Falls. Both authors critique the social-climbing tourists who focus on pleasure, luxury, and fashion rather than the hard work of appreciating the sanctity of the natural landscape. Willis seems to respond in part to ideas expressed in Thomas Cole’s popular 1836 “Essay on American Scenery,” in which he promotes the value of appreciation for American scenery, particular scenes already popularized by the tourist

²⁷² Willis, *Inklings of Adventure*, 29.

²⁷³ Willis, *American Scenery*, vol. I, 46.

industry. He claims that those interested in consumerism and fashion (those social climbers that Willis and Sedgwick describe) are incapable of understanding the sanctity of the natural landscape. He argues, “for those whose days are all consumed in the low pursuits of avarice, or the gaudy frivolities of fashion, unobservant of nature's loveliness, are unconscious of the harmony of creation.”²⁷⁴ Like Cole and Sedgwick before him, Willis saw these newly wealthy tourists as unable to observe the qualities of the landscape that he promotes in *American Scenery*.

Yet Willis’s critique is typically no more than a playful, tongue-in-cheek satirization of the newly middle and upper classes. In fact, in their lighthearted nature, these comments appear to embrace the tourist industry more than reject it. In fact, most of these critiques are couched within paragraphs celebrating the tourist industry. Willis’s satirical description of a tourist waking up in Clifton Falls is preceded by a paragraph earnestly depicting the amenities and scenic views at the hotel. Willis’s moments of satire serve as a moment of lighthearted humor in an otherwise earnest text, rather than a passionate critique of tourists and tourism.

After all, like Sedgwick, Willis was an avid tourist, who made much of his money through promotion of the American tourist industry.²⁷⁵ Even his critiques of those aspiring to the middle and upper classes cannot be taken seriously. As Gassan explains, he was among those who “embodied the idea of high class without having a significant amount of money in his pocket.”²⁷⁶ Associating with the “social bounders” that Sedgwick

²⁷⁴ Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” *American Monthly Magazine*, January 1836, 2.

²⁷⁵ For more on Willis and his relationship to the tourist industry, see Tomc, “An Idle Industry.”

²⁷⁶ Gassan, *Birth of American Tourism*, 126.

(and even Willis himself) critiques, he saw leisure and wealth as “available commodities”; they were signs of social status that one could merely desire and gain through the purchase of conspicuous items, including the gift book. Willis himself thus embodies the tension inherent in *American Scenery*, between sincerity and commercialism, particularly within the tourist industry, but also within the larger antebellum American culture. Willis’s solution as an author is a tense fluctuation between humor and sincerity, between critiquing the pre-packaged tourist industry and profiting from it.

Beyond Sedgwick and Willis

As Dona Brown has written about antebellum travel writers, “The aesthetic test of a[n antebellum] writer lay in his or her own capacity to respond powerfully to the scenery.”²⁷⁷ Sedgwick, Willis, and Bartlett were not the only authors and artists in the antebellum era to emphasize the connection between the landscape and one’s own sense of religion and morality. Painter Thomas Cole, for example, was a vocal proponent of the connection between admiring scenery and achieving a deeper connection to God. In his previously mentioned piece “Essay on American Scenery,” Cole explains the value of natural scenery (in America in particular) through a direct connection between religious texts and scenic landscapes:

The good, the enlightened of all ages and nations, have found pleasure and consolation in the beauty of the rural earth. Prophets of old retired into the solitudes of nature to wait the inspiration of heaven. It was on Mount Horeb that Elijah witnessed the mighty wind, the earthquake, and the fire; and heard the "still small voice" – that voice is YET heard among the mountains! St. John preached in the desert; – the wilderness is YET a fitting place to speak of God. The solitary

²⁷⁷ Brown, “Travel Books,” in *A History of the Book in America*, vol. II, 454.

Anchorites of Syria and Egypt, though ignorant that the busy world is man's noblest sphere of usefulness, well knew how congenial to religious musings are the pathless solitudes.²⁷⁸

For Cole, there is religious precedent for admiring landscapes: to visit sites like Niagara Falls and to have a religious experience at the site is to be following in the footsteps of biblical figures. Moreover, like Willis and Sedgwick, Cole sees a connection between one's ability to appreciate the religiosity of particular landscapes, and one's class – at least indirectly. Earlier in the essay, he notes that “those whose days are all consumed in the low pursuits of avarice, or the gaudy frivolities of fashion, unobservant of nature's loveliness, are unconscious of the harmony of creation.”²⁷⁹ Like Sedgwick, who mocks tourists who focus on their lack of boiled chicken and roast pig at Niagara Falls, Cole criticizes men and women who focus on material objects instead of sublime vistas. Those who cannot appreciate the connection between the landscape and God are immoral – they are greedy, and focus solely on consumerism. They are also, according to Cole, focused on “fashion” – which Halttunen has argued was seen by middle-class men and women as a sign of one who “practiced empty forms of false etiquette.”²⁸⁰ In other words, to dress extravagantly was to perform middle class values, while not actually attaining them. Cole therefore also argues that the aspirational classes, those striving to perform like those of the middle class, are the ones who cannot appreciate sublime and picturesque landscapes.

Sedgwick and Willis were thus part of a collection of writers and artists who expressed concerns about those performing middle class values, and lacking the Christian

²⁷⁸ Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” 2-3.

²⁷⁹ Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” 1.

²⁸⁰ Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, xv.

morality supposedly inherent in this class. However, what makes these two authors more than representative examples is that they actually *created* tourist print culture to promote their concerns *about* touristic practices that relied too much on print culture. Sedgwick created what might be deemed a children's guidebook that critiqued other guidebooks as superficial. Willis produced a gift book about tourist sites that sought to provide more in-depth didacticism than other travel books. This reveals not the hypocrisy of these authors, but their ambivalence. They both sought to educate readers about how to have a more profound, religious response to the landscape – they sought to promote a supposed authentic practice of middle-class Christian morality – while at the same time expressing deep concern for the superficial performance of that morality. The more these authors tried to cling to their concept of the middle class, the more it fell apart.

Chapter 3: Purchasing Romance: Print, Capitalism, and Romanticism in Hawthorne's White Mountain Tales and Sketches

In his 1835 sketch "My Visit to Niagara," Nathaniel Hawthorne's narrator spends as much time observing the tourists that surround him as he does admiring the Falls:

My contemplations were often interrupted by strangers, who came down from Forsyth's to take their first view of the falls. A short, ruddy, middle-aged gentleman, fresh from Old England, peeped over the rock, and evinced his approbation by a broad grin. His spouse, a very robust lady, afforded a sweet example of maternal solicitude, being so intent on the safety of her little boy that she did not even glance at Niagara. As for the child, he gave himself wholly to the enjoyment of a stick of candy. Another traveller, a native American, and no rare character among us, produced a volume of Captain Hall's tour, and labored earnestly to adjust Niagara to the captain's description, departing, at last, without one new idea or sensation of his own."²⁸¹

The "native American" in Hawthorne's sketch responds to Niagara Falls in the same way that aspiring middle-class tourists respond to the site in Sedgwick's *The Travellers*. He painstakingly attempts to align the physical Falls with the vocabulary of scenic tourism supplied by Captain Basil Hall's *Travels in North America*, a popular antebellum travelogue describing Hall's tour of the United States in the 1820s. The tourist is ultimately unable to react to the Falls in an original, untutored way: he requires the guidance of an author's words. The traveler fails to achieve what Sedgwick and Willis sought to help their own readers achieve: a genuine spiritual response to the landscape that conveyed their middle-class respectability.

In "My Visit to Niagara," Hawthorne's narrator critiques this tourist not because of his lack of middle-class trappings, but because of his lack of originality. Hawthorne's

²⁸¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Visit to Niagara," *New-England Magazine* 8 (1835): 91-96, in *Miscellanies: Biographical and Other Sketches and Letters*, 1876 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), 252.

narrator emphasizes the man's inability to respond to the scene with ideas "of his own." According to the narrator, the desired response to the tourist landscape is one resistant to outside influences – one drawn from personal, internal beliefs and experiences. In short, the desired response is an inherently Romantic one. In the early nineteenth century, American authors and artists began to adopt and adapt the artistic, literary, and intellectual concepts of eighteenth-century British Romantics. Partly in reaction to the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment, and in conjunction with the spiritual and reform movements of the antebellum period, American Romanticism emphasized the divine connection between man and nature. Beginning around the 1830s, Artists like Thomas Cole, poets like William Cullen Bryant and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and authors like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Herman Melville (members of F.O. Matthiessen's so-called "American Renaissance") produced diverse works that all nonetheless celebrated the spiritual in the natural environment. American Romantics also emphasized that one's relationship to nature was a personal one – authors and artists stressed the need for people to connect with the natural environment through an earnest, original voice that came from within.²⁸² Thus, when Hawthorne's narrator critiques the tourist's lack of any ideas "of his own," he draws attention to the tourist's

²⁸² For more information on American Romantics, see F.O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, 1941 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, 1956 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Charles Seller, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Lewis Perry, *Boats Against the Current: American Culture Between Revolution and Modernity, 1820-1860* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993); Jeffrey P. Skalnsky, *The Soul's Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

lack of Romantic thought: the tourist cannot turn within and recognize a connection between his spiritual interiority and the landscape he surveys.

Yet despite his disparagement of this tourist, the narrator himself has a very similar reaction upon first seeing Niagara Falls. Indeed, the narrator initially expresses frustration with his own inability to have a spontaneous, Romantic response to the site. Lamenting his inability to come up with any novel ways to describe the scene, he bemoans, “Oh, that I had never heard of Niagara till I beheld it!”²⁸³ He faces utter “disappointment” upon seeing the Falls, because his expectations were so high after reading other authors’ and artists’ dramatic, sublime descriptions of the scene. He explains, “Had [the Falls’] own mysterious voice been the first to warn me of its existence, then, I might have knelt down and worshipped. But I had come thither, haunted with a vision of foam and fury, and dizzy cliffs, and an ocean tumbling out of the sky,—a scene, in short, which nature had too much good taste and calm simplicity to realize.”²⁸⁴ Ultimately, he struggles to “adapt these false conceptions” of Niagara that he had read about in books to the “reality” of the Falls.²⁸⁵ For the narrator and the tourists around him, other writers’ reactions (or overreactions) to the Falls dilute the individual’s response to the landscape. While an antebellum traveller might have sought a personal, spiritual communion with Niagara, it was impossible to disassociate the space from the extensive visual and literary culture surrounding it. Every response to the scene, according to Hawthorne’s narrator, was derivative and unromantic.

²⁸³ Hawthorne, “My Visit to Niagara,” 248.

²⁸⁴ Hawthorne, “My Visit to Niagara,” 248.

²⁸⁵ Hawthorne, “My Visit to Niagara,” 248.

Ultimately, on his final day at Niagara, the narrator finally manages to cast aside the language of published authors and have a unique, quasi-religious response to the Falls. This moment of Romantic transport occurs when he is alone at the site, away from other tourists reciting trite phrases from Hall and others. The narrator explains, “My enjoyment became the more rapturous, because no poet shared it—nor wretch, devoid of poetry, profaned it: but the spot, so famous through the world, was all my own!”²⁸⁶ Only when he casts aside literary descriptions of the site—only when he ignores the reality of mass-market print culture and the commercialized tourist industry—does the narrator achieve the individualized, Romantic response for which he so desperately yearns.

Yet there is deep (if unstated) irony in the conclusion of this sketch. To arrive at Niagara Falls, the narrator must participate in the well-established, commercialized tourist industry that resulted in the rapid publication of travelogues, guidebooks, and other print culture that tourists relied upon for their scripted responses to the landscape. The narrator describes riding in a stagecoach with other tourists, staying at a hotel, and enjoying “unwonted and perverse epicurism” with his fellow travelers.²⁸⁷ He also participates in guided tours of the Falls, which lead all tourists to the same vistas. By actively participating in this codified, commodified industry, the narrator sets himself up for an unoriginal response to the landscape that draws on the reactions of others.

It is worth noting too that “My Visit to Niagara” itself is an active piece of the commercialized tourist industry. Published in *New-England Magazine* in 1835 and reprinted in multiple magazines and newspapers throughout the 1830s and 1840s, this

²⁸⁶ Hawthorne, “My Visit to Niagara,” 254.

²⁸⁷ Hawthorne, “My Visit to Niagara,” 245.

sketch had the potential to serve as another travelogue like Captain Basil's.²⁸⁸ Readers could absorb the narrator's response to the scene, and then apply the same vocabulary to their own response during their travels. Thus, while the narrator promotes the concept of an original, untutored Romantic response to the landscape, the text itself is potentially a vehicle for other readers to have more imitative, rote responses. This sketch therefore embodies what this chapter will demonstrate: that in the antebellum era, while Romanticism and mass print culture often contradicted one another in purpose and function, they were both integral parts of the tourist industrial complex.²⁸⁹

This chapter frames the antebellum tension between Romanticism and commercialism through an examination of Nathaniel Hawthorne's tourism stories and sketches. Known in both the nineteenth century and today as a Romantic novelist, Hawthorne is rarely remembered for his active participation in the consumer-driven tourist landscape, as well as in the increasingly commercialized print industry.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ "My Visit to Niagara" was republished by George Parsons Lathrop in 1891 as part of his *Tales, Sketches, and Other Papers*. For more on Hawthorne's publication history, see C.E. Frazer Clark, Jr., *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978).

²⁸⁹ Hawthorne's identity as a Romantic artist, however, is distinct from his idiosyncratic definition of the "romance," which he defines in the prefaces of many of his novels and short story collections. In the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), for example, Hawthorne defines the romance as distinct from the novel: whereas the novel must adhere to "minute fidelity," the romance is a tale that focuses not on facts but on the "truth of the human heart." Through imaginative techniques (those "of the writer's own choosing or creation"), the romance writer presents psychological or internal truths. Hawthorne's well-known distinctions between the novel and the romance are distinct from the dominant antebellum concept of the Romantic writer, and are not the focus of this chapter. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, (New York: Charles E. Merrill, 1907), 29.

²⁹⁰ Some scholars have begun to change this narrative, focusing on his earlier publications of short stories and sketches, and treating them not as lesser, preparatory work for his novels, but as entities worth studying on their own. See, for example, McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*.

Hawthorne struggled to reconcile the landscape of the tourist industry – a landscape that embraced consumerism and imitation – with his writing projects, which typically resisted this kind of codification, instead emphasizing originality and individualism. Ultimately, I argue that Hawthorne viewed these concepts of commercialism and Romanticism as inextricably, if complexly, linked.

Hawthorne's embrace of both of these concepts reveals a unique issue of the antebellum era: the rise of the commercialized landscape. This occurred, on one level, across all of America. Improvements in transportation, a rise in the use of credit and money, the expansion of cities, and the growth of manufacturing and wage labor all helped America develop a national economy with an increased focus on for-profit transactions. However, the commercialization of the environment played out perhaps most clearly in the tourist landscape. Throughout the antebellum era, the tourist industry developed modes of transportation, hotels, guided tourist routes, and print culture in the form of guidebooks and brochures. All of these components were critical to the tourist experience, and all required tourists to make specific purchases.²⁹¹ Thus, in order for a tourist like the narrator of "My Visit to Niagara" to have an unscripted, Romantic response to the landscape, it was in fact essential that he first see the landscape as a commercialized space, one to experience through various forms of commodity consumption.

The formation of this contradictory Romantic-commercialized landscape is particularly evident in Hawthorne's White Mountain tales and sketches. One of the final

²⁹¹ For more on the commercialization of the tourist industry, Will Mackintosh, "Ticketed Through."

scenic stops along the American Grand Tour to develop a substantial tourist industry, the White Mountain region in northern New Hampshire was one of the most popular tourist areas for Romantic authors and artists. Yet it was also one of the most commercialized sites on the American Grand Tour. As historian Eric Purchase has contended, the tourist industry transformed the region into a commodity for leisure and visual pleasure.²⁹² As this chapter argues, the White Mountain tourist landscape demonstrates the unstable coexistence of commercialism and Romanticism in the American landscape in the antebellum era. Hawthorne's tales and sketches reveal the relationship he sought between the consumer-driven, localized, reproducible (and thus inherently unromantic) White Mountain tourist experience with his own Romantic literary projects. His works reveal how print culture and tourism worked together to simultaneously promote both commercialism and Romanticism in the antebellum era, contributing to the development of the commercialized landscape.

Unscripted Responses to the Land: An Embrace of the Romantic Ideal

In late summer of 1832, Hawthorne began a month-long tour of New England and upstate New York. While he planned to see Albany, Niagara Falls, Montreal, and Quebec City, his first stop was the White Mountains of New Hampshire. From his home in Salem, Massachusetts, he took a stagecoach north. He traveled into the heart of the White Mountains, spending three nights at the well-known Crawford Inn. There, he spent his

²⁹² Eric Purchase, *Out of Nowhere: Disaster and Tourism in the White Mountains* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For more on the development of the antebellum White Mountain tourist industry, see Sears, *Sacred Places*; Brown, *Inventing New England*; Paul Hutchinson, "Crafting an Outdoor Classroom: The Nineteenth-Century Roots of the Outdoor Education Movement," PhD Diss (Boston: Boston University, 2015).

time hiking up Mount Washington and other adjacent mountains, often guided by one of the owners at the Inn. From there, he traveled to the Green Mountains (then known as the “Green Hills”) in Vermont, and then journeyed across Lake Champlain to upstate New York.²⁹³

This trip resulted in a number of short stories and sketches based on Hawthorne’s journey. As Dennis Berthold explains, the tour was Hawthorne’s “conscious attempt to gather materials for a national literature that celebrated the history, natural beauty, and future progress of the United States.”²⁹⁴ Hawthorne planned to compile this literary material into a book, to be called *The Story Teller*. Written between 1832 and 1834, *The Story Teller* was to be a two-volume publication, in which the narrator, Oberon, travels throughout the northeastern United States on a journey similar to that of Hawthorne. Ultimately, the project was never published in book form; however, from the unpublished work came numerous short stories and sketches that Hawthorne released in popular American magazines and newspapers.²⁹⁵

While he wrote sketches depicting other parts of his journey (including “My Visit to Niagara”), Hawthorne published at least half a dozen pieces on the White Mountains. In these White Mountain tales Hawthorne most clearly contemplates the role of the Romantic artist in antebellum America, particularly within the rising commercialism of the tourist industry. Many of his stories include characters that are either authors or strive

²⁹³ Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*, 12.

²⁹⁴ Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*, x.

²⁹⁵ For more on *The Story Teller*’s failed publication history, see Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*; Nina E. Browne, *Bibliography of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1905).

to be authors, and at least superficially embrace ideals common to American Romanticism. Yet these characters fail to adhere to their own definitions of Romanticism, in large part because of the commercialism that surrounds them.

In multiple White Mountain stories and sketches, Hawthorne satirizes a character who claims to be a Romantic author, but who fails to demonstrate the close association with nature that was so critical to Romanticism. In “The Great Carbuncle: A Mystery of the White Mountains” (1837), eight treasure-seekers travel to the White Mountains in search of the carbuncle, a “wondrous gem” rumored to exist on a mountainside in New Hampshire.²⁹⁶ One of the treasure seekers is a poet who initially appears to embody the Romantic concept of man’s sympathy with nature. He seeks the carbuncle, a natural element found in the wild, for inspiration for his poetry. Yet he does not value the object for its ability to connect him to nature. The narrator in fact emphasizes that the man is far more comfortable in the city streets than in the natural environment of the Whites. He desires to keep the carbuncle “in one of the darksome alleys of London” as inspiration for his poetry.²⁹⁷ Hawthorne satirizes the poet’s inability to connect to nature; he mistakes a slick of ice for the carbuncle, which he takes home, turning his poetry “cold.”²⁹⁸ The poet has so little understanding of the natural world that he is unable to differentiate between two different natural elements (ice and gems). Moreover, he treats the object as a commercial good to be purchased and consumed by himself: he wants to take it from its

²⁹⁶ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle: A Mystery of the White Mountains,” *The Token*, ed. S.G. Goodrich (Boston: Charles Bowen, 1836), 156-175, in *The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, vol. I* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1892), 187.

²⁹⁷ Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle,” 180.

²⁹⁸ Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle,” 180.

natural environment, hiding it “under [his] cloak,” and “drink[ing] its radiance” alone, in his “attic chamber.”²⁹⁹ Ultimately, while the poet appears to adhere to the ideal of connecting to nature by seeking the carbuncle, his choices are driven by his desire for commercial and cosmopolitan success.

Occasionally, Hawthorne introduces an artist who more closely embodies the Romantic artist’s ideal of embracing and connecting to the natural world. In the 1851 tale “The Great Stone Face,” a young boy, Ernest, tries to find a man who resembles the visage of a face embedded in the White Mountains. According to legend, the man who most resembles the Great Stone Face will be “the greatest and noblest personage of his time.”³⁰⁰ Ernest seeks out this man, at one point befriending a “new poet” who he thinks might be the noble personage he is looking for. The narrator describes the poet:

He, [like Ernest], was a native of the valley but had spent the greater part of his life at a distance from that romantic region, pouring out his sweet music amid the bustle and din of cities. Often, however, did the mountains which had been familiar to him in his childhood lift their snowy peaks into the clear atmosphere of his poetry. Neither was the Great Stone Face forgotten, for the poet had celebrated it in an ode, which was grand enough to have been uttered by its own majestic lips...If he sang of a mountain, the eyes of all mankind beheld a mightier grandeur reposing on its breast, or soaring to its summit, than had before been seen there. If his theme were a lovely lake, a celestial smile had now been thrown over it, to gleam forever on its surface. If it were the vast old sea, even the deep immensity of its dread bosom seemed to swell the higher, as if moved by the emotions of the song.³⁰¹

While the poet lives in an urban setting like the poet in “The Great Carbuncle,” this poet was raised in the natural setting of the White Mountains, and is thus “familiar” with the

²⁹⁹ Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle,” 180.

