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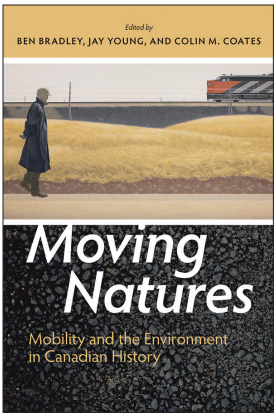

MOVING NATURES: Mobility and the Environment in Canadian History Edited by Ben Bradley, Jay Young, and Colin M. Coates

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Automobile Tourism in Quebec and Ontario: Development, Promotion, and Representations, 1920–1945

Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert

The interwar years saw an unprecedented number of tourists take to the road in Quebec and Ontario. This chapter explores some of the developments that resulted from this new form of recreational mobility, which had become prevalent by 1945. Automobile tourism fostered a new understanding of the landscape through representations of these provinces' tourism regions in promotional materials as well as the first-hand knowledge that tourists were able to acquire. This understanding was particularly apparent in the design and promotion of roads and in the development of automobile touring itineraries, as well as in the ways that individual tourists embraced this form of mobility.

This study stands at the intersection of various historiographies, in particular those of transportation, mobility, and the environment. Long treated as a narrative of technological advancement, the history of transportation has in recent years responded to criticisms put

forward by cultural theorists by shifting towards the study of mobility. With growing interest in the practices of stakeholders and in the controversies and conflicts around the use of public space, the history of mobility has moved away from transportation history's focus on corporations and regulations.[1] Research by Christophe Studeny on the evolution of our relationship to speed and by Wolfgang Schivelbusch on the transformation of visual and temporal perceptions resulting from train travel reflects a "sensuous" approach to the relationship between culture and technology.[2] Automobile tourism forms part of this trend, since it involves uses of mobility—recreational mobility—that go far beyond a simple history of the automobile.

Environmental history encourages a more concentrated focus on the material dimensions of mobility. Historians in this subfield have demonstrated not only how objects and technologies transform natural environments but also how they mediate the relationship between the human and the nonhuman.[3] Similarly, the automobile and mobility appear to mediate our relationship to nature and landscape. For instance, in his study of national parks in Washington State, David Louter shows how park development was shaped by the concept of wilderness observable from an automobile in movement, which he dubs "windshield wilderness."[4] An analogous process underlay efforts to develop roads and automobile touring circuits in Quebec and Ontario.

But first of all, what distinguishes automobile tourism from other forms of recreational mobility that preceded it? According to Marc Desportes, "automobile tourists . . . leave behind the overexposed places served by railroads . . . and seek to conquer new and as yet infrequently visited sites."[5] The pleasure of driving combines with the desire to explore new horizons as well as the sensation of having infinite space before oneself. This type of tourism differs from destination- and resort-based tourism in the sense that travelling from point A to point B becomes less important than discovering what lies between these two points. Stops at X and Y are possible without advance planning.

Between 1920 and 1945, the new needs of automobile travel reshaped tourist practices and the tourist industry in Quebec and Ontario. Various groups helped transform and adapt landscapes to automobile tourism, including automobile clubs, regional tourism associations,

and municipal and provincial governments. The year 1945 was a turning point in this regard, after which automobile use soared and became widely accessible. From 1920 to 1945, automotive culture came to epitomize a new, modern tourism in Quebec and Ontario.

The sources used for this chapter include government and nongovernment publications such as tourist guides, road maps, and newsletters. Periodicals specifically targeting motorists, elected officials, and local businesses were also examined.[6] I also analyzed approximately twenty automobile travelogues on Quebec and Ontario, written by American and Canadian men and women. Most of these authors, such as Kathrine Sanger Brinley, were journalists or professional travel writers who published a number of books or articles on their travels.[7] Others, such as the American writer Dorothy Childs Hogner, published only one travelogue over the course of their careers.[8]

The choice of Quebec and Ontario reflects the fact that, during the first half of the twentieth century, these provinces were by far the most urbanized and had adopted the automobile most quickly. Most tourist traffic from the United States entered Canada through these provinces. However, Ontario and Quebec developed contrasting promotional approaches towards the motoring public, with each province emphasizing rather different environments. This chapter examines how these jurisdictions developed tourism through promoting roads to motorists, how road maps and guides were used to depict automobile tourism regions, and how specific circuits became a focus of recreational mobility and what elements characterized these routes. Northern Ontario and the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Quebec serve as the primary examples, since these regions underwent extensive development during the period under study. In both cases, road construction in the late 1920s aimed to link resource regions and isolated communities to the rest of their respective provinces; provincial authorities and local boosters quickly identified and promoted the tourism potential of these destinations. These promotions largely targeted an English-speaking—and mostly American—motoring public. While Ontario's advertising did not reach out to French-Canadian tourists, Quebec designed a targeted approach and differentiated vision of its landscape to attract its own citizens onto its roads.

