



Are We There Yet?
Vacationing in California,
1870-1940



University of California, Irvine
Main Library • Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery
November 2001 - April 2002

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*Vacationing in California,
1870-1940*

An exhibit in
the UC Irvine Main Library's
Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery

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Checklist compiled by
William Landis
Manuscripts Librarian



Cover Illustration: **Sunny Southern California.**
Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1920.
Illustrated brochure. (Item 1)

Foreword

Welcome to the UC Irvine Libraries' fall 2001 exhibit, "*Are We There Yet?*" *Vacationing in California, 1870-1940*. This exhibit is not only delightful to view, but thought provoking in its exploration of the changing ways in which leisure travelers to the Golden State experienced its natural and man-made wonders during the first seventy years of California tourism.

The Department of Special Collections and Archives holds exceptional collections documenting California's history and culture, as revealed by the small slice of our collections that is on view in this exhibit. Historians, social scientists, and other scholars have become increasingly interested in the influence of "ordinary people's" activities and preferences upon the evolution of our society and culture. Library collections, such as those on display, play an increasingly important role as primary sources for study and research that helps us all understand our past and, consequently, our future.

The exhibit was curated by William Landis, Manuscripts Librarian in Special Collections and Archives. Many of the items on display were donated to the Libraries over the last thirty-five years by members of the local community. They serve as a reminder that library research collections often begin as carefully selected or personally produced family treasures. Items from collectors, photographers, and local donors such as Don Meadows, William MacPherson, Edward Cochems, and the Gulick family are included.

We are particularly pleased that Dr. Hal Rothman, a noted scholar on the history of Western tourism who is Professor of History at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, is the featured speaker for the exhibit's official opening on November 14. His remarks will further establish the context of contemporary research and writing into which "*Are We There Yet?*" fits.

On behalf of both the Partners of the UC Irvine Libraries and the entire library staff, I hope you enjoy this exhibit and will return to view others in the future.

Gerald J. Munoff
University Librarian

Are We There Yet?

Vacationing in California, 1870-1940



Though California has been celebrated in books, newspapers, and magazines for more than twenty years, it is really ... little known to the tourist ... California is to most Eastern people still a land of big beets and pumpkins, of rough miners, of pistols, bowie-knives, abundant fruit, queer wines, high prices—full of discomforts, and abounding in dangers to the peaceful traveler.

—Charles Nordhoff, **California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence** (1872)

“What did you do on your summer vacation?” This perennial question with which students greet each other at summer’s end provides a fitting opening for an exploration of how and why vacationers from other parts of the United States and around the world have come to California over the years since tourism to the far West began in 1870.

The Gold Rush of 1849 had famously brought California to the world’s attention, but as a lawless, violent place where men vastly outnumbered women, and where one was likely to encounter populations unfamiliar to Easterners, including Native Americans, Mexicans, and Chinese immigrants who had crossed the Pacific in large numbers to work the gold fields of the Sierra Nevada. Those who ventured into the magnificent mountains along the eastern edge of California at that time were seeking instant fortunes, not a place to relax and enjoy leisure time. During the post-Gold Rush era, traveling to California involved privations and hardships that meant only the hardy or the desperate made the slow and difficult trip, whether overland or by sea.



Soon thereafter the United States was plunged into the chaos of sectional conflict over slavery and the rights of individual states to challenge the will of the federal government, resulting in four years of civil war from 1861-1865. Political machinations and the growth of overland immigration routes led to the admission of several new states in the far West: California, Oregon, and Nevada. After peace finally came in 1865, attention focused on linking the two coasts of the United States for the benefit of commerce. The historic result was the transcontinental coupling of the tracks of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads at Promontory Point, Utah, on May 10, 1869.

Beginning with the first trainload of casual sightseers to California in 1870, vacationers have flocked to the Golden State in ever increasing numbers. Many who came for vacation ended up settling in California, helping to swell the state's population from 560,000 in 1870 to nearly 7,000,000 by 1940. They were attracted by the diverse scenery and topography, celebrations of which filled post-Civil War travel literature. They were also attracted by the Mediterranean climate and mineral springs, which were touted extensively in books, magazines, and newspapers of the time as the cure for a variety of poorly understood lung ailments collectively known as "consumption." One of the first published guides for visitors to the state, Charles Nordhoff's *California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence* (item 4), appeared in 1872 and had been reprinted at least four times by 1882.