³⁰⁰ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1852), 38.

³⁰¹ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 55-56.

natural landscape (he also returns to the White Mountains with more frequency than the poet in “The Great Carbuncle”). Because the poet is raised in the White Mountain region, he is not quite the commercialized tourist that is so unfamiliar with and removed from the natural landscape. The narrator even claims that his poetry could “have been uttered by [the Great Stone Face’s] own majestic lips,” implying that the poet speaks for the natural landscape.³⁰² This connection to the landscape brings the poet quite close to the definition of a Romantic artist. He can speak for the natural landscape, and the natural landscape responds to his words (when he speaks of the sea, the sea itself “seem[s] to swell the higher”).³⁰³

However, as the poet himself admits, he has “lived – and that, too, by my own choice – among poor and mean realities.”³⁰⁴ By leaving the White Mountains and moving to the city, he has moved far away from his Romantic connection to the natural landscape, and therefore does not fulfill the prophecy. In the next passage in the story, the reader discovers that Ernest is, in fact, the man that Ernest himself seeks – the “greatest and noblest personage of all time.”³⁰⁵ The ultimate trait that demonstrates Ernest’s greatness (and his fulfillment of the prophecy) is his connection to the natural landscape. Ernest gains knowledge not “from books, but of a higher tone—a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends.”³⁰⁶ He does not engage with the landscape as a consumer, or a tourist, or even an artist removed from the

³⁰² Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 56.

³⁰³ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 56.

³⁰⁴ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 60.

³⁰⁵ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 38.

³⁰⁶ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 55

natural landscape. Instead, he simply sits among the mountains every day, “gaz[ing] for hours” at the Great Stone Face and the scenery surrounding him.³⁰⁷ Not influenced by other artists or publication, not adhering to a tourist itinerary, Ernest embodies the connection to nature that the Romantic author sought.

Along with a connection to the natural world, the antebellum Romantic artist was supposedly an innovator, someone who was original and untutored rather than repetitive and derivative.³⁰⁸ In his White Mountain stories, Hawthorne satirizes a number of characters who eschew Romantic originality for imitation. In his 1835 sketch “The Notch of the White Mountains,” for example, Hawthorne’s narrator mocks a romantic tourist who quotes Byron when looking at the White Mountains, rather than offering an spontaneous reaction to the landscape. The author describes the man as he rides by in a stagecoach: he is “a well-dressed young man, who carried an opera-glass set in gold, and seemed to be making a quotation from some of Byron's rhapsodies on mountain scenery.”³⁰⁹ This man’s unoriginality is directly tied not only to his recitation of a Romantic author, but also to his materialism: he is “well-dressed” and carries a particularly ornate opera-glass through which to view the sights. He also “carries” the glass while quoting Byron, implying that he is not even using the glass to look at the scenery and draw his own conclusions. Instead, holding the material object and quoting

³⁰⁷ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 39.

³⁰⁸ See, for example, Poe’s review of Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*. Poe’s greatest (and most repeated) compliment to Hawthorne is his “originality,” his “inventive and original mind,” his “high originality of thought.” Edgar Allan Poe, “Review of Twice-Told Tales,” *Graham’s Magazine* (May 1842): 200-201.

³⁰⁹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Notch of the White Mountains,” *New England Magazine* (Dec. 1835), 321-326. This is the first of two sketches under the title “Sketches from Memory,” which includes “The Notch” and “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains.” In *The Great Stone Face and Other Tales of the White Mountains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889), 63.

another literary figure are enough for him. Here, commercialism links directly to derivativeness.

Occasionally, Hawthorne satirizes a character who strives to produce original work, but ultimately fails in ingenuity. The 1835 sketch “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains” depicts a diverse group of tourists exploring the White Mountains. The narrator, a tourist himself, reads through an “album” at an inn, presumably a handcrafted book for travellers to write in (a common item at inns along the American Grand Tour).³¹⁰ The narrator derides the “ridiculous” poetry he reads in the album, including a sonnet composed on the top of Mount Washington. He describes the poem as “elegant and full of fancy, but too remote from familiar sentiment, and cold as their subject, resembling those curious specimens of crystallized vapor, which I observed next day on the mountain-top.”³¹¹ Like the “cold” poet treasure-seeker in “The Great Carbuncle,” this poet’s works are without emotion, or originality – they are devoid of any spontaneous sentiment, compared to coldness and emptiness of “vapor.”

Moreover, the narrator subtly critiques the poet for his participation in a form of publication well known for its patterns of reproduction and repetition. He notes that the “ridiculous” poem in the album was “bearing a signature of great distinction in magazines and annuals.”³¹² Magazines were known for reprinting works (often

³¹⁰ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” *New England Magazine* (Dec. 1835), 398-409, in *The Great Stone Face and Other Tales of the White Mountains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889), 66.

³¹¹ Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 74-75.

³¹² Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 74.

anonymous ones) that originated in other publications.³¹³ As discussed in chapter two, annuals (many of which were gift books) frequently contained stories reprinted from other newspapers, magazines, and even other annuals. Moreover, new editions of annuals regularly contained the exact same stories, poems, and essays as earlier editions; editors would simply change the binding, cover page, or the steel plate illustrations. When Hawthorne links the “ridiculous” poetry of the album with a magazine and annual author, he draws a clear connection between a failed author and an embrace of repetition and reproduction. This “ridiculous” writer is not explicitly a Romantic author; however, his references to Byron and his literary presence in annuals (which were known for publishing works by both English and American Romantic authors) reveal, at the very least, his awareness of Romanticism as a cultural norm and, at most, his desire to produce these kinds of works. Romanticism was supposed to reject the reproducible. Romantic writing was an expression of unique thoughts and ideas that could not be replicated, and yet the poet from “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains” was actively engaged with an industry that relied on replication.

Annuals, newspapers, and magazines were also part of a mass-market print culture that developed in the antebellum era.³¹⁴ Many stories and sketches from this commercialized print industry centered on the topic of tourism: as noted in chapter two, gift books focusing on American tourist sites were particularly common. The poet in

³¹³ McGill. *Culture of Reprinting*, #.

³¹⁴ See Andie Tucher, “Newspapers and Periodicals,” in *A History of the Book in America, Vol. 2: An Extensive Reading Republic*, 389-397; Eric Lupfer, “The Business of Magazines,” *A History of the Book in America, Vol. 3: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, eds. Scott E. Casper, et al (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 248-258.

“Our Evening Party Among the Mountains” makes two choices that allow for commercial success: he writes works describing scenic tourist sites, and he publishes these works in two of the most popular literary genres of the period. His banality is thus directly tied to the commercialism of his work, and of the tourist industry more broadly. This becomes clear in the sketch when, after reading the poem in the album, the narrator notes that “The poet was understood to be the young gentleman of the opera-glass,” who was mentioned previously in the story.³¹⁵ Hawthorne establishes this character as an unoriginal tourist focused on conveying Romantic ideals through repetition of other artists and through the display of material objects (the opera-glass). The literal lens through which the poet views the White Mountain region serves as a metaphor for the commercial market through which the poet reproduces hackneyed Romantic expressions.

Hawthorne, Guidebook Author: Hawthorne’s Embrace of Citation and Repetition

Despite Hawthorne’s mockery of the imitative travel writer, his narrators—and even the author himself—occasionally fit into this ridiculed image. The White Mountain stories reveal Hawthorne’s struggle to reconcile his embrace of the Romantic ideal, and his identity as an antebellum tourist and writer, hopelessly enmeshed in concepts of reproduction and commercialism.

Like the writers he ridicules, Hawthorne drew on many other sources for his supposedly authentic, original works about the White Mountains. For example, as Dennis Berthold has argued, Hawthorne owes “an indebtedness to the new genre of tourist guides,” which are “an unrecognized source for Hawthorne’s travel writing and help

³¹⁵ Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 66.

identify the conventions and norms that inform his approach to tourism.”³¹⁶ As explained in chapter one, by the time Hawthorne published his White Mountain stories in the 1830s through the 1850s, guidebooks had become indispensable texts for tourists. In his White Mountain tales, Hawthorne adopts not only the structure and language of guidebooks, but he also incorporates guidebooks’ strategies for citing, rephrasing, and adapting works of other authors. In this way, Hawthorne’s stories and sketches, which on the one hand embrace the originality of Romanticism, also participate in a kind of double unoriginality, employing guidebook authors’ own strategies of appropriation.

Hawthorne frequently turns to Native American history and legend to provide a cultural backdrop for his White Mountain stories. Sometimes, Hawthorne’s characters deny this fact: In “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” for example, Hawthorne’s narrator initially claims, “I do abhor an Indian story.”³¹⁷ And yet, Hawthorne recounts numerous Native American histories and legends throughout his tales and sketches. He also frequently emphasizes that these legends are not his original stories. “The Great Carbuncle” is based loosely on lore from Northeastern Native American tribes, and Hawthorne’s author acknowledges in the first page of the tale that it is “from Indian tradition.”³¹⁸ The tale of “The Great Stone Face” is also a Native American legend, and Hawthorne stresses this in the beginning paragraphs. He explains that the prophecy of the stone face was “a story, nevertheless, so very old, that even the Indians, who formerly inhabited this valley, had heard it from their forefathers, to whom, as they affirmed, it had

³¹⁶ Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*, xi.

³¹⁷ Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 68.

³¹⁸ Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle,” 173.

been murmured by the mountain streams, and whispered by the wind among the tree-tops.”³¹⁹ Like antebellum guidebook authors, this emphasis on Native American lore serves two seemingly contradictory purposes: it calls attention to Native American culture as something worth exploring, and it also denies the continued presence of Native Americans in the White Mountain region. The story reassures American readers that Native Americans only exist in Romantic stories, rather than in present-day reality. But this emphasis on the origins of each of his stories also highlights and celebrates the multiple layers of telling and retelling in which his works participate. His citation of lore and previously told stories echoes the man with the opera glass in “The Notch of the White Mountains,” observing the landscape firsthand but writing down the ideas of another author.

Along with an emphasis on Native American legend, Hawthorne repeatedly cites other authors in his stories and sketches, often through the use of asterisks and footnotes. For example, in the first edition of “The Great Carbuncle,” the title is immediately followed by an asterisk, which leads the reader to a note at the bottom of the page: “The Indian tradition, on which this somewhat extravagant tale is founded, is both too wild and too beautiful to be adequately wrought up in prose. Sullivan, in his *History of Maine* [sic], written since the Revolution, remarks, that even then the existence of the Great Carbuncle was not entirely discredited.”³²⁰ This footnote demonstrates Hawthorne’s reliance on both Native American lore and a previous publication. The reference to James Sullivan’s *History of the District of Maine* (1795) serves to provide an authenticity to the

³¹⁹ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 38.

³²⁰ Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle,” 173.

lore of the carbuncle. Just as antebellum guidebook authors do, Hawthorne includes a reference to a white-authored publication to add credibility to Native American lore. Relying on scholarly precedent in this way, Hawthorne's story becomes more like a guidebook: an aggregate of other accounts. Located right next to the title of the story, the asterisk sets the tone for Hawthorne's tale, emphasizing that it is not an original work, but one repeated in lore and historical tales.

Like the man with the opera glass that his narrator so detests in "The Notch of the White Mountains," Hawthorne even refers to other Romantic authors throughout his stories. In "A Flight in the Fog," another sketch from the unpublished *The Story Teller*, the narrator compares his zest for travel with that of Byron's character Childe Harold, from the narrative poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-1818). In Hawthorne's sketch, the narrator is just beginning his journey from home, which will soon lead him north to the White Mountains. Leaving his hometown for the very first time, he writes, "I waved my hand towards the dusky village, bade it a joyous farewell, and turned away, to follow any path but that which might lead me back. Never was Childe Harold's sentiment adopted in a spirit more unlike his own."³²¹ On the one hand, this reference to being "unlike" Childe Harold sets Hawthorne's narrator in contrast to Byron's character, who is often considered the first example of the Romantic, Byronic hero.³²² Hawthorne's tale thereby becomes distinct from previously published Romantic works. And yet, Hawthorne is still deliberately including a reference to a famous Byronic text within his

³²¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, "A Flight in Fog," in "The Story Teller No. 1," *New-England Magazine*, VII (November 1834): 352-358.

³²² D. Michael Jones, *The Byronic Hero and the Rhetoric of Masculinity in the 19th Century British Novel* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland), 9.

own Romantic tale. This reference counteracts the originality of his own writing, directly drawing on readers' knowledge of previously published texts to give his own work credibility.

Along with referring to characters from other Romantic works, Hawthorne uses language that evokes that of other popular antebellum authors. For example, his description of the White Mountains in "The Notch of the White Mountains" is reminiscent of Washington Irving's famous description of the Catskill Mountains in "Rip Van Winkle." In the first paragraph of his tale, Hawthorne writes, "Those old crystal hills, whose mysterious brilliancy had gleamed upon our distant wanderings before we thought of visiting them."³²³ This description evokes the beauty and mystery of the Catskills as Irving describes them in the opening lines of his story: "Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains...swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather...produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains."³²⁴ Like Irving, Hawthorne presents the regional mountains as deeply etched in the memory of any tourist. While Irving emphasizes the Catskills' mysterious color and shape, later even calling them "these fairy mountains," Hawthorne emphasizes the mountains' mysterious and startling radiance. Scholars have noted Hawthorne's debt to Irving, particularly in his reliance on the short story form early in his career.³²⁵

³²³ Hawthorne, "The Notch of the White Mountains," 61.

³²⁴ Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," in *The Complete Works of Washington Irving* (Paris: Stassin Et Xavier, 1843), 234.

³²⁵ Millicent Bell ed., *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005).

Hawthorne even read Irving's *Tales of a Traveler* while planning his journey to the White Mountains.³²⁶ Irving's *Tales* is, like *The Story Teller*, a loose collection of adventures written by the pseudonymous narrator, Geoffrey Crayon. While Hawthorne does not quote, or even name, Irving in his texts, any reader familiar with Irving (which would have been most of Hawthorne's middle-class audience) would have recognized the debt Hawthorne owed to the "first American storyteller" – a title commonly attributed to Irving.

On occasion, Hawthorne even copies himself. Occasionally he refers to stories he has already written and published, or has at least begun work on. For example, in "Our Evening Party Among the Mountains," the author mentions the Native American legend of the carbuncle. The narrator muses, "On this theme, methinks I could frame a tale with a deep moral."³²⁷ He alludes to the carbuncle in other stories, including "A Virtuoso's Collection," in which a traveler comes upon the carbuncle in a man's curiosity cabinet.³²⁸ In an even more blatant example of self-appropriation, Hawthorne sometimes draws on figurative language used in his own previous stories. "The Great Stone Face" includes a metaphoric description of the White Mountains that evokes that of "The Notch of the White Mountains." In "The Great Stone Face," Hawthorne anthropomorphizes the mountainside, stating, "It seemed as if an enormous giant, or a Titan, had sculptured his

³²⁶ Alfred Weber, "Hawthorne's Tour of 1832 through New England and Upstate New York," in Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*, 8.

³²⁷ Hawthorne, "Our Evening Party Among the Mountains," 68.

³²⁸ Nathaniel Hawthorne, "A Virtuoso's Collection," in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (London: Wiley & Putnam, 1846).

own likeness on the precipice.”³²⁹ In “The Notch of the White Mountains,” Hawthorne writes a similar line: “A demon, it might be fancied, or one of the Titans, was travelling up the valley, elbowing the heights carelessly aside as he passed, till at length a great mountain took its stand directly across his intended road.”³³⁰ In “The Notch,” the Titan creates the mountain, and in “The Great Stone Face,” he places a visage upon that mountain. While Hawthorne’s repetitions of phrase and references to previous publications might simply be tongue-in-cheek references to his other stories, they undercut the originality of each piece, highlighting the author’s reliance on other stories and previously conceived ideas.

Hawthorne conveys this tension between his desire for originality and spontaneity, and his reliance on repetition and citation, through the inner turmoil of his narrators. Sometimes, Hawthorne’s narrators endure an internal struggle between critiquing those unromantic, unoriginal figures around them, and realizing that they too fit this mold. In “The Canal Boat,” for example (a sketch from the never-published book *The Story Teller*), the narrator, Oberon, leaves the White Mountains to head for Niagara Falls. Oberon regards disapprovingly an English traveler who, he explains:

...was taking notes in a memorandum-book, with occasional glances round the cabin, I presumed that we were all to figure in a future volume of travels and amused my ill-humor by falling into the probable vein of his remarks. He would hold up an imaginary mirror, wherein our reflected faces would appear ugly and ridiculous, yet still retain an undeniable likeness to the originals. Then, with more sweeping malice, he would make these caricatures the representatives of great

³²⁹ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 37.

³³⁰ Hawthorne, “The Notch of the White Mountains,” 61.

classes of my countrymen.³³¹

Here, Oberon describes a common form of writing among English travellers in antebellum America; many international visitors published travelogues of their journeys to America, generally critiquing American culture and society. Hawthorne's readers would have been familiar with this genre in the antebellum era; scholars have called this time of heated critique of America (and the heated response of American critics) the "Anglo-American Paper War."³³² Hawthorne's narrator appears to critique this English traveller's commonplace writing, both for its satirization of Americans and for its derivativeness.

Yet very quickly, Oberon becomes an active participant in this same kind of writing, by "falling into the probable vein of his remarks."³³³ In imagining how the Englishman would satirize each tourist, he ultimately passes judgment on each person himself. The narrator quickly realizes what he has done:

In this manner, I went all through the cabin, hitting everybody as hard a lash as I could, and laying the whole blame on the infernal Englishman. At length, I caught the eyes of my own image in the looking-glass, where a number of the party were likewise reflected, and among them the Englishman, who, at that moment, was intently observing myself.³³⁴

On the one hand, this mirror-glance simply reveals that Oberon too will be a part of the Englishman's critique. On the other hand, this is also a moment of self-reflection

³³¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Canal Boat," *New England Magazine* (Dec. 1835), 398-409. This is part of a selection of stories labeled "Sketches from Memory. By a Pedestrian No. II." This included "The Inland Port," "Rochester," "An Afternoon Scene," and "A Night Scene." In *The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Vol. 2* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), 489.

³³² See Joseph Eaton, *The Anglo-American Paper War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³³³ Hawthorne, "The Canal Boat," 489.

³³⁴ Hawthorne, "The Canal Boat," 490.

(literally and figuratively) for Oberon. Both he and the Englishman are simultaneously looking at the narrator. In this moment, in their united gaze through the mirror, writer and narrator become one. Thus, while looking at himself, Oberon is also looking at the critical, unoriginal writer whom he critiques. He is, ultimately, simply another writer who follows the unoriginal conventions of a literary genre. If, as Alfred Weber has suggested, the narrator of *The Story Teller* is “the persona of young Hawthorne,” we then see in this moment not only the narrator, but Hawthorne himself, fearing he will be identified as nothing more than an unoriginal, even “malicious,” author, like the English tourist.³³⁵ Thus, the united mirror gaze is truly amongst the writer, narrator, and Hawthorne.

Beth Lueck has claimed that in the sketches and tales of *The Story Teller*, the narrator Oberon “develops an aesthetic distance from the superficial responses to historical sites, natural landmarks, and technological innovations in the guidebooks of the day.”³³⁶ Yet we have seen that each of the stories from the unpublished book draws directly on literary strategies employed by guidebook authors, travelogue writers, Romantic authors, and Hawthorne himself. This demonstrates the interconnection between Romantic innovation and supposedly unromantic repetition. Ultimately, the two were linked in the antebellum era: authors like Hawthorne relied on repeated narratives, especially Native American legend, to provide a rich grounding for their own Romantic tales. Moreover, the repetition of phrases and recycling of narrative patterns also

³³⁵ Alfred Weber, “Hawthorne’s Tour of 1832 through New England and Upstate New York,” in Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*, 5; Hawthorne, “The Canal Boat,” 489.

³³⁶ Beth Lueck, “Hawthorne’s Ironic Traveler and the Picturesque Tour,” in Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*, 154.

demonstrates a reliance on commercially successful genres of the day. By referencing and even copying strategies employed by successful guidebooks, British travelogues, and even Romantic authors like Byron, Hawthorne sought his own commercial and financial success.

Landscape Iconography, Replicated and Commodified

Despite Beth Lueck's claim of *The Story Teller* narrator's "aesthetic distance" from other previously published responses to the White Mountains, and despite the narrator's own wish that he "had never heard of" various tourist sites before visiting them, Hawthorne in fact directly drew from the tourist iconography of his time.³³⁷ Part of this, of course, is evident in his references to and repetition of guidebooks and travelogues. Yet Hawthorne also turned to the rich visual culture surrounding the tourist landscape in the antebellum era. His sketches and stories reveal what happens when the Romantic idea of the individual encounter with the landscape is influenced by mass consumption.

In both his sketches and stories,³³⁸ Hawthorne relies directly on the aesthetic developed by countless artists before him. He draws on two popular visual modes of the

³³⁷ Lueck, "Hawthorne's Ironic Traveler and the Picturesque Tour," *American Travel Sketches*, 154.