"Good and Beautiful Roads" for Recreational Driving

At the dawn of the twentieth century, as the first automobiles appeared in Canada, roads were the poor relation of the nation's transportation system. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the federal and provincial governments had invested in rail and maritime transportation and left responsibility for roads in the hands of municipalities. In fact, most municipalities lacked the human and financial resources required to develop the road system. Various interest groups—cyclists, motorists, rail companies, farmers—banded together to lobby governments for better roads. The Ontario Good Roads Association (founded in 1894) and the Association des bons chemins de la Province de Québec (1895) demonstrated the need for improvement of the road system and attempted to rally the public to their cause.[9]

In response, the provinces began providing municipalities with financial assistance. Ontario employed this strategy first: starting in 1901, the province advanced one million dollars to help its counties improve their roads.[10] Quebec adopted its Good Road Policy in 1911 and passed legislation the following year making ten million dollars available to municipalities for road work. As the cost of building and maintaining roads increased, it became clear that the provinces had to play a more active role. In 1914, the Government of Quebec created its Roads Department, and in 1916, Ontario established its Department of Public Highways. These departments undertook the development of extensive provincial road networks.

Between 1912 and 1918, over 564 kilometres of provincial roads were built in Quebec, and by the end of 1934, $150 million had been spent on improving and expanding the road network.[11] Starting in 1935, Ontario assumed all road-related costs.[12] In 1930, Quebec, with 53,100 kilometres of roads, trailed Ontario with its 106,400 kilometres. Ontario's advance over the other provinces was remarkable. Over half of Ontario's roads were improved—that is, surfaced with gravel, asphalt, or concrete—versus a third of Quebec's.[13] As of 1946, Ontario continued to hold a significant lead, containing 44 percent of Canada's paved roads. However, its lead over Quebec was narrowing; 57 percent of Quebec's roads were paved versus 78 percent in Ontario.[14]

Governments invoked various rationales to justify these expenditures, such as the need to expand commerce, strengthen rural economies, and promote tourism. The flow of American tourists, the argument went, funded the cost of good roads, and the resulting revenues accrued to provinces, businesses, and communities. Some 112,000 American motorists visited Quebec in 1923, and over 625,000 did so in 1929. Ontario was the Canadian province visited most by American tourists. During the 1929 season, tourists spent $131 million in the province, which represented 61 percent of Canada's total tourism revenues. That same year, American tourists spent $51 million in Quebec, the second most visited province.[15]

Municipalities, automobile clubs, and senior levels of government agreed that "good roads have led to the birth of our tourism industry . . . and maintaining good roads will allow us to retain these new customers."[16] Promoting roads to motorists played a central role in the objectives of the Ontario highways department and Quebec's Road Department. The comfort of a modern road system was just as important as the quality of a hotel. Newsletters for motorists as well as tourism guides and brochures directly addressed the quality of the roads. They detailed the improvements made (e.g., widening, surfacing, straightening of curves) and unabashedly promoted their road networks as the basis of their province's reputation. They claimed that the roads earned effusive praise from tourists, although this was not always the case in reality.[17]

Conversely, an abundance of honesty risked frightening away tourists. Quebec realized this after publishing the first edition of its Gaspé Peninsula guidebook in 1930. The original text, which discussed the various difficulties that motorists encountered on the road, was revised for the next edition. While the 1930 version mentioned that it was sometimes impossible to see motorists approaching from the other direction, and stressed the importance of honking one's horn when approaching tight curves, the 1933 version reassured the reader that "the road poses no danger, provided that one takes elementary precautions."[18]

For the motorists of that period, the quality of roads was important if not crucial in choosing a destination. In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, the magazines *Canadian Motorist* (published by the Ontario

Motor League) and *Service* (by the Quebec Automobile Club) produced numerous travelogues, some of which were sponsored by government roads departments. These reports aimed to direct the flow of tourists to new routes, highlight tourist attractions, and praise the quality and comfort of the roads. In 1938, the Quebec Roads Department even published a brochure entitled *Les routes modernes dans la province de Québec* that made generous use of photographs to showcase the province's broad, paved roads. The goal was to demonstrate that despite Quebec's reputation for preserving its ancestral traditions, it had modernized its road system.[19]

The cultural and material experience of overland mobility improved considerably during the interwar years.[20] By the early 1940s few adventurers wrote of perils on the road, as Canadian author Percy Gomery had earlier. In his account of crossing Northern Ontario in the early 1920s—in a chapter appropriately titled "Motoring without Roads"—Gomery revealed the difficulties encountered by the first motoring tourists. His trip faced a series of literal obstacles: downed trees on the road, wobbly bridges that prompted motorists to perform repairs themselves, and last but not least, muddy roads capable of entrapping cars.[21] Travelogues from the early 1940s mentioned such obstacles to tourists' mobility less frequently, signalling that roads were in fact being improved. More positive testimonials about the road system, such as Ontarian Margaret Pennell's, also appeared. Pennell had only praise for the quality, aesthetics, and cleanliness of Quebec's roads.[22]

The beautification of roads was intimately related to tourism. In Quebec as well as Ontario, extensive projects beautified the roadsides, the primary landscape focus for these new travellers. For practical as well as aesthetic reasons, government authorities planted thousands of trees along roadsides beginning in 1920, a long-lasting fight against billboards began, and tourism promoters encouraged the public to improve the general appearance of the countryside, homes, and farms in the travellers' sight lines. Governments and municipalities realized the futility of inviting travellers to discover the countless natural attractions of Quebec and Ontario if dirty and neglected roadsides negated their charm. Guides detailed the work of embellishing roadside landscapes and enhancing the tourist experience:

> When entering the Province of Québec, the tourist is impressed by the neat and attractive appearance of the highways. . . . The pavement and road are constantly kept in good shape and in a perfect state of cleanliness. Whitewashed posts and painted signs are ornamental. Tree planting along the highways has been conducted actively for some years past.[23]

Concerns about speed, safety, and the beauty of landscapes influenced the development of roadsides, although reconciliation of these was sometimes difficult. For example, in order to widen or straighten a road, trees often had to be removed. Given the premium placed on order, trees were not planted randomly, but rather on both sides of a road based on an alignment and precise distance largely inspired by French practices dating back to the eighteenth century. Such tree alignments, as shown in many photographs of the period, represented the goal for the early promoters of road beautification across much of North America.[24] Antimodern sentiments tinged this desire to create beauty through order, as developers strove to recreate landscapes predating the automobile in order to enhance the tourist experience and, above all, give visitors a thorough change of scene.

