

Meeting of Minds: North American Travel Writers and Government Tourist Publicity in Quebec, 1920–1955

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As the writings of American, English Canadian, and French Quebec travel writers between 1920 and 1955 make clear, each group had its own distinctive image of Quebec and its own reasons for finding the province an attractive destination. In turn, the Quebec government, in marketing the province, presented an image of Quebec that would essentially match the tastes of American travellers, who expected to see a rural, simpler lifestyle evocative of French seventeenth-century settlement. By the 1940s, however, the Quebec government was beginning to modify its traditional representation of the province. The quaintness of Quebec's society was still seen as a lure, but travel advertisements now also affirmed the province's contemporary sophistication.

Il ressort clairement des textes des rédacteurs touristiques américains, canadiens anglais et québécois français de 1920 à 1955 que chacun de ces groupes voyait le Québec à sa propre façon et avait ses propres raisons pour y voir une destination attrayante. En moissant la province, le gouvernement du Québec présentait quant à lui une image du Québec qui correspondait essentiellement aux goûts des voyageurs américains, qui s'attendaient à y observer un mode de vie rural plus simple évocateur des colonies françaises du XVII^e siècle. Mais dans les années 1940, le gouvernement du Québec a commencé à modifier le portrait traditionnel qu'il dépeignait de la province. Le cachet pittoresque de la société québécoise servait toujours d'appât, mais les publicités de voyage affirmaient dorénavant le caractère contemporain de la province.

AFTER WORLD WAR I, when automobile ownership and improved highways combined to make travelling an affordable option for a larger number of people, Quebec beckoned as an enticing tourist destination for a growing

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population of Americans, English Canadians, and French Quebecers.¹ Americans composed the largest proportion of visitors,² but each group had its own distinctive image of the province. American, English Canadian, and French Quebec travel writers offer a window on these differing versions of Quebec's image. At the same time, the Quebec government tried to attract tourists, and its advertising reflected particular assumptions about what these tourists wanted or what they should want. Scholars have argued convincingly that the attitudes of visitors have a determining influence on the way the host-society perceives itself. The visited want to please the visitor. Looking at what American, English Canadian, and French Quebec travel writers thought about Quebec not only allows us to bring out the multiple ways in which Quebec was defined, but it also permits us to see to what extent these perceptions influenced how the government chose to market the province to prospective tourists.

Focusing on travel writers has other advantages. These travellers were professional tourists who recorded their impressions for the reading public in the popular press and in more specialized magazines and so helped shape the expectations and reactions of the travelling public. Their writings are therefore not only of interest in their own right but also offer the historian an opportunity to come closer to understanding what may have gone through the minds of the more silent masses of tourists heading for Quebec.

Few historians have explored this facet of Quebec's past. Those who have done so have focused on the Quebec government's initiatives³ and the contributions of French-Quebec elites to the promotion of tourism in the province.⁴ Two historians have studied the attitudes of French or British travellers who visited Quebec before World War I.⁵ Others have spent some time describing

1 Tourism revenues in the province of Quebec increased significantly by the 1920s: while they amounted to \$34,000 in 1915, by 1929 they had reached \$61.2 million. See Alain Roy, *Le Vieux Québec 1945–1963. Constructions et fonctions sociales d'un lieu de mémoire nationale* (MA thesis, History, Université Laval, 1995).

2 During the greater part of the period, the majority of tourists coming to Quebec were Americans, largely from New York state and the New England states. In 1929 Quebec attracted 39% of the American tourist market. Although that figure fell to 20% in 1964, clearly Americans found in Quebec a tourist destination of great interest. See George Delage, "Le tourisme, comédie ou tragédie?", *Commerce*, vol. 66 (May 1964), pp. 87–89, 91–92.

3 Robert Prévost, *Trois siècles de tourisme au Québec* (Sillery: Septentrion, 2000); Jules Bélanger et al., *Histoire de la Gaspésie* (Montreal: Boréal Express, IQRC, 1981).

4 Roy, *Le vieux Québec*; Natalie Duhamel, "Coordonner tourisme et artisanat, ou comment mettre en valeur le visage pittoresque du Québec, 1915–1960", *Histoire sociale/ Social History*, vol. 34, no. 67 (May 2001), pp. 97–114, and "La collection Coverdale d'histoire canadienne : reflet des préoccupations patrimoniales d'une époque (1929–1949)" (paper presented at the meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Quebec City, May 2001).

5 See Doug Owrarn, "'Quaint Quebec': British Views of French Canada", in Doug Owrarn and R. G. Moyles, eds, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 87–113; Sylvain Simard, *Mythe et reflet de la France. L'image du Canada en France, 1850–1914* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, Cahiers du CRCCF #25, 1987).

the activities of tourists in certain regions of the province.⁶ In discussions of ordinary tourists, mostly American visitors who came to Quebec in the first half of the twentieth century, the conclusion is generally a blanket statement that Quebec was of interest because it was a traditional society, if not a primitive one, distinctive because of its French culture and Catholic beliefs. The information contained here does not contradict this generalization, but it is clear, especially from the attitudes of English Canadians and French Quebecers, that travel writers' expectations and reactions were varied and complex.

The available sources certainly confirm that Quebec was being publicly discussed as a tourist destination. Travel writers published their accounts in the daily press, popular and more specialized magazines, and numerous guide books throughout the period.⁷ These may be plentiful, but they have their drawbacks: one can assume that those who wrote travel accounts for such publications emphasized positive experiences or impressions. They wrote for an audience of potential tourists; by force of circumstance, they thus wrote about what they liked or found interesting about Quebec. Such sources will not prove revealing when it comes to analysing what these authors did not like about Quebec or what they found objectionable. It is important to keep this particular intent in mind while evaluating their pronouncements on Quebec as a travel destination.

An analysis of the sources that most likely shaped travel writers' expectations concerning Quebec shows how these may have predetermined the writers' reactions when they visited the province and defined what they perceived as worthy of interest during their trips. The focus here is on the expectations and reactions of American, English Canadian, and French Quebec travel writers who visited the province of Quebec between 1920, when mass tourism began, thanks in large part to the increase in automobile travel,⁸ and the mid-1950s, which brings us to the eve of the Quiet Revolution, the years before the Quebec government made unprecedented efforts to develop the tourism industry. Understanding the tourists' "demand" permits an evaluation of the extent to which the Quebec government's advertisements in the various newspapers and magazines in the United States and across Canada focused on attributes of the province that these constituencies of tourists enjoyed or whether they were guided by other distinct priorities.

Expectations

The many American, English Canadian, and francophone Quebec travel writers who came to Quebec had certain expectations about their destination,

6 See, for instance, Philippe Dubé, *Deux cents ans de villégiature dans Charlevoix ou l'histoire d'un pays visité* (PhD thesis, Université Laval, 1985).

7 It must be noted that these authors did not provide their national origin in their written accounts. A few travel writers published in American publications were clearly Canadian. For the purpose of this article, I have tried to the best of my knowledge to quote American writers exclusively.

8 Indeed, "three-quarters of visitors came by car and their numbers went from 15,000 in 1915 to 650,000 in 1930, not counting the short trips made by Ontarians" (Prévost, *Trois siècles de tourisme*, p. 90).

fed by a large variety of sources including novels, films, school readers, newspaper or magazine articles, and guidebooks. All these influences helped to shape a distinct frame of mind with which they would view the Quebec sites and people they encountered. Since most travel writers did not often say directly what they had hoped to see and did not footnote the sources of their expectations, a discussion of these expectations and their origins must in some part remain speculative. One must in effect resort to analysing the most likely sources and make some deductions as to how these may have shaped travel writers' pre-departure frame of mind.

Some travel writers did indeed make reference to novels and films that had fed their imagination. Many American travel writers during the period evoked the title of the novel *Maria Chapdelaine* when recounting their trips to Quebec. In fact, they labelled the Lac St-Jean area, more often than not, "Maria Chapdelaine country".⁹ The Gaspésie and the Laurentians were also associated with the novel. All these regions were "the 'back-in-the-bush' country of the habitant whose life has been so intimately portrayed by Louis Hémon in his novel 'Maria Chapdelaine' ".¹⁰ This novel presented French Quebec as an essentially static and rural society, devoutly attached to its French Catholic traditions, in a country where "nothing has changed. Nor shall anything change...."¹¹ One can assume that, before setting off to Quebec, some travel writers were also exposed to novels such as Willa Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* or William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*, both set in the New France era and featuring the French noble and religious figures of the time, thereby underlining the French and Catholic origins of that part of the continent.

Other American travellers were clearly influenced by movies depicting French Canadians or some parts of Quebec. As Pierre Berton has brought out in his study of American film depictions of Canada, Hollywood represented French Canadians in stock characters, usually as the "happy-go-lucky rogue", the "untutored children of the forest".¹² Such characters appear in the two versions of *Rose Marie* of 1936 and 1954. Alfred Hitchcock's popular 1953 movie *I Confess*, with its plot set in Quebec City, would also have fed the imagination of some prospective American visitors to Quebec. Many of the scenes in the movie underline the Catholic beliefs of the city's population; thus nuns and priests feature frequently, dressed in their distinctive habits, and the camera often draws the attention of the spectator to the numerous

9 See also, for instance, "World Travel Notes: Eastern Canada", *Living Age*, vol. 236 (August 1929), p. 459; Helen Augur, "The New Order on New France", *Travel*, May 1942, p. 36.

10 "Glimpses of Summer Playground – Realms of Summer Recreation", *Literary Digest*, vol. 85 (June 6, 1924), p. 90.

11 Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine*, trans. W. H. Blake (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1948), p. 171.

12 Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of our National Image* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1975), p. 82. See also pp. 79–86.

churches of the city. The film also showcases Old Quebec, presenting its narrow cobbled streets and its old buildings, including the inevitable Château Frontenac. Clearly this film would have served to create or reinforce stereotypical ideas concerning French Canadian society. In addition to providing information, it would also have fed the visual expectations of potential visitors with evocative images.