In short, this "land of opportunity" offered something for everyone: the tourist, settler, invalid, and land speculator. Although other options for transportation within California increasingly became available as the 19th century gave way to the 20th—stage coach, electric streetcar, motor coach, and the private automobile—the railroad companies continued to play an important role in attracting tourists and bringing them to California during the time period considered by this exhibit. Up until 1920 the majority of people coming to California, whether to sightsee or to settle, still arrived by train.

This exhibit examines the changing nature of tourist travel to California over the course of its first 60 years, beginning with the great railroad era, progressing to the age of the personal automobile, and examining ramifications of that transition during the early 20th century. In addition, four themes in the history of Golden State tourism are explored: the lure of the Yosemite Valley, the Great Hiking Era in the San Gabriel Mountains, Southern California's beaches and deserts, and the role that organized promoters and boosters played in bringing vacationers to the state.

All items in this exhibit are from the manuscript, book, and periodical collections on Orange County and regional history of the Department of Special Collections and Archives in the UCI Libraries. The majority of the printed ephemera is from the Don Meadows Papers. Additional materials are from the McPherson Postcard Collection, Edward W. Cochems Photographs, Alice Gulick Gooch Photographs, Edward R. Frank Stereograph Collection, and others. *Are We There Yet?* was curated by William Landis, Manuscripts Librarian in the Department of Special Collections and Archives.

The Grand Circuit, 1870-1900

“These fast through trains are really swift-moving hotels”

For travelers from the Eastern United States to the Pacific Coast in 1870, the inauguration of transcontinental train service enabled a three-day train trip rather than a hazardous, months-long journey by ship around the southern tip of South America, or by wagon across the vast expanse of the West.

Until the turn of the 20th century, train travel to the Western United States was largely equated with social status. Travelers were generally wealthy Americans who could afford both the high fares and the expense of staying in a resort hotel for weeks or months at a time. Historian Earl Pomeroy relates that “in a generation when six-room houses rented for eight dollars a month and schoolteachers taught for two hundred dollars a year ... one might expect to spend a total of about eight hundred dollars to take in Northern California” with “side trips beyond San Francisco to the north or south mean[ing] extra fares.” The arrival of early tourists was so noteworthy that passenger lists of arriving cross-country trains were telegraphed from way stations for printing in the San Francisco newspapers.

Following construction of a spur rail line from San Francisco to Monterey, the Southern Pacific Railroad developed the Hotel del Monte in Monterey in 1880, the first of a number of lavish resort hotels that sprang up over the following decades along the Central and Southern California coast. Another prime example of such exclusive lodging was the Hotel del Coronado, which opened in 1888 on a sand spit across the bay from San Diego, only three years after completion of a transcontinental rail line linking San Diego directly to the rest of the nation.

A French traveler in the U.S. in 1887 noted that “hotels are for [the Americans] what cathedrals, monuments, and the beauties of nature are for us.” Fanciful hotels were not the only thing in California that drew comparisons to Europe and the Mediterranean during the latter portion of the 19th century. The climate was proclaimed by numerous authors as reminiscent of Italy, the Greek islands, or Palestine, while the Sierra

Nevada Mountains were likened to the Swiss Alps. Doctors from the East prescribed the springs and spas of California as a cheaper alternative to sending consumptive patients to Europe. Such comparisons increased in the promotional literature after the Southern Pacific opened its first rail line from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1876, and the Santa Fe Railroad inaugurated direct Chicago to Los Angeles service in 1887. The historian Anne Hyde notes that early promoters of resort hotels in California clearly “understood the economic advantages of creating familiar and comforting European images rather than unfamiliar and strange American ones.”

The scenery in the West proved an irresistible draw for those who could afford the trip to California. The stereoscope, a device for viewing two nearly identical images in a way that makes them appear three-dimensional, was immensely popular in the United States from 1859 through the 1920s. Natural scenes from California’s Sierra Nevada, especially the spectacular and increasingly accessible cliffs and waterfalls of the Yosemite Valley, took particular advantage of this photographic format.