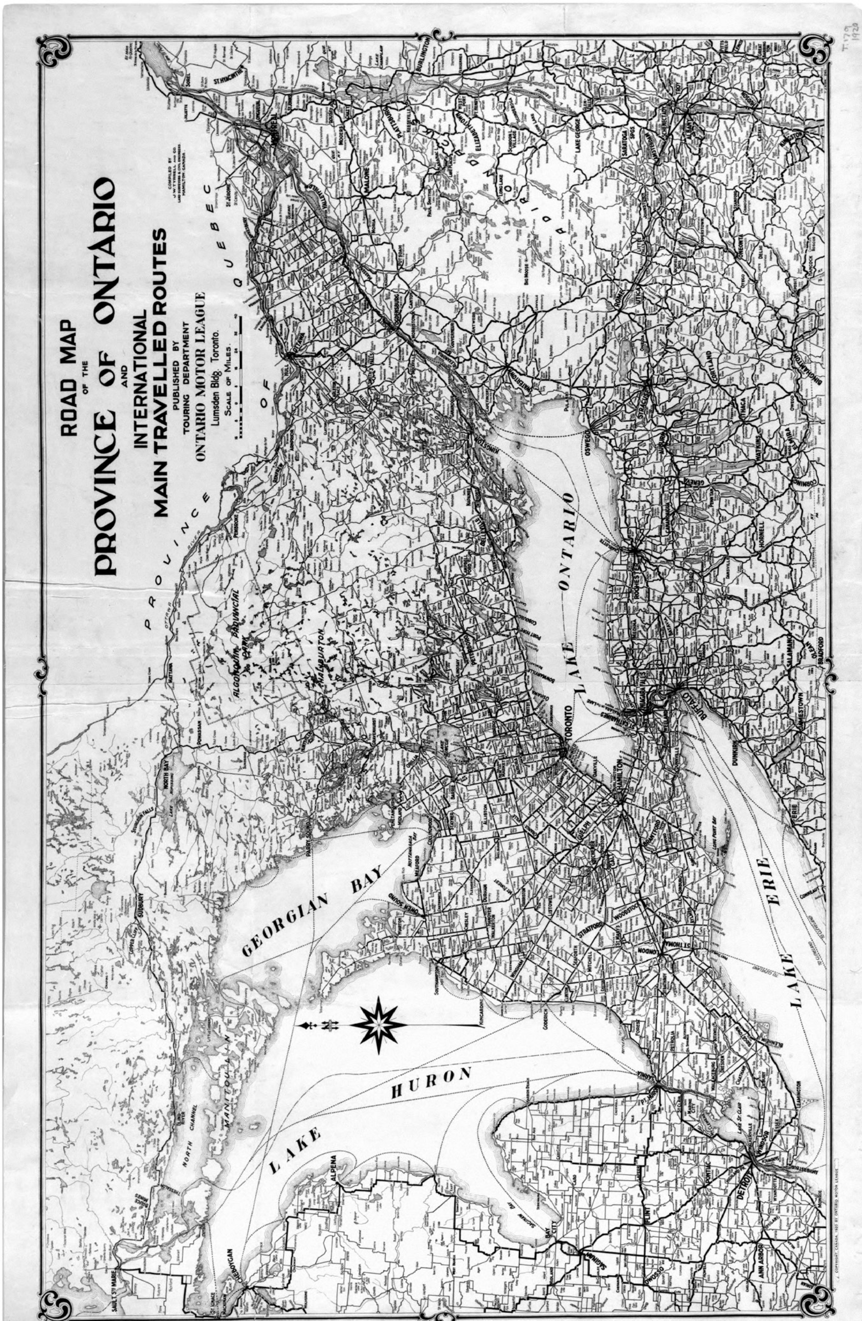
Essentially, government promotional efforts projected the image of regions that were easily accessible by road and conducive to mobility. Whatever the type of landscape (e.g., forests, mountains) that motorists wished to visit, they were assured that a road existed that would allow them to do so. Starting in 1926, the covers of Quebec guides almost always showed motorists driving along the roads of Charlevoix or the Gaspé Peninsula (fig. 12.1). The Ontario guides, in contrast, emphasized images of automobiles exploring extreme or distant regions in a spirit of adventurism. In both cases, tourism advertising highlighted automobiles in motion. Although the assurance of high-quality and attractive roads underpinned these promotional efforts, other goals also came into play. Ontario and Quebec quickly realized that they had to distinguish themselves from other North American tourist destinations, and offering novel routes to motorists was the way to do so.