History books and school readers are another source from which prospective travel writers would have built their expectations about Quebec, as adults and starting at a young age. Textbooks can be particularly influential as they often reflect wider cultural assumptions that school children will encounter again in other sources and contexts. They provide a basic interpretative framework that individuals later use to understand the world around them. This influence operates at two levels: through the text and through the accompanying illustrations or photographs. As the historian Pierre Savard reminds us, “[D]uring the pre-television era, the literary and iconographic images contained in school readers from the catechism to the atlases had much more impact than today on the young.”¹³

Faithful to their genre, American school readers discussing Quebec or French Canada in the first half of the twentieth century aimed to pique the curiosity of school children by highlighting what distinguished Quebec from their own native country. Thus the text invariably underlined the importance of the Catholic Church in the neighbouring society: “In Quebec one cannot forget the power of the Roman Catholic Church...”¹⁴ These school readers also emphasized that Quebec was a francophone society: “One fourth of the people living in Canada speak another language, the French, and their customs are quite different from those of the British Canadians.”¹⁵ The text went beyond generalizations to document this fact, confirming what was considered a remarkable feature of Quebec society. For instance, children were told that “the street signs are in both languages”,¹⁶ that “in Riviere-du-Loup the names were French, the street names were in French, and, all the tourist homes bore French-Canadian names”.¹⁷ The fact that the authors provided such evidence suggests that school children needed proof to convince them of the existence of this French society across their borders.

Quebec was not only distinguished from the United States through these attributes but also because it appeared to be a society embedded in an atmosphere of bygone days. Emphasis in these school readers was placed on the survival of the traditional ways of the rural people, the *habitants* to the

13 Pierre Savard, “Les ‘caractères’ nationaux dans un manuel de géographie des années 1930”, *Recherches sociographiques*, vol. 23 (1982), p. 205, n. 1.

14 Leila Gott Harris and Kilroy Harris, *Canadian Ways* (Bloomington, Ill.: McKnight and McKnight, 1939), pp. 19–23.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 19–23.

17 Harold B. Clifford, *Canada, My Neighbour* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1944), p. 110.

present day. This information most likely influenced the expectations that these young students would harbour later about French Quebec during their tourist forays. In a chapter entitled “On a Habitant Farm”, the Harrises confirmed the convergence of the past and present by pointing out, “On the Island of Orleans, things are still done in the old-French manner, as they are in many other rural districts of Quebec.”¹⁸ The illustrations accompanying the text would have left no doubt in the minds of school children that Quebec was a society where one could encounter relics, both human and material, of bygone days.¹⁹ To accentuate this melding of the past and present in the Quebec countryside, the authors went on to mention something most likely to impress young urban dwellers: “Many people on the island do not know by experience what a moving picture is. They supply their own amusement by telling tales, singing folk songs and dancing. They ride to church in ox-cart, or horse-drawn wagon, or in an old car.”²⁰

The past did not only have a hold on the countryside. The city of Quebec, with its Château Frontenac, also reminded one of a distant past: “[The Château] looks like it might have stepped out of a picture of olden times, or as if it were a castle in a foreign land....”²¹ It would have spoiled this medieval image to admit that the Château Frontenac was a modern hotel built in 1893.

It must be noted that these authors looked on the quaint *habitant* with some condescension. Their *habitants* were unsophisticated, with a *joie de vivre* associated with a simpler age:

On name days and feast days the young people gather for taffy pulls, or square dancing to the tunes of a fiddle and an accordion. Many of the farm families now have radios also, but they think homemade music is best on such occasions. The countryside rings with singing and laughter. Oh, there is plenty of fun on an habitant farm.²²

These readers, however, did not completely ignore the existing signs of modernity that were manifest in Quebec during the period. According to these texts, the city of Montreal epitomized economic progress in the province: “Montreal is the Paris, London and New York of Canada. It has world-wide business interests and therefore a world-wide outlook.” Young American readers would have been all the more impressed to learn that: “Its busy streets lined with modern office buildings and stores with handsome banks

18 Harris and Harris, *Canadian Ways*, p. 40.

19 In Carpentier’s reader one sees, for instance, a photograph of a young girl taking a loaf of bread from an outside oven. The caption reads: “Girls of Quebec Province learn to bake delicious loaves of sweet-smelling bread in the outdoor ovens near their farmhouses.” See Frances Carpentier, *Canada and Her Northern Neighbours* (New York: American Book Company, 1946), pp. 180, 188.

20 Harris and Harris, *Canadian Ways*, p. 46.

21 Etta Macdonald and Julia Dalrymple, *Betty in Canada: A Geographical Reader* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1912), p. 78.

22 Carpentier, *Canada and Her Northern Neighbours*, pp. 180–181.

and fine hotels, rival those of the most progressive cities in the United States.”²³ Even in Montreal, though, the past was never far behind, for it also “looks like a city of churches. [It] is a beautiful and modern city, yet, like Quebec it reflects the past.”²⁴

This brief overview suggests that American school children who might one day visit Quebec could have expected to enter a land that was foreign on many levels: in language, culture, and Old World traditions. This was the authentic Quebec, and the Quebec that American travellers would come to see. When combined and reinforced with information conveyed in other sources, all these characteristics would eventually be perceived by adult American travellers as authentically French Canadian, typical of what they should look for on their trip to Quebec.

English Canadian travel writers were different without being polar opposites. The expectations of English Canadians were also shaped by novels and movies they had encountered and more than likely by the school readers of their youth. Furthermore, one notices that they were inspired for the most part by the same novels and movies. However, English Canadians differentiated themselves from their American counterparts by the diversity of the sources they invoked and to some extent by the use they made of these sources. English Canadian travel writers referred more often to literary sources, drawn from a more extensive inventory of titles. *Maria Chapdelaine* was still the front runner,²⁵ but other titles appeared such as *The Golden Dog* by William Kirby, *The Rock and the River* by Ralph Connor, *The Battle of the Strong* by Gilbert Parker, *Arundel* by Kenneth A. Roberts, and *A Diana of Quebec* by Jean M. McIlwraith.²⁶ In fact, among English Canadian visitors, one finds a larger number of “pilgrims” — travel writers who came to Quebec expressly to visit a place described in a novel. As Carleton McNaught explained in 1935, “It was *Maria Chapdelaine* that inspired our sentimental pilgrimage this summer to the Lac St Jean country.”²⁷ In addition, English Canadian travel writers were much more likely than Americans to quote from these novels and to allude to the names of some of the characters.

How can one account for this difference? For one thing, English Canadians had assuredly been more exposed than Americans to novels that included descriptions of French Canadian culture or that used this culture as a backdrop. Their points of reference were bound to be more numerous and more

23 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

24 Harris and Harris, *Canadian Ways*, pp. 26, 27, 33.

25 See, among others, Wallace Ward, “The Quebec of the Visitors”, *Saturday Night*, vol. 67 (July 12, 1952), p. 36.

26 See W. P. Percival, “Picturesque Quebec”, *Canadian Geographical Journal*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1946), p. 61; Gorman Kennedy, “Holiday in Quebec”, *Canadian Geographical Journal*, vol. 34, no. 1 (January 1947), p. 26.

27 Carleton McNaught, “The Real Maria Chapdelaine”, *Canadian Magazine*, vol. 83 (January 3, 1935), p. 6. See also F. O. Call, “Country of Maria Chapdelaine”, *Canadian Magazine*, vol. 63 (December 1924), p. 453.

varied, suggesting that their preconceived ideas about Quebec would probably be so as well. As a result, English Canadians were likely to be travellers with more fleshed-out expectations about Quebec. The reference one such traveller made to *The Plouffe Family* television series (1953–1959) offers a vivid example of English Canadians' wider access to cultural references involving Quebec.²⁸

One can safely assume that the movies viewed by English Canadian travel writers were largely the same American films seen by their counterparts to the south and that these would have imprinted a similar image of the province on their minds. One can also be certain that English Canadian travellers were much more exposed to school readers discussing Quebec and French Canadians than their American counterparts. A brief overview of a small sample of the readers used in Canadian schools during the period certainly confirms that the image they projected about Quebec or about French Canadians could only serve to reinforce the impressions assimilated from novels or movies.

Generally speaking, English Canadian school readers before the Second World War devoted relatively little attention to Quebec and to French Canadians after the Conquest.²⁹ Until the 1940s children thus got little information about contemporary Quebec. Quebec was usually referred to only in times of political conflict or during the “great events” that punctuated British North America's and later Canada's history. With the publication of the Ryerson readers in 1930, a widely used set of Canadian history textbooks, topics involving French Canada focused on the Explorers, Heroes and Heroines, Battles and Crosses series. This suggests that, among other things, young children would have learned to associate Quebec with the period of New France. Great emphasis was also placed on the influence of the Catholic religion. Thus, in the Ryerson Reader devoted to Sir George-Étienne Cartier, children were told that Quebec was “monarchical by religion, by habit and by the remembrance of past history”.³⁰

Yet, contrary to American readers, those published in English Canada after World War II spent more time discussing the modern economic development taking place in the province.³¹ A greater proportion of adult English Canadian travellers during the period would thus have been exposed to readers presenting them with a more multifaceted Quebec. Interestingly enough, however, even after World War II, while acknowledging Quebec's industrial

28 See Hugh Gardner, “Quebec City: Eye to the Future”, *Saturday Night*, vol. 72 (February 1957), p. 12.

29 See Gilbert Paterson, illustrated by C. W. Jeffreys and Edith MacLaren, *The Story of Our People* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1933); W. Stewart Wallace, *A First Book of Canadian History* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1928; reprinted 1929, 1931), p. 132. Authorized by the Minister for the Public Schools of Ontario from 1928 to 1950–1951.

30 D. C. Harvey, *Sir George Etienne Cartier*, Ryerson Canadian History Series, Lorne Pierce, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930), p. 20.