In the latter half of the 19th century, viewing nature was still largely understood by Americans in the context of criteria set forth by romantic and sentimental European art and literature. Views in guidebooks, especially the dramatic black-and-white steel engravings that predated the mass-market emergence of the photograph, were largely brooding and mournful, evoking “thoughts of the dreadful majesty of divine power.” Pomeroy notes that during this era “the typical tourist sought out only what the guidebook recommended, and according to schedule he felt the prescribed emotions—of satisfaction of having seen what ‘everyone’ saw, of wonder and awe at God’s work, and at dreadful reminders of the turmoil of creation.”

“Exotic” populations in California, especially Native Americans, Mexicans, and Chinese, became a topic of fascination for tourists from the East,

where former African American slaves were the only prominent non-Caucasian racial group, and where diversity was still primarily seen in terms of European immigrant groups. The tribes of the Southwest, such as the Pueblo and the Navajo, were callously promoted as tourist attractions at station stops along the southern rail route from New Orleans that opened in 1883. Tourist guidebooks frequently contained lengthy chapters on the Chinese community in San Francisco that were tinged with both curiosity and a liberal dose of the anti-Chinese hysteria that swept through the West in the 1880s. A prime example of this is the 14-page chapter devoted to “The Chinese in San Francisco” in Bowman’s *The Pacific Tourist* (item 9).

1. **Sunny Southern California.**
Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1920.
Illustrated brochure.
2. **Mirror Lake, Yosemite Valley, California (stereograph) and decorated wooden stereoscope (stereograph viewer).**
Ca. 1880s.
3. **Rand, McNally & Co.’s New Guide to the Pacific Coast: Santa Fe Route.** Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1890.
4. Charles Nordhoff.
California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence: A Book for Travellers and Settlers.
New York: Harper & Bros., 1872.
5. **Colton’s Map of California and Nevada.**
New York: Colton & Co., 1879.



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6. George A. Crofutt.
Crofutt's Overland Tours.
Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1890.
 7. Charles Dudley Warner.
Our Italy.
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891.
 8. Rev. John Todd.
California and its Wonders.
London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1884.
 9. Frederick E. Shearer, editor.
**The Pacific Tourist: J. R. Bowman's
Illustrated Trans-Continental Guide of Travel
from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.**
New York: J. R. Bowman, 1882-1883.
Accompanied by reproductions of 2 engravings:
"Two bits to see the pappoose" (p. 208) and
"Scene in alley, Chinese quarters, San Francisco" (p. 280).
 10. **Union Pacific Railroad, Overland Limited
route advertisement.**
Published in: *Sunset: A Magazine of the Border*,
vol. 6, no. 1 (Nov. 1900).
 11. **Sunset, Ogden, and Shasta Routes,
Dining Car Service menu.**
San Francisco: Southern Pacific Co., ca. 1900.
 12. **A Winter in California.**
Boston: Raymond & Whitcomb, 1892 and 1895.
Two tour advertisement books.
 13. **Los Angeles Limited: Salt Lake Route.**
Brochure, ca. 1890s.
 14. **Hotel del Coronado advertisement.**
Published in: *The Argonaut* (San Francisco, 21 April 1890).
 15. **Hotel del Coronado advertisement.**
Published in: *Northwestern Medical Journal* (1890).
 16. **Excursion to San Diego and Coronado.**
Los Angeles: Southern California Railway, 1896. Brochure.
 17. **Hotel del Coronado, Coronado Beach, California.**
Brochure, ca. 1923.
 18. **Photograph of Hotel del Coronado from the Southeast.**
By C. B. Waite, Los Angeles landscape photographer, ca. 1890s.

California Tourism, 1900-1920

“The railroad was still the poor man’s automobile”

The perception of California as a destination primarily for wealthy tourists on grand train excursions was beginning to fade by 1890. Contributing factors included the increasing amounts of leisure time and disposable income that American workers were beginning to enjoy, and the railroad companies were quick to realize that real profits could be made by creating a mass market for Western tourism. By 1906 they were offering regular summer discounts to lure middle-class tourists to California. Another significant development in the late 1880s was the introduction of the Pullman sleeping car on transcontinental train routes, which, while not as comfortable as first-class palace cars, made the three-day journey palatable for less wealthy travelers. The rapid pace of development of the railroad infrastructure, coupled with the increasing competition for tourist revenue, combined to make travel to California economically viable for thousands of Americans who, just a decade or two earlier, could have expected to see the wonders of the West only in printed illustrations.