Figure 12.1. Cover of a Quebec guidebook featuring a landscape scene from Charlevoix. The guide, *Welcome to the Province of Québec*, was published between 1926 and 1933. Author's collection.

Figure 12.2. (right) While this 1920 road map provided great detail about roads in Ontario and neighbouring American states, it depicted Quebec as an automotive terra incognita. T.J. Kirk, *Road Map of the Province of Ontario and International Main Travelled Routes* (1920).

Road Maps and Guides: Representations of Tourism Regions and Automobility

Starting in the 1920s, provincial governments, assisted by automobile clubs, designed tourist itineraries especially for motorists. Maps and guidebooks created new tourism regions based on the automobile. Ontario and Quebec published their first road maps in 1923 and 1926, respectively, a few years after automobile clubs had begun doing so. These maps initially targeted American tourists. They showed the various roads leading to the borders of Ontario and Quebec as well as roads within the provinces. Curiously, a number of these maps failed to show the road network of neighbouring provinces (for example, see figure


ROAD MAP
OF THE
PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
AND
INTERNATIONAL
MAIN TRAVELLED ROUTES
PUBLISHED BY
TOURING DEPARTMENT
ONTARIO MOTOR LEAGUE
Lumsden Bldg. Toronto.
SCALE OF MILES.
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC
LAKE ONTARIO
LAKE ERIE
LAKE HURON
GEORGIAN BAY
NORTH CHANNEL
ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK
TORONTO
KINGSTON
BUFFALO
DETROIT

12.2). Perhaps this reflected a certain level of competition between Ontario and Quebec, expressed through cartography, in their efforts to capture tourist traffic.

The earliest examples of these maps were so succinct as to omit the provinces' tourist attractions. Subsequent editions corrected this oversight. In some cases, maps predated access to the regions or even supplied the impetus to seek such access. Indeed, governments sometimes published maps before completing the new road infrastructure shown on them. By linking local roads, provincial authorities sought to create the impression that reliable, drivable roads already existed. Maps not only promoted the use of these roads but also made the construction of other roads necessary.[25] For instance, even though no road yet crossed northwestern Ontario directly, the Department of Northern Development (DND) published a roadmap of this region in 1935–1936 indicating its points of interest and panoramic viewpoints.[26] Maps anticipating future roads were another means of building tourism regions through mobility.

Automobile clubs were the first organizations to publish road guides for American and Canadian tourists, the first being the *Official Automobile Road Guide of Canada* (1906), which included maps and over a dozen automobile excursions devised by Ontario Motor League members.[27] The proposed itineraries concentrated in the areas immediately surrounding major cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec City and involved one-day round trips of approximately eighty kilometres. With these itineraries came detailed descriptions of the various legs of the trips as well as the corresponding mileages. A number of proponents of tourism criticized these guides, which were clearly designed to emphasize the infrastructure at the motorists' disposal, for being bland and almost entirely silent on the tourist attractions in these areas.

> When looking at most of our tourist guides . . . we see that the names of our villages are reference points and not points of interest. Is there nothing else to say about our parishes than how to negotiate the local streets in order to reach the national highway?[28]

These complaints led to changes, and from the early 1930s, guidebooks began inserting notes into road descriptions to highlight the natural and cultural attractions of the places accessible by automobile. The Ontario and Quebec governments began publishing brochures containing tourism profiles of various regions rather than mere road descriptions. The provinces' traditional destinations—including Muskoka, Georgian Bay, the Thousand Islands, Quebec City, Charlevoix, and the Laurentians—were the main focus of promotion. While Ontario stressed its recreational potential by proclaiming itself the capital of lake-based outdoor recreation in Canada, and even North America, Quebec emphasized its picturesque character and its retention of French traditions.[29]

The quest for, and promotion of, improved overland mobility found another expression through the creation of tours, an innovation introduced during this period. In Quebec, the tours divided up the countryside and incorporated high-profile attractions, the best-known of which included French-Canadian peasant life on the Île d'Orléans (1927), Percé Rock in the Gaspé Peninsula (1929), and the home of Louis Hémon (author of the bestselling novel *Maria Chapdelaine*) in the Lac Saint-Jean region (1932).[30] In Ontario, the construction of roads linking the north to the rest of the province gave this region a higher profile and the opportunity to reach a new tourist clientele. Official roadmaps inviting motorists to visit Northern Ontario first appeared in 1926, and the DND also published separate brochures for the northwestern region.[31] Finally, although Northern Ontario continued to be presented as a mecca for sportsmen, government promotion started placing greater emphasis on touring families, especially beginning in the mid-1930s. It pointed out that the main summer playgrounds for families—the Rideau Lakes, Kawartha Lakes, Muskoka, and Lake Simcoe—were only a few kilometres by car from forests and rivers ideal for hunting.[32] Although this reference to families may appear to suggest that the clientele for automobile tourism was broadening, the trend truly became widespread only after 1945.