³³⁸ Berthold makes a distinction between Hawthorne's short stories and travel sketches. However, his distinction is slightly confusing and, at times, inaccurate: Berthold seems to define every narrative from *The Story Teller* as a "sketch," while standalone stories taking place at tourist sites are "short stories." Yet he also distinguishes the "sketches" from his "fiction" writing, implying that the narratives from *The Story Teller* are not fictional, which they were. There is a fluidity to these definitions that Berthold does not acknowledge – all Hawthorne's travel literature is fictional, and all of it walks a fine line between the typically plot-less sketch and the more plot-driven short story. The most important distinction is that his travel sketches (which make up the majority of his *The Story Teller* pieces) generally de-emphasize plot, while his short stories center

antebellum era: the sublime and the picturesque. These aesthetics were contemporaneously being produced for, sold to, and consumed by numerous middle-class consumers, in the form of paintings, engravings, and lithographs. Printed and reprinted in books, newspapers, and magazines, sublime and picturesque images would have been familiar to those reading Hawthorne's stories – which were published in those same books, newspapers, and magazines. In “The Ambitious Guest,” (1835) for example, Hawthorne embraces the sublime aesthetic, providing readers with a terrifying and emotionally overwhelming narrative. The story is a fictionalized account of a landslide in Crawford Notch, New Hampshire. The Willey family, along with two hired men, were killed while running towards a shelter to escape the landslide, although the house they ran from remained unscathed. Americans became fixated on the irony of the Willey family's tragedy, and Hawthorne's short story both responded to and increased the Willey disaster's popularity.³³⁹ Throughout the story, Hawthorne depicts the landscape and the tragedy itself using language that evokes the sublime aesthetic. For example, the author's description of Crawford Notch sets a scene with which antebellum Americans would have been familiar:

This family [a fictional family based on the Willeys] were situated in the Notch of the White Hills, where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter,--giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a

upon plot. As Dennis Berthold has argued, Hawthorne's White Mountain short stories embrace the sublime aesthetic more than the pieces from the unpublished text.

³³⁹ For more on the Willey disaster (as it was often known), and its cultural impact, see Sears, *Sacred Places*, Brown, *Inventing New England*, Purchase, *Out of Nowhere*, Hutchinson “Crafting an Outdoor Classroom.”

mountain towered above their heads, so steep, that the stones would often rumble down its sides and startle them at midnight.³⁴⁰

In this introductory paragraph, Hawthorne establishes the sublime power of the region. Through a multisensory description of temperature (“pitilessly cold”), sound (“stones would rumble down”) and physical sensation (“the wind was sharp”), Hawthorne conveys the natural scenery’s ultimate power over man. This human defenselessness is also apparent in the contrast between the natural landscape and the human family’s abode: the mountain “tower[s]” above the people, and is “so steep,” emphasizing the natural environment’s control over the landscape, and man’s impotence in the face of nature.

Hawthorne continues this sublime aesthetic throughout the rest of the story. The family and their guest (a young man passing on his way to Burlington, Vermont) sit around their fire that “brightened the room,” as they discuss their ambitions for the future.³⁴¹ Hawthorne interweaves these moments of blissful domesticity with sublime descriptions of the surrounding environment. For example, as a “germ of love was springing in [the] hearts” of the stranger and the eldest daughter in the family, everyone in the house is distracted by the sounds coming from outside:

...the Notch took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine-branches on their fire till the dry

³⁴⁰ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Ambitious Guest,” *New England Magazine*, 8 (June 1835): 425-431, in *Twice-Told Tales, vol. II* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1900), 121.

³⁴¹ Hawthorne, “The Ambitious Guest,” 123.

leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness.³⁴²

Here, Hawthorne depicts nature's awesome power again through sound (the "choral strain," the "blast," the "wail") As other Romantic authors and artists did, he also connects the landscape's power (and its potential for tragedy) to Native American lore. His emphasis on the supposedly bygone era of Native Americans (who, in fact, remained present in New Hampshire in the nineteenth century) is a common nineteenth-century trope: Native Americans provided tourist sites with an ancient, tragic lore, while simultaneously reminding white readers of their own contemporary domination of the landscape. All of these sublime elements – the increasing power and violence of the storm, its tragic associations – are sharply contrasted by the "peace and humble happiness" of the interior scene. As the family discusses their visions for the future, and as the storm continues to brew, the heavy irony of the characters' fate becomes clear. To a nineteenth-century reader, the tragedy of the family and the stranger demonstrates God's divine power, and His expression of that power through natural forces.³⁴³

As discussed in chapter two, artists had been depicting the American landscape as sublimely powerful for years before Hawthorne's story. By the time Hawthorne published "The Ambitious Guest," artist Thomas Cole had produced multiple paintings that epitomized the American sublime and would serve as models for other artists. In 1827, Cole toured the White Mountains with artist Henry Cheever Pratt – a tour that

³⁴² Hawthorne, "The Ambitious Guest," 130-131.

³⁴³ Sears, "The Making of an American Tourist Attraction: The Willey House in the White Mountains," in *Sacred Places*, 72-86.

included a stop at Crawford Notch. Cole wrote in his journal, reflecting on his first sight of the Notch:

We now entered the Notch, and felt awestruck as we passed between the bare and rifted mountains, rising on either hand some two thousand feet above us. With the exception of a few curling round the airy pinnacles, the clouds had now dispersed and the sun shone down on a scene of wild grandeur. The sight of the Willey House, with its little patch of green in the gloomy desolation very naturally recalled to mind the horrors of the night when the whole family perished beneath an avalanche of rocks and earth. . . It is impossible to give a true picture of this desolate and savage spot: we made some sketches, and proceeded up the gorge.³⁴⁴

Cole's description of the spot mirrors Hawthorne's language in his later publication: Like Hawthorne, Cole highlights the power of the natural landscape – the verticality of the mountains rising “two thousand feet above,” the “wild grandeur” of the scene – as opposed to the small family who were swiftly demolished by “rocks and earth.” Both Cole's and Hawthorne's descriptions of the Notch diminish the strength and power of man in the face of extreme landscapes.

Four years after “The Ambitious Guest” was first published, Cole completed a painting of Crawford Notch, *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)* (Figure 3.1). His painting visually renders Crawford Notch in much the same way as Hawthorne's short story. While the painting is not explicitly a depiction of the Willey family house on the day of the landslide, the scene suggests impending natural disaster. A small cabin stands nestled in a mountain pass: the mountains rise up on either side of the cabin, and a large mountain looms over the background. Blasted, gnarled trees line the foreground; they appear to have been ravaged

³⁴⁴ Thomas Cole, diary, October 3 1828, reprinted in Louis Legrand Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole*, ed. Elliot S. Vessell (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 1997): 97.

by wind and lightning, alluding to previous natural disasters (and perhaps suggesting the tragedy to come). While the sky is a soft blue, a dark gray cloud appears to be moving into the image from the top right corner. The cloud is already billowing through the small pass between the mountainsides, and appears to be heading straight towards the cabin. All of these suggest doom for the bright, sunlit cabin. While Cole completed this painting after Hawthorne's short story, his sublime aesthetic was already well established in his paintings of the Catskill Mountains from the 1820s, 30s, and 40s. These paintings were popularized as reprintings in newspapers, magazines, and gift books throughout the same period.³⁴⁵

While this sublimity is most apparent in Hawthorne's later short stories, his earlier White Mountain narratives also embrace this aesthetic, albeit to a lesser degree. For example, in "The Notch of the White Mountains," Hawthorne opens his story with a description of the narrator's first sighting of the mountains:

Height after height had risen and towered one above another, till the clouds began to hang below the peaks. Down their slopes, were the red path-ways of the Slides, those avalanches of earth, stones and trees, which descend into the hollows, leaving vestiges of their track, hardly to be effaced by the vegetation of ages. We had mountains behind us and mountains on each side, and a group of mightier ones ahead. Still our road went up along the Saco, right towards the centre of that group, as if to climb above the clouds, in its passage to the farther region.³⁴⁶

Like "The Ambitious Guest," "The Notch of the White Mountains" begins with a description that emphasizes the strength, power, and size of the natural landscape,

³⁴⁵ For more on Cole's reprintings, see Kenneth C. Myers, "On the Cultural Construction of Landscape Experience: Contact to 1830," in *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature*, ed. David C. Miller (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

³⁴⁶ Hawthorne, "The Notch of the White Mountains," 61.

highlighting in particular the verticality of the scene (particularly with the phrase, “height after height had risen”). The powerful natural disaster – the avalanche – becomes animate, “descend[ing]” into hollows and leaving “vestiges” that mark its eternal presence.

Yet as Berthold notes, Hawthorne tends to embrace the picturesque aesthetic far more than the sublime in these earlier works. As described in chapter two, the picturesque aesthetic emphasized variation within a landscape: a picturesque painting might include both wild, natural elements and evidence of human presence. Two White Mountain sketches in particular – “The Notch of the White Mountains” and “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains” – epitomize the author’s embrace of the popular aesthetic. These two works were initially published together (“The Notch” coming just before “Our Evening Party”) in 1835 under the title “Sketches from Memory. By a Pedestrian. No. 1,” in *New England Magazine*.³⁴⁷ In these tales, Hawthorne situates the tameable landscape and domestic comforts of the tourist industry against the backdrop of the sublime mountainside. For example, after Hawthorne’s dramatic, terrifying depiction of the White Mountains in “The Notch of the White Mountains,” he quickly moves on to describe the comforts of the Crawford Inn, which he designates “at once the pleasure-house of fashionable tourists, and the homely inn of country travellers.”³⁴⁸ In “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” he writes:

It did one's heart good to see the great fires that were kindled in the parlor and bar-room, especially the latter, where the fire-place was built of rough stone, and

³⁴⁷ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Sketches from Memory. By a Pedestrian. No. 1,” in *New England Magazine*, IX (November 1835), 321-326.

³⁴⁸ Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 64.

might have contained the trunk of an old tree for a back-log. A man keeps a comfortable hearth when his own forest is at his very door. In the parlor, when the evening was fairly set in, we held our hands before our eyes, to shield them from the ruddy glow.³⁴⁹

Here, Hawthorne deliberately offsets the terror of the mountains that “towered” over them (as described in “The Notch of the White Mountains”) by depicting the developed human presence and the creature comforts that the tourist industry derived from the landscape. The result of this juxtaposition is a picturesque scene of comfort.

Hawthorne’s sketches evoke the work of William Henry Bartlett, particularly his illustrations of the White Mountains in *American Scenery*, discussed in chapter two.³⁵⁰ His engraving, “The Notch House, White Mountains, New Hampshire,” portrays the same inn that Hawthorne describes in “The Notch of the White Mountains” and “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains” (Figure 3.2).³⁵¹ Like Hawthorne, Bartlett includes a dramatic, sublime scene in the background. Two hills rise up on either side of the picture, with an even taller mountain between them. The mountaintop is partially covered by gray clouds, masking its complete height and terror. However, the foreground of the image describes a very different scene. The two-story inn, illuminated with a soft light, dominates the image. The landscape is utterly tamed – there is a road leading up to the house, lined by a wooden fence. A man chopping wood in the foreground reminds the viewer that this entire landscape has been cleared of trees. Everywhere there are

³⁴⁹ Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 66.

³⁵⁰ For more on the relationship between Bartlett and Hawthorne, see Dennis Berthold, “The Literary and Pictorial Iconography of Hawthorne’s Tour,” in Berthold et al, *American Travel Sketches*.

³⁵¹ This inn went by multiple names, including the Crawford House, the Crawford Inn, and the Notch House. Sears, *Sacred Places*, 74-75.

reminders of the luxuries and amenities of the tourist industry. The man with the ax presumably chops wood for the “hearth” that Hawthorne describes – the smoke softly coming out of one of the chimneys reminds us of this fact – and a well-kept stone and wood well stands next to the home. An elegantly dressed woman sits in a horse cart, reflecting the ease and luxury of travel in the White Mountains. A man and child walk on the road up to the house, again emphasizing the safety of travel in the area. These figures are not necessarily all tourists – the man chopping wood in the left foreground, for example, is likely an employee of the innkeepers, or a member of the family – but the engraving nonetheless highlights the dynamic of tourism present at the inn and within the White Mountains. Here, as in Hawthorne’s “Sketches from Memory,” the sublimity and terror of the scene are offset by the domestic comforts of the tourist industry.

While Hawthorne’s “The Notch of the White Mountains” and “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains” were published before Bartlett’s engravings in *American Scenery*, Americans (including Hawthorne) were already familiar with Bartlett’s picturesque aesthetic by the time Hawthorne wrote his sketches. The artist is perhaps best known for his *American Scenery* pictures, but he also produced picturesque images of European sites throughout the 1830s (as mentioned in chapter 2). Hawthorne was also likely influenced by earlier picturesque artists, particularly Irish emigrant William Guy Wall, whose watercolors were reproduced as engravings in the collection *Hudson River Port Folio* (1820). While there were no engravings of the White Mountains in *Hudson River Port Folio*, Wall applied a picturesque aesthetic to his landscape images, depicting

American scenes as tameable, approachable, and tourist-friendly.³⁵² For example, the first engraving in *Hudson River Port Folio*, “Little Falls at Luzerne” depicts a domesticated tourist site along the Hudson River in New York (Figure 3.3).³⁵³ There are a few sublime elements to the scene: the rushing waterfall takes central place in the image, and the engraving is framed by shadowy rock cliffs, with the Catskill Mountains rising up in the background. But Wall deliberately deemphasizes the drama of the falls and the loftiness of the surrounding Catskill Mountains. For example, the waterfall emphasizes horizontality over verticality, highlighting the placidity of the Hudson instead of the power and spectacle of the Falls. Like Bartlett, Wall includes numerous reminders of man’s presence in this tourist landscape. Three buildings lead from the middle of the image to the top left corner, and a man fishes in the bottom right foreground. While Wall does not identify any of these buildings, sunlight shines directly on the largest one, which overlooks the Hudson River (a man also stands in front of the building). It is not clear whether or not this is a hotel (and there is no evidence of a hotel from contemporaneous travel narratives); however, the fact that this was a tourist location, and the presence of people and what look to be amenities (or at least signs of civilization) remind the viewer of the overwhelming picturesque pleasantness of the tourist industry.

By the time Hawthorne took his trip throughout the Northeast in 1832, he and other American readers would have been very familiar with Wall’s *Port Folio*. The book was published as a subscription print collection that, according to Karol Lawson, helped

³⁵² Karol Ann Peard Lawson, “An Inexhaustible Abundance: The National Landscape Depicted in American Magazines, 1780-1820,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (Fall 1992): 303-330.

³⁵³ As Richard Gassan explains, Luzerne was not a particularly popular site. Wall likely selected this site because it happened to be a convenient location. Gassan, *Birth of American Tourism*, 59.

“inaugurat[e] the first significant surge of popular interest in American landscape subjects.”³⁵⁴ Other artists, including William Russell Birch and Joshua Shaw, produced similar subscription print collections that depicted popular American tourist sites and landscapes.³⁵⁵ By the 1830s, Hawthorne would have been accustomed to reading the American landscape through the picturesque lens.

Hawthorne continued to embrace this picturesque aesthetic in his sketches throughout the 1840s and 1850s. “The Great Stone Face,” for example, includes a description of a valley in the White Mountains that could come directly from a Bartlett engraving:

Embosomed amongst a family of lofty mountains, there was a valley so spacious that it contained many thousand inhabitants. Some of these good people dwelt in log huts, with the black forest all around them, on the steep and difficult hill-sides. Others had their homes in comfortable farm-houses, and cultivated the rich soil on the gentle slopes or level surfaces of the valley. Others, again, were congregated into populous villages, where some wild, highland rivulet, tumbling down from its birthplace in the upper mountain region, had been caught and tamed by human cunning, and compelled to turn the machinery of cotton factories. The inhabitants of this valley, in short, were numerous, and of many modes of life.³⁵⁶

Like the descriptions in his earlier White Mountain sketches, this passage depicts a human-dominated scene, one surrounded by sublimity (“a family of lofty mountains”) but not subsumed by it. People live and work in the valley, farming the land, taming the waterways, and even running factories. This concept of a tamed landscape is similarly evoked in Bartlett’s “Mount Washington, and the White Hills” (Figure 3.4). A “family of

³⁵⁴ Lawson, “An Inexhaustible Abundance,” 328.

³⁵⁵ Dennis Berthold, “*The Literary and Pictorial Iconography of Hawthorne’s Tour*,” in *Hawthorne’s American Travel Sketches*, 108-114.

³⁵⁶ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 36.

lofty mountains” looms in the background of a placid valley scene. The central foreground image, a horse cart crossing a river on a wooden bridge, highlights man’s ability to control the landscape. A handful of people, including a shepherd and his flock, approach the bridge as well, implying that this is a populated and well-used landscape. Hawthorne’s language thus evokes Bartlett’s picturesque vision of the White Mountains, and its emphasis on the well tamed, human pleasures of the landscape.

By repeating and promoting the sublime and picturesque aesthetic in his sketches and short stories, Hawthorne participated actively in promoting an iconography of the White Mountains that was directly tied to the tourist industry. Tourists visiting the White Mountains would have been extremely familiar with these kinds of depictions of the landscape. While not everyone would have been able to see a Thomas Cole painting in person, his works were reproduced as engravings and lithographs in magazines, newspapers, and gift books, and were occasionally sold as individual objects.³⁵⁷ Similarly, Bartlett’s images of the White Mountains were not only reproduced in *American Scenery*, but were also sold as individual engravings.³⁵⁸ Middle-class readers might have an edition of *American Scenery* in their parlors, or have an engraving of Cole’s *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*.

By virtue of their popularity, Bartlett’s and Cole’s works in themselves became promotional materials for the tourist industry. Bartlett’s representation of the Notch House inn became a sort of advertisement for the site, depicting a comfortable inn with

³⁵⁷ Myers, “On the Cultural Construction of Landscape.”

³⁵⁸ Pfitzer, “Eden’s Artist.”

all the necessary creature comforts. Artists like Cole and Bartlett thus became a part of the commercialized tourist industry. Whether purchasing and consuming a guidebook or paying for a night at a hotel, a tourist could expect to see references to the popular aesthetics of these artists. Hawthorne was thus not only influenced by the mass commercialism of the tourist industry, but he also influenced this commercialism in turn. Like Bartlett, his descriptions celebrated both the Romantic landscape of tourist sites, as well as the touristic luxuries and amenities at those sites. While Hawthorne extolled and encouraged individual engagement and spontaneous responses to the landscape, he nonetheless embedded these responses in commercialized pictorial modes that were part of the growing tourist industry.

Hawthorne occasionally addresses his complicity in the commercialization of the landscape, and its affect on the ability of the artist to produce natural, spontaneous responses to the tourist landscape. One example of this appears in the short story “The Great Stone Face.” As previously mentioned, the main character, Ernest, meets a poet who he thinks might be “the greatest and noblest personage of his time.”³⁵⁹ The poet embodies the anxieties Hawthorne expresses in other stories about his lack of an authentic connection with nature, and his inability to express a connection to nature in writing. The poet tells Ernest that while his “ideal was the truest truth,” he struggles to find that truth in the landscape.³⁶⁰ He explains that he has “had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams, because I have lived—and that, too, by my own choice—among poor and mean realities. Sometimes even—shall I dare to say it?—I lack faith in the

³⁵⁹ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 38.

³⁶⁰ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 57.

grandeur, the beauty, and the goodness, which my own works are said to have made more evident in nature and in human life.”³⁶¹ The poet says his decision to live “among poor and mean realities,” which he specifies as living in “the bustle and din” of cities rather than in a less populated landscape, has weakened his connection to the natural environment.³⁶² Thus, when he visits the White Mountains, he feels he cannot express original thoughts about the scene around him. He envies Ernest, “whose thoughts and feelings gushed up with such a natural freedom, and who made great truths so familiar by his simple utterance of them.”³⁶³ The poet embodies Hawthorne’s anxieties about the power of nature to inspire Romantic thought, particularly as a result of living in the modern, commercialized world.

The conclusion of “The Great Carbuncle” also encapsulates this concern about the dangers of seeking commercial gain from the natural environment. The narrative critiques those who seek treasure for immoral purposes, particularly those who seek only monetary gain or fame. Those who look only for wealth experience horrible fates during their search: one dies during the journey, another is blinded, and one is captured by Native Americans and is forced to spend all his money on a ransom. Only the young couple that decides to give up the search for wealth and settle into a simple life among the White Mountains avoids such a fate. Yet despite this heavy-handed moral about the dangers of seeking commercial gain from the landscape, the narrator falls into the same dangerous pattern. He concludes at the end of the story:

³⁶¹ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 60.

³⁶² Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 60, 56

³⁶³ Hawthorne, “The Great Stone Face,” 58.

Some few believe that this inestimable stone is blazing, as of old, and say that they have caught its radiance, like a flash of summer lightning, far down the valley of the Saco. And be it owned, that, many a mile from the Crystal Hills, I saw a wondrous light around their summits, and was lured, by the faith of poesy, to be the latest pilgrim of the GREAT CARBUNCLE.³⁶⁴

The moralistic storyteller claims to be lured towards the carbuncle by “poesy,” and yet we have seen that every treasure seeker in the story (including a poet) is ultimately seeking the promise of wealth and fame, to some degree. The narrator appears to have succumbed to these consumer-driven values, despite his own warnings. Ultimately, the narrator embraces everything Hawthorne seems desirous of rejecting – in particular, responses to the landscape that focus on exterior desires, such as commercialism, rather than the internal spiritual responses associated with Romanticism.

Repetition and Reprinting: Hawthorne’s Commercial Printing Practices

Hawthorne’s White Mountain stories thus reveal just how linked the commercial and Romantic elements of the White Mountain landscape were in the antebellum era. Through the inner turmoil of his narrators, as well Hawthorne’s aesthetic choices, we see his own conflicted sense of what it means to be a Romantic author. He embraces the retelling of other narratives and employs aesthetics that are deeply entrenched in the commercialized tourist industry. And yet his characters still seek out original, untutored responses to the landscape that defy any commercial tendencies. This tenuous embrace of commercialism and reproduction is also evident in the publication history of Hawthorne’s tales. Hawthorne published these stories with an eye towards commercial gain, which in turn involved extensive practices of reprinting and reproduction. He mocked magazine

³⁶⁴ Hawthorne, “The Great Carbuncle,” 191.

writers through his “ridiculous” man with the opera glass in “Our Evening Among the White Mountains,” but Hawthorne embraced many of the same profitable publishing practices as these magazine writers, despite their deviance from the supposed ideals of the Romantic artist.