The growth of local resorts along the coast and in the mountains in the 1890s also had an impact on tourism in California. These resort communities catered primarily to the increasing numbers of urban Californians needing venues for brief vacation getaways. Their existence was made feasible by the use of electric interurban cars, then coming into use in urban centers nationwide. In Los Angeles the Pacific Electric Company operated a vast web of streetcar lines that could whisk vacationers from the San Gabriel Mountains to the beach at Santa Monica in a few short hours. Fanciful route names, such as the Orange Blossom service from Los Angeles to Riverside, were created for excursion packages operated specifically for tourists. The presence of relatively cheap and easy local transportation alternatives made it possible to feature new kinds of attractions, such as the burgeoning moving picture industry in Hollywood and farms featuring exotic animals like ostriches and crocodiles.

While the personal automobile remained a rich tourist’s amusement during the first two decades of the 20th century, motor coach routes gradually developed to take tourists en masse to locations not reached by urban streetcars. The first crossing of the U.S. in a personal automobile occurred in 1903; the trip took nine weeks, cost \$8,000.00, and was a harbinger of the future.

19. **Lines of the Pacific Electric Railway in Southern California.**

Published in: *Southern California Tourist*, vol. 2, no. 4 (April 1927).

20. **Vistas del Balloon Route.**

Los Angeles: Los Angeles Pacific Railroad, ca. 1897.
Souvenir brochure open to panoramic view of Pier Avenue, Ocean Park.

21. **Good Roads in Southern California.**

Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1900.
Souvenir viewbook.

22. **How to See All Southern California.**

Los Angeles: Golden State Auto Tours, ca. 1920.
Brochure advertising tours throughout Southern California.

23. **Souvenir.**

Los Angeles: Los Angeles Pacific Railroad, 1903.
Souvenir viewbook.



24. Seeing California with Henery: A Complete Review in Picture and Humorous Story of All Points and Features of Interest in the Golden State.

Los Angeles: Daily Doings Publishing Co., 1920.
Souvenir booklet.

25. The Tatler of California,

vol. 3, no. 26 (8 Jan. 1910). Los Angeles:
Representative Hotels of California. Advertisements on inside
back cover for Riverside-area orange grove train tours.

26. A Souvenir of Delightful Journeys.

Los Angeles: San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad,
1909. Orange-shaped souvenir booklet of Southern California
communities and attractions.

27. The Greeters Guide of Southern California,

vol. 3, no. 7 (July 1923). Los Angeles: Greeters of
Southern California. Monthly magazine produced by “the
largest hotel organization in the world.” Accompanied by
reproduction of story on the making of moving pictures
in Los Angeles.

28. Ostrich Farm.

Undated advertisement for an ostrich farm and “hot sulphur
baths equal in medicinal effect to the Hot Springs of Arkansas,”
both reachable from Los Angeles by train or “private
conveyance.”

29. See Los Angeles.

Los Angeles: Pacific Sightseeing Company, ca. 1910s.
Brochure advertising 3 half-day autobus sightseeing trips to
Pasadena, Hollywood, and the beaches from downtown Los
Angeles.

30. Postcards (9 cards and 2 folding packets).

Various publishers in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago,
and New York, 1915-1940.

Places depicted (left to right):

San Carlos Borromeo and San Juan Bautista missions
(postcard packet).

Olvera Street, Los Angeles.

Circular bridge, Mt. Lowe Railway.

Balboa, Newport Beach (3 postcards).

Palm Canyon, Palm Springs.

Los Angeles and Southern California scenes (postcard packet):

Union Station.

Mac Arthur Park.

Grauman's Chinese Theater.

Santa Monica beaches.

Colorado St. bridge, Arroyo Seco.

Avalon Bay, Santa Catalina Island.

Long Beach battleships.

California park scene.

Mt. Baldy and orange groves.

Santa Fe Depot, Los Angeles.