The Roads of Gaspé and Northern Ontario: Objects of Recreational Mobility

The Gaspé Peninsula tour well illustrates the various tours developed by the Quebec and Ontario governments to promote the discovery of tourism regions through mobility. In the summer of 1929, the Government of Quebec officially opened Perron Boulevard (named after the minister of highways of the time), which allowed a tour circling the Gaspé Peninsula from Sainte-Flavie to Matapédia. Thousands of tourists started exploring this route in 1927 and 1928, even before construction had been completed. Through the end of World War II, this tour attracted between twenty and fifty thousand summer visitors annually.[33]

The Gaspé was the first region that Quebec systematically promoted. The provincial government piloted a series of promotional tools for the region that later served as models for other regions. It distributed half a million postcards in 1928 and published a colour brochure entitled *Romantic Québec: Gaspé Peninsula* in 1929. In 1930, it published *The Gaspé Peninsula*, a lengthy tourist guide targeting motorists, with a print run of fifty thousand copies in French and one hundred thousand copies in English. In 1933 alone, two thousand articles appeared in American newspapers, including Franco-American ones, and the following year saw the peninsula widely publicized during the events marking the four hundredth anniversary of Jacques Cartier's arrival in Gaspé. In 1935, the prestigious magazine *National Geographic* devoted an article to the Gaspé Peninsula.[34]

In Ontario, regional associations and the government developed and promoted numerous tourist routes, such as the Bluewater Highway along Lake Huron. In the late 1920s, a new road into Northern Ontario attracted many tourists. Built and administered by the DND, the Ferguson Highway officially opened with great fanfare in the summer of 1927. This road, linking North Bay to Cochrane, honoured current premier G.H. Ferguson, one of the most important promoters of northern development. Various stakeholders, including automobile clubs, had lobbied for this road—a major step forward for communities formerly served only by train. By the early 1930s, the Ferguson Highway

had been extended to Hearst.[35] During World War II, when the Hearst-to-Geraldton section was completed, this road became, for all intents and purposes, the first trans-Canada highway, crossing Ontario from Quebec to the Manitoba border. The more southerly road, along Lake Superior via Wawa, was only completed in 1960.[36]

In 1932, Ontario guides presented the Ferguson Highway as the road leading to the so-called Northern Country, with postcards providing additional publicity. At North Bay, a viewpoint allowed motorists to contemplate "One of Ontario's finest Panoramic Views of Land and Lake-Scape."[37] In a profile published in the *Canadian Motorist* in 1929, engineer Roscoe D. Miller described this road as a "motorial scenic way." In addition to crossing the Temagami Forest Reserve, it also passed numerous lakes, which enhanced its tourism potential.[38] Sections of the route circling Lake Superior—the future Highway 17—were promoted in a similar manner, as was the road between Nipigon and Schreiber, which most tourist guides of the 1930s promoted as a panoramic route.[39] The Lake Superior International Highway project, developed in collaboration with the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, took shape around the same time. This initiative clearly illustrated the government's priority of making Northern Ontario more accessible to automobile traffic coming from the United States. With a population of forty million living within a day's drive of its magnificent forests, mountains, and lakes, the Lake Superior region was the stuff of dreams for Ontario tourism promoters.[40]

The Perron Boulevard, the Ferguson Highway, and the road circling Lake Superior were all promoted as engineering marvels. In some cases, the geography required bypassing or overcoming topographical obstacles such as rocky highlands, cliffs, and unstable soils, and this made for roads dotted with natural features of interest to motorists. On the Gaspé Peninsula, the challenge was to link via ground transportation villages that had previously been accessible only by sea. The resulting road, although torturous and varying greatly in elevation, was an immediate success with tourists; the Perron Boulevard gave travellers an almost uninterrupted view of the ocean and of maritime landscapes. A spectacular image of a road snaking between the mountains and sea to Cap Gros-Morne was undoubtedly one of the most popular postcards

Figure 12.3. Cap Gros-Morne postcard from the 1940s. Author's collection.

of the time (fig. 12.3). As for Northern Ontario's roads, they reached some impressive elevations; for instance, the section of the Ferguson Highway between Swastika and Cochrane, "creditable to engineering science, in its gradient and its graded width," exceeds an elevation of three hundred meters above sea level.[41] The climb to Cavers Hill on the section between Schreiber and Nipigon, photos of which often appeared in tourist guides and Department of Highways reports, also posed a number of challenges to engineers of the time.

Tourism promoters emphasized the visual experience these roads offered. They publicized roadside landscapes, but they also focused on the views from automobiles in motion instead of those requiring that tourists stop to take a look. To preserve the beauty of the landscapes that the Lake Superior region could offer travellers, automobile clubs stressed the importance of cooperation between engineers and landscape architects. During the planning phase, road infrastructure had to not only be integrated into the landscape but also accentuate its visual composition: the route and design of a road were considered crucial for

the success of tourism, in that they would serve to showcase roadside landscapes.[42] According to engineer Eugène Pelletier, a road's design was not only a matter of utility or of mathematics but also of aesthetics. With economic and aesthetic considerations coordinated, the resulting roads were rendered pleasant for tourists and safe for the general public, without monotonous scenery or tiring tangents.[43] Tourism promotion of the Gaspé Peninsula, with its emphasis on the variety of natural settings to be seen from the coastal road, showed how these factors could merge.

> No other part of Canada, and possibly no other country in the world, offers the same variety of scenery, and splendid, though at times awe-inspiring, landscapes. Mountain, forest and sea can all be seen in the same vista. . . . The entire coast line, all along the road which skirts both the river and the bay, forming a magnificent belt-line round the peninsula, is most colorful in its rugged strength and beauty.[44]

In some key respects, promotion of the Gaspé Peninsula tour and of Northern Ontario's various roads differed. Northern Ontario was depicted as a romantic and distant place that was nevertheless accessible by automobile. Advertising capitalized on a vision of wilderness that echoed the works of Tom Thomson and the other members of the Group of Seven. The north was not presented as a place inhabited for, or related to, productive work, but rather as "a place of recreation—of scenic value and spiritual renewal."[45] The local population—both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—as well as the mining and forest industries (despite these industries' key role in the regional economy) were also absent from tourist guides.