Firstly, in deciding to publish sketches and stories about the most popular tourist landscapes, Hawthorne deliberately placed his texts in one of the most commercially successful antebellum markets. Authors from Irving to Sedgwick to Stowe published popular travel narratives in multiple genres. From guidebooks to travelogues to scenic gift books to magazine stories to newspaper articles, tourism comprised one of the most popular themes for antebellum publications.

Secondly, the publication history (or lack thereof) of Hawthorne’s *The Story Teller* (which was to include most of his White Mountain sketches) reveals his astute awareness of the money-making markets of his day. In its original conception, *The Story Teller* was to be a novel about the narrator – Oberon’s – journey to some of the main tourist sites in the United States. The book would follow a common tourist travel route, beginning in the White Mountains, then heading up into Vermont, traveling west across New York towards Niagara Falls. While each story would be able to stand on its own, the frame narrative would unite each of Oberon’s adventures.

If it had remained a novel, *The Story Teller* would have provided a meandering but coherent narrative of a traveller’s observations on society, along with his simultaneous development as an original, Romantic thinker. In “At Home,” (the first sketch within “Passages from a Relinquished Work”) which is thought to be the

introduction to *The Story Teller*, Oberon leaves his home (a small “village” of undisclosed location and name) to become a traveling storyteller.³⁶⁵ Oberon very self-consciously seeks to become a Romantic narrator. While he doesn’t explicitly define himself as a Romantic, he does declare himself to be a reciter of romances: as he says when describing his guardian’s disappointment in his career choice, “it was not half so foolish as if I had written romances instead of reciting them.”³⁶⁶ In “A Fellow Traveller” (the third sketch within “Passages from a Relinquished Work”), he defines what he thinks makes the ideal (Romantic) storyteller:

...wide observation, varied knowledge, deep thoughts, and sparkling ones; pathos and levity, and a mixture of both, like sunshine in a rain-drop; lofty imagination, veiling itself in the garb of common life.³⁶⁷

Oberon tries to react to the landscapes he witnesses with the earnest, spontaneous response of a Romantic thinker. His definition of a storyteller is similar to British Romantic William Wordsworth’s description of poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranquility.”³⁶⁸ Both Oberon and Wordsworth define Romantic thought as a combination of observing, reflecting, and feeling – all actions that require personal engagement rather than the retelling or regurgitating of others’ responses.

³⁶⁵ Alfred Weber, “An Edition of Hawthorne’s American travel Sketches with Textual Introductions,” in Berthold, *Hawthorne’s American Travel Sketches*, 26; Nathaniel Hawthorne, “At Home,” in “Passages from a Relinquished Work,” *New England Magazine*, 7 (November 1834), 352-358, in *Mosses from an Old Manse, Vol. II* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1863), 191.

³⁶⁶ Hawthorne, “At Home,” 195.

³⁶⁷ Hawthorne, “A Fellow Traveller,” in “Passages from a Relinquished Work,” 204.

³⁶⁸ William Wordsworth, “From Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 2, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York: W. W. Norton), 151.

Yet Hawthorne's novel of the Romantic traveler/writer seeking personal, spontaneous engagement with the American landscape never materialized. Samuel G. Goodrich, editor of *The Token*, sent the work to Park Benjamin, editor of *The New-England Magazine*, who initially planned to publish the book in a series of installments in his magazine. Ultimately, he published only two sections of the book in 1834, and then published other sections years later in his subsequent magazine, *American Monthly*.³⁶⁹ The reasoning behind this fracturing is not entirely clear, but its main purpose was clearly financial. Once it became clear that the novel would not be published as a united text, splintering the piece provided Hawthorne with multiple sources of income.

Breaking up the text into distinct magazine stories also allowed Hawthorne to easily reach his audience of middle-class readers. In the first half of the nineteenth century, magazines (along with gift books and newspapers) were one of the most popular forms of American literature. Hawthorne had been producing short pieces, rather than novels, for years before writing *The Story Teller*. As Michael Davitt Bell has explained, Hawthorne "turned most consistently to the tale rather than the novel."³⁷⁰ Hawthorne published over 100 tales and sketches in gift books and magazines in the 1830s and 1840s alone.³⁷¹ His decision to produce touristic short pieces, rather than novels, reflects his astute awareness of the financial potential of the short story. By splitting *The Story Teller* into multiple narratives for a magazine-reading audience, Hawthorne managed to

³⁶⁹ James R. M Mellow, *Hawthorne in His Times* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 71.

³⁷⁰ Michael Davitt Bell, *Culture, Genre, and Literary Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 95.

³⁷¹ Melissa McFarland Pennell, *Student Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1999), 8.

gain some commercial success and celebrity out of what could have been a professional failure.

According to James Duban, Hawthorne “cared little for the stories” once Park Benjamin broke them up.³⁷² While Hawthorne did not elaborate on his distaste for the splintering of his book, we can draw assumptions based on what is lost and gained in fracturing the novel into short stories. When broken into individual magazine stories and sketches, Hawthorne gains relative financial success and a wider readership. Yet with this breaking up comes a significant loss in a primary theme of the book – the need for a Romantic tourist to have a personal experience with the landscape. When considered as one text rather than a fractured series of stories, *The Story Teller* presents a narrator as a tourist on a literal and psychological journey. In “At Home,” Oberon is a naive young man embarking on his first journey outside of his home village. His early performances as a traveling storyteller are merely “mimicry and buffoonery,” and he is made a laughing stock by his audience.³⁷³ By the time he arrives at Niagara Falls in “My Visit to Niagara,” Oberon actively seeks unscripted, Romantic responses to the landscape around him, and even lampoons those who, like his younger self, merely imitate others. By fracturing the frame narrative, we lose the emphasis on finding an original, innovative voice and an authentic aesthetic experience.

Not only were these sketches and tales severed from their narrative whole, but they were also reprinted in dozens of magazines, newspapers, and books. A number of

³⁷² James Duban, “The Triumph of Infidelity in Hawthorne's ‘The Story Teller,’” *Studies in American Fiction* 7:1 (1979): 49.

³⁷³ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Village Theater,” in “Passages from a Relinquished Work,” 208.

Hawthorne's tales were reprinted, typically anonymously, in regional publications such as the *Essex County Mercury*, *Danvers Courier*, and *Lowell Weekly Journal*. Some were later published in compilations of Hawthorne's works, which Hawthorne produced during his lifetime. For example, pieces including "The Great Carbuncle," and "The Ambitious Guest" were reprinted in *Twice-Told Tales* (1837). Others, such as "Sketches from Memory," and "Passages from a Relinquished Work," were reprinted in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846).³⁷⁴ "The Great Stone Face," first published in the *National Era*, was reprinted in *The Snow-Image* (1851) (and was, in fact, supposed to be part of another unpublished book, *Old Time Legends*). Some of these publications (particularly those in local newspapers) may not have been approved by Hawthorne or the editor of the original publication; however, as Meredith McGill has argued, Hawthorne very deliberately participated in the reprinting of his short stories in subsequent books.³⁷⁵ By losing the frame narrative of *The Story Teller*, Hawthorne lost the Romanticism that he initially sought, but gained some commercial success from what would otherwise have been a publication failure.

As discussed above, all of these reprinted, republished, and fractured travel tales belittle the typical middle-class tourist. And yet Hawthorne's publication choices reveal his primary audience to be, in fact, those middle-class tourists, or potential tourists. Some of this mockery in his tales focuses on those author figures like himself, as described above. But in other instances, he belittles other tourist types, particularly for their

³⁷⁴ Although the original edition of *Mosses from an Old Manse* (published by Wiley and Putnam) did not include "Sketches from Memory" – these were published in the 1854 edition (published by Ticknor and Fields).

³⁷⁵ McGill, *The Culture of Reprinting*.

opulence. In “The Notch of the White Mountains,” for example, he describes the tourists traveling in a stagecoach to Mount Washington. His very first description of a tourist in the stagecoach is simply of “a very fat lady on the back seat” who is unable to get out of the coach to admire the view.³⁷⁶ And yet, these sorts of well-heeled, middle-class travelers were exactly the ones reading the newspapers and magazines in which he published. Thus, in “Our Evening Party,” when Hawthorne criticizes the “ridiculous” writings of a fellow traveller who was “of great distinction in magazines and annuals,” he describes a man who could have been Hawthorne himself.³⁷⁷ Ultimately, Hawthorne’s Romantic tales (which embraced original, spontaneous reactions to the landscape) existed only because of the success of the commercial tourist industry (which encouraged and enabled regurgitation of previous responses to the landscape).

In the mid-nineteenth century, Hawthorne moved away from the publication of short stories and sketches. As McGill has explained, Hawthorne “began to transform himself from a moderately successful writer of short fiction for gift books and magazines into a national novelist” through the help of publisher James T. Fields, who published *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850.³⁷⁸ As he continued to publish other novels, Hawthorne actively sought to dissociate from his previous engagement in magazine and gift book publication and reprinting. He claimed his short stories were “neglected” by the populace—a false statement that simply served to place more focus on his novels. On the one hand, his shift towards novels simply reveals, as McGill acknowledges, a move from “one publishing

³⁷⁶ Hawthorne, “The Notch of the White Mountains,” 62.

³⁷⁷ Hawthorne, “Our Evening Party Among the Mountains,” 66.

³⁷⁸ McGill, *The Culture of Reprinting*, 219.

system” to being “repositioned within another.”³⁷⁹ Yet, as Michael T. Gilmore has argued, his novels address strong misgivings about the role of the marketplace in the independence and integrity of the novelist. His novels on occasion lacked the intersections between commercial print culture and Romanticism that are present in his short stories and sketches.³⁸⁰ It is in his short stories and sketches that Hawthorne demonstrates the awkward reliance on both Romantic originality and commercial practices, including reproduction and repetition. The endless reprinting of Hawthorne’s short works is a metaphoric equivalent to the tourist’s mindless recitation of previous responses to the landscape. As much as characters in Hawthorne’s short works seek original responses to the tourist landscape, they tour within a commercialized tourist industry that embraces codified tourist experiences. Moreover, these characters exist within texts that eschew originality and embrace reproduction.

The Effects of a Commercialized Landscape

By the time Hawthorne had moved on from writing short stories to publishing novels like *The House of Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun*, the commercialization of the White Mountain scenic landscape was reaching its apex. Railroads in the 1850s began to bring tourists as close as eight miles from Mount Washington, the tallest and most famous of the White Mountains. By this decade, there was a “deluge” of tourists coming to the region, and to Mount Washington in particular, which now housed a hotel. Hotel staff offered tourists rides up the Mountain by

³⁷⁹ McGill, *The Culture of Reprinting*, 219.

³⁸⁰ Michael T. Gilmore, “The Artist and the Marketplace in *The House of Seven Gables*,” in *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*, 96-112.

horseback ride.³⁸¹ Even the Willey House, the site of the infamous landslide that Hawthorne helped immortalize, had become the site of a two-story hotel.³⁸² As historian Dona Brown describes the region in the 1850s and 1860s, “The White Mountains were still scenic, but their scenery was now part of a package deal” that included railroad transportation and luxurious accommodations.³⁸³

In the 1830s and 1840s, Hawthorne had expressed ambivalence about the melding of commercialism and Romanticism. He, like authors including Thomas Cole and William Henry Bartlett, participated in a mass-market print culture, producing Romantic works that espoused originality while simultaneously being part of both a print culture of reproduction and reprinting. These authors and artists ambivalently embraced a tourist industry that encouraged particular, often unoriginal, responses in its tourists. Yet that ambivalence about the tenuousness of Romantic originality and commercial reproduction appeared to dissipate in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Romanticism was still a critical tool authors and artists used to describe scenic tourist regions like the White Mountains. For example, perhaps the most popular book related to the White Mountains in the nineteenth century was Thomas Starr King’s 1859 guidebook *The White Hills: Their Legends, Landscape, and Poetry*. Yet while King promotes Romantic engagement with the White Mountain scenery – he even quotes directly from Hawthorne’s “The Old Stone Face” when describing Franconia Notch – he also openly acknowledges the commercial packaging of this Romanticism. King notes not only Romantic locations for

³⁸¹ Brown, *Inventing New England*, 60.

³⁸² Brown, *Inventing New England*, 70-72.

³⁸³ Brown, *Inventing New England*, 73.

tourists to visit, but also suggests particular times of day that tourists should view scenes, and even how to frame their views. As Pavel Cenkl explains, in King's guidebook, "the mountain vistas were being presented as paintings for consumption."³⁸⁴ King essentially created an early version of the picture postcard, prescribing spot and location for which a tourist could participate in the mass consumption of scenery.³⁸⁵ Starr's guidebook laid bare the relationship between Romantic responses to the landscape and the commercialization of that landscape. As Dona Brown has argued, "the business of scenery was capitalism, pure and simple."³⁸⁶ The Romantic language espoused by guidebook authors, railroad travel pamphlets, and hotel owners was a veil that enticed the nineteenth-century tourist while helping the industry to make a decided profit.

In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, authors and artists increasingly would express concern not about the rote nature of Romanticism in an increasingly commercialized landscape, but about other effects of the commercialized landscape. In particular, guidebook writers, short story authors, painters, and later photographers, critiqued the commercialized landscape's effects on the environment. Susan Cooper Fenimore, for example, was one of the first authors to express concern about the commercialized landscape, while still being an active Romantic tourist herself. In *Rural Hours*, a book of ecological observations, she expresses concern about the increased destruction of forests in both the White Mountains and all of the Northeast, as various regions sought to both profit off of the lumber and make space for increased tourist

³⁸⁴ Pavel Cenkl, *This Vast Book of Nature: Writing the Landscape of New Hampshire's White Mountains, 1784-1911* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 65.

³⁸⁵ Cenkl, *This Vast Book of Nature*, 65.

³⁸⁶ Brown, *Inventing New England*, 5.

infrastructure: “It is not surprising, perhaps that a man whose chief object in life is to make money, should turn his timber into bank-notes with all possible speed; but it is remarkable that anyone...should act so wastefully.”³⁸⁷ She later adds, “A careless indifference to any good gift of our gracious Maker, shows a want of thankfulness, as any abuse or waste, betrays a reckless spirit of evil.”³⁸⁸ Fenimore saw sites like the White Mountains becoming part of a destructive feedback loop in which the desire to increase profit ultimately became detrimental to Romantic views. Moreover, this wastefulness ran counter to the Romantic connection between man, landscape, and God. By destroying that landscape, one was not only ungrateful, but also “evil.”

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, authors would draw on the works of Hawthorne and other antebellum writers to romanticize a pre-industrial, pre-commercialized era of tourism.³⁸⁹ Yet Hawthorne’s own acknowledgement of the commercialization of the White Mountain landscape demonstrates that the immense tourist infrastructure that existed over a half century later was part of a much longer narrative of commercialization and Romanticism.

³⁸⁷ Susan Fenimore Cooper, *Rural Hours*, 1850 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 132. For more on Fenimore’s *Rural Hours*, see Cenkl, *This Vast Book of Nature*.

³⁸⁸ Cooper, *Rural House*, 134.

³⁸⁹ As Paul Hutchinson has argued, early twentieth-century outdoor education literature often cited and referenced works by Hawthorne to promote a romanticized, pre-industrial ideal. See Hutchinson, “Crafting an Outdoor Classroom.”

Chapter 4: “Over the Border-land”: Race and Authority in Mammoth Cave

In his account of a visit to the Mammoth Cave in south-central Kentucky, published in the travelogue *A Health Trip to the Tropics* (1853), Nathaniel Parker Willis struggles to describe the interior of the Cave:

I have no intention of giving you a detailed description of the cave. In the language of Appleton’s Guide-Book, ‘it is said to contain 226 avenues, 47 domes, numerous rivers, 8 cataracts, and 23 pits,’ and [my tour guide] Stephen estimates the aggregate length of the different corridors that branch off at the sides...at several hundred miles....Every eighth of a mile has some miracle which it would take a newspaper column to describe....I think I shall try, mainly, to convey to you the impression which the visit to the cave made upon me—using as much special description as is necessary for this; but referring you to the Guide Books for a detailed account of its wonders.³⁹⁰

Willis was not the first tourist who strained to accurately depict this popular antebellum tourist site. Two years before Willis, another tourist wrote in a letter to a friend, “I have described many things in my life, with, I believe, some force and capacity, but were you to offer me the world, I could not...describe what I have seen in the monarch of caves.”³⁹¹ Many tourists described the site only through metaphor and simile, defining sections of the Cave as “rocks...like the mighty waves of the Red Sea” or a chamber “resembling a cathedral choir” as they were unable to depict the site by any other, more literal, means.³⁹² Throughout his travelogue, Willis consistently refers to the guidebook genre for more accurate, authoritative details. Where first-hand experience failed in the antebellum era, the guidebook was always there to provide codified descriptions.

³⁹⁰ Nathaniel Parker Willis, *Health Trip to the Tropics* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1853), 165-6.

³⁹¹ Horace Martin, *Pictorial Guide to the Mammoth Cave, Kentucky* (New York: Stringer & Townsend, 1851).

³⁹² Lydia Maria Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series* (Boston: C.S. Francis, 1845), 85, 79.

Developed as a saltpeter mine in the first years of the nineteenth century, Mammoth Cave was opened to tourists after the War of 1812. While the initial visitors were primarily Kentucky locals, tourists journeying along the American Grand Tour increasingly traveled south as part of their trip, adding Mammoth Cave to their itinerary of scenic tourist sites.³⁹³ By the 1830s, Mammoth Cave had a sizeable tourist infrastructure that accommodated this influx of new travelers. The site boasted stagecoach routes from nearby cities, a spacious hotel, nearby taverns, and guided tours of the Cave. Along with this physical infrastructure, a print cultural infrastructure simultaneously developed around Mammoth Cave. Authors and artists from the North and South published travelogues, fiction, poetry, and sketches describing their experiences at the Cave. In these texts, authors constantly expressed an inability to accurately describe the site.³⁹⁴ Yet what was it that was so difficult to explain about Mammoth Cave? What made this site more obscure than any other?

On the one hand, these tourists' literary difficulties demonstrate that Mammoth Cave fit perfectly into the aesthetic used to describe many other antebellum tourist sites.³⁹⁵ Part of the antebellum formula for describing a sublime site like Mammoth Cave was the declaration of one's inability to express that very sublimity. As noted in chapter one, for example, tourists often depicted Niagara Falls as a site impossible to accurately describe due to its overwhelming grandeur. As Sedgwick writes in *The Travellers*, "We

³⁹³ For information on the rise of Mammoth Cave as a tourist site, see Sears, *Sacred Places*.

³⁹⁴ As Sears notes, Mammoth Cave was definitely still the most difficult tourist site along the Grand Tour for Northerners to visit, but it still became nationally known. Sears, *Sacred Places*, 32.

³⁹⁵ Sears has argued that tourists identified Mammoth as a sacred place in America, one through which authors and artists contemplated the concepts of life and death. Sears, *Sacred Places*.

hope our young readers do not think us so presumptuous as to attempt to give them a description of the Falls of Niagara; one of the sublimest spectacles with which this fair earth is embellished.”³⁹⁶ Similarly, John Croghan, the one-time proprietor of Mammoth Cave, wrote of the site in 1841, “No language can convey an idea of the sublimity of this spot.”³⁹⁷ Like Niagara Falls and other tourist locations, Mammoth Cave offered tourists an encounter with the profound, the stupefying.

At all of the sites described in this project, authors and artists explored and depicted the sublimity of the landscape as a way to think through, and even reimagine, American culture. Guidebook authors explored the concept of manifest destiny through cultural narratives surrounding the Catskill Mountains. Authors sought to consolidate and circumscribe white middle-class identity at Niagara Falls. And artists and authors questioned the relationship between antebellum commercialism and Romanticism in the White Mountains. Yet while the sublimity of Mammoth Cave was, on the one hand, typical, Willis’s and others’ struggles to describe Mammoth Cave also reveal something unique about the site. As a tourist attraction existing completely underground, shrouded in darkness, Mammoth Cave resisted the comparatively easy aesthetic codification of sites like the Catskills, Niagara Falls, and the White Mountains. Rather than a dramatic waterfall or sweeping panoramic vista, the Cave was defined by its nothingness, its

³⁹⁶ Sedgwick, *The Travellers*, 77.

³⁹⁷ John Croghan to Victor Gifford Audobon, January 18, 1841. Quoted in Samuel W. Thomas et al, “A History of Mammoth Cave, Emphasizing Tourist Development and Medical Experimentation Under John Croghan,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 68.4 (October 1970), 319-340.

emptiness. Authors described it as a space of “hole[s]” and “slippery abysses,”³⁹⁸ a site of “thick darkness.”³⁹⁹ An unsettling space of disorienting shadow, Mammoth Cave provided a space wherein authors could easily separate themselves from the world above, and imagine and reimagine the organization of culture more acutely than at other sublime tourist sites.

A cave is also a decidedly liminal space, a place that exists in between the world aboveground and the world belowground. As such, Mammoth Cave was often depicted by tourists as a limbo, a space between heaven and hell, between life and death. Travelogues often contained this kind of liminal language, or simply used a contradictory mix of terms: The space was both “celestial” and “hellish,” a site of both “horror” and “pleasure.” Guides and tourists named various spaces within the Cave using terminology associated with both heaven and hell: one could explore the River Styx and Paradise on the same tour. Lydia Maria Child even allegorizes the site as a limbo for “Spirits not good enough for heaven, or bad enough for hell.”⁴⁰⁰

This religiously liminal nature, coupled with the disorienting darkness, allowed authors to explore themes of life, death, eternity, and mortality in the Cave. But more than this kind of spiritually transitional, bordering language – which could be found, to an extent, at other sites such as Niagara, which was also often defined as both “celestial” and “hellish” – Mammoth Cave straddled geographic and political lines as well. Located in antebellum Kentucky, Mammoth Cave was within a state that identified politically with

³⁹⁸ Willis, *Health Trip*, 151.