31 See, for instance, J. C. Sutherland, *The Romance of Quebec* (Toronto: W. J. Gage & Co., 1937); E. C. Woodley, *The Province of Quebec through Four Centuries* (Toronto: W. J. Gage and Company, 1947).

and agricultural progress, the authors managed to reinforce the image of the province as only recently stepping into modernity, suggesting that it was a place in Canada where one could still find vestiges of the “olden days”. For example, in a reader authorized by the Ontario government during the 1950s, students were told that, if one excluded urban centres, “the advance of Quebec generally took place at a slower tempo”. However, “the province is no longer predominantly an agricultural community. Though he still has a deep reverence for the past, the French Canadian farmer now lives in the present as well, and is rapidly becoming a skilled modern agriculturalist.”³² These developments had threatened the old traditions, but, “fortunately, the French Canadians have managed to retain the arts and crafts of Old Quebec, though a few years ago these were in very real danger of dying out”.³³ This type of remark suggested that present-day visitors to Quebec could still expect to come across these old traditions.

In fact, authors throughout the period often blurred the boundaries between traditional rural French Canadian culture and the contemporary lifestyle of French Quebecers, making it difficult for their readers to distinguish between past and present. Based on these texts, French Quebec culture was by definition traditional. This could only encourage prospective tourists to think that in Quebec one could still find many *habitants* living as did their ancestors. In 1927, for instance, students were told, “In winter both sexes wore out of doors much the same picturesque costumes as we see in the rural districts of Quebec today.”³⁴ Twenty years later, E. C. Woodley remarked of post-WWII Quebec: “In many farm-houses during the long, cold winter, young women work busily at the loom in the attic, while before the fireplace older women still weave the ceinture flèche — a sash with a gay arrow pattern. Other members of the family make the hooked rugs for which Quebec is famous.”³⁵ Certainly many of the photographs that accompanied these texts confirmed a traditional lifestyle. As did American school readers, the authors during this period, most notably before World War II, revealed a somewhat paternalistic if not condescending attitude towards French Quebecers, who were characterized as essentially simple, happy people, if not “childlike”. Thus authors emphasized the gaiety to be found in French Quebec rural homes: “[W]hen the sap begins to run, the farm becomes a gay and lively place.”³⁶ While Donalda Dickie observed that “[t]he habitants ... were honest though it is said, careless farmers”, she added, “Then as now they were noted for their gaiety and good manners.”³⁷

32 Arthur Dorland, *Our Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1949), pp. 353–356 (used in Ontario from 1952 to 1959).

33 *Ibid.*, p. 472.

34 Isaac Gammell, *History of Canada* (Toronto: W. J. Gage and Co., 1927), p. 113 (textbook used in the high schools of Montreal and authorized for use in schools in British Columbia).

35 Woodley, *The Province of Quebec*, pp. 193, 200.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 210.

37 Donalda Dickie, *The Great Adventure: An Illustrated History of Canada for Young Canadians*, illustrated by Lloyd Scott (Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1950), reader used in Ontario from 1951 to 1960 and in Alberta and British Columbia for grades 6, 7, and 8.

This limited vision of Quebec, frozen in a distant past, could only encourage tourists to envisage Quebec as a traditional Catholic and rural destination, often bucolic, certainly folkloric, and inhabited by the picturesque *habitants* devoted to working the land as “in the good old days” or producing crafts following the methods of their ancestors. Although English Canadian students were more likely than their American counterparts to get a sense of the features of urban contemporary Quebec, predictably the authentic Quebec would remain essentially rural, Catholic, and traditional.

There is no doubt that children were encouraged to view French Quebecers as distinct in terms of culture, lifestyle, and also temperament if not sophistication. Students were told that, when entering Quebec, the visitor would have the impression of discovering “another world” for the province “in character ... is unique”.³⁸ However, authors could not present the place as entirely foreign. They were, after all, teaching children about a part of their own country. English Canadian students might wonder whether such a distinct province could truly belong to their Canada. Certainly, J. C. Sutherland felt the need to reassure his young audience by saying that his text “is intended to show that the province of Quebec, however much it has retained of the character and customs of Old France, is nevertheless a loyal and essential part of our great Dominion”.³⁹ During most of the period, English Canadian authors did imply, more than Americans, the differences between English and French Canadians in a way that tended to highlight the positive features of English Canadians. However, the goal was to confirm that the distinct French Canadians had become part of the Canadian family. Thus Aileen Garland, while mentioning that “[t]hese two groups differ in many ways”, made sure to add, “Yet they are united by a common devotion to Canada, to our form of government, and to our way of life. All are now Canadian.”⁴⁰

It remains that, throughout the period, children’s readers tended not to emphasize what French and English Canadians had in common, but highlighted the distinctive features of French Quebec by making it clear that the *habitants* with their Old World traditions had survived. Potential English Canadian tourists could therefore expect that, as late as the 1950s, they would encounter in Quebec a culture steeped in the distant past.

French Quebec travel writers also toured the province and, as their anglophone colleagues, were influenced by prior expectations. Their accounts also offer certain clues as to the readings that might have coloured their expectations before they set off on their travels. The diversity of these references is much less significant, however. French Quebecers referred to *Maria Chapdelaine* when discussing the Lac St-Jean region. But, unlike anglophone

38 George Wrong, Chester Martin, and Walter N. Sprague, *The Story of Canada*, illustrated by C. W. Jeffreys (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1929).

39 Sutherland, *The Romance of Quebec*, p. 236.

40 Aileen Garland, *Canada Then and Now* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1954), p. 144 (authorized in Ontario from 1954 to 1960).

texts, the writings of French Quebecers more frequently contained the reactions and comments of notables such as historians, men of letters, or judges who took pen in hand to laud the charms of a specific place or region of the province. Thus, for instance, in an article on the Quebec City region, a journalist of *La Presse* newspaper quoted Sir A. B. Routhier and the intellectual Arthur Buies.⁴¹ Presumably the reputation of these writers gave the area described its imprimatur. This is particularly true at the beginning of the period. In all likelihood, the proximity of the territory and a greater familiarity with Quebec meant that French Quebecers relied on other types of sources to shape their expectations. One can safely assume that an area highly recommended by well-respected French Quebecers, or simply by “word of mouth” between friends and family, occupied a greater place in the overall set of potential influences.

As were all North American tourists visiting Quebec, French Quebecers were exposed to school readers, and these of course focused to a much greater extent on Quebec than elsewhere. One would assume that young French Quebecers were given a more extensive presentation of the history of their province, one that included the past as well as the present, discussing the development of rural as well as urban areas. A brief overview of some of the French Quebec readers of the period reveals that they had distinct objectives and limitations. They, too, tended to focus on the traditional rural values and customs of French Canadian culture. The sections devoted to the earlier period of French Canadian history stressed the heroic accomplishments of the early settlers, pointing to the salutary intervention of God to ensure the survival of this beleaguered “chosen people” in North America. The Catholic beliefs and the use of the French language were constantly put in the forefront. All this material was presented less to inform than to eulogize the superiority of the French Canadian race and the Catholic religion. The goal was not to bring out the picturesque nature of the *habitant* way of life, but to offer it as a model.

Cities were rarely mentioned at all before the Second World War. By the mid-1950s, authors were clearly concerned about the detrimental influence of industrialization and urbanization on the admirable behaviour and morals associated with traditional rural French Canadians. Some authors presented a more optimistic outlook, reiterating at the same time what they considered to be the truly admirable traits of French Canadians. In the view of Abbé Hermann Plante and Abbé Louis Martel, “The social hierarchy has remained intact: the parish priest has kept his role of Universal counselor.... The father exercises an uncontested authority.... Lovers meet in the kitchen under the watchful eye of parents.”⁴²

As did anglophone readers, French Quebec school texts presented the

41 See “Plages et Places d’été de la région de Québec”, *La Presse*, July 3, 1926, p. 46.

42 Abbés Hermann Plante and Louis Martel, *Mon pays : synthèse d’histoire du Canada* (Montreal: Éditions Laflèche, 1956), p. 275.

habitants as essentially happy people: for them, “everything is a pretext for rejoicing”. Yet these *habitants* were not distant actors in time and space, but the direct ancestors of both the authors and their young readers. Not surprisingly, the patronizing tone found in the anglophone texts was absent, replaced by a clear sense of pride and desire to uphold the *habitants* as role models. As Abbés Plante and Martel pointed out, they led “a hard life ... made of work and abnegation”. But it was nonetheless “a gay life ... made of good relations and mutual aid. [During family gatherings] one could play cards, sing, dance, drink. These relations developed in a spirit of Christian charity.”⁴³ French Quebec authors did not see the survival of traditional society as a quaint object of curiosity. The goal was altogether different. These authors wanted to instil pride in their young readers, respect for authority, both paternal and religious, and admiration for the lifestyle and beliefs of their brave *habitant* ancestors. Students were also entreated to admire the exploits of the numerous heroes that peopled their history. As future tourists, they would presumably be prepared by this mild form of hero worship to seek out and recognize commemorative sites worthy of interest.

Prospective travel writers, whether American, English Canadian or French Quebecer, also saw their expectations fortified by readings they encountered in travel literature, newspapers, or wide circulation and specialized magazines. Travel writers read each other, and this is where the forming of their expectations and the discovery of their reactions meet as far as the researcher is concerned. These sources both shaped travel writers’ expectations and reveal the reactions of those who had come back from Quebec.

Travel writers made it clear that they had expectations. American travel writers, for example, consciously sought what they understood to be an authentic experience or, as some of them put it, “the true French Canadian”.⁴⁴ It is important to point this out because, as many tourism scholars have recently noted, not all tourists seek authenticity or the same degree of authenticity. In early tourism studies, scholars tended to offer sweeping generalizations concerning tourists and authenticity. Thus Dean McCannell, one of the pioneers in the sociology of tourism, stated in 1973 that “[t]ouristic experience is motivated by its desire for authentic experiences”⁴⁵ in a world where “for moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere; in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles”.⁴⁶ For their part, Chris Rojek and John Urry have argued that tourism “involves a search for the inauthentic, a search for those perfect simulations”.⁴⁷ The tremendous

43 *Ibid.*, p. 276.