Southern Pacific Station, Los Angeles.

Civic Center, Los Angeles.

The Automobile Meets the Tourist, 1920-1940

“The opening up of an era of unprecedented mobility”

The availability of cheap, reliable passenger automobiles following Henry Ford’s introduction of assembly-line production in 1914 sparked a revolution in vacation travel to and within California. The “good road” movement constituted an effort to increase highway signage and paved-road mileage within California and on Western roads leading to California. This project was begun by the Automobile Club of Southern California shortly after its founding in 1900 and resulted in a steady improvement in the ease of car travel around Southern California. The Auto Club, founded according to art historian John Ott as a “tony fraternal order on wheels,” saw its membership mushroom from 2,500 in 1911 to 100,000 in 1924, necessitating its transition to a true service organization. An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1924 reported that there were four times more tourists traveling in California in their own cars in 1923 than there had been in 1920. Ironically, the Auto Club’s good-road efforts were actively supported during the first two decades of the 20th century by the railroad companies, who failed to foresee the negative impact that the automobile would have on their own tourist transportation and resort businesses.

The development of formal auto camps by municipalities throughout the West in the early 1920s served further to erode the exclusivity that had for so long been characteristic of a vacation trip to California. Automobile tourists carrying their own camping gear could pitch their own lodgings for about fifty cents a night. A 1925 article in *Sunset* magazine, the promotional organ of the Southern Pacific Railroad, noted that “the automobile and the municipal camps have so cheapened travel that the wonders of the West’s national parks today are accessible to hundreds of thousands who ten years ago had as much chance to see them as Hobson has of becoming admiral of the Swiss navy.”

The depression of the 1930s had a dramatic and lasting impact on tourism in California. Raymond and Whitcomb, a major purveyor of exclusive California train tours for more than fifty years, was a fatality of the nation’s economic plunge, while the Greyhound Company, taking advantage of the new network of paved roads and cheaper accommodations en route, began offering its low-budget, bus-based “Western Wonder Tours” in 1935. Pomeroy summed up this era in noting that “the age of the automobile was the age in which the average American vacationer found the West within reach.”

31. **Touring Topics.** Los Angeles: Automobile Club of Southern California. Three issues of the “magazine for motorists.”

Vol. 18, no. 8 (August 1926).

Inside back cover: Shell motor oil and gasoline advertisement.

Vol. 16, no. 8 (August 1924).

Front cover painting by Ray Winters.

Vol. 17, no. 2 (February 1925).

Advertisements for the Auto Club’s Departments of Insurance and Carter Auto Works in Los Angeles.

32. **The Panoramic Automobile Road Map and Tourist Guide Book of Southern California: Season 1914-15.**

Los Angeles: Cadmus Press, 1914. Cover and facsimile of map of route from Whittier to Santa Ana on a main road that is “generally all level, wide, and well macadamized.”



33. Southern California Tourist.

Los Angeles: Southern California Tourist Information Bureaus.
Covers of 4 issues (left to right).

Vol. 1, no. 2 (Nov. 1926).

Cover: new Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.

Vol. 2, no. 3 (March 1927).

Cover: view of the Pacific from Palos Verdes.

Vol. 2, no. 4 (April 1927).

Cover: view of Death Valley from the Union Pacific Railroad.

Vol. 3, no. 12 (Dec. 1928).

Cover: advertisement for the Furnace Creek Inn, Death Valley.

34. Postcards (6 items).

Various publishers in Pomona, Long Beach, Los Angeles,
and Chicago, ca. 1920-ca. 1940.

Places depicted (left to right):

Dana Point Service Station.

Mill Creek bridge, Highway 1 near Monterey.

Palisades along Highway 101 near Santa Monica.

Bender's Service Station and Camp, Amboy.

Desert Center Café, near Blythe.

"Rim o' the World" Highway, Big Bear Lake.

35. Roads in San Diego County, California.

San Diego: Board of Supervisors in association with Goodrich National Touring Bureau, 1917. Booklet of driving maps, open to listing of post offices in San Diego County containing demographic statistics, major industries, and services for automobile drivers.

36. Southern California at a Glance:

History, Romance, Maps, Facts, Statistics.