³⁹⁹ Child, “Mammoth Cave.” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 14 (1843), 409.

⁴⁰⁰ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 79.

both the North and the South, participating in slavery while still identifying firmly with the Union. As Anne Marshall explains, Kentucky was at a “geographical and ideological crossroads,” leading up to (as well as during, and after) the Civil War. Like the state of slavery itself, which literary scholar Rachel Jane Dunsmore has described as a space of “forced inbetweenness,” Mammoth Cave hovered between life and death, and was thus an ideal space to examine and question the role of slavery in the Union.⁴⁰¹

Mammoth Cave was a site directly impacted by slavery. Unlike most other nationally known tourist sites, Mammoth Cave was located in a slave state, and relied directly on enslaved labor as part of its tourist infrastructure. Along with enslaved men and women working in the Mammoth Cave Hotel and along the stagecoach lines, most of the guides leading cave tours were also enslaved. These men were either owned by the Mammoth Cave proprietor (initially Franklin Gorin) or leased to him by local Kentucky farmers.⁴⁰² Tourists relied on these guides to lead them into the Cave, and conduct them on six- to fourteen-hour underground tours. Unlike any other tourist site along the American Grand Tour, Mammoth Cave was a site narrated through the lens of individuals held in bondage.

The Cave thus became a profound site for confronting concepts of spirituality, life, and death, like other tourist sites. Yet its combination of disorienting sublimity and geographic, political, and aesthetic liminality combined to encourage travelers to think

⁴⁰¹ Rachel Jane Dunsmore, *Embodied Social Death: Speaking and Nonspeaking Corpses in Hannah Craft’s The Bondwoman’s Narrative and Solomon Northup’s Twelve Years a Slave*, Master’s thesis, University of Tennessee, 2016, iv.

⁴⁰² Franklin Gorin purchased seventeen-year-old Stephen Bishop in Glasgow, and then sold both the Cave and Bishop to Dr. John Croghan in 1839. “Grand, Gloomy, and Peculiar.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/macal/learn/historyculture/grandgloomypeculiar.htm>.

imaginatively and creatively. At least, that is how certain antebellum authors read and interpreted the space. As Nathaniel Parker Willis explains in his travelogue, the obscurity of Mammoth Cave allowed for – and even required – one’s imagination to “guess all that was beyond” the glow of one’s lantern.

Edmund Burke, the eighteenth-century philosopher of the sublime who is discussed in chapter two, argues that obscurity allows for contemplation of hellish topics.⁴⁰³ He writes, “To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary.” He adds that to excite the “passions” of people about these topics, and to “affect...the imagination,” one must “write in obscurity.” Some authors and artists followed Burke’s philosophy, and used the Cave as a space through which to address what they saw as the most “hellish” aspects of society aboveground – particularly the concepts of slavery and white supremacy.

In this chapter, I argue that while many tourists simply saw the Cave as a sublime site that only reinforced the existing social order aboveground, some more radical authors and artists used their interpretations of the Cave as ways to reposition the issue of slavery for readers, and promote abolitionist ideals. It became a primary site for white, abolitionist authors to consider and reconsider the role of slavery in antebellum America, and to encourage readers to do the same. These authors sought to “affect...the imagination” of their readers through the obscurity of the Cave, and encourage them to consider alternatives to the system of slavery.

⁴⁰³ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. 1757 (London: N. R. and J. Dodsley, 1757), 43, 45-46.

Some scholars have explored the ways in which Mammoth Cave became a space for contemplating issues of race and abolition. Literary scholar Peter West in particular has explored the “racial imagination” of Mammoth Cave, arguing that the Cave became a space for white tourists to play with boundaries of race (as well as gender), while reaffirming social norms and white control.⁴⁰⁴ This chapter explores how some authors did not merely play at reimagining racial relations underground, but in fact used the underground space as a lens through which to suggest the possibility for new racial dynamics aboveground. Rather than seeing the Cave as a contained space of transgression, I argue that descriptions of the Cave reveal larger concerns about the role of slavery and race relations in antebellum American culture. Utilizing text and imagery, authors and artists created Mammoth Cave narratives that critiqued the antebellum system of slavery. Through a close examination of dozens of authors and writers, including vocal abolitionist Lydia Maria Child, I demonstrate the unique and diverse ways that some authors chose to use the Cave to suggest alternative visions for antebellum America.

A History of The Cave Rave

To understand the uniqueness of Mammoth Cave, the writings on Mammoth Cave must be placed within a larger archive of literature on caves. Tourists visiting Mammoth Cave were drawing on a long history of tourism and, subsequently, literary productions

⁴⁰⁴ Peter West, “Trying the Dark: Mammoth Cave and the Racial Imagination, 1839-1869,” *Southern Spaces* February 9, 2010. For similar arguments about the role of race in antebellum tourism at Mammoth Cave, see Joy Medley Lyon, *Making Their Mark: The Signature of Slavery at Mammoth Cave* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2006).

about issues of humanity and mortality through the uncanny darkness of caves.⁴⁰⁵ As Stephen Damm and Allison Young have argued, “caves acted as a means to separate the tourist from their society, which was generally widely present not far from the cave.”⁴⁰⁶ Every cave became a potential space for separating from, and contemplating, issues related to the society that lay just above the cave. Caves in Germany, Slovenia, and Slovakia attracted travelers – including royalty – for centuries. As early as the sixteenth century, cave travelers in these regions compared cave formations to human architecture and the natural environment above, depicting the caves as parallel worlds. For example, one of the earliest known widespread publications depicting a cave’s interior is a 1654 etching of Baumann’s Cave in the district of Harz in Germany (Figure 4.1). The title of the image reads, in part, “The Horse, across which one has to slide to get to the deepest cave.”⁴⁰⁷ The “Horse” is a small cliff on the right-hand side of the image; with a narrow and steep incline, it looks somewhat like the mane of a horse, as viewed from a rider’s perspective. Three cavers in the foreground have entered the Cave and are about to cross the Horse, while the two cavers in the background have already passed the cliff.⁴⁰⁸ This anthropomorphization of a cave interior is one of the earliest examples of cave visitors drawing imaginative connections between the cave and the world above.

⁴⁰⁵ For example, Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” is perhaps the oldest and most popular texts that grapple with philosophical issues through a cave analogy.

⁴⁰⁶ Stephen Damm and Allison Young, “Caving In: An Archaeology of Historical Cave Exploration and Exploitation,” *Nebraska Anthropologist* vol. 28 (2013): 74-83.

⁴⁰⁷ Translated by Stephan Kempe, “Baumann’s Cave at Rübñeland/Harz, Germany, One of the Caves Noted in Early Science History for its Cave Bear and Cave Hyena Bone Deposits,” *Thessaloniki* 98 (2006), 214.

⁴⁰⁸ Kempe, “Baumann’s Cave,” 214.

Yet it was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the rise of Romanticism, that authors and artists began to emphasize the potential of caves for imaginative thinking and contemplation. Marianne Sommer even defines this period as the “cave rave,” during which cave tourism blossomed in Europe.⁴⁰⁹ For example, the European Grand Tour, popular among both Europeans and wealthy Americans in the 1700s, often included a stop at the Grotto of Antiparos in Greece. Discovered in 1673, it was a source of imaginative inspiration for poets and artists for centuries. Lord Byron carved his name in the walls of cavern, and Romantic disciples came to see both the Cave and the poet’s signature.⁴¹⁰

The British picturesque tours of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also included stops at various caverns, where tourists continued to embrace the cave as a space for imaginative thought and contemplation of life and death. For instance, Fingal’s Cave in the Hebrides was a common site for romantic, imaginative thinking and writing. A site that saw a regular influx of travelers throughout the 1700s and 1800s, Fingal’s Cave attracted numerous authors and artists including Sir Walter Scott, John Keats, J.M.W. Turner, and composer Felix Mendelssohn. As Ralph Crane and Lisa Fletcher explain, a tour of Fingal’s Cave “prompted poets, scientists, painters...to reflect (however fleetingly or unconsciously) on their place on the earth—both materially and

⁴⁰⁹ Marianne Sommer, “The Romantic Cave? The Scientific and Poetic Quests for Subterranean Spaces in Britain,” *Earth Sciences History* 22.2 (2003), 177.

⁴¹⁰ For more on Lord Byron’s interest in and depictions of European caves, see Robert Allen Prescott, “Reweaving the Rainbow: Science in Romantic Poetry,” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988).

spiritually.”⁴¹¹ British caves became spaces for contemplating concepts of eternity, life, and death. In 1811, Wordsworth describes his reaction to viewing a cave in Tilberthwaite, in the north of England: “Among sensations of sublimity, there is one class produced by images of durate, [or] impassiveness by the sight of rocks of ever-lasting granite... a barrier upon which the furious winds or the devouring sea are without injury resisted.”⁴¹² Wordsworth’s description emphasizes not only the enormity of the Cave, but also the enormity of time, of eternity, that the Cave represents. As places with deep history, that existed and would continue to exist after travelers had come and gone, caves were spaces through which tourists could choose to contemplate the world beyond.

Mammoth Cave was not even the first American cave to be explored and written about by white travelers. Thomas Jefferson mapped a number of caves in Virginia, which he describes in detail in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. These descriptions emphasize the rational thinking typically ascribed to the Enlightenment: Jefferson details the height and depth of the various caverns, their internal temperatures, and their geologic makeup.⁴¹³ Yet as these caves and others opened up to tourists in the early nineteenth century, authors began to contemplate these spaces in ways similar to Wordsworth and other Romantic travelers. Weyer’s Cave in Virginia opened for tourism as early as 1806, drawing an influx of tourist descriptions. Publications such as Robert L. Cooke’s 1834

⁴¹¹ Ralph Crane and Lisa Fletcher, “Inspiration and Spectacle: The Case of Fingal’s Cave in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature,” *ISLE* 22.4 (Autumn 2015), 786.

⁴¹² William Wordsworth, “An Unpublished Tour,” in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, vol. 2, ed. W.J.W. Owen and J.W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 317. Qtd. in John Wyatt, *Wordsworth and the Geologists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 150.

⁴¹³ It is worth noting that in the same section, alongside these rational, statistical descriptions of caves, is one of the most romantic passages in *Notes* – a description of the Natural Bridge. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1789), 19-23, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/jefferson/jefferson.html>.

“A Description of Weyer’s Cave” describe how the Cave’s “indistinctness of vision” gives “free scope to the imagination.”⁴¹⁴ The language, aesthetics, and themes that authors and artists used to describe Mammoth Cave were therefore part of a centuries-long transatlantic trope.

Race and Authority in Mammoth Cave

Just as Mammoth Cave was clearly part of a larger history of cave literature and tourism, it was also part of a longer line of allegories connecting caves to the concept of slavery. Centuries before, Plato’s had drawn a connection between caves and slavery in his allegory, using a narrative of enslaved men and women in a cave as a metaphor for the untutored, for those who mistake sensory understanding for absolute truth. Yet at Mammoth Cave, slavery was not an allegory, but a practical and critical component of the tourist industry that no traveller could ignore.

Tours began rather haphazardly in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, when Mammoth Cave was used as a mine, operated primarily by Kentucky slaves.⁴¹⁵ After the War of 1812 (and an earthquake that occurred around the same time), nitre work in the Cave ceased, and touring became the primary activity within the Cave. Owners Hyman Gratz and Charles Wilkins hired caretakers to look after the Cave, including Archibald Miller Jr., and paid locals to give tours of the underground site. Early

⁴¹⁴ R.L. Cooke, “A Description of Weyer’s Cave,” The Seminary Press, Staunton, VA, 1834.

⁴¹⁵ According to Lyons, sources have purported that there were seventy slaves working in the mine during the War of 1812, but there is no definitive evidence of this. Lyons, *Making Their Mark*, 10.

guides were all white Kentuckians, and included Miller himself, James Miller, James Moore, Fleming Gatewood, and Joseph Shakelford.⁴¹⁶

As Karen Cox has argued, wealthy tourists had been traversing the South as early as the eighteenth century. Elite tourists came to “take the waters” at mineral water resorts at sites like Virginia’s Sulphur Springs for decades. However, middle-class tourists increasingly traveled south in the antebellum era.⁴¹⁷ Lawyer Franklin Gorin saw Mammoth Cave’s potential as a popular southern tourist site for these new middle-class travellers. In the 1830s, he purchased Mammoth Cave from Hyman Gratz (after Wilkins’s death), and helped transform the site into a bustling tourism enterprise. He converted the saltpetre miners’ log cabins into a hotel replete with a ballroom and dining room.⁴¹⁸ He also expanded the routes in the Cave, extending the length of time and distance that visitors could traverse.

The most consequential change Gorin made to Mammoth Cave was the addition of enslaved tour guides. He purchased a slave, Stephen Bishop, and leased two men – Materson (Mat) Bransford and Nicholas Bransford from a local farmer and slaveholder from Glasgow, Thomas Bransford.⁴¹⁹ Gorin kept on Archibald Miller, Jr., and the new slaves who served as guides learned from Miller and other white guides who continued to work at the site. When local doctor John Croghan (whose uncle was William Clark)

⁴¹⁶ R.W. Brucker and R.A. Watson, *The Longest Cave* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 267.

⁴¹⁷ For more on the rise of tourism in the South, see “Introduction,” in Karen Cox, ed., *Destination Dixie: Tourism and Southern History* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2012).

⁴¹⁸ Jeanne Cannella Schmitzer, “The Black Experience at Mammoth Cave, Edmonson County, Kentucky, 1838-1942,” M.A. thesis (University of Central Florida, 1994), 14.

⁴¹⁹ Gorin leased both slaves at \$100 per year. Gorin leased other slaves to work as chambermaids and cooks in the hotel, as well as handymen helping around the property. Brucker and Watson, *The Longest Cave*, 269; Lyons, *Making Their Mark*, 50-51.

purchased Mammoth Cave from Gorin in 1839, he also purchased Stephen Bishop, and continued to lease Mat and Nick Bransford from Thomas Bransford.

Gorin's and Croghan's leasing of men from nearby farms reiterated a common Kentucky practice in the antebellum era. The majority of Kentucky slaveholders were middling farmers who owned one to three slaves. To supplement their income, these slaveholders often leased enslaved men and women to others at the end of spring planting season. Many enslaved men and women worked in service during this period, either as cooks, waiters, chambermaids, or porters. Others worked on steamboats, railroads, and in factories. Traveling as far as Ohio, these men and women were forced to perform leased labor until they returned to their owners' farms for the fall harvest. Mammoth Cave's busiest season was the period between spring planting and fall harvesting, so slave owners like Thomas Bransford hired enslaved men and women out to perform this seasonal work.⁴²⁰

What is unique about the presence of these three guides at Mammoth Cave therefore is not that they were slaves leased and purchased by the Cave proprietor, but that they played a critical role in shaping the narrative of the Cave. Even when writers had a white guide, they made certain to include a description of Stephen, Mat, or Nick in their travelogues. Tourists on occasion even specifically requested to be led by one of these guides – typically they requested Stephen Bishop, who was most frequently written about in travel literature, and therefore was the most well known.⁴²¹ The richest descriptions of these three men, of course, came from tourists who went underground

⁴²⁰ Schmitzer, "The Black Experience at Mammoth Cave," 22.

⁴²¹ Schmitzer, "The Black Experience at Mammoth Cave," 43.

with them for hours at a time. By the time Croghan took over ownership of the Cave, tourists could choose between two tours: the short tour, of approximately six hours, and the long tour, which lasted fourteen hours. Whichever tour the traveller chose, he or she spent long periods following the light of the guide's oil lamp, listening to tales of this underground world. The tourist therefore had – or at least felt he or she had – ample time to observe, and later write about, the guide.

Many white tourists accepted the authority of the enslaved guide in a way they would not likely have accepted a black person's authority aboveground. Of course, the trust that many tourists put in these guides often resembled the trust southern whites put in their slaves to complete household tasks.⁴²² There were other enslaved people working on the Mammoth Cave property, including cooks, maids, and stagecoach drivers. Yet the precariousness of the Cave tour itself required a complete dependence on the guide that created a potentially unique (albeit temporary) relationship between guide and tourist.⁴²³

Guides led the way through dark, narrow passages, across an underground river, and around grand abysses. This period in which the tourist could not see (or even survive) without the help of the guide, led to a temporary upheaval of social norms; the guide held total authority over the tourists' bodies, serving as their surrogate eyes and occasionally their surrogate feet, carrying tourists over dark and treacherous abysses. In this physically

⁴²² For more on the interdependent relationship between southern slaveholders and their slaves, see Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁴²³ There are, of course, some examples of slaves who had jobs that required similar authority over a white man or woman's body, and were not necessarily seen as figures of authority. Consider, for example, Babo, the slave barber in Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855). Babo's authority is similarly subjective: while one white man (Amasa Delano) sees this act as a demonstration of a slave's deference and natural talent for barbering, the other (Benito Cereno) fears the man's authority and potential violence.

dangerous environment, tourists willingly accepted this temporary shift in social relations. Travelers emphasized their acceptance of and submission to the black guides' knowledge and control through their letters, travelogues, and other publications. For example, the passive voice runs throughout travel narratives and guidebooks depicting the tourists' experiences, emphasizing their passive role as followers of their guides: antebellum narratives include phrases such as "we were placed in the hands" of a guide, or "you are at once ushered" into the Cave.⁴²⁴ This language highlights the powerlessness of the tourist in the dark, unfamiliar terrain of Mammoth Cave. In contrast, authors emphasize the guide's active role; he "leaps up," "leads," "warns," "addresses," and, of course, "guides" the tourists. The narrative voice in travelogues and guidebooks thus emphasizes the clear, distinct roles of the passive, ignorant, obedient tourist, and the active, knowledgeable, trailblazing guide.

These tourists also readily acknowledged the control their guides held over their physical safety while underground. They had to trust in the ability of the guide to protect them. If they got separated, tourists had to make the ultimate act of faith – assuming their guide's ability to navigate was stronger than their own ability to escape. Sometimes this reliance on the guide led to an intensely emotional dependence. In Robert Davidson's 1840 publication on his tour of Mammoth Cave, he describes the tourists' reliance on the guides even aboveground: "At length, after supper, we got to bed; but, between the day's excitement and the late supper, our dreams were of rocks and dens...some of [the proprietor's] guests had made a terrible noise in the night, and called out lustily for

⁴²⁴ Horace Martin, *Pictorial Guide*, 10; Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 89.

Stephen, the guide!"⁴²⁵ Even nightmares related to the Cave required the knowledge and emotional comfort of the tour guide.

Guides also controlled the narrative of the Cave absorbed by the tourists. During the multi-hour tour, the guide told a number of stories about both the geologic and human history of Mammoth Cave. Tourists generally placed complete trust in their guides' information. In travelogues, most facts about the Cave begin with phrases such as "According to Stephen" or "Your guide says..."⁴²⁶ Legends of human skeletons found in the Cave, the history of tuberculosis patients who briefly tried living in the Cave, and the reasons behind the allegorical names of various Cave rooms all purportedly came directly from the mouths of guides. Thus, the transmission of information about the Cave into print required the guide's knowledge.

Along with creating a narrative for the tourists, the guides also created – or at least enhanced – the visual experience of the Cave. What historian John Sears calls "manipulations of the scenery" were common underground.⁴²⁷ These effects were created solely by the guide, who was thus in complete control of the tourists' visual and emotional responses to the Cave. Tourists often noted that the experiences they most enjoyed underground were the creation of the guides. Guides would extinguish or ignite lamps in certain rooms of the cavern to create particular effects. Often, simply exposing tourists to the utter darkness of the unlit Cave made the greatest impact. Charles Wright

⁴²⁵ Robert Davidson, *An Excursion to the Mammoth Cave* (Lexington, KY: A.T. Skillman & Son, 1840), 65, 66.

⁴²⁶ Gilbert S. Bailey, *The Great Caverns of Kentucky: Diamond Cave, Mammoth Cave, Hundred Dome Cave*, Chicago: Church & Goodman, 1863, 23.

⁴²⁷ Sears, *Sacred Places*, 47.

describes the “illusion” created when his guide hid behind a rock with everyone’s lamps, and then slowly elevated a lamp above the rock, producing “the illusion of the rising sun.”⁴²⁸

Carlton Rogers describes, in detail, a similar event on his 1856 tour of the Cave. His guide, Bishop, led him and his fellow tourists into Croghan’s Hall, a popular “room” on Mammoth Cave tours. Rogers explains:

While my imagination was thus excited, our guide extinguished the lamps, and led us slowly along through the intense darkness which enveloped us like a pall. I had great confidence in Stephen, yet I could not divest myself of a sort of nervous apprehension and dread, as we followed him with slow and cautious footsteps. After proceeding quite a distance he stopped and ignited a Bengal light. As the blue sulphurous flame ascended, I discovered that we were standing on the brink of a frightful abyss. I started back alarmed, but being reassured by our guide, approached this yawning chasm. As I looked down into its fearful depths, which had never yet been fathomed, my ear was greeted by the dull roar of an invisible waterfall. The ground was damp and slippery, from a mist, which, though scarcely perceptible, was diffused through the surrounding atmosphere. A kind of nervous chillness crept over me, and I instinctively shuddered as I gazed into these gloomy regions. It was by far the most frightful place I ever beheld...⁴²⁹

While Rogers emphasizes his fear, he simultaneously admires the “scenic display,” and celebrates this opportunity to appreciate “triumph of the Mighty Architect and Builder.”⁴³⁰ In fact, part of the “pleasure” of the Cave for tourists like Rogers were these moments of terror. As discussed in chapter two, tourists sought out scenes of awesome grandeur and even horror; they stood as close to the roaring, rushing Niagara Falls as possible, attempting to physically experience God’s grandeur. Yet part of the enjoyment

⁴²⁸ Charles W. Wright, *The Mammoth Cave, Kentucky*, Vincennes, IN: Harvey, Mason, 1858, 27.