44 Charles and Margaret Koehler, “Canada Carefree”, *Travel*, vol. 111 (June 1959), p. 23.

45 Dean MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings”, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 79 (November 1973), p. 589.

46 Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 3. See also his article “Staged Authenticity”, pp. 589–592.

47 Chris Rojek and John Urry, “Transformations of Travel and Theory: Tourism and Culture”, in John Urry and Chris Rojek, eds, *Touring Cultures: Transformation of Travel and Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 12.

popularity of sites such as Las Vegas and Disneyland offer telling evidence of this theory.⁴⁸ Essentially, a consensus is building that authenticity is a “socially constructed concept”.⁴⁹ Indeed, “rather than being naturally given, [it] is held to have been produced by a variety of entrepreneurs, marketing agents, interpretative guides, animators, institutional mediators, and the like”.⁵⁰ In the case of North American travel writers visiting Quebec, it is clear that Americans and English Canadians wanted to experience some kind of authenticity. This had to do both with their responsibilities as travel writers and with the fact that they were engaging in cultural tourism, which “seek[s] exotic peoples and ‘different’ cultures”.⁵¹

Quebec travel writers involved in cultural tourism were those who wrote in the most widely circulated press and the magazines of more general interest. Yet these travel writers did not fit neatly into the existing tourist typologies. Some were noted intellectuals or novelists; others were journalists. In this regard one might be tempted to associate them with D. L. Redfoot’s “third order tourists” comprising anthropologists.⁵² Such intellectuals “will engage on a more serious quest for authenticity than most rank-and-file members of society”.⁵³ However, travel writers also shared some traits with Redfoot’s “first order tourists”. These people “travel[ing] with family or a tour group” have been “molded by travel brochures, television and picture postcards”, and their “expectations are well formed in advance as to just what one is ‘supposed’ to experience”.⁵⁴ Certainly, travel writers must put themselves in the shoes of the rank-and-file tourists and anticipate the needs, tastes, and hopes of these ordinary tourists, while themselves heading out to their destinations better prepared, seeking information, and for the most part setting out to convey to their readers what is distinctive about the destination they have been hired to highlight. While the issue of authenticity would be much more on their minds as they travel, just as first-order tourists, travel writers would also be influenced by prepackaged impressions of the site being visited and their overall pre-departure expectations.

Travel writers’ own accounts reveal how they ended up defining what constituted the authentic Quebec. From these, we can better understand how they themselves played the role of “authenticators”⁵⁵ by establishing how they

48 See, for instance, George Ritzer and Allen Liska, “‘McDisneyization’ and ‘Post-Tourism’: Complementary Perspectives on Contemporary Tourism”, in Urry and Rojek, eds., *Touring Cultures*, pp. 107–108.

49 See Erik Cohen, “Authenticity and Commodification in Tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 15 (1988), p. 374.

50 George Hughes, “Authenticity in Tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1995), p. 781.

51 Marjorie R. Esman, “Tourism as Ethnic Preservation: The Cajuns of Louisiana”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 11 (1984), p. 459.

52 D. L. Redfoot, “Tourist Authenticity, Tourist Angst, and Modern Reality”, *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Winter 1984), p. 299.

53 Cohen, “Authenticity and Commodification”, p. 376.

54 Redfoot, “Tourist Authenticity”, p. 293.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 295.

defined differences between themselves and the French Quebecers they encountered and why they found the province so appealing. Not surprisingly, French Quebec travel writers reacted differently than their anglophone colleagues. They were not so much looking for the “true French Canadian”, being French Canadian themselves, as travelling in the homeland of their ancestors. The focus here is not on whether travel writers experienced authenticity but on what they thought they were experiencing, and how these perceptions influenced the behaviour of those in the Quebec government responsible for marketing the province as a tourist destination.

Reactions

It is clear from all travel accounts throughout the period that American travel writers interested in the culture and people of Quebec came to the province essentially to find, as one writer described it, “The France across our Border”.⁵⁶ Going to Quebec was the next best thing to going to France. Here, prospective tourists were told, they would experience “the rural charm of Normandy”.⁵⁷ To American travel writers, Quebec not only acted as a French surrogate in North America but allowed them to travel in time as well, exposing them to what life was like in seventeenth-century France. Indeed, they were attracted to what they more often than not referred to as Quebec’s “Old France” or “Old Europe” qualities.

The ultimate incarnation of Old France in Quebec for American travel writers was the *habitant*. Success in seeing the *habitants* became, for American travel writers, the test of whether or not they had come into contact with what they had determined was the authentic Quebec culture, the true French Canadian. The more they saw of the *habitant* and his way of life, the more satisfied they were with their trip to Quebec. In fact, some travel writers stated explicitly that “it was rural French Canada we had come to see”.⁵⁸ According to writer Helen Augur, by “find[ing] how the habitant live[s], you will understand Quebec”.⁵⁹ This explains why proportionately more space in these travel accounts was devoted to describing the ways of the *habitants*, particularly in the Gaspé and Lac St-Jean regions, than those of the city dweller.

At first glance, it is puzzling that these American travel writers should have been convinced that the “dying race” of the *habitant* in twentieth-century Quebec represented the authentic French Canadian. After all, demographic and economic indicators between 1920 and the 1950s pointed to the relative yet steady decline of the rural population in the province. Not only did “the percentage of the Quebec population living on farms steadily ... decline from 27 percent in 1931 to 25.2 percent in 1941 and then to 19.5 per-

56 Harry A. Franck, “The France Across our Border”, *Travel*, vol. 75 (May 1940), p. 14.

57 Wes Whitefield Walker, “A Survival of Old Normandy in Canada”, *Travel*, vol. 69 (August 1937), p. 16.

58 Stella Burke May, “Along Rural Highways in French Canada”, *Travel*, vol. 59 (June 1932), p. 33.

59 Augur, “The New Order”, p. 36.

cent in 1951”, but the 1921 census revealed for the first time “that more than half the population of Quebec (51.8 percent) already lives in urban areas”.⁶⁰ Furthermore, after World War I, Quebec was steadily becoming industrialized. Indeed, “manufacturing accounted for almost half the net value of production in Quebec in 1929, and three-fifths in 1945”.⁶¹

The reason for equating French Canadians with the *habitants*, of course, lay in the travel writers’ expectations. As we have seen, these expectations had been fed by a wide range of sources, but were also reinforced by a more widespread anti-modernist set of beliefs that shaped English North America’s views of Quebec.⁶² As several scholars have pointed out, by the end of the nineteenth century, middle-class North Americans and many Europeans were reacting with dismay to what they saw as the artificial, unreal, and over-civilized nature of their urban working environments.⁶³ Furthermore, as a result of secularization, “familiar frameworks of meaning were evaporating; they felt doomed to spiritual homelessness.” This “drift towards weightlessness”, as the American historian Jackson Lears describes it, provoked a yearning among the bourgeoisie for intense experience. More precisely, “[T]hey longed to rekindle possibilities for authentic experience, physical or spiritual.” In their view, regeneration was possible “through pre-industrial craftsmanship and a pastoral ‘simple life’ ” and many “looked hopefully toward the figure of the pre-modern artisan”, “idealizing manual labor”, the “simplification of life, the virtues of life on the land”⁶⁴ to confront the complexity and anonymity of modern existence. In North America, in the eyes of many, including American and English Canadian travel writers, the French Quebec *habitants* were the very incarnation of this folk society, which represented “the antithesis to everything they disliked about modern urban and industrial life”.⁶⁵ Indeed, as Canadian historian Donald Wright points out for the years spanning the 1880s to the end of World War I, many English Canadians viewed the *habitants* through this anti-modernist lens, as “pre-modern, pre-commercial, unsoiled by the ‘mere creation of wealth’ ”. However, he also makes the point that “antimodernism was neither monolithic nor static but varied over time and space”. By the 1920s, anti-modernism had evolved into an ideology that was less a “rejection [of] modern culture” than “a revitaliza-

60 “Further urbanization during the 1920s brought that figure to 59.5 per cent in the 1931 census” and to 61.2 per cent in 1941. See Paul-André Linteau *et al.*, *Quebec Since 1930*, trans. Robert Chodros and Ellen Garmaise (Toronto: Lorimer, 1991), pp. 16, 31.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

62 For full discussion of anti-modernism in the American context as it emerges at the turn of the century, see Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 33–42.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 45, 74.

65 Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), p. 4. See also his discussion about the “long history of European and American thought about the Folk.”, pp. 9–23.

tion of it". It gradually developed into a set of responses made to help bourgeois city dwellers better adapt to modernity through contact with the folk and experiencing life on the farm, turning anti-modernism from a type of dissent into a "therapeutic world view", "a vivifying hobby for the affluent".⁶⁶

The reactions of American travel writers visiting Quebec between 1920 and the mid-1950s are steeped in these evolving anti-modernist sentiments. Not only were these writers predisposed to look for the *habitants*, but they were also eager to believe in their existence, even if the evidence was not always convincing. Clearly, for city-dwelling Americans, the French Canadian *habitant* offered an appealing contrast to their own condition and lifestyle. One need not merely infer this from travel writers' comments. Many were quite explicit about what encountering the *habitants* could offer them on a personal level. Thus they commented again and again on how seeing the *habitants*, these "simple unspoiled natives",⁶⁷ offered a beneficial contrast to their over-hecktic, bustling lives in the city. Typical in this regard were the comments of Sally Bennett, a *Travel* magazine contributor in 1940. According to Bennett, "the best refreshment to nerves and souls is the *habitants*, for they are peaceful folk who want nothing but their river country and their traditional ways."⁶⁸

More fascinating still for these travellers with their anti-modernist world view is the fact that, in their eyes, the *habitants* led a simple life of the distant past: "[T]he people of the Gaspé peninsula fish, and the people of the tideway farm, they wear their gala peasant costumes at fetes, and drive their little dogcarts, as they did long ago, before they left Normandy. It is all very soothing."⁶⁹ Constant reference was made to the perception that these people lived as did their seventeenth-century ancestors, with their outdoor ovens for baking bread, their spinning wheels and handlooms, where "oxen draw clumsy conveyances or work in the fields".⁷⁰

According to many American travel writers, the French Canadian *habitants* were also blessed with another attractive quality: they were essentially a happy people. This belief could also be attributed to an anti-modernist frame of mind. It is evident, for instance, in George Sessions Perry's account in the *Saturday Evening Post* that he "observed [to his guide] that most of the people I'd seen that day seemed happy". In his view, French Canadians were content precisely because they were steeped in the traditions and priorities of a world Americans had lost: "Untroubled by hankerings for progress,

66 Donald Wright, "W. D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English Canadian Imperialism, 1880s-1918", *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, vol. 32, no. 2 (Summer 1997), pp. 139, 135, 75, 92, 93. Ian McKay also notes in his study on the "invention" of the folk of Nova Scotia that the 1930s saw a boom in interest in the folk (*The Quest of the Folk*, p. 75).