That said, the environment presented in the advertisements for these roads did not entirely ignore the human presence.[46] In fact, tourists were omnipresent: they were depicted in natural spaces partaking in various recreational activities—hunting, swimming, fishing, canoeing, or simply exploring in their cars (fig. 12.4). Such representations encouraged tourists to appropriate these "empty" landscapes through

Figure 12.4. Cover of the guide *Beautiful Ontario, Canada's Premier Province: The Lakeland Playground of America* (1932). Its resemblance to *The Jack Pine* (1916–1917), one of Tom Thomson's most celebrated works, is obvious. Author's collection.

leisure. Solitude remained a key value upon which the advertising insisted. In some images, the space occupied by tourists was miniscule in relation to the natural decor surrounding them, which highlighted the grandeur of this natural environment and gave the impression that a tourist could be alone. Many guides included photos of an automobile driving along a deserted road across a rugged landscape, with similar evocations: solitude, not to mention tourists' sense of adventure and attraction to the unknown. All of these images promoted tourist experiences in which the environment was inextricably related to mobility.

In contrast to their depictions of Northern Ontario, which emphasized the beauty of wilderness, tourist guides accentuated the rustic character of the Gaspé. They showcased the simplicity of local people's traditional way of life, for instance, with occasional mentions of their

Figure 12.5: Saint-Paul-des-Capucins, near Cap-Chat on the Gaspé Peninsula. Drawing by Daniel Putnam Brinley, from Gordon Brinley, *Away to the Gaspé* (1935).

Catholic faith. However, tourism advertising varied its focus depending on the target audience. The English-language version of a 1930 guide compared the physical and human aspects of the Gaspé to those of Ireland through an implicit reference to Celtic culture: "There is in the Peninsula the same scenic beauty, enshrined in the same rough setting that Ireland offers to the gaze of poet and artist."[47] Percé Rock—a "strange example of nature's handiwork which marks the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, where mountains touch the sea"—symbolized the power of nature.[48] The peninsula's rustic character was evidence of the minimal human alteration that it had supposedly undergone.

In English as in French, promotional documents emphasized the antimodernity that characterized the region and, more particularly, the lifestyle of its people.[49] Guides claimed that the residents of the Gaspé

Peninsula continued to live as their European ancestors had done, and that they had preserved a simpler way of life, closer to nature and little influenced by modern technology:

> Happy and contented in their simple faith, free of mind and rustic in their desires and wishes, they tend to their daily tasks, love their land, venerate their pastors, and live the lives their forefathers, the hardy sailors and fishers from St. Malo and Dieppe and the Channel Islands, and the exiled farmers of Acadia, lived in centuries gone by.[50]

This antimodernity of the people of the Gaspé Peninsula ostensibly provided Francophone tourists a way of reconnecting with their own roots. They were invited to discover the soul of the people of the Gaspé and to understand these people's attachment to landscapes that had brought them more hardship than joy. Acting as amateur ethnologists, motorists could engage in dialogue with the local residents and appreciate all the diversity of their language and material culture.

> You must take the time to get out of your car and climb a steep path, grasping nearby bushes for support, in order to visit a small group of determined fishers who love their solitary existence and bravely accept their poverty, without shrinking from the dangers of their rustic calling or the uncertainty of tomorrow. You must linger in the countryside, chat with a Gaspé peasant, and listen to him pronounce the old expressions of the region before they disappear entirely.[51]

The many automobile travelogues published in the 1930s reflected this fascination with the antimodernity of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Quebec countryside in general.[52] American, Ontarian, and even French-Canadian tourists searched constantly for signs of this historic way of

life that contrasted so sharply with their urban existence. Examples included horse- or dog-drawn carts, women weaving clothing or rugs, and even fishers making their own nets. The Gaspé tour also featured various vernacular elements that were landscape markers of French-Canadian civilization and its Catholic culture. Most covers of tourist guides from the 1930s showed churches, Quebec-style houses, roadside crosses, outdoor bread ovens, and windmills.[53] Americans Dorothy and Nils Hogner, as well as Kathrine Sanger Brinley and her husband, Daniel Putnam Brinley, enjoyed stopping on the side of the road to capture—with their pencils and brushes—this rich cultural, architectural, and religious heritage (fig. 12.5). In fact, from its inception, the Gaspé Peninsula tour attracted numerous artists in search of inspiration, including the American painter Georgia O'Keeffe, who travelled the road in 1932.[54]

Conclusion

In the early 1920s, automobile travel as both a new form of recreational mobility and a new way of interacting with the environment pressed the public to rethink Quebec and Ontario landscapes. Widespread and intensive tourism development was one of the key results of this new way of looking at landscape. Governments' construction of high-quality, attractive roads and promotion of touring and specific itineraries played a large role in developing popular automobile tourism regions. These projects reflected primarily a drive by provincial governments to engage with this new and expanding form of mobility: automobile-borne tourists. Rather than emphasizing encounters with places that tourists would experience by getting out of their cars, tourism promotion stressed experiences accessible to automobiles in constant motion. With its focus on the needs and aspirations of motorists, this new kind of tourism promotion would shape popular visions of parts of Quebec and Ontario for years to come.