Los Angeles: States Publishing Co., 1930. Booklet containing maps and information about Southern California communities and attractions.

37. Automobile Map of California.

Chicago: Rand McNally & Company for Richfield Oil Co., 1925.

**38. Los Angeles to San Diego and Return,
Circuit No. 1: Goodrich Tour No. 2304.**

Goodrich National Touring Bureau, 1918.

Brochure containing mile-by-mile driving instructions and landmarks.

**39. Highway Map to California: Shortest, Coolest,
and All-Year Route to the Pacific Coast.**

San Diego: Chamber of Commerce, 1930.

Tourists in the Yosemite Valley

*“Wonder, delight, admiration, and awe
in beholding this marvel of nature”*

A scant four years after the forced removal of a hostile group of Native Americans first brought white men into the Yosemite Valley, James Hutchings, publisher of *California Magazine*, led the first tourist party to see the scenic wonders in this spectacular canyon of the Merced River in 1855. The artist Thomas Ayres accompanied the Hutchings expedition, producing the first images of what has become one of the most sketched and photographed locations in the world. In fact, painters and photographers in the last quarter of the 19th century were influential in creating the images that brought a flood of tourists to California after the completion of the transcontinental railroads. Their work spurred public pressure on the state and federal governments to set aside the valley as a preserve.

Initially, tourists in the Yosemite Valley were largely the wealthy who could afford a months-long “grand tour” of the West by train. By 1880 a visit to the valley was considered “de rigeur” and “of course, inevitable” as a part of the Western circuit. A proliferation of guidebooks provided tourists with detailed directions on how to “see” Yosemite during the course of a visit. Hutchings himself, in his 1870 tourist’s guide, expressed his purpose as insuring that “every sight worth seeing, with a knowledge of how to see it, should be known to every visitor ... after journeying so far, all other considerations permitting, it will be well that as many scenes of beauty, or of singularity, or of majesty, should be witnessed, as may be possible.”

Nevertheless, early travelers to Yosemite suffered hardships en route that made many wonder if the awe-inspiring views were worth the trip. Visitors arrived at Wawona by stagecoach and traveled from there into the valley by horse or mule, a round trip of about fifty miles. Early accommodations along the trail from Wawona to the valley consisted of huts constructed by shepherds, and in the Yosemite Valley itself, rough wooden hotels and tent camps offered only the most spartan comforts. These early trips took ten days from San Francisco and cost the then-exorbitant sum of \$150.00.

By the beginning of the 20th century, several competing toll stage roads had been constructed into the valley. The first automobile arrived in 1900, and a rail link was completed from Merced in 1907. The first National Park Service director, Stephen Mather, noted in a 1921 report that 74% of visitors to Yosemite in 1919 entered in their own automobiles. Ever since then, the Yosemite Valley has been a tourist attraction accessible by all.

40. Josiah Dwight Whitney.
**The Yosemite Guide-book: A Description of
the Yosemite Valley and the Adjacent Region of
the Sierra Nevada, and of the Big Trees of California.**
Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1869.
41. Prof. Samuel Kneeland, M.D.
The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley and of California.
Boston: Alexander Moore, 1871.
42. **California vacation photograph album, 1913-1914.**
“Views of Yosemite Valley taken by Haven C. Hurst, 1914.”
43. **Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Big Trees.**
San Francisco: Yosemite Stage & Turnpike Co., ca. 1890.
Illustrated brochure containing train and stage transportation
schedules to Yosemite Valley from Los Angeles, Bakersfield,
and San Francisco.
44. Ansel F. Hall, editor.
**Handbook of Yosemite National Park: A Compendium of
Articles on the Yosemite Region by the Leading Scientific
Authorities.**
New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921.



The Great Hiking Era in the San Gabriels

“The grandest mountain and canyon scenery on earth”

45. **The Yosemite Tourist**,
vol. 14, no. 63 (12 July 1919).
Yosemite Valley: Yosemite Falls Studio.
46. **Yosemite**.
Merced: Yosemite Valley Railroad Co., ca. 1930.
Brochure for train and motor stage trip into
the Yosemite Valley.
47. **Camp Ahwahnee: Facing Yosemite Falls**.
San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., ca. 1920.
Tent camp brochure.
48. **Yosemite: Sentinel Hotel and Camp Yosemite**.
San Francisco: Peck-Judah Co., ca. 1920.
Hotel and tent camp brochure.