67 Pat Morgan, "Popular Art in the Raw", *Commonweal*, vol. 28 (May 13, 1938), p. 71.

68 Sally Bennett, "The Grand Style at Murray Bay", *Travel*, vol. 75 (May 1940), p. 37.

69 "Dozen favorite tours", *Holiday*, July 14, 1953, p. 17.

70 Franck, "The France Across Our Border", p. 16.

the French-Canadians do not want to see Quebec's peaceful, harmonious ways altered. Just as he is, the habitant is *bien content*."⁷¹

While longingly admiring the manifestations of these bygone days unfolding before their very eyes, these travel writers nonetheless often couched their reactions in unequivocally condescending terms. But they did not produce explicit or direct comments to the effect that French Canadians were primitive in one way or the other, as did, for instance, the British travellers, studied by historian Doug Owram, who came to Quebec and saw the *habitants* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁷² American travel writers' feelings towards the *habitants* were more steeped in a nostalgia for a simpler past than in the self-satisfaction of visitors convinced of their own superiority.⁷³ If American travel writers did not directly pass judgement about the primitiveness of the *habitant*, they did recount their meetings with the *habitant* much as an anthropologist would observe a primitive society. These travel writers went beyond blanket anti-modernist generalizations about the *habitant* as a happy vestige of the past to explore the *habitants*' way of life. Nothing seemed to thrill the traveller more than to be able to live with the *habitants*. During this period, limited available accommodation meant that travellers in the countryside were often taken in by the local *habitants*. American travel writers often alluded to the fact that they had visited a family farm and were graciously taken in for a meal or an overnight stay.⁷⁴ This "foot in the door" provided the travel writer with a soothing contact with the folk specimen and also validated the writer's credentials as a reliable observer.

Overall, these would-be anthropologists devoted considerable time to describing what they perceived as the generic character traits of French Canadians and their way of life. For instance, in 1938 Brian Meredith explained that the French Canadian "bristles with sensitivities; he is rich with talent artistically and temperamentally; he has revealed lamentable weakness in the face of political temptation and he is personally one of the most charming people of the world."⁷⁵ This essentializing can be found throughout most of the travel literature of the period. Authors tended to underline the most traditional features of the people they encountered or those that in the writer's view most distinguished them from the mainly urban, protestant, middle-class readers.

71 George Sessions Perry, "Quebec City"(in a series called "Cities of the World"), *Saturday Evening Post*, February 18, 1956, p. 54.

72 See Owram, "Quaint Quebec", pp. 87–113.

73 Historian Ian McKay in the context of his research of the folk of Nova Scotia has noted a comparable contrast between travellers' reactions of the late nineteenth century and those of the 1920s and 1930s. By then, rural citizens had become "objects of contemplation" (*The Quest of the Folk*, pp. 225, 32, 39).

74 See "The Habitant Ho Kays Winter", *Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 211 (February 4, 1939), p. 42; Wes Whitfield Walker, "A Survival of Old Normandy in Canada", *Travel*, vol. 69 (August 1937), p. 16.

75 Brian Meredith, "Laurentian Prospect: An Aperçu of French Canada", *The Fortnightly*, January 1938, p. 95.

Thus writers included the inevitable section on the religious life of French Canadians and their simple and all-encompassing faith. Readers were told that “[the] habitant is devoutly Catholic”. In fact, according to Byron Steele, “no where in the world does the Catholic Church wield a greater influence on the everyday life of its members than in Quebec.”⁷⁶ Large families, a clear marker of bygone days, were also often mentioned in these travel accounts. Harry A. Franck noted that “[t]here were only fourteen children” in the family he was staying with when in Gaspésie. Sure to impress his city-dwelling readers, he added that this “is not a surprising number for this region. French Canadian families may range from 12 to 26 children.”⁷⁷ This tendency to ascribe to whole populations character traits encountered in a few individuals on a trip is, in many ways, typical of travellers in general. However, what distinguishes the American travel accounts of this period is that they contained more of this type of essentializing of the “other”.

American travel writers were typical in other ways: they saw what they wanted to see or passed lightly over what they did not want and did not expect to see. Thus their stubborn desire to come across the *habitant*, direct descendant of the seventeenth-century Normans, meant they only briefly commented on the industrial development taking place in the province and, more specifically, in *habitant* country such as the Lac St-Jean region. Some suggested that the Old World was, in fact, front and centre in the province. Readers of *Travel* magazine, for example, learned in 1942 that: “Despite the radios and the busy paper mills of the Upper Saguenay country, you will hear mostly Norman songs and the native ones created by the fur trappers and voyageurs.”⁷⁸ They thus acknowledged the presence of modern industrialization, but these signs of twentieth-century development did not serve to modify their vision of the true French Canadian as essentially rural and traditional. The expectations they developed over time before setting foot in the province clearly influenced how they would see Quebec society: they chose to notice certain aspects of the people and its culture and ignored others. The conclusion drawn by Sylvain Simard about French travellers to Quebec at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century could very well apply to American travel writers of this later period: “One looks only for what one misses and one finds only what one looks for.”⁷⁹

The most telling evidence of the Americans’ particular fascination with the *habitants* is the way they reacted to Quebec’s urban centres, more specifically to the city of Montreal. Montreal was a concrete manifestation of the modern industrial age in twentieth-century Canada. Indeed, until the late 1960s, Montreal was Canada’s largest metropolitan, industrial, and financial

76 Byron Steele, *Let's Visit Canada: A Practical Guide for Tourist, Sportsman and Vacationist* (New York: Robert M. McBride and Co., 1st ed, 1948), p. 46.

77 Franck, “The France Across Our Borders”, p. 17.

78 Augur, “The New Order”, p. 36.

79 Simard, *Mythe et reflet de la France*, pp. 316–317.

centre. American travel writers were clearly interested in the city and systematically included commentaries or a section on Montreal in their accounts. They highlighted and even praised its cosmopolitan nature, describing it as sophisticated and exciting.⁸⁰ Peter Kennedy explained to his readers: “By day the metropolis offers a full program of sight-seeing and shopping while by night its Parisian-style theaters, night clubs and restaurants provide top-rank entertainment.... There are more fine places to eat in Montreal than anywhere else in Canada and the city has more night clubs than Manhattan.”⁸¹ Anti-modernism and nostalgia, the search for the soothing work of the traditional *habitant*, were obviously not at play here. If Montreal could not offer American travel writers the *habitant* they generally looked for when they come to Quebec, what did it have to offer and what made it French Canadian? For one thing, during the 1920s, Montreal was an attractive spot for some Americans during prohibition. As Charles Stokes explained in 1929:

A Canadian of course would not dare to assert that the Volsted Act is an advertisement for Canadian holiday resorts; nevertheless, it probably helps many Americans to make up their minds where to go. And one historical fact is inescapable: it was the Volsted Act which really put the province of Quebec upon the tourist map, and first started the great northward trek....⁸²

It is interesting to note that, although Montreal had a well-established reputation as a “sin city”,⁸³ offering as it did ample opportunities to indulge in a wide range of entertainment that might be frowned upon in a visitor’s home town, it was not promoted as such by travel writers in their various accounts. By regularly referring to Montreal as the North American Paris, however, these authors were indirectly conveying to their readers the city’s enticing “naughtiness”. Clearly, American travel writers both looked for the traditional *habitant* and enjoyed the very modern, urban, and racy aspects of Montreal. This serves to confirm the view that, by the 1920s, anti-modernism was no longer simply about seeking to escape “from the iron age of modernity”.⁸⁴ Travel writers by then were not rejecting modernity out of hand; many were in fact embracing it. As historian Ian McKay notes, “It was and is possible to believe on one level in the golden age, the simple life, and the stolid Folk while extolling the virtues of progress, urban sophistication, and the risk-taking entrepreneur”⁸⁵ — and to be attracted to the most urban of vices. It remains, however, that, when American travel writers discussed

80 See, for instance, Charles W. Stokes, “Picturesque Canada”, *Review of Reviews*, vol. 79 (May 1929), pp. 59–60.

81 Peter Kennedy, “Canadian Honeymoon”, *Travel*, vol. 100 (July 1953), p. 10.

82 Stokes, “Picturesque Canada”, pp. 57–58.

83 See William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and 50s* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996).

84 McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, p. xv.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

French Quebec culture and its people, they were more likely to identify them with rural areas and *habitants*. Montreal was enjoyable when it came to the big-city, racy amenities it provided to the visitor.