Although construction and improvement of provincial road networks was initially aimed at linking communities and encouraging rural-urban commerce, the roads' recreational appeal quickly emerged. Motorists demonstrated enthusiasm for these road networks. From the

early 1920s, Ontario and Quebec attracted hundreds of thousands of automobile tourists from other Canadian provinces and the United States. To encourage this traffic, the provincial governments publicized the quality and beauty of their roads through brochures, maps, and advertisements. They promoted regions that were easily accessible, while also giving the impression of access to new areas that opened up as they built more roads. As a result, certain regions of the two provinces came to be seen as vast playgrounds for motorists.

All the promotional tools developed by government departments targeted mobile tourists. This was the case with the first roadmaps, which set the boundaries of the automobile tourism regions and even predicted future developments. Automobile clubs and provincial governments also set about creating touring itineraries. During the 1910s, the idea of driving within the Toronto and Montreal regions sufficed, but a need for added value for tourists quickly became apparent. Tourism brochures then started highlighting the attractions of the various regions and guiding tourists towards certain routes. In Quebec, these publications were thematic and focused on the cultural heritage of various regions. In Ontario, tours promoted both the discovery of river and forest environments and the outdoor recreation opportunities they afforded. Many tours showcased regions that had been remote and largely inaccessible before the construction of roads, especially in Northern Ontario and the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Quebec.

The tourism-related roads shared some points in common. They were advertised as triumphs of human technical know-how over nature. They offered travellers a unique visual experience and showcased the natural features that were to be encountered. The sparsely populated regions crossed by these roads were presented as either wilderness or rustic antimodern countryside. Ontario guidebooks encouraged tourists to experience roads in a solitary way; they invited visitors to appropriate these wild and depopulated regions through leisure. In contrast, Quebec guidebooks, in portrayals of motorists passing through villages and observing people going about their daily chores, emphasized folkloric activities. The objective was the same in both cases: namely, to encourage motorists to explore and appropriate certain regions.

In the period from 1920 to 1945, governments launched tourism development initiatives for the first time. These measures, supported by automobile clubs, municipal governments, and tourism associations, were intended and designed to attract a mobile, motorized clientele who had the time and money to travel long distances for pleasure. Thus, road development and tourism promotion encouraged automobile use not only as a means of travelling within Ontario and Quebec but also as a means of experiencing these provinces. The provinces' analyses were accurate. By World War II, automobiles had accelerated swiftly past both trains and steamships to become the primary means by which tourists visited Canada.

Notes

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1 Mathieu Flonneau and Vincent Guigueno, "Introduction : De l'histoire des transports à l'histoire de la mobilité ? Mise en perspective d'un champ," in *De l'histoire des transports à l'histoire de la mobilité?* ed. Mathieu Flonneau and Vincent Guigueno (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 19.

2 Christophe Studeny, *L'invention de la vitesse: France, XVIIIe–XXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995); Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

3 Martin Reuss and Stephen H. Cutcliffe, eds., *The Illusory Boundary: Environment and Technology in History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

4 David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2006).

5 Marc Desportes, *Paysages en mouvement: transports et perception de l'espace, XVIIIe–XXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 234 (my translation).

6 For instance, the *Canadian Motorist* (Ontario Motor League); *L'automobile au Canada* (Quebec Provincial Motor League); *Auto-sport* (Automobile Owners Association); the *Revue mensuelle du Québec Automobile Club*,

later renamed *Service*; *La Revue municipale du Canada* (Union des Municipalités du Québec); and the *Municipal Review of Canada* (Union of Canadian Municipalities).

7 Brinley published four automobile travelogues, commissioned by a publisher, related to Canada in the space of four years.

8 However, Hogner wrote more than thirty publications on topics such as nature, ecology, and horticulture.

9 Sharon Bagnato and John Shragge, eds., *From Footpaths to Freeways: The Story of Ontario's Roads* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Historical Committee, 1984), 43–44.

10 Edwin C. Guillet, *The Story of Canadian Roads* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 155–66.

11 During these years, the expenses of the road system accounted for between 21 and 26 percent of the total budget of the Quebec government. James Ian Gow, *Histoire de l'administration publique québécoise, 1867–1970* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1986), 109–10.

12 Guillet, *Story of Canadian Roads*, 166.

13 Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1931* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1931), 685, Statistics Canada website, accessed 15 March 2015, http://www66.statcan.gc.ca/eng/acyb_c1931-eng.aspx.

14 Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1947* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1947), 680, Statistics Canada website, accessed 28 March 2015, http://www66.statcan.gc.ca/eng/acyb_c1947-eng.aspx.

15 "Le Tourisme au Canada en 1930," *L'actualité* économique 7, nos. 5–6 (1931): 217.

16 Peto, "À propos de Voirie," *La Revue Municipale* 4, no. 8 (1926): 271 (my translation).

17 Edwin Guillet mentions that as late as 1955, more than half of the tourists coming to Canada complained of poor road quality and traffic jams. Guillet, *Story of Canadian Roads*, 210. See also *Beautiful Ontario, Canada's Premier Province: The Lakeland Playground of America* (Toronto: Travel and Publicity Bureau, 1932), 3.