⁴²⁹ Carlton H. Rogers, *Incidents of Travel in the Southern States and Cuba* (New York: R. Craighead, 1862), 315-316.

⁴³⁰ Rogers, *Incidents of Travel*, 283-4.

of the sublime for a tourist was the reassurance of ultimate safety. For Rogers, Bishop's presence provided that safety.

Along with travelogues and letters, artists also published visual narratives of the Cave. Throughout the antebellum period, artists visiting the Cave sketched scenes from their tours. Other times, they embellished narratives written by tourists, with limited knowledge of the Cave themselves. In both cases, these artists' renderings often emphasized the control of the guide over the tourists. In 1856, the popular Boston weekly periodical *Ballou's Pictorial* published a front-page article "State of Kentucky" (Figure 4.2).⁴³¹ The bottom two-thirds of the page contains engravings of various places and historical moments related to the state, with a central cartouche of Mammoth Cave's interior. On the left side of the cartouche, a black guide stands on a rock, raising a torch high in the air in one hand, and holding a walking stick in the other. At the bottom-right corner of the image, three white tourists and a second black guide stand looking up at the guide with the torch, apparently about to walk across a narrow, natural bridge towards him. The guide standing on the left is the clear leader of the group, standing above the others,⁴³¹ and leading the way through the site. As the guide with the largest torch, he controls what the tourists see, illuminating particular areas of the Cave for them. Here, his torch lights up the area behind and just in front of them, helping lead the tourists across the narrow bridge. These travellers depend on the guide for safety and even sight. As the figure that dominates the scene visually, and as the figure that the other people in the pictures literally look up to, the black guide conveys power and authority.

⁴³¹ *Ballou's Pictorial*, Saturday, November 29, 1856.

Containing Authority

Most tourists thus appeared to respect, or at least accept, the authority guides held, at least within the Cave. As German tourist Herman Zagel explains in his description of the relationship between the tourist and guide, “One does what he does.”⁴³² Yet on occasion, tourists subtly resisted, or even categorically rejected, the authority of their black guides. In part, this may have been a defensive response to the radical possibility of black authority suggested by the presence of the guides.

Sometimes the tourist reinforced his or her ultimate authority over the guide by making changes to the guide’s suggestions during the tour. For example, some tourists encouraged guides to take them further along the Cave’s passages than the guides had planned, or even told guides to let them spend the night in the Cave.⁴³³ Others gave commands to the guides that completely disavowed their expert knowledge. According to National Park ranger Mary Lyons, guide Nick Bransford warned a group of tourists that a boat contained too many people, and some would have to wait for another boat. Rejecting this concept of waiting, tourist F.J. Stevenson instead told Nick to get out of the boat.⁴³⁴ Through these attempts to alter the tour’s route, or even alter the composition of the tour group, tourists defied the supposed absolute authority of the guides.

These tourists struggled to accept the concept that a black man – in particular, an enslaved man – could take a position of authority over them. Some tourists drew connections between their guides and the popular antebellum stereotype associating black

⁴³² Quoted in Schmitzer, “The Black Experience at Mammoth Cave,” 20.

⁴³³ Davidson, *An Excursion to the Mammoth Cave*.

⁴³⁴ Lyons, *Making Their Mark*, 46.

men and women with deception and trickery.⁴³⁵ Gilbert Stephen Bailey's narrative of his 1860 tour embodies this common prejudice. He describes a tale told by his guide about remains from the saltpetre mines from the War of 1812. Bailey writes (using the second-person narrative voice), "A pile of old corn cobs in one place, your guide says, were left there by feeding the oxen on corn in the cave. But he gives you a cunning nigger laugh as you suggest that he can easily replenish the pile when antiquarians have carried away these venerable relics—the corn cobs of 1812."⁴³⁶ Here, Bailey depicts his guide in a manner typical of antebellum blackface minstrelsy – the guide is a trickster, a cunning man not to be trusted. Bailey provides a similar description of his guide during their tour of Scotchman's Trap, a popular stop along the Cave route: "as your guide descends through the hole beneath the trap, he repeats the poetic couplet, 'The Scotchman's Trap is set by a trigger,/And if it should fall it would catch a poor nigger'Whether you admire his poetry or not you must follow him through the Trap with the interesting feeling that you are liable to be caught there yourself as well as the 'poor nigger.'"⁴³⁷ Bailey's narrative reveals the complex and antagonistic relationship between black guide and white tourist. Here, the black guide's poem diminishes the guide's authority and knowledge; the guide acknowledges the mistake he could make, and its consequence for him. Moreover, his poem resembles a common form of antebellum minstrelsy; the

⁴³⁵ See Gretchen Martin, *Dancing on the Color Line: African American Tricksters in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015). As Martin notes, the role of the African American trickster in white literature often served as a demeaning stereotype. However, she also argues that it was an adoption of the trickster from African American oral tradition, which emphasizes cunning and intelligence. The narratives of the "trickster" guide can thus be seen as either a demeaning representation of African Americans, or an acknowledgement of their intelligence that is nonetheless steeped in the racial identity.

⁴³⁶ Bailey, *The Great Caverns of Kentucky*, 23.

⁴³⁷ Bailey, *The Great Caverns of Kentucky*, 28-9.

guide's song serves to entertain his (white) audience through the depiction of himself (a black man) as a stereotypical buffoon, performing a racialized song.⁴³⁸ This kind of deference to the tourist's own racialized conceptions of the guide was, perhaps, a purposeful attempt to put the tourists at ease. Through this language, the guide reminds his white tourists that he is aware of his supposedly inferior social position. Here, the tourist seems to buy into the guide's self-deprecating narrative, expressing concern (albeit brief) that he could be injured as a result of the guide's potential mistakes.

While I argue that Mammoth Cave was a space in which some writers imagined and reimagined racial relations in the United States, it is important to recognize that the majority of tourists did not have this transformative experience. For many, the deference to a slave guides' authority underground was strictly limited to that underground experience. In fact, many tourists emphasized that the guides' supposed control and power were generally another reflection of their actual lack of power in the antebellum sociopolitical system. Tourists occasionally viewed guides in an overtly demeaning way, treating them like pack animals that would physically carry them through difficult terrain. As Bayard Taylor described in a narrative of his Cave tour, "He [Mat Bransford] and Stephen [Bishop] carried us one by one upon their shoulders and deposited us in it [the boat]....Twice again were the guides obliged to carry us on their shoulders through the shallows, and once we succeeded in passing along a narrow ledge of rock overhanging a

⁴³⁸ For more on nineteenth-century minstrelsy, see W.T. Lhamon Jr., *Jump Jim Crow: Lost Plays, Lyrics, and Street Prose of the First Atlantic Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

deep pool, only by using Stephen's foot as a stepping-stone."⁴³⁹ Carlton Rogers literally describes Bishop as a "pack-saddle for many a valetudinarian, whose curiosity was greater than his endurance."⁴⁴⁰

Another way authors and artists reinforced the guides' actual lack of authority was to link the unusual nature of their authority and knowledge to their racial backgrounds. Bayard Taylor's description of Bishop is typical of other authors from the period:

He is a slight, graceful, and very handsome mulatto of about thirty-five years of age, with perfectly regular and clearly chiseled features, a keen, dark eye, and glossy hair and moustache. He is the model of a guide—quick, darkening, enthusiastic, persevering, with a lively appreciation of the wonders he shows, and a degree of intelligence unusual in one of his class....I think no one can travel under his guidance without being interested in the man, and associating him in memory with the realm over which he is chief ruler.⁴⁴¹

Here Taylor, like other authors, emphasizes Bishop's mixed-race heritage. Bishop was supposedly of both Native American and African American descent. Other authors similarly emphasize his unique heritage; in his travelogue *A Health Trip to the Tropics*, Willis describes his guide, again Bishop, as "a slave, part mulatto and part Indian, but with more of the physiognomy of a Spaniard."⁴⁴² Carlton Rogers describes him as "Indian-mulatto (a curious admixture truly), but he has more the physiognomy of the Spaniard than of the Indian or African."⁴⁴³ Similarly, Reverend Horace Martin defined Bishop as "Half Indian and half negro (a singularly rare mixture of blood)." Other

⁴³⁹ Bayard Taylor, *At Home and Abroad: A Sketch-Book of Life, Scenery and Men* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1864), 209-210.

⁴⁴⁰ Rogers, *Incidents of Travel*, 309.

⁴⁴¹ Taylor, *At Home and Abroad*, 205.

⁴⁴² Willis, *A Health Trip*, 151.

⁴⁴³ Rogers, *Incidents of Travel*, 302.

enslaved guides were depicted in similar terms: Mat Bransford was labeled “a fair average specimen of the Anglo African race,” for example.⁴⁴⁴ Taylor, Willis, Rogers, Martin, and others sought to emphasize Bishop as distinct from other slaves and African Americans. At a time when racial makeup was considered directly indicative of one’s character, a slave of Anglo, or Indian descent, was seen as distinct from slaves of African descent.⁴⁴⁵ If the guides’ racial backgrounds were atypical – if it is “singularly rare” – their ability to lead and inform white tourists was also atypical. Thus, these writers immediately disavowed the possibility that the authority of these guides could extend aboveground, and extend to all enslaved peoples.

Authors also depicted these guides as a physical part of the dark, sublime, even hellish underworld that they guided. For example, Martin’s description of Bishop goes beyond simply establishing his uniqueness: “Although, of course, uneducated, he is essentially a clever man, and has contrived to pick up a vast amount of information from associating with every description of persons....He is as much at home in the lengthy avenues...as if he had been born amongst them.”⁴⁴⁶ Once again, Bishop is depicted as a “singularly rare” kind of slave, emphasizing the unique circumstances of his authority. Yet the author also portrays Bishop as being a part of the underground world. He is “at home...amongst” the avenues of the Cave. According to Martin, Bishop is part of this underground world more than the land above.

⁴⁴⁴ A.D. Binkerd, *Mammoth Cave, Kentucky* (Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clarke, 1869), 61.

⁴⁴⁵ George Fredrickson’s seminal work on the concept of romantic racialism defines this nineteenth century conception of race. George Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987).

⁴⁴⁶ Martin, *Pictorial Guide*, 10-11.

When describing a trip across an underground river, Carlton H. Rogers describes his guide as “Our Charon, with his dark luminous eyes peering from under his slouched hat, as he sits crouched in the stern of the boat, presents a highly imaginative picture of his fabulous namesake.”⁴⁴⁷ The guide, with his “dark” eyes, seems to be a physical part of this dark underworld, so much so that Rogers embeds his physiognomy into the mythology of the death and the afterlife. Similarly, Nathaniel Parker Willis links his guide, Stephen Bishop, to the symbolic underworld in his description of “Dismal Hollow, a “dreary” cavern on the Cave. Willis describes Dismal Hollow as, “a Hades roofed in with a Hades, and I must own that I was very glad to have Stephen to admire, as he knelt on one knee at the far side of the cavern, receiving on his romantic physiognomy the full glare of the tar and brimstone.”⁴⁴⁸ Here, the Cave is an inescapable Hell, of which Bishop seems to be a critical part. He literally reflects the hellish scene in his face. These descriptions of Bishop and other guides evoke common antebellum descriptions of demonic figures, which emphasized similarly pejorative racial descriptions: as art historians Sarah Burns and Ross Barrett have noted, many literary and artistic depictions of demonic figures linked monstrosity to subjugated populations including African Americans and Indians.⁴⁴⁹ Washington Irving’s short story “The Devil and Tom Walker” (1824), for example, describes a man like Bishop, who is “neither negro nor Indian ...

⁴⁴⁷ Rogers, *Incidents of Travel*, 304-5.

⁴⁴⁸ Willis, *A Health Trip to the Tropics*, 183.

⁴⁴⁹ Sarah Burns, *Painting the Dark Side: Art and the Gothic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Ross Barrett, “Bursting the Bubble: John Quidor’s *Money Diggers* and Land Speculation,” *American Art* 30:1 (Spring 2016): 28-51.

neither black nor copper-colored, but swarthy.”⁴⁵⁰ Like Irving’s depiction of the Devil, Willis describes Bishop as a dark figure in an inescapable underworld, denying the possibility of the guides’ authority ever extending beyond the realm of which he is an eternal part.

By placing the guide (and his authority) in the underground world, tourists denied this authority aboveground, thus reaffirming political and social norms. Even when tourists drew connections between Mammoth Cave and the United States, they did not suggest the guides’ power should extend to the world above. One example of this comes from Carlton H. Rogers’s travelogue, *Incidents of Travel in the Southern States and Cuba*:

[Mammoth Cave] is, in fact, a small subterranean state of itself, which might almost claim to be admitted separately into the Union, if it had any population save ‘rats, bats, and eyeless fish,’ to legislate and enjoy the rights of suffrage. I am not sure, however, but it can take care of itself, having done so from time immemorial, which is more than *all* states can say!”⁴⁵¹

At first glance, Rogers simply playfully suggests here that Mammoth Cave is big enough to qualify for statehood. Yet Rogers then insists that the Cave has no “population save ‘rats, bats and eyeless fish,’ to legislate and enjoy the rights of suffrage.” As seen previously, this was not in fact the case: the guides were in fact very much considered “of the cave.” They were not only experts on the region, but they were also described as eternal parts of the landscape. In promising that there was no population in the Cave to participate in American social norms, Rogers insists upon the slave guides’ lack of authority aboveground. Even the eyeless fish apparently have more chance of suffrage

⁴⁵⁰ For a detailed analysis of this scene, see Barrett, “Bursting the Bubble,” 42.

⁴⁵¹ Rogers, *Incidents of Travel*, 278.

than Bishop and his fellow guides. The “othering” of the landscape made the transgressive roles of authority and submission safe for white tourists.

Images of Mammoth Cave also express both the guides’ unique position of authority, and the limits of that control. *Ballou’s* previously mentioned cartouche of Mammoth Cave, while emphasizing the authority of the guide, simultaneously minimizes that authority. While the guide on the left side of the image stands above the tourists, guiding them, the white tourist on the right side seems to be guiding the other, female tourists. The white tourist’s hand extends towards the guide, and the women’s eyes are turned towards him, not the guide. Much like Bishop’s map of the Cave is couched within the authority of a white man’s publication, this image depicts the white tourist serving as the proximate guide for the other tourists. This ultimately dilutes the authority of the black guide. Moreover, the white male seems to be pointing up not at the guide himself, but at the light of his torch, which is the tallest item in the Cave, rather than the guide himself. In a similar, literary example, Willis asks Bishop on his tour that he be “looked back for occasionally. To be left behind without that oil-canister on his hip, was a calamity which my weary legs warned me to guard against.”⁴⁵² Like the *Ballou’s* image, what initially seems like a poignant trust in the black guide is ultimately reduced to a desire for the equipment he brings with him, and the safety that it ensures.

Some Mammoth Cave scholars have argued that the enslaved guides were depicted by authors as “heroic figures of slave self-determination and power” and

⁴⁵² Willis, *A Health Trip*, 188.

accomplishment.⁴⁵³ After all, the guide had an uncommon level of authority and independence underground, as the sole leader and caretaker of a group of white tourists. This is seen, to an extent, in the life of Steven Bishop, who had a degree of freedom and authority both above and belowground that was not seen in other slaves. He provides one of the only examples of a guide's authority extending beyond the confines of the Cave. In 1842, Stephen Bishop constructed a map of Mammoth Cave (Figure 4.3).⁴⁵⁴ Titled "Map of the Explored Parts of the Mammoth Cave of KY. By Stephen Bishop, One of the Guides" and published as a pullout map in Alexander Bullitt's travelogue *Rambles in Mammoth Cave* (1845), Bishop's map provided the only up-to-date depiction of all discovered regions of the Cave.⁴⁵⁵ Many of these regions were discovered by Bishop himself. By publishing a map of his discoveries, Bishop's knowledge of Mammoth Cave quickly became public knowledge. However, this is a unique example of an enslaved guide retaining authority over his knowledge in print. Whereas most publications on the Cave contained information on the region as described by black guides, but written by and attributed to white authors, this map literally retained Bishop's name and authority. As the most widely reproduced map of the Cave throughout most of the nineteenth

⁴⁵³ West article provides useful background on this typical interpretation. West, "Trying the Dark."

⁴⁵⁴ For more information on Bishop's map, and previous and subsequent maps of Mammoth Cave, see Roger W. Brucker, "Mapping of Mammoth Cave: How Cartography Fueled Discoveries, with Emphasis on Max Kaemper's 1908 Map," in, "Mammoth Cave National Park's Max Kaemper Centennial Symposium & 9th Science Symposium: Cultural History and Research," ed. Shannon Trimboli, October 2008.

⁴⁵⁵ Alexander Clark Bullitt, *Rambles in the Mammoth Cave: During the Year 1844, by a Visitor* (Louisville, KY: Morton and Griswold, 1845).

century, Bishop's map represented one rare example of a slave's authority extending aboveground, albeit still inherently tied to the Cave.⁴⁵⁶

However, despite this example of an enslaved man's authorship, most tourists emphasized how unusual, and even exotic, this authority was. Moreover, this authority was clearly inscribed within the sublimity of the site, and even linked to common tropes of caves, darkness, and slavery. Through methods of limiting and constricting slave authority, these moments of apparent social transgression became meaningless outside of the Cave. Moreover, the underground experience in fact confirmed that any moment of black authority was not even a transgression, but was in fact part and parcel with the otherworldly experience of a sublime site. Authors who confined a slave's authority to the space belowground thus assured their middle-class readers and viewers that this was a limited, temporary reversal of traditional social power structures.

Through descriptions in both text and image of the guides' authority underground, authors and artists subtly approved of and even justified the current social and political order whereby African Americans were subjugated people, lacking in political power, and limited in social and economic means. Willis described this apparent contradiction succinctly: "In darkness so many miles deep, one cannot but feel that he is over the border-land."⁴⁵⁷ This reference to the "border-land" initially appears to suggest that the Cave is, in fact, a liminal space, connected to the world above. However, Willis is clear that one is "over" the border-land when in Mammoth Cave. This is clearly a separate world from the one above, not even a liminal space, but a clearly demarcated world. Just

⁴⁵⁶ Brucker, "Mapping of Mammoth Cave."

⁴⁵⁷ Willis, *A Health Trip*, 189.

as Kentucky itself resided “over the border-land” of the slave-free North, the Cave resided in a world in which, according to these authors, the social and political norms were reversed. Slaves held some form of control, and white middle-class tourists, to some degree, obeyed. Thus, when white authors described the Cave as, for example, the “land of independence” and a space of “underground freedom” for all, they in fact emphasize an utter lack of freedom for some aboveground. Through descriptions of Mammoth Cave, this land over the border-land, authors and artists actually reinforced the social systems that rested above it.

An Abolitionist’s Platform: Lydia Maria Child, *Letters*, and Mammoth Cave

Countless letters, travelogues, and guidebooks thus depict the Cave as a space that, in its bizarreness and sublimity, in fact reinforced the social and political norms of antebellum Kentucky, the South, and the nation. It is therefore significant when a tourist pushes against these normalizing descriptions of the Cave. At least one author suggested that Mammoth Cave’s uniqueness and utter defiance of social norms could serve as an alternative reality that could be applied, to an extent, aboveground. In Lydia Maria Child’s publication on Mammoth Cave tourism, Child emphasizes the otherworldly aesthetic of the underground cave to encourage readers to reconsider the politics of the world above.

In 1832 Lydia Maria Child dedicated her novel, *The Coronal*, to Catherine Maria Sedgwick, whose tourist novel *The Travellers* is discussed in chapter two. Child and Sedgwick published in a sort of competitive but friendly rivalry throughout the antebellum era; Sedgwick even published multiple pieces in the children’s magazine *The*

Juvenile Miscellany, edited by Child.⁴⁵⁸ The two were impressed by one another's progressive ideals. However, as noted in chapter two, Sedgwick was a hesitant progressive. By the 1830s, the two writers began to cool to each other due to their differing political ideologies. In particular, Sedgwick expressed concern over Child's increasingly strong stance on antislavery.

Child, like Sedgwick, was "a household name" in antebellum America.⁴⁵⁹ She produced over 47 books and tracts in her lifetime. She wrote historical novels, essays, treatises, cookbooks, and domestic advice books, and edited magazines and newspapers. Child is sometimes considered one of the earliest proponents of children's literature in America.⁴⁶⁰ Like Sedgwick, Child published works in a variety of genres as a means of conveying her social and political beliefs to a wide audience. For example, Child published a number of pieces for children: she edited the children's magazine, *The Juvenile Miscellany*, from 1826 to 1834. According to Carolyn Karcher, Child "essentially created American children's literature" as a way to address racial prejudice, dealing with race, and slavery in a way that focused specifically on a younger audience.⁴⁶¹ While Sedgwick's *The Travellers* addressed issues of class and social mobility, Child's juvenile literature served her growing interest in abolition.

Child published antislavery works for adult audiences as well, including *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833), the gift book *The*

⁴⁵⁸ Carolyn L. Karcher, ed., *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 12-13.

⁴⁵⁹ Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 1.

⁴⁶⁰ Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 3.

⁴⁶¹ Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 3.