American travel writers' reactions to the French language spoken in Quebec, on the other hand, must be interpreted outside the anti-modernism prism. Their travel accounts leave no doubt that they were truly amazed to discover upon arrival that the majority of the population was actually francophone. Although they obviously were expecting to visit a French place, one nonetheless has the distinct impression that American travel writers felt the need to convince their readers that French was truly the living language of the province. It is almost as though they were assuming scepticism among their readers, suggesting in turn that they themselves had been surprised at the extent of Quebec's "Frenchness". The astonishment of George Sessions Perry is clearly betrayed when he informed his readers that Quebec City "has four radio stations, but only one gives programs in English, and only one newspaper of the city's three is printed in English".⁸⁶ Writers regularly provided details about hearing people speak French and in what circumstances they heard them do so — all in the effort to convince the prospective American tourist that French was spoken in everyday contexts, not simply for the benefit of the tourist. In fact, in 1929 Charles W. Stokes stated directly, "One thing the American visitor has at last decided to unlearn — that the French Canadian speaks French because he likes to be quaint."⁸⁷ There is no doubt that, if being a French place was what made Quebec a most attractive destination for Americans, it also appears to have been a source of some ambivalence. The French language was one aspect of French Canadian culture that American travel writers could not simply note or admire passively. It had the potential to make them feel excluded, if not frustrated. Thus in 1940 Sally Bennett told her readers that, in Gaspésie, "Tourists ... will find natives gracious, even if they do not venture out of their *patois* into English."⁸⁸ Enthusiasm about the province's French language was guarded in the account of Charles and Margaret Koelher. In their view, "This matter of languages lends some attraction to your visit and you'll find yourself speaking a smattering of French by the time you return home even if you didn't know a word of it when you started out."⁸⁹ However, the goal of these travel accounts was not to discourage tourists from coming to Quebec. On several occasions travel writers offered some reassurances. E. B. Hotton, for example, had some encouragement for unilingual tourists: "Though French is the language on Gaspé, have no fear that natives will not understand English. A few words enforced with sign language will secure necessities."⁹⁰ Over the period,

86 Perry, "Quebec City", p. 22.

87 Stokes, "Picturesque Canada", p. 59.

88 Bennett, "The Grand Style at Murray Bay", p. 37.

89 Koelher and Koelher, "Canada Carefree", p. 23.

90 E. B. Hotton, "Along the Perron Boulevard", *The New York Times*, July 27, 1930, section 19, p. 7.

American travel writers revealed their amazement at the true Frenchness of the province and their appreciation when this did not preclude them from getting by with their mother tongue.

Were the reactions of English Canadian travel writers comparable? Were they looking for an Old France with its *habitants*, conveying their impressions in the same anti-modernist outlook? English Canadians were obviously not looking for, nor did they expect to find, “a France inside our borders”. The awareness that they were visiting part of their own country coloured all their reactions and produced a slightly different set of attitudes to those of their fellow American travel writers.

Certainly, English Canadian travel writers constantly reminded their readers that by visiting Quebec they would enter the most different province of Canada. This difference is clearly defined in anti-modernist terms: by Quebec’s long-standing rural traditions, by the vestiges of a seventeenth-century Normandy. These travel writers also commented on the presence of the happy and picturesque *habitant*, and in this they were similar to their American colleagues. If they described at great length the attributes of the *habitants*, however, they were less likely to label them as typical French Canadians. They spoke instead of the “true French Canadian habitant”.⁹¹ In other words, they did not limit themselves to a folkloric vision of the province: their travel accounts revealed a much more diversified Quebec. In fact, for many English Canadian travel writers, Quebec was more if not just as remarkable for the fact that it was the ancestral homeland of the white man in North America, the homeland of the ancestors of all Canadians. In 1935 the periodical *Saturday Night* baptized Quebec “the birth place of Canada’s civilization”.⁹² Twenty-three years later, Ken Johnston considered that “visiting Quebec is like visiting your own birthplace”.⁹³ One is also struck by the fact that English Canadian travel writers devoted more time to describing the industrial development they encountered in the province’s various cities and regions. Thus, while extolling Quebec City’s picturesque and old-world qualities, W. P. Percival also devoted a section to the “Industries of Quebec”. He explained that “the ‘cradle of New France’ is not only beautiful and historical: it is a busy city.... It is ... a center of the paper trade, of shoe manufacturing and corset making and the seat of the Provincial government.”⁹⁴ Even though they deplored, as did Americans, the ills of the modern era with comparable anti-modernist rhetoric, English Canadian travel writers remained nonetheless very proud of the unmistakably modern progress made in their province. They devoted more attention to the triumphs of Montreal, the city they christened

91 See “Fascinating Gaspé”, *Saturday Night*, vol. 48 (July 15, 1933), p. 16; “Gaspé – Canada’s Riviera”, *Saturday Night*, vol. 50 (May 25, 1935), p. 16.

92 “Along Quebec Highways”, *Saturday Night*, vol. 50 (July 27, 1935), p. 10.

93 Ken Johnstone, “Holiday Weekend in Quebec City”, *Maclean’s Magazine*, vol. 71 (November 8, 1958), p. 27.

94 Percival, “Picturesque Quebec”, p. 60.

“Canada’s metropolis”,⁹⁵ the remarkable feats of Quebec City’s industries,⁹⁶ and the hydroelectric miracles of the Lac St-Jean area⁹⁷ than did their American colleagues. Canadian national pride opened their eyes more to the multidimensional Quebec landscape and brought out more strikingly the way in which anti-modernist thought could cohabit with pride in the manifestations of modernity. Their reactions also suggest that this national pride, combined with prior access to a wider range of cultural products about Quebec, allowed them to project a less folkloric image of the province.

It is also clear that English Canadian travel writers imbued themselves with a mission to counter certain commonplace ideas about politics pertaining to French Quebec in the rest of Canada. They were therefore more likely to discuss French-English relations than their American counterparts. Indeed, one refrain throughout the period was that, contrary to what one might have expected, the regions in which French and English cohabited in Quebec were marked by harmonious relations. Thus Kennedy Crone explained, “To the Protestant who wonders how the poor Protestant minority can get along with the awful Roman Catholic majority, it can honestly be said that the majority is just as tolerant as any Protestant majority has ever been.” He added reassuringly, “Much more religious trouble is credited to Montreal than actually exists.”⁹⁸ Given the particular attributes of the sources, it was obviously in the interest of these authors to reassure their readers on this particular subject — a subject more than likely to preoccupy potential English Canadian tourists. However, this did not prevent English Canadian travel writers from expressing some level of anti-modernist condescension towards the friendly French Canadians. This was particularly true in the case of the *habitant*, who, according to Dr. W. T. Herridge, “at heart, ... is still a child, responsive, obedient, unworldly, fond of pranks, not weighed down by a multitude of worries, an unconscious rebuke to materialistic business”.⁹⁹

English Canadian travel writers also wanted to be reassuring about the spoken language in Quebec. Yet, again, they showed a distinct perspective. While their fellow Americans were in a permanent state of amazement over the fact that French was actually spoken in Quebec, English Canadians on the other hand more often than not simply noted that francophones in Quebec were bilingual. In 1933 William Macmillan explained, “In nine cases out of ten [the French Canadian] does what [the English Canadian] frequently cannot do — speak both languages.” He added, in typical reassuring fashion, that “over ninety-five percent of the people [of Quebec City] are French —

95 Gorman Kennedy, “Holiday in Quebec”, p. 22.

96 See William MacMillan, “I Prefer Quebec”, *Maclean’s Magazine*, vol. 46 (April 1, 1933), p. 42.

97 See McNaught, “The Real Maria Chapdelaine”, p. 6.

98 Kennedy Crone, “La Ville de Montréal”, *Canadian Geographical Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (July 1931), pp. 38, 39.

99 Dr. W. T. Herridge, “Murray Bay: A Distinguished Paradox”, *Canadian Magazine*, vol. 69, no. 8 (September 1925), p. 229.

loyal to Canadians nonetheless”.¹⁰⁰ A few commended the bilingualism of their compatriots; others took it for granted. Whatever their reactions, travel writers made it clear to the reader that tourists would be warmly welcomed in Quebec, in their own mother tongue and by a people who were compatriots regardless of the language difference.

As is to be expected, the reactions of French Quebec travel writers differed considerably from those of both Americans and English Canadians. Traveling about Quebec did not provide them with an opportunity to encounter the *habitants* or to explore a North American France, nor was it for them the cradle of the Canadian nation. Instead it was the chance to explore the *foyer* (hearth) of their “ancestral traditions”.¹⁰¹ Touring Quebec became therefore more than a trip: it took on the attributes of a pilgrimage in a territory rich in numerous vestiges of a collective past, shared by both the writers and their readers. This accounts for the fact that the francophone Quebec authors constantly used possessive articles and pronouns to qualify the names of sites and landscapes. They were writing about *chez-nous*.¹⁰² Quebec, in this perspective, was a territory that invited the visitor to delve into memories belonging to a French Quebec collective memory. As a columnist from *La Presse* explained in 1926, “[L]et us always remember that [chez-nous] there is not one inch of land that we tread that could not provide material for a history text.”¹⁰³ These travel writers were inviting the tourist to undertake a historical exploration rather than a tour. Thus, for instance, above all, the historic sites of the Richelieu valley “evok[ed] moving memories”,¹⁰⁴ or the drive around Quebec City revealed “the archaic characters of the villages, peaceful little houses [which] reflect more than elsewhere far away origins”,¹⁰⁵ to say nothing of the fact that these souvenirs were linked to a heroic past.¹⁰⁶ The Lower Saint Lawrence was described as “the witness of the first efforts of the pioneers and the first battles of the French race in America”.¹⁰⁷

Contrary to their anglophone counterparts, francophone Quebec travel writers took for granted that their readers would have a higher level of historical knowledge. They therefore produced much more detailed historical descriptions, peopled with individuals well beyond Jacques Cartier or Samuel de Champlain. They referred to events that presumed a solid background in Quebec history. Thus, in discussing the Richelieu Valley, a columnist

100 Macmillan, “I Prefer Quebec”, p. 42.

101 “La Gaspésie, pays qu’il faut voir”, *La Presse*, June 13, 1936.

102 See, among others, the article on Quebec City in *La Presse*, June 19, 1926, p. 21; “Ce que la province de Québec offre à ses habitants...”, *La Presse*, July 3, 1926, p. 21.

103 “Plages et Places d’été de la Région de Québec”, *La Presse*, July 3, 1926, p. 46.