18 Quoted in Marc Desjardins, Yves Frenette, Jules Belanger, and Bernard Hetu, *Histoire de la Gaspésie* (Quebec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999), 519 (my translation).

19 *Routes modernes dans la province de Québec* (Montreal: Route moderne, 1938).

20 I have written on this issue in "Québécoises et Ontariennes en voiture! L'expérience culturelle et spatiale de l'automobile au féminin (1910–1945)," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* (hereafter *RHAF*) 63, nos. 2–3 (2009–2010): 305–30.

21 Percy Gomery, *A Motor Scamper 'cross Canada: A Human-Interest Narrative of a Pathfinding Journey from Montreal to Vancouver* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1922).

22 Margaret Pennell, "Some Observations on a Gaspé Tour Made by Four Girls in a Car," *Canadian Motorist* 20, no. 1 (1933): 14.

23 *The French-Canadian Province: A Harmony of Beauty, History and Progress* (Quebec City: Roads Department, 1926), 43.

24 John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 133.

25 Alan Morantz, *Where Is Here? Canada's Maps and the Stories They Tell* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2002), 163–64.

26 *Road Map of the Northwestern Portion of the Province of Ontario, 1935–36* (Toronto: Department of Northern Development, 1936).

27 Jeffrey S. Murray, *Terra Nostra: les cartes du Canada et leurs secrets, 1550–1950* (Quebec City: Septentrion, 2006), 125.

28 Peto, "L'organisation municipale au point de vue touristique," *La Revue municipale* 4, no. 8 (1926): 266 (my translation).

29 *Spend Your Vacation in Ontario, Canada's Premier Province: The Lakeland Playground of America* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Travel and Publicity, 1930).

30 Serge Gagnon, "L'émergence de l'identité rurale et l'intervention de l'État québécois en tourisme (1920–1940)," *Téoros* 20, no. 3 (2001): 25.

31 Ontario, Department of Public Highways, *Official Road Map of Ontario* (Toronto, 1926); *Northwestern Ontario Highways and Tourist Attractions* (Toronto: Minister of Lands and Forest and Northern Development, 1932).

32 *Ontario Invites You to the Lakeland Playgrounds of Canada* (Toronto: Ontario Travel and Publicity Bureau, 1939), 33.

33 Desjardins and Frenette, *Histoire de la Gaspésie*, 547.

34 Serge Gagnon, *L'échiquier touristique du Québec* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2003), 264–68 ; *Romantic Québec: Gaspé Peninsula* (Quebec City: Department of Highways and Mines, Provincial Tourist Bureau, 1929) ; *The Gaspé Peninsula: History, Legends, Resources, Attractions* (Quebec City: Department of Highways and Mines, 1930); Desjardins and Frenette, *Histoire de la Gaspésie*, 542–43.

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36 Bagnato and Shragge, *Footpaths to Freeways*, 65–66, 77.

37 Roscoe R. Miller, "Towards the Height of Land and Beyond by Motor," *Canadian Motorist* 16, no. 4 (1929): 139.

38 Roscoe R. Miller, "Towards the Height of Land and Beyond by Motor, Part IV," *Canadian Motorist* 16, no. 7 (1929): 304.

39 *Ontario Invites You*, 49.

40 Harlow D. Whittemore, "The Superior Scenic Highway Will Be 'All That the Name Implies,'"

Canadian Motorist 19, no. 12 (1932): 335.

41 Miller, "Towards the Height of Land and Beyond by Motor," 139.

42 Whittemore, "Superior Scenic Highway," 36.

43 Eugène Pelletier, "Tracé et construction des routes en forêts et en pays de montagnes," *Onzième convention des ingénieurs, rapport des délibérations* (Quebec City: Road Department, 1938), 142.

44 *The Gaspé Peninsula*, 11–12.

45 Lynda Jessup, "The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or, The More Things Change," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2002): 149.

46 The concept of wilderness relies, problematically, on the idea that humans are necessarily outside nature. William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1995): 81.

47 *The Gaspé Peninsula,* 10.

48 *La Province de Québec* (Quebec City: Province of Quebec Tourist Bureau, 1937).

49 For a discussion of the role of antimodernism in tourism promotion, see James Murton, "La 'Normandie du Nouveau Monde': La société Canada Steamship Lines, l'antimodernisme, et la promotion du Québec ancien," *RHAF* 55, no. 1 (2001): 3–44.

50 *The Gaspé Peninsula,* 10.

51 *La Gaspésie*: *Histoire, Légendes, Ressources, Beautés* (Quebec City: Roads and Mines Department, 1933), 8 (my translation).

52 Pennell, "Some Observations," 14–15; Gordon Brinley, *Away to the Gaspé* (New York: Dodd, 1935); Dorothy Childs Hogner, *Summer Roads to Gaspe* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939).

53 A roadside cross appears in the foreground on the covers of most tourist guides in the 1930s. Like beacons, these crosses were found everywhere on the motorist's journey: on quiet backroads, at rural intersections, and at the entry to villages. More than three thousand roadside crosses are still located along Quebec roads. Diane Joly, "Wayside Crosses," *Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America*, accessed 28 March 2015, http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-296/Wayside_Crosses.html.

54 O'Keeffe painted a series of landscapes depicting roadside crosses, barns, and the seaside.