Oasis (1834), and *Anti-Slavery Catechism* (1836). These texts emphasized the need for immediate emancipation. Child continued to express this stance as the editor of the pro-William Lloyd Garrison newspaper, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. Child edited this newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society from 1841-1843. After leaving the *Standard*, Child published, *Letters from New York* (1843, 1845), a republication and expansion of her column in the newspaper, with additions from her writings in *Liberty Bell and Boston Courier*.⁴⁶² Published in two editions (or “series”), these letters addressed a variety of topics related to New York City. Yet she often expanded beyond the geographic, social, and political borders of the city. In fact, she includes at least a dozen letters focusing on travels throughout the United States, with two letters providing detailed descriptions of Mammoth Cave.

Published by C.S. Francis & Company, a publisher with no discernable political agenda, *Letters* became dissociated from the pro-Garrison newspaper, allowing Child to share her political (and particularly, her abolitionist) leanings with a mass-market audience. Some scholars, including Karcher and Bruce Mills, have argued that the book is “subtle” in its antislavery leanings, focusing more on the modern city than slavery and race relations.⁴⁶³ As Karcher explains this shift, “In repackaging *Letters from New York* as a book for the commercial market, Child simply increased the size of the garland and enveloped her antislavery message more ingeniously. Besides reducing the portion of antislavery material, Child eliminated the letters most likely to offend readers who

⁴⁶² In fact, Volume 2 of *Letters* was originally published in the *Boston Courier*, and then reprinted as a book in 1845. Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 22.

⁴⁶³ Bruce Mills, *Cultural Reformations: Lydia Maria Child and the Literature of Reform* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 73.

considered abolitionists meddlesome fanatics.”⁴⁶⁴ While the antislavery narrative of *Letters* might be more subtle than her *Standard* editorials, Child made this issue central to a number of her letters, particularly those involving travel outside of New York – especially her letters detailing Mammoth Cave tourism.

Letters provided Child with a platform for expressing her political views to a wider audience. As an abolitionist newspaper, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* circulated among supporters of her cause. Yet Child’s other publications – particularly her novels and children’s literature – received a much wider readership. Thus, by publishing *Letters* as a stand-alone book, rather than as a component of a publication with an avowed agenda and specific readership, Child could extend beyond her abolitionist audience to attract a greater number of readers. Child thought carefully about which publisher to use, looking specifically for one who would allow her to include her abolitionist letters, without working with a specifically abolitionist publishing company. She considered publishing with the Langley Brothers, but they encouraged her to stifle her abolitionist agenda, something she was unwilling to do. Ultimately, Child decided to publish with C.S. Francis. The book proved a commercial success; the first volume sold out within four months, with ten reprintings over the next seven years.⁴⁶⁵ By selecting a less politically vocal publisher, Child, intentionally and successfully spread her social and political beliefs across a wider audience.

Adhering to the formal conventions of the newspaper sketch allowed Child to express her political beliefs while attracting a great number of readers. Newspaper

⁴⁶⁴ Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 301.

⁴⁶⁵ Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 308-309.

sketches like Child's were a new genre in the antebellum era. These typically short pieces ranged from complete fiction to personal narratives, covering a wide variety of subject matter. As Karcher explains, sketches "interweave personal sentiment, social protest, poetic description, and mystical speculation" in a style akin to free association.⁴⁶⁶ Later in the nineteenth century, this style became even more popular, as famous authors including Mark Twain, Theodore Dreiser, and Ralph Waldo Emerson all published sketches in daily and weekly newspapers.⁴⁶⁷ Through repeated use of this increasingly popular genre, Child was able to envelop her abolitionist messages in a variety of ostensibly diverse topics, including Mammoth Cave.

When writing these letters, Child was not reflecting on a personal experience at the Cave: Child had not in fact visited Mammoth Cave before. As she notes in her first of two letters on the Cave, "My imagination has lately been much excited by a vivid account of Mammoth Cave, from a young friend who spent several days there." She then explains, "I will try to transfer to your mind, as well as I can, the picture he gave me."⁴⁶⁸ While this once-removed account might render her descriptions inaccurate, this highlights the deliberate purpose behind her focus on Mammoth Cave. Child clearly saw Mammoth Cave as a site through which she could address issues of national consequence, and therefore decided to focus her writing on this subject, despite her lack of firsthand experience.

⁴⁶⁶ Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, 306.

⁴⁶⁷ Norman Sims, *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 46-7.

⁴⁶⁸ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 75.

Because of Child's decision to use metaphor and analogy to address social and political arguments, Bruce Mills has said Child "places abolition on the borders of the article[s] and not within it," using a variety of other topics as "emblems for transcendent truths."⁴⁶⁹ I argue that, in her Mammoth Cave letters, Child deliberately uses the "borderland" nature of the Cave to make a direct critique of slavery. By highlighting the liminal nature of the Cave, Child turns the space into a symbol for the possibilities and opportunities granted by freedom for African Americans. Moreover, Child uses rhetorical strategies common in travel literature to evoke sympathy for African Americans in her middle-class readers. Thus, while *Letters* is not a standard abolitionist tract, Child ultimately uses the traditional abolitionist strategy of evoking sympathy in readers. Through this technique, Child's supposedly peripheral critique becomes a direct one.

From the beginning of her first Mammoth Cave letter, Child draws a clear connection between the darkness of the underground space, and the tourist industry's utter reliance on the slave economy. She begins by promising her readers she will convey a description "'Of antres vast, and deserts idle,/Rough quarries, rocks, and hills, whose heads touch heaven.'"⁴⁷⁰ This line from *Othello* is part of a longer soliloquy in which Othello describes his biographical history – in particular his journey from slavery to becoming an army general. In this passage, Shakespeare uses a word of his own devising, "antres," derived from the Latin "antrum," meaning "cave." This Shakespearean reference in the first paragraph of Child's letter sets up a relationship between caves and

⁴⁶⁹ Mills, *Cultural Reformations*, 73-75.

⁴⁷⁰ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 75.

slavery, and, more specifically, between Mammoth Cave and the antebellum slave system.⁴⁷¹

Much of Child's description of Mammoth Cave is similar to the previously analyzed Mammoth Cave travel writings. For example, she too depicts the power and authority of the black guide underground. Once again the guide is depicted as an active figure, while tourists are passive: the guide "leaps up," "ascends huge cliffs," and places lamps in various positions to create effects for the tourists; he walks along the edge of crevasses and overpasses to show tourists the shape of the Cave.⁴⁷² The guide thus uses his body and lighting techniques to guide the tourists' viewing experience. The tourists, on the other hand, are passive: they "are at once ushered" and "find [themselves]" in spaces throughout the Cave, due to the leadership of the guide.⁴⁷³

In *Letters*, Child also recognizes that the guides' knowledge of the Cave has granted them the authority to not only discover, but also name, various rooms in Mammoth Cave. For example, she notes, "In this neighbourhood is a vast, dreary chamber, which Stephen, the guide, called Bandit's Hall the first moment his eye rested on it; and the name is singularly expressive of its character."⁴⁷⁴ Child acknowledges Bishop's authority to name the space, and even praises his apt designation.

Child even warns tourists who refuse to acknowledge the authority of their enslaved guides. She emphasizes the safety provided by knowledgeable guides, stating,

⁴⁷¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Antres,"

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/view/Entry/8945?redirectedFrom=antres#eid>.

⁴⁷² Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 79, 84.

⁴⁷³ Lydia Maria Child, "Mammoth Cave," *Bentley's Miscellany* 14 (1843): 412.

⁴⁷⁴ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 82.

“none but the practised eye of a guide can disentangle their [the Cave paths’] windings.”⁴⁷⁵ Later, she notes that “Parties are occasionally mustered and counted, to see that none are missing. Should such an accident happen, there is no danger, if the wanderer will remain stationary; for he will soon be missed, and a guide sent after him.”⁴⁷⁶ Here, following the instructions of a guide is critical for survival; should one disobey, only the guide can provide salvation.

Also like other Mammoth Cave narratives, Child appears to explain this level of authority by describing the Cave as an aesthetically unique place. Through the use of free-association and metaphor, Child places the Cave in another world. She describes the Cave as a “subterranean world” full of “marvellous imitations.”⁴⁷⁷ Everything she describes is akin to, and yet not of, the world above. Cave rooms “resemble” familiar shapes from above, including cathedral choirs, temples, statues and busts of famous figureheads, and Gothic architecture. In describing the Cave through metaphor and simile that connects it to the world above, Child (like other travel writers) in fact emphasizes its distinctive nature. As her descriptions imply, there are no manmade architectural structures or works of art in the Cave – it is instead a “fairy-land” that is uneasily paralleled in the world above.⁴⁷⁸

Yet Child goes beyond common descriptions of Mammoth Cave as a unique, sublime site. She emphasizes the otherworldliness of the site in her second letter about the site to a degree that other writers typically did not. In this letter, she devises a

⁴⁷⁵ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 91.

⁴⁷⁶ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 92.

⁴⁷⁷ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 76, 94-5.

⁴⁷⁸ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 91.

fictional legend about Mammoth Cave, drawing inspiration from Norse mythology. Once again, this is a narrative not based on her own experience in the Cave, but is based on that of others. This second letter is in fact supposedly a revision of her first, based on criticism she supposedly received from her friend who first described the site to her. Child explains:

The story originated thus: the German friend, who visited Mammoth Cave, and gave me so vivid a description of its wonders, was not satisfied with the account I wrote of it. "The fact is," said he, "such stupendous scenery as that needs the agency of the supernatural. Genii and spirits should be summoned to your aid." "Very well," I replied, "to please you, I will try to write a spirit-legend. I think it will not be difficult to fill the cave with supernatural presence; for such creations as abound there, seem like the appropriate work of powerful genii."

According to tourists like Child's acquaintance, Mammoth Cave's otherworldly, bizarre nature can only accurately be depicted through legend and lore. Her ultimate choice to develop a mythology for the Cave was not unusual for the period. About twenty-five years before, John Keats imagined Fingal's Cave (on the island of Staffa) to be constructed by "Giants who rebelled against Jove," or Titans, of Greek mythology. In a subsequent poem, "Staffa," he imagines that in the Cave, he meets John Milton's character Lycidas (from the eponymous poem), who tells him the origin story of the Cave.⁴⁷⁹ As discussed in chapter one, Washington Irving had created tales about other geographic regions, including the Catskill Mountains. He claims that "The Legend of Sleep Hollow," for example, is one of the many "rich...legendary treasures" from the

⁴⁷⁹ For more on Keats's descriptions of Staffa, see Jennifer Davis Michael, "Ocean Meets Ossian: Staffa as Romantic Symbol," *Romanticism* 13.1 (2007): 1-14.

region.⁴⁸⁰ Yet while other Romantic authors had drawn connections between mythology and sublime sites, Child's "spirit-legend" was somewhat unique in its overt political purpose.

In Child's second letter, she devises a tale based on Norse mythology, of the "romance" between Thot ("synonymous with Art, Science, or Skill") and Freia ("the goddess of Love, or Feeling; likewise of the Moon and of Spring").⁴⁸¹ In her tale, Thot enslaves Freia in an underground cave. To please Freia, he creates a landscape that imitates the land above. However, Freia continuously points out that none of this is as beautiful as the same structures aboveground. Underground, she protests, "all is so still and deathly...it is not quite the same."⁴⁸² Thot ultimately agrees that his "boasted creation [is] but a tomb," a space where rock and decay falsely replicate the life aboveground.⁴⁸³ In this myth, Mammoth Cave parallels the world above: it too has mountains, waterfalls, and stone replicas of vegetation. There are also architectural features, including "pillars and churches." Yet it is a dead, lifeless replica of the world above. The colors are "dead grey," and the soundlessness is "still and deathly," and the flowers are without scent. In this way, Child's description of Mammoth Cave parallels that of Willis, who describes the site as "over the border-land." It is a world that, at first glance, appears to mimic the world above, but is in fact quite the opposite: it is the

⁴⁸⁰ Washington Irving, *Washington Irving's Sketch-Book*, 1820 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1905), 378.

⁴⁸¹ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 177-178. Child explains that she selected Norse mythology "as better suited to the wild and sublime scenery of the place." She also chose Norse mythology because of her admiration of Ole Bull, the Norwegian violinist, who once gave a performance in Mammoth Cave, and had a cave room named after him ("Ole Bull's Concert Hall").

⁴⁸² Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 188.

⁴⁸³ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 190.

bowels of the earth opposed to the land and sky above, the death that opposes life, the darkness opposed to the light. Mammoth Cave is a distinctive world, and a far less preferable one.

While most of her writing on Mammoth Cave emphasizes this clear distinction between the two worlds – something that authors like Willis do as well – the conclusion of her first letter emphasizes a liminality to this “underworld.” She ultimately disavows the distinction she originally sets up throughout the letter, offering a potential connection between the world above and the world below. Significantly, Child offers this possibility in a paragraph dealing with the enslavement of the tour guide, Stephen Bishop. She begins with a description of a tour’s ascent from the Cave:

Nature never seems so miraculous as it does when you emerge from this hidden realm of marvellous imitations. The ‘dear goddess’ is so serene in her resplendent and more harmonious beauty! The gorgeous amphitheatre of trees, the hills, the sky, and the air, all seem to wear a veil of transfigured glory. The traveller feels that he was never before conscious of how beautiful a phenomenon is the sunlight, how magnificent the blue arch of heaven!⁴⁸⁴

At first glance, Child appears to set up a distinction between the world above and belowground, celebrating the return to earth. Yet she repeats much of the language previously used to describe the world belowground: the “amphitheatre,” the “arches” the “beauty” she describes aboveground all have parallels belowground, suggesting a connection between the two worlds.. However, her use of the word “imitations” reminds the reader that the Cave’s beauties and spectacles – and its social digressions – are not quite the same as those found in the world above. But after this description of the land

⁴⁸⁴ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 95.

surrounding the Cave entrance, and its benefits over the world below, Child then quickly shifts to a discussion of the guides who lead the underground tours:

There are three guides at the service of travellers, all well versed in the intricate paths of this nether world. Stephen, the presiding genius of Mammoth Cave, is a mulatto, and a slave. He has lived in this strange region from boyhood, and a large proportion of the discoveries are the result of his courage, intelligence, and untiring zeal. His vocation has brought him into contact with many intellectual and scientific men, and as he has great quickness of perception, and a prodigious memory, he has profited much by intercourse with superior minds. He can recollect everybody that ever visited the cave, and all the terms of geology and mineralogy are at his tongue's end. He is extremely attentive, and peculiarly polite to ladies. Like most of his race, he is fond of grandiloquent language, and his rapturous expressions, as he lights up some fine point of view, are at times fine specimens of glorification. His knowledge of the place is ample and accurate, and he is altogether an extremely useful and agreeable guide. May his last breath be a free one!⁴⁸⁵

In this passage, the final paragraph of her letter, Child emphasizes the liminal nature of Mammoth Cave. She jumps from a celebration of the world aboveground to a description of the positive qualities the guides possess and display below. This passage directly links the pleasure of the Cave tour to the guide Stephen Bishop. She calls him “the presiding genius of Mammoth Cave,” and celebrates the Cave knowledge he bestows on tourists, including his geological knowledge and his memory of famous visitors. Yet the final line of the paragraph – and the final line of the letter – shifts from a praising of his skills as an underground guide to a wish for his life aboveground. Her final claim, “May his last breath be a free one” ultimately applies to the world above and below. Thus, Child suggests that slaves like Stephen Bishop should be free citizens not only in theory belowground, but also in actuality in the world above. Her decision to describe them in detail *aboveground* – after demonstrating their knowledge and authority – reminds the

⁴⁸⁵ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 95.

reader of the borderland nature of the Cave – men like Stephen Bishop are slaves both above and belowground; they are intelligent and knowledgeable in both “the underworld” and “on this earth.” Thus, when she concludes with her appeal for Bishop’s freedom, she opens a rhetorical portal between the world below and the world above, addressing the possibility for social and political change aboveground.

Child also uses the mythological tale in her second letter to promote her antislavery principles. Like in her first letter, the world above and belowground initially appear distinct, but Child quickly draws connections between the two. In fact, it is actually the world below that in many ways most closely parallels antebellum American society. For example, despite being a Norse myth, Child clearly sets her tale in “the New World across the Ocean,” clearly mapping her legend onto the American landscape. Moreover, Child defines the underground cave as a space of enslavement. Not only does Thot “compel [the] service” of Freia, but the natural scenery seems enslaved as well: as Freia laments, “everything seems imprisoned.”

By setting up similarities between the world below and the nation above, Child once again promotes the concept of freedom for all in both regions. In the narrative, Thot “enslaves” the goddess Freia in the Cave, forcing her to sing and provide entertainment for him. Yet ultimately, he realizes that the person he has enslaved is not the goddess Freia, but a woman “of [her] form.”⁴⁸⁶ Towards the end of the myth, the real Freia comes

⁴⁸⁶ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 191.

from Mispelheim, “the region of warmth and light” to tell him that “Thou hast never enslaved *me*.”⁴⁸⁷ She continues:

Me thou couldst not bind for a moment. If thou couldst fetter me with they triangles and squares, the universe would stop its motions. Thou and I, dear Thot, are one from all eternity. Thou hast made this mournful separation, by reversing the divine laws of our being. Thou hast thought to create the outward, and then compel the inward to give it life. But the inward forms the outward, and thus only can the outward live.⁴⁸⁸

Here, Freia insists that she was never (and could never) be enslaved, and criticizes Thot’s attempt to create a living landscape underground (with an “inward” life) that parallels the living world above. As she explains, he was only successful in creating the “outward” appearance of life: he created a lifeless replica, a mere imitation of life in the world above, and he enslaved a woman who was only a substitute for the real Freia. This concept of being incapable of enslaving the true goddess, and of being incapable of creating true life underground, parallels a common abolitionist argument. Abolitionists often argued that, while slaveowners might be able to control a slave’s body, they did not have control over a the man or woman’s soul, interior thoughts, or even their greatest skills. As Harriet Martineau wrote (and as Child quoted in her *Appeal*), “Their [slaves’] masters will never possess their facilities, though they have purchased their limbs.”⁴⁸⁹ Similar to Thot’s inability to get Freia’s substitute to sing as Freia did aboveground, slave owners would never be able to utilize and understand the true talents, abilities, and thoughts of the black men and women they enslaved. Just as Child’s first letter

⁴⁸⁷ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 180, 191.

⁴⁸⁸ Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 191.

⁴⁸⁹ Qtd. in Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (Boston: Alles and Ticknor, 1833), 85.

encourages freedom for slaves both above and belowground, her myth also emphasizes the impossibility of enslaving people in either realm.

Child's use of Mammoth Cave for abolitionist purposes might initially seem subtle compared to the powerful, direct antislavery messages in her other abolitionist tracts. Her *Appeal*, for example, advocates directly for the immediate emancipation of all black men and women, as well as the end of all racial discrimination. As she states in *Appeal*, after dismantling arguments for slavery based on the inferiority of slaves, "...let the slave-holder no longer apologize for himself by using the stupidity and sensuality of negroes. It is upon the *system*, which thus transforms men into beasts, that the reproach rests in all its strength and bitterness." As Karcher explains, once Child met William Lloyd Garrison and joined the American Antislavery Society, her antislavery beliefs became even more "militaristic." When publishing *Letters*, Child purposefully left out her most direct and radical antislavery letters in an effort to appeal to a wider audience.

Yet despite what appears to be a comparative tepidness or subtlety in Child's Mammoth Cave letters, Child in fact uses the aesthetic of Mammoth Cave to employ the common abolitionist rhetorical strategies of evoking sympathy and sentiment. Throughout the antebellum era, abolitionist authors employed the trope of moral sympathy, encouraging readers to imagine themselves in the situation of a slave, in order to understand and associate with their plight.⁴⁹⁰ Child in particular was well known for employing "strategies of sympathetic engagement" in her newspaper series "Letters from

⁴⁹⁰ See Elizabeth B. Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 82, No. 2 (Sep. 1995), 463-493.

New York.” As Heather Leland Roberts explains, Child “maintains that it is the capacity to open one’s heart to others that provides the central impetus for moral development, and thus social change.”⁴⁹¹ While her letters that focus on New York arouse sympathy through detailed depictions of the cityscape and city dwellers, her Mammoth Cave letters evoke sympathy through depictions of the Cave. The dark sublimity of the Cave becomes a vehicle for encouraging imaginative rethinking of the world above. For Child, Mammoth Cave is a place where the limits of one’s sense could perhaps be broached: as Child explains, “The vastness, the gloom, the impossibility of taking in the boundaries by the light of lamps—all these produce a deep sensation of awe and wonder.”⁴⁹² As tourists often described, the darkness of the Cave (the “dark and silent abyss,” the “darkness and desolation,” a “darker planet”)⁴⁹³ made one feel as if he or she were “out of the world.”⁴⁹⁴ By being in utter darkness and “out of the world” as one knew it, Mammoth Cave provided a potential opportunity for people to step outside of not only their society (their “world”), but out of their own selves as well. Like Emerson’s “transparent eyeball” that exists without a body, that absorbs the environment around it, tourists had the potential to be absorbed by the darkness of the Cave, and step outside of themselves and their consciousness.

Child takes advantage of this potential in *Letters*. She describes Mammoth Cave not through first-person narrative or scientific terminology, but through metaphor: the

⁴⁹¹ Heather Leland Roberts, “Urban Life and the Politics of Sympathy in Lydia Maria Child’s Letters from New York,” *American Literature* 76.4 (2004): 733.

⁴⁹² Child, *Letters from New York, Second Series*, 78.

⁴⁹³ Willis, *A Health Trip*, 156, 182; Taylor, *At Home and Abroad*, 200.