104 “La banlieue de Montréal – les Cantons de l’Est : région parsemée de superbes lacs”, *La Presse*, June 8, 1940, p. 36.

105 “Ce que la province de Québec offre à ses habitants et à ceux qui la visitent”, *La Presse*, June 19, 1926, p. 21.

106 See “Le Québec prévoit une saison touristique record cette année”, *La Presse*, June 8, 1940, p. 28.

107 “Centre touristique des plus populaires”, *La Presse*, July 2, 1940, p. 39.

mentioned in passing that “this Valley is a precious repository of history. The principal episodes of the troubles of 1837–38 took place there.” The Russell resolutions were also referred to without any further explanation.¹⁰⁸ Other authors mentioned the names of local seigneurs and obviously assumed that their readers understood something of the seigneurial system when they alluded to the *moulin banal*.¹⁰⁹

These writers were clearly not looking for the *habitant* but for traces of their heroic ancestors who tended to be explorers, pioneers, or war heroes. One could argue that they were looking for the figures and reminders of the past promoted in the readers of their youth. In fact, they rarely made use of the expression *habitant* in their writings. They occasionally referred to *nos cultivateurs* [our farmers] when they discussed the contemporary rural population, but they limited themselves to generalizations without providing details about lifestyle. Nothing suggests that they considered this group worthy of any particular attention. Certainly there was nothing comparable to what one finds in texts addressed to anglophone tourists. This difference is not surprising: French Quebec writers — and their urban readers — were often only one or two generations removed from rural Quebec and were almost sure still to have relatives or friends living there. This familiarity, by force of circumstance, meant that the *habitant* lifestyle would not exert the same fascination.

However, many indications confirm that these writers considered the rural population, and the fishermen as well, to have better succeeded in maintaining links with the beautiful traditions of the past. While nowhere did they suggest that these people incarnated the authentic French Quebec, nonetheless, in their view, this segment of the population gave tourists the opportunity to reconnect with their people’s traditions. French Quebec travel writers thus recognized that regions still existed such as the Gaspésie that “in spite of the evolution of the machinery has still remained attached to its old traditions”.¹¹⁰ Clearly, anti-modernist reactions were not restricted to the essentializing gaze of the outsider. Indeed, many French Quebec travel writers appreciated the fact that their province not only evoked a glorious past but in some regions had maintained a lifestyle of bygone days. They did not hesitate to adopt a lyrical tone tinted with the nostalgia of their anglophone counterparts when the time came to describe life in the countryside. Thus, in their view, the Île d’Orléans “deserves to be visited because it has kept its attractive scenery preserved from the encroachments of civilization and for the reason that its inhabitants have managed to maintain a balance between

108 *La Presse*, June 8, 1940, p. 36.

109 “Ce que la province de Québec offre à ses habitants et à ceux qui la visitent”, *La Presse*, May 8, 1926, p. 67. See also “Ce que la province de Québec offre à ses habitants et à ceux qui la visitent”, *La Presse*, May 1, 1926, p. 3; “Ce que la province de Québec offre à ses habitants et à ceux qui la visitent”, *La Presse*, May 15, 1926, p. 61.

110 *La Presse*, June 22, 1940, p. 35.

the progress of modern amenities and the traditions of their family customs".¹¹¹ This may account for the photographs of *habitants* (or fishermen) involved in some kind of traditional activity that often accompanied texts even when the words did not focus much on the life and activities of traditional people *per se*. The text instead spent more space lauding the benefits of living in the country to disadvantaged urban readers: to "city dwellers tired of the city noises and work", Quebec "can offer absolute tranquility in a scenic decor [that is] the wildest and grandiose imaginable".¹¹² In other words, their objective was less to inform readers about life on the farm than to encourage them to leave the city. The *habitants* might not represent the "true French Canadian" as defined by anglophone travel writers, but they satisfied the tourist's widespread North American demand for therapeutic escape from modernity.

In line with this perspective, and just as their American colleagues, francophone writers did not spend much time describing the industrial development in the regions under review. They simply occasionally noted in passing the various industries that existed. Unlike their neighbours to the south, they were not ignoring what they did not expect to see, but simply focusing on what they and the city-dwelling Quebecer tourist wanted to see. Presumably they were also more informed about the province's industrial development and less likely as a result to relate this information. This may explain why French Quebec travel writers spent more space describing the beauties of the non-urban Quebec scenery than the social and cultural characteristics of the population, be it urban or rural.

The observations of these three sets of travel writers — American, English Canadian, and French Quebec — presented over a long period of time may give the impression that changing attitudes were not the order of the day. Sources certainly confirm that, until the end of World War II, the major sets of attitudes outlined above remained relatively unchanged. New expectations do not appear to have emerged. This is not surprising when one takes into account, for instance, the fact that novels and school readers that presented a more urban and industrialized Quebec did not surface in any significant numbers until the 1940s. This in turn may have contributed to the stable set of reactions to Quebec society and its people expressed by anglophone travel writers. However, by the early 1950s some changes did appear in anglophone travel writing, largely attributable to the new emerging post-war prosperity. Indeed, by the 1950s Americans and English Canadians spent more time commenting on good restaurants and shopping opportunities, and they did so more systematically in their accounts, particularly those about Montreal and Quebec City. Clearly, they were responding to the priorities of a wealthier post-war consumer society. According to anglophone travel writers, what

111 "Le Québec prévoit une saison touristique record cette année : Québec la province la plus attrayante", *La Presse*, June 8, 1940, p. 28.

112 "Les Laurentides et les rives du Saint-Laurent", *La Presse*, June 26, 1930, p. 30.

made Quebec food and shopping opportunities appealing was their so-called French sophistication.¹¹³ As we have seen, Montreal attracted anglophone tourists early for its Parisian flare and *joie de vivre*. What differed after the war was that travel writers began to be much more explicit about the “racy” pleasures to be found in Montreal. Thus in 1952 Wallace Ward of *Saturday Night* labelled the city “Canada’s largest and gaudiest playboy”, where the “night life ... is gay and practically uninhibited”.¹¹⁴ These less inhibited descriptions and this new focus on the trappings of a wealthier tourist clientele did not preclude the search for the traditional *habitant*. In fact, this search can be documented until the early 1960s. Gradually, however, by the end of the period, anglophone travel writers began to shy away from the blanket essentializing statements about the *habitant* or the French Canadian.

Government Publicity

We have argued that travel writers defined authenticity on the basis of what they expected to see when they arrived in Quebec. While the host society does not have control over what visitors want and like to see, it does aim to attract the tourist. Of particular interest to historians is how host societies have chosen to attract incoming visitors, and it is clear that different approaches have been taken depending on the period. Quebec government tourism advertising that appeared in American and English Canadian newspapers and magazines provides a good case study to analyse this phenomenon. It must be kept in mind that this advertising was also another source of information that served to feed travellers’ expectations. This government advertising therefore both contributed to shaping and responded to visitors’ expectations.

In the earlier period of the 1930s, the Quebec provincial government chose to emphasize the “Old France” attributes of the province in its general advertising campaigns, focusing on culture and the people. This connection to the past was highlighted in both the headlines and the finer print of the advertisements and in the accompanying pictures. Not only did this publicity constantly refer to Quebec as “old”, but it made direct links between the province and its French connections. For instance, it referred to Quebec and its regions as “this ancient corner of New France”,¹¹⁵ “Medieval France in America”,¹¹⁶ the age of the *Ancien Régime*.¹¹⁷ It also reminded prospective tourists of the

113 See, for instance, B. W. Riddell, “In Any Season Old Quebec Has Vacation Variety”, *Financial Post*, vol. 50, no. 12 (May 26, 1956); Ward, “The Quebec of the Visitors”, p. 26; Winston Brebner, “Quebec”, *Holiday*, vol. 17 (June 1955); Jane Carter, “Winter’s Magic in Canada”, *Travel*, vol. 90 (February 1948), p. 7.

114 Ward, “The Quebec of the Visitors”, p. 23.

115 “Lazy, Unhurried Days through the Quaint Picturesque Quebec Countryside”, *Saturday Night*, June 10, 1933.

116 “Visit the Old Province of Quebec, Land of Legend and Romance”, *Halifax Herald*, June 27, 1936, p. 7.

117 “Bienvenue à Montreal”, *Halifax Herald*, May 23, 1936, p. 10.

seventeenth-century Norman flavour of the place and its “old French customs”.¹¹⁸ Almost every advertisement alerted the reader to the fact that one could see handlooms, spinning wheels, handicrafts, caleches, oxen. Prospective tourists learned as well that the people they would meet in Quebec fitted nicely into this old-world decor. They were regularly reminded of simple, content, peace-loving, unspoiled French Canadians. One character trait underlined without exception was the hospitality of the French Canadian. Some mention was made that in Quebec one encountered an appealing contrast between the vestiges of the past and the manifestations of modernity — modernity being highlighted insofar as it reassured tourists that they would be able to enjoy this “past before their eyes” in modern comfort. Yet history and the past were definitely brought to the fore. There is no doubt that the attributes of Quebec emphasized in these advertisements catered to the tastes of American visitors as expressed in the travel literature of the time.

If we refer to what English Canadian travel writers liked about Quebec, it is clear that the Quebec government advertising contained information that would entice them as well. Indeed, even though English Canadian travel writers had a more polyvalent view of Quebec society, they were also seduced by its old-world qualities. They would also respond positively to statements confirming that in Quebec one encountered “four centuries of Canadian history”, the “beginning of a new continent, a new nation, a new Dominion”.¹¹⁹ This publicity was meant to entice both an American and an English Canadian clientele, as the same ads were distributed to both destinations. It appears that the focus of the Quebec government’s promotional efforts was directed to the province’s American neighbours while nodding slightly in the direction of the English Canadian market. In fact, until the 1960s, the Quebec government was not very active in promoting interprovincial tourism. Its efforts focused mainly on trying to attract visitors from the American northeast.¹²⁰

The advertisements of the 1940s stressed the same themes and would also have appealed to both American and English Canadian tourists. Quebec was still identified primarily as “Old”, a place where one could find spinning wheels and hand-made hooked rugs, peopled by friendly and hospitable French Canadians — all themes guaranteed to please American visitors, judging by travel accounts of that period. English Canadians’ interest for Quebec in terms of its historical connection to the birth of Canada was also taken into account in statements that the people of Quebec were “descendants of some of our earliest settlers”.¹²¹ Some of the ads invited readers to

118 “See the Old Province of Quebec, the Cradle of American History”, *Halifax Herald*, July 25, 1936, p. 6.