⁴⁹⁴ George Brewer, *A Description of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky...* (Boston: J.M. Hewes, 1850), 4.

walls of one hall are like “the mighty waves of the Red Sea,” another is a “vast amphitheatre,” and of course, the entire cave becomes a Norse myth in her second letter. As the bounds of reality dissolve, so do the bounds of self. Child explicitly chose a site of such illusion and selflessness to encourage the kind of imaginative thinking necessary to reconsider the social and political world.

Child uses a second-person narrative voice to rhetorically encourage readers to rethink their relation to others. The reader does not passively read a story of Child’s visit to the Cave, but instead descends beneath the surface of the earth herself. Antebellum travel literature commonly uses second person narrators: guidebooks, for example, often told “you” where to go and what to do. However, Child forces readers to go beyond the superficial voyeurism of an armchair traveller; she encourages in her readers the potential for a sympathetic, quasi-religious experience in the Cave. In the Star Chamber room, for example, “You enter...looking upward, through this narrow aperture, you see, high, high above you, a vaulted roof of *black* rock, studded with brilliant spar, like constellations in the sky, seen at midnight from the deep clefts of a mountain.” Readers are encouraged to draw the same kinds of analogical conclusions from this sensory data; they are meant not just to see what the speaker sees, but also to take up her habits of mind.

This use of second person was a common rhetorical device used by abolitionist authors, particularly in direct appeals to readers.⁴⁹⁵ Child herself used it in all of her “Letters to New York,” as they were each written to an undisclosed person. By placing the reader in the place of the tourist throughout her first Mammoth Cave letter, the reader

⁴⁹⁵ See, for example, Clark, “The Sacred Rights of the Weak.”

is ideally more open to her conclusion (in which she expresses her appreciation for the guide Stephen Bishop, and that he dies a free man). The Cave has become a space in which one can exist outside of oneself, and sympathize with others. Her narrative voice thus allows for a chance for identification between slave and reader: the reader has just survived a six-hour tour with Stephen, and sympathizes with his role as slave in a potentially new and deeper manner.

Furthermore, Child thoughtfully places these letters on Mammoth Cave within a series of letters largely focused on New York City society and culture, thus linking both the North and South in her critique of slavery. Unlike Child, other writers published their narratives of the Cave within publications focusing solely on the South. Willis, for example, published his descriptions of the Cave in his book *A Health Trip to the Tropics*, which focuses on his southern and Caribbean travels. Even the large cartouche of Mammoth Cave from the Boston magazine *Ballou's Pictorial* is part of a piece on the state of Kentucky, rather than national tourism. Child, however, refuses to relegate the issue of slavery – and the responsibility of dealing with it – to the South. By placing the issue within a national tourist industry, the issue becomes one for the entire nation to resolve – or, at least, the white, middle-class tourists. Moreover, she places this issue in a text that focuses on New York City. Tourism scholars have argued that scenic tourism was inherently a part of the city, in that it relied on the city for promotional print culture, transportation, and even the tourists themselves.⁴⁹⁶ Mammoth Cave was, by this logic, an extension of the northern city, and therefore New York City was staunchly implicated in

⁴⁹⁶ Stradling, *Making Mountains*.

the slave system. By implicating her readers in this ostensibly foreign, subterranean world, she opened their eyes to issues of the nation.

Post-Civil War: A New Perspective?

Mammoth Cave tourism slowed during the Civil War. In fact, the tourist site essentially became an active war zone. As a border state, Kentucky was a site of heated contention, both on the battlefield and off. Kentucky officially did not secede from the Union, but many slaveholders sided with the Confederacy, or at least felt concern for the future of their position as slaveholders. Mammoth Cave in the 1860s is representative of these political and social contentions. Hotel proprietors Larkin J. Proctor and E.K. Owsley both owned slaves, but also had strong affiliations with the Union.⁴⁹⁷ With the L&N Railroad running near the Cave by 1859, troops regularly passed through the area carrying supplies for Union soldiers. Yet the Cave became even more directly entrenched in the war as early as 1861. Union soldiers in 1861 were located along the Green River near Mammoth Cave; according to Jeanne Schmitzer, hundreds of Union soldiers were quartered at the Mammoth Cave Hotel itself during the war. Confederates tried unsuccessfully to raid the Mammoth Cave Hotel in 1861. One month later, they planned to try again, under the command of Confederate General Thomas C. Hindman. Schmitzer tells a story of the Mammoth Cave proprietor, E.K. Owsley, hearing that the Confederates in fact planned to burn down the hotel, so he hid valuables from the hotel in

⁴⁹⁷ Lyons, *Making Their Mark*, 46.

the Cave – including the slaves who worked for the tourist site. While the Confederates failed to destroy the hotel, they supposedly created over \$50,000 in property damages.⁴⁹⁸

With the end of the war and the abolition of slavery, tourism at Mammoth Cave resumed; by about 1870, the number of annual tourists had reached about the same levels as in the antebellum period.⁴⁹⁹ Despite the drastic social and political changes in Kentucky (and the nation), particularly the abolition of slavery, tourism at the Cave remained remarkably the same. Perhaps the most significant point of continuity was the consistency in who guided the tours. Most of the guides – those men and women who were enslaved or formerly enslaved, and who played such a critical role in the tourist’s experience – decided to remain at Mammoth Cave after the Civil War. A number of them had already purchased or been granted freedom before the War. Stephen Bishop, for example, became free in 1856 (although he died before the Civil War began), and Nick Bransford had purchased his freedom, in part by selling eyeless fish from the Cave to tourists as souvenirs.⁵⁰⁰

Artists and authors continued to produce images and texts about the tourist site. Some of these were very similar to antebellum depictions of the site – in fact, many of the antebellum images and texts were reprinted after the Civil War. Charles Wright, for example, produced two different guidebooks on Mammoth Cave – one before the Civil

⁴⁹⁸ Schmitzer, “The Black Experience,” 46-52.

⁴⁹⁹ According to the National Park Service, by 1860 (just before the start of the Civil War), Mammoth Cave saw 30-40,000 visitors each year. “The National Park Idea,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/macal/learn/historyculture/thenationalparkidea.htm>.

⁵⁰⁰ According to A.D. Binkerd post-Civil War travelogue, one exception to the continuation of solely black guides was Samuel Meredith. Binkerd writes, as opposed to “our colored guides, Mat and Nick” Meredith was “a native of our country.” Binkered, *Mammoth Cave, Kentucky*, 62.

War and one after. While they contain different information, and are published by two different publishers from two different cities, the images are identical.⁵⁰¹ Other postbellum travelogues depicted Mammoth Cave much in the same way as the antebellum travelogues. Authors described the underground site using the same sublime, otherworldly language: the Cave was “a world to itself,” giving a tourist the feeling “that he has left the world.”⁵⁰² And tourists still followed the command of their black guides. Antebellum guides like Nick Bransford (known by then as “Ole Nick”) continued to give tours, still using lighting effects to elicit emotional, dramatic responses of their tourists.

Yet the new social and political climate, new ways of touring, and new technologies all combined to result in a unique new form of depicting Mammoth Cave, and addressing the issue of race. Almost as soon as the war ended, photographers began experimenting with underground flash photography within the Cave.⁵⁰³ Mammoth Cave owner Larkin Proctor’s nephew John R. Proctor and his associate John H. O’Shaughnessy saw the potential value in photography as a new means of depicting – and therefore marketing – Mammoth Cave to tourists. In 1866, they secured the rights to all photographs of the Cave for the next five years. They hired Cincinnati “photographic chemist” Charles L. Waldack to come to Mammoth Cave and capture images of the

⁵⁰¹ Wright, *The Mammoth Cave*, 1858; Charles W. Wright, *A Guide Manual to Mammoth and Proctor’s Caves* (Louisville, KY: Bradley & Gilbert, 1870).

⁵⁰² R.S. Thompson, *The Sucker’s Visit to Mammoth Cave* (Springfield, OH: Live Patron Publishing Office, 1879).

⁵⁰³ The first known photograph of Mammoth Cave was taken by Adin F. Style in 1865. William Stump Forwood, *An Historical and Descriptive Narrative of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1875).

underground region using flash photography.⁵⁰⁴ After two trips in July 1866, Waldack had eighty negatives of Mammoth Cave. Stereograph publishers E & H.T. Anthony & Co. of New York published a set of 42 stereographs of the Cave. These photographs became a popular means of viewing the Cave from the comfort of one's middle-class home – publishers reproduced the photos (some legally, some illegally), and artists rendered illustrations from the photos, publishing them in guidebooks, as well as in newspapers and magazines.⁵⁰⁵ Many other photographers followed suit in the coming decades, using new technologies to produce clearer images.⁵⁰⁶ An examination of these earliest photographs reveals changes in the aestheticization of the Cave – which in turn complicate postbellum conceptions of race.

Like the postbellum travelogues and other touristic publications, some of Waldack's photographs adhere to the aesthetic trends of antebellum images. Many images, as well as the captions (also known as versos) on the back of the stereoscopic images, depict the Cave as a sublime, almost overwhelmingly terrifying, space. For example, "Ole Bull's Concert Room" (named after Norwegian violinist and composer Ole Bull) depicts a man standing on a pile of rocks next to a dark gorge, which the stereocard says is the "Pass of El Ghor" (Figures 4.4, 4.5). The figure looks towards the dark space, as if he is looking towards the next sight to behold. The utter darkness offers an element of the unknown. A dark shadow in the foreground parallels the darkness of

⁵⁰⁴ Chris Howes, *To Photograph Darkness: The History of Underground and Flash Photography*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 50-53.

⁵⁰⁵ For example: Forwood's *An Historical and Descriptive Narrative* includes reproductions of 12 of Waldack's photographs.

⁵⁰⁶ For more on the development of underground photography, particularly in Mammoth Cave, see Howes, *To Photograph Darkness*.

the space, implying that the figure is consumed by darkness. The male figure, though standing tall and confident on the rock ledge, is clearly dwarfed by the immense size of the cavern. His stance in the middle of the photo reveals the height both above and below him. Like the cartouche in the antebellum image from *Ballou's Pictorial*, this photograph demonstrates the size, darkness, and potential danger of the Cave.

However, in the guide's place is a figure whose role, and race, are unclear. Neither the image nor the verso name or describe the man. This ambiguity allows the viewer to more easily place him or herself in the position of the figure, imagining traversing the Cave. This voyeurism is further encouraged by the multiple light sources in the image. The figure does not hold a lantern, yet light radiates on him and the rocks to his left. Unlike antebellum images, the light is not controlled by the guide; instead, it becomes an all-assuming power, belonging to everyone. The complicated, but very real, authoritative role of the slave guides underground appears to be supplanted by the power of technology – in particular, the flash of the camera. Now the tourist can more easily imagine him or herself guiding a tour of the Cave, without the reliance on a reversal of social structures.

A number of photographs further suggest a new relationship between race and authority at Mammoth Cave. Waldack's "Mouth of the Cave" (Figure 4.6) depicts the tourist entrance to the Cave. At the base of the entrance sit three black men, all looking directly at the camera. The stereocard verso describes them as "three well known guides," and explains that "The one on the right is old "Mat," a colored man who has acted in the capacity of guide for the last thirty years." Thus here, name and race are made explicit,

both in image and text. The concept of the “male gaze,” as described by Laura Mulvey, has been reexamined and applied to visual culture studies by a number of scholars. Shawn Michelle Smith, for example, examines how Frances Benjamin Johnston’s photographs of African American students at the Hampton School consistently avoid the black students’ gaze, which “signify doubly the charged power dynamics out of which her images were produced...[her] photographs do not forward the radical defense of African American virtue...but instead ambiguously skirt the ‘challenging’ gaze, thereby subtly reproducing a legacy of racial hierarchy on turn-of-the-century South.”⁵⁰⁷ Yet in Waldack’s image, these men make direct eye contact with the camera. Their bodies turn at least three-quarters, if not fully, towards the lens. While the identity (and race) of the man to the left is unclear, the two other men have darker skin, and the man on the right is identified as “Mat.” This direct gaze between viewer and the man who is a former slave provides a view of black people that was not offered in images in the antebellum era, and only offered to tourists in the past belowground. Alan Trachtenberg has argued that photographs of people looking head-on at a camera lens were not standard in mid-century American photograph.⁵⁰⁸ However, other photography scholars have noted that postbellum images of African Americans looking directly at the camera could denote “pride.”⁵⁰⁹ While the purpose of their gaze is unclear, the men are not actively serving white tourists. They are not pointing at sights for the tourist to admire, nor carrying lights

⁵⁰⁷ Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 170.

⁵⁰⁸ Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989).

⁵⁰⁹ Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer, *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 118.

to guide the blinded tourist. They stand aboveground, in a geographic space they know better than any white visitor. Place and subject come together here to convey the men's knowledge and authority aboveground – something rarely depicted in the antebellum era. In this small way, the black guides of Mammoth Cave gained a new sense of cultural ownership aboveground – or, perhaps better put, a freedom from the need to provide authority and assurance to tourists.

This photograph does not necessarily reveal a dramatic shift in racial ideology in the late nineteenth century. And in fact, it is important to remember that any world created by the tourist industry is ultimately a fantasy. Tourism is inherently a fleeting experience. As tourism theorists emphasize, tourism by definition is “temporary.”⁵¹⁰ Thus, the post-Civil War tourist industry does not reveal the potential for racial equality in the nineteenth century. However, these photographs reveal that Americans were considering and questioning the role of race in American culture and identity, and these questions would, of course, expand well beyond the confines of the longest cave in the world.

⁵¹⁰ See, for example, Geoffrey Wall and Alister Mathieson, *Tourism: Change, Impacts, and Opportunities* (New York: Pearson & Prentice Hall, 1982); Adam Franklin and Mike Crang, “The Trouble with Tourism and Travel Theory?” *Tourist Studies* 1, no.1 (2001): 5-22.

Image Appendix

Chapter 1 Images

Figure 1.1: Untitled map, from *The Northern Traveller*, 1828.



Figure 1.2: The Tourist's Map of the State of New York, in *The Fashionable Tour*, 1828



Figure 1.3: Untitled map in *The Northern Traveller*, 1826



Chapter 2
Images

Figure 2.1: William Henry Bartlett, *Rapids Above the Falls of Niagara*, 1840, in *American Scenery*, vol. 1.



Figure 2.2: William Henry Bartlett, *View Below Table Rock*, 1840, in *American Scenery*, vol. 1.



Figure 2.3: William Henry Bartlett, *Niagara Falls, From Clifton House*, 1840, in *American Scenery*, vol. 1.



Chapter 3 Images

Figure 3.1: Thomas Cole, *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*, 1839.



Figure 3.2: William Henry Bartlett, *The Notch House, White Mountains, New Hampshire*, in *American Scenery*, vol. 1, 1840.



Figure 3.3: William Henry Bartlett (etching by John Hill), *Little Falls at the Luzerne*, 1822-23



Chapter 4 Images

Figure 4.1: Conrad Bruno, *Der Inwendige theil der Būmans Höhle...*, 1654.



Figure 4.2: *State of Kentucky*, in *Ballou's Pictorial*, November 29, 1856.



Figure 4.3: Stephen Bishop, *Map of Mammoth Cave, Kentucky*, 1845.

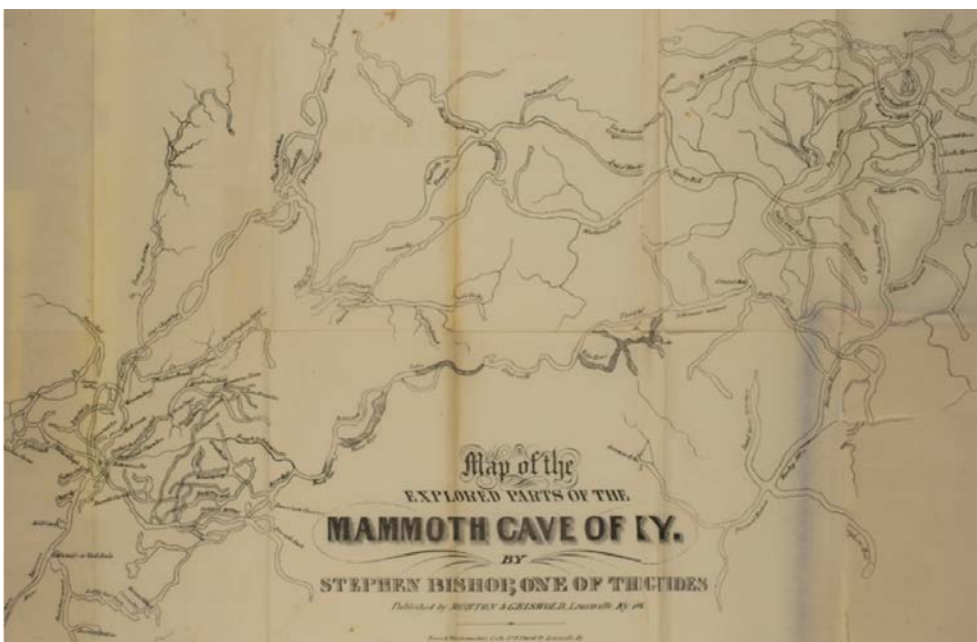


Figure 4.4: Charles Waldack, *Ole Bull's Concert Room*, front side, 1866.

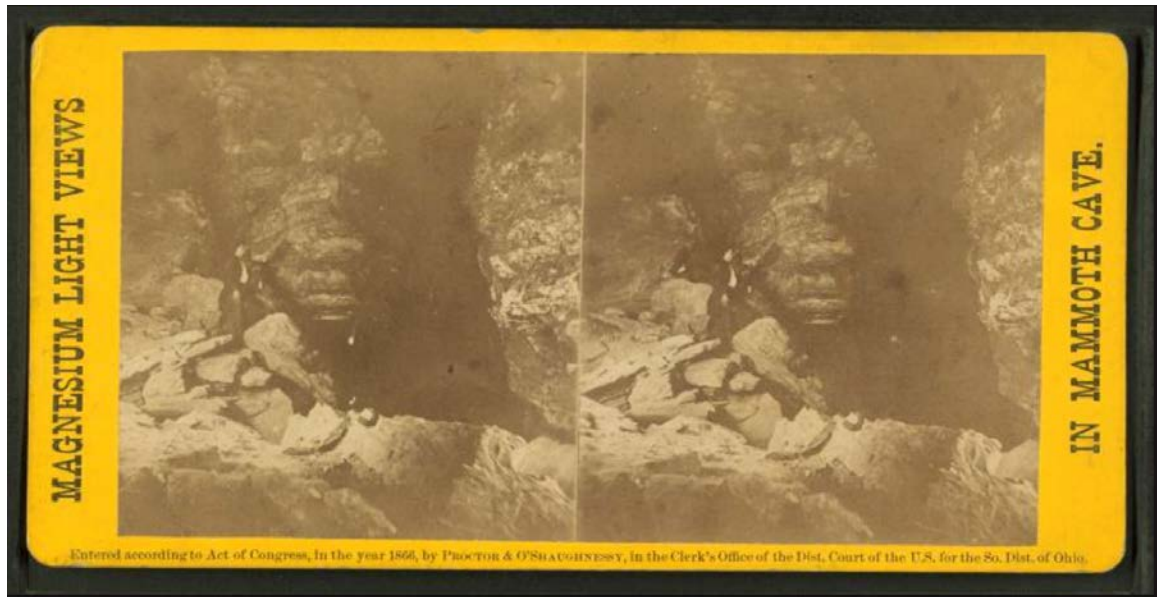


Figure 4.5: Charles Waldack, *Ole Bull's Concert Room*, reverse side, 1866.

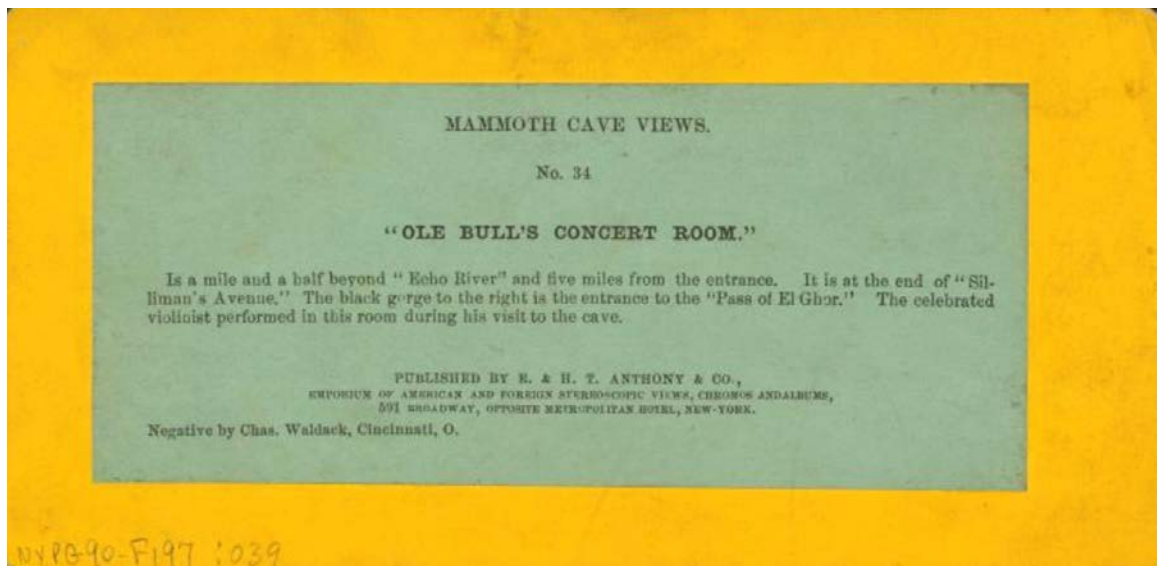


Figure 4.6: Charles Waldack, *Mouth of the Cave*, 1866.



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Vita