119 “Chateau de Ramezay—1705”, *Canadian Geographical Journal*, vol. 14, no. 4 (April 1937).

120 Prévost, *Trois siècles de tourisme*, p. 202.

121 “Discover a new Vacation – a French Canadian Vacation” [Gaspé], *Halifax Herald*, June 5, 1940, p. 8.

“kno[w] more of our corner of the Dominion”,¹²² suggesting that the Quebec government intended the advertisements to have a special appeal to English Canadians.

Some differences did appear, however. The government promoters were touting Quebec as a “new” experience. More emphasis was placed on the fact that in Quebec one would come across both old and new, traditional and modern amenities and ways of life: “old world French cuisine and new world air conditioning”,¹²³ “modern hostelrys and modern recreation [in] background of the Old world French Canada”,¹²⁴ “modern office buildings” and “ancient convents”.¹²⁵ The message was that in Quebec the “old world and [the] new [are] liv[ing] side by side”. More allusions to the French language and more references to the special French cuisine available in Quebec also pointed to the veneer of sophistication that Quebec’s image was gradually acquiring in these advertisements. This slightly different approach was linked to the Quebec government’s efforts to convince travellers that, even if France was inaccessible during wartime, they would find a surrogate France at their door in the province of Quebec, including good food, the French language, and Gallic sophistication. Indeed, in a 1940 advertisement, prospective tourists were reminded of the fate of “embattled Europe” and reminded that “here all is peace” where they could “dine with a choice of English or French cuisine”.¹²⁶

In line with this new government concern were references made on a few occasions to a French and English *bonne entente*. The prospective visitor was informed, “French Canadian and English Canadian live side by side in neighborly concord.”¹²⁷ In the ads of the 1930s no mention had been made of an English Canadian presence in the province. Again, the strains of war help to account for this type of reassuring message. English Canadians might be wondering how they would be greeted in times of French-English tensions over the country’s war effort. This reassuring remark would have served the same purpose for Americans. From all accounts, Quebec’s neighbours to the south were concerned about the type of welcome they would receive in Quebec before the United States eventually joined the Allied cause.¹²⁸ Unfounded rumours were circulating likely to discourage Americans from heading north. Indeed, a series of interviews published by *The*

122 “This Year – Plan a French Canadian Vacation” [Eastern Townships], *Halifax Herald*, July 7, 1940, p. 4.

123 “Contrast...atmosphere...gaiety...a French Canadian Vacation”, *Halifax Herald*, July 24, 1940, p. 12.

124 “Refreshing...Different...a French Canadian Vacation” [Province], *Halifax Herald*, July 17, 1940, p. 4.

125 “Contrast...atmosphere...gaiety...a French Canadian Vacation”, *Halifax Herald*, July 24, 1940, p. 12.

126 “Have you ever had a French Canadian Vacation?”, *Halifax Herald*, May 8, 1940, p. 8.

127 “Have you ever had a French Canadian Vacation?” [Laurentians], *Halifax Herald*, June 12, 1940, p. 11.

128 Americans were concerned about how they would be welcomed across Canada. See Alisa Apostle, “Canada, Vacations Unlimited: The Canadian Government Tourism Industry” (PhD thesis, History, Queen’s University, 2002), chap. 3.

Montreal Gazette with American tourists in Montreal in 1940 made clear that many of them had worried before leaving home about the way they would be treated once in Canada, in view of their country's neutral stance. Thus Fred Stater from Detroit explained that he was told before coming to Canada that "the Canadians were hostile to Americans because they had not yet entered the war".¹²⁹ The greater emphasis placed on Quebec's hospitality and friendliness in the 1940s government publicity was also an attempt to counter these wartime concerns.

The advertisements published in the 1950s offer some differences that mirror the emergence of a wealthier tourist clientele. Quebec was no longer referred to as "Old Quebec" but was called instead *la province de Québec*, emphasizing its French flavour. This is not to say that the old-world qualities of the province were no longer highlighted. One still read about the "historic centuries — old towns and villages";¹³⁰ yet, continuing on a trend identified in the 1940s, the old was definitely paired with the new. Quebec was a place "where the bustle of metropolitan Montreal contrasts with the fortifications of Quebec".¹³¹ History became one among many of the province's attractions and was not as frequently put to the forefront. In fact, during the 1950s, the government produced a series of specialized ads targeting specific categories of tourists including families,¹³² honeymooners,¹³³ shrine visitors,¹³⁴ and sports enthusiasts.¹³⁵ By choosing to attract these distinct clienteles through separate ads, the provincial government was acknowledging the greater disposable income and diversification of its tourist market. This, in turn, led it to promote a more diversified product.

What about government advertising in French Quebec newspapers, aimed at a French Quebec tourist clientele? Before the late 1950s, it would appear that the Quebec government did not consider it worthwhile to invest in publicity through advertising campaigns for the francophone home market, although plenty of private companies advertised summer resorts or cruises, and newspapers regularly featured various regions of Quebec in articles, editorials, and photographs. The government's silence before the late 1950s certainly made some sense. After all, the great majority of tourists in Quebec came from the United States; tourists were identified as foreigners. When governments in Canada eventually truly appreciated the benefits of encouraging their respective populations to travel "at home", new marketing strategies emerged. Thus a campaign entitled "Visitez la province de Québec" was launched in

129 "One American's Opinion: A Daily Interview with a Tourist from South of the Border", *The Montreal Gazette*, June 10, 1940, p. 18.

130 "Enjoy Your Honeymoon in Romantic Québec", *Toronto Star*, May 15, 1950, p. 7.

131 "Bienvenue à Québec", *Saturday Night*, June 1953.

132 "Plan Your Vacation in Romantic Quebec", *Toronto Star*, June 5, 1950, p. 40.

133 "Enjoy Your Honeymoon in Romantic Quebec", *Toronto Star*, May 15, 1950, p. 7.

134 "Visit Quebec Shrines", *New York Times*, May 20, 1956, p. 43.

135 "Plan Now for a Vacation that is Different", *New York Times*, June 10, 1956, p. 38.

1960,¹³⁶ aimed at encouraging Quebecers, both French and English, to travel inside Quebec. Yet one must wait for the 1970s for more diversified and aggressive marketing campaigns aimed at this particular clientele.

Conclusion

Was there a meeting of minds between travel writers and the Quebec government tourism advertising? There is no doubt that the Quebec government was mostly marketing what American travel writers wanted to see, while in some instances tipping its hat to the slightly different expectations of their English Canadian colleagues. On the other hand, the distinct perceptions of French Quebec travellers who viewed their province as a repository of ancestral traditions were not yet on the government's advertising radar screen. Among the anglophones interested in Quebec society and culture, both American and English Canadian, the fascination with old seventeenth-century Quebec and its traditional *habitants* remained a constant feature of travel writing. The authentic Quebec society continued to be defined in these terms, even though these two groups of "authenticators" produced distinct versions of the province, with Americans emphasizing the exotic, folklorish *habitant* way of life and English Canadians adding to this unique aspect of the province a proud recognition of its other multiple accomplishments — including its modern industrial progress. While these groups constructed their own version of Quebec's authenticity, before the Quiet Revolution the Quebec government chose to present an image of the province that essentially matched the tastes of American travellers. Not surprisingly, this also meant that the provincial government was very sensitive to the immediate concerns of its largest clientele, a fact particularly obvious in the 1940s. While the objective in the publicity campaign of that decade was not meant directly to transform tourists' long-held expectations of finding an "Old World" in North America, the wartime situation did inspire government promoters to modify slightly the image of the province towards a place where visitors would find sophistication with advertisements highlighting the good food and the French language it had to offer. By deviating somewhat from a traditional representation of the province, the government was in effect modestly redrawing the image it wanted to project of Quebec to the outside world. It is noteworthy that this attempt survived the war to become part of the way the province would represent itself in the following decade. This more sophisticated imaging of the province would endure, as it corresponded to the increasingly consumer-oriented priorities of the growing tourist boom of the 1950s. Quebec would no longer be first and foremost "Old", projecting instead an image combining a more timeless quaintness with a contemporary sophistication.

The expectations of American, English Canadian, and French Quebec travel writers, fed by the various sources they most likely encountered

136 This campaign was jointly organized by the Association des Hôteliers du Québec and the Quebec government.

before leaving home, were by and large reflected in their reactions to Quebec society and its French Canadian inhabitants. The overall reactions of these three groups were distinct in many ways, but never seriously questioned the wider set of cultural assumptions prevalent in the various sources of prior information available to travel writers.¹³⁷ The war and its ensuing influence on government promotional campaigns to lure American tourists, followed by the growing prosperity and increasing demand for consumer products, appear to have been the most significant factors leading to a slight re-imaging of the province and its people away from a folkloric presentation to a more urban and sophisticated one. Quebec might have been changing, but, at least until the 1960s and the Quiet Revolution, the image of Quebec in the travel literature and in government advertising was not dramatically transformed.

137 Joan D. Laxson, who studied the attitudes of anglophone tourists towards Native Americans, asked whether tourism was a broadening experience likely to change “preconceived stereotypic images”. She concluded that “the superficial interactions of tourists as museum visitors and observers ... reinforce their stereotypical views of the world or of the host culture as the ‘correct one’.” Joan D. Laxson, “How ‘We’ See ‘Them’: Tourism and Native Americans”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 18 (1991), pp. 366 , 373.