Long before the automobile and the Angeles Crest Highway existed to speed motorists through the San Gabriel Mountains, Angelinos and tourists rode horse-drawn coaches and, later, electric trains to one of Southern California’s premier attractions, the Mt. Lowe Railway. Departing from Altadena, this brainchild of Civil War balloonist Thaddeus Lowe—a combination railway and incline that opened on July 4, 1893—took city folk into the wilds of the San Gabriels to an elevation of 5,000 feet above sea level at the Alpine Tavern. From there the summit of Mt. Lowe, at 6,100 feet, was a relatively short hike away. Other attractions along the railway included a hostel at Rubio Canyon and an observatory and hotel at Echo Mountain.

Mt. Lowe was not the only attraction drawing visitors to Los Angeles’ mountain backdrop. Beginning in the late 1880s camp resorts were developed to welcome the increasing numbers of hikers who ventured into the mountains on holidays and weekends to fish, relax, and stay cool. Every canyon had its enthusiasts and resorts, the latter generally consisting of cabins or canvas-walled tent cabins, a dance floor, and a central dining room, many of which were famous for treats like rhubarb pie and apple dumplings. In 1892 the Angeles National Forest was created by Executive Order to regulate recreation in and resource extraction from the canyons of the San Gabriels.

The Great Hiking Era really took off between 1900 and 1910 with the proliferation of camps such as Switzer’s, Opid’s, Oak Wilde, Sturtevant’s, Rincon, Bonita, and Cold Brook. Strings of these resort camps generally began within four to five miles of trailheads in the cities that were booming at the western base of the mountains. Traffic on the Sturtevant Trail into the Big Santa Anita Canyon from Sierra Madre was so heavy on weekends that the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture had to establish rules for rights of way, bells on pack animals, and distances required between pack trains. On one three-day holiday weekend in 1919 5,000 Sturtevant Trail hikers checked in at Joe Clark’s Half-Way House.



Forces of nature and human progress combined to bring an end to the era. By 1934 the Angeles Crest Highway was snaking its way over the mountains to the Mojave Desert, giving ready access to the more remote canyons. A fire in 1936 permanently closed the Mt. Lowe Railway, and torrential rains in the winter of 1938 damaged camps throughout the San Gabriels, many of which were not rebuilt. Despite the lack of such facilities today, hiking in the San Gabriels remains a popular recreation activity for Angelinos and tourists alike.

49. California vacation photograph album, 1924.

Photographs documenting a horseback trip to the top of Mt. Baldy (10,080 feet).

50. Mt. Lowe Trail Trips.

Los Angeles: Pacific Electric Railway, ca. 1915. Brochure and map detailing San Gabriel Mountains hiking trails accessible by electric railway routes from Los Angeles.

51. San Gabriel Mountains camping resort brochures (3 items).

Ca. 1920-ca. 1930. Advertising Sturtevant Camp, Opid's, and Cold Brook Camp.

52. Forest Home Mountain resort brochures (2 items).

Ca. 1920. San Bernardino Mountains hotel and camp.

53. Souvenir photograph, Mt. Lowe, California.

August 1930. Alfred Higgins (in straw hat at center of picture) was a schoolteacher at Orange Union High School.

54. A Mt. Lowe Souvenir.

Los Angeles: Pacific Electric Railway, ca. 1930. Souvenir brochure includes a map and pictures illustrating the trip from downtown Los Angeles to the summit of Mt. Lowe.

55. Mt. Lowe ephemera (3 items).

Echo Mountain House stationery, ca. 1890; Pacific Electric Railway brochure, ca. 1900; Mt. Lowe Tavern menu, ca. 1900.

Southern California's Deserts and Beaches

“Entranced and bewildered by mirages”

From the arrival of the first transcontinental trainload of Easterners, California's seaside resorts were a primary lure for tourists. Through the early 20th century, lavish resort hotels such as the Del Monte in Monterey and the Del Mar in San Diego provided all that a visitor could need, though over time they focused less on the curative benefits of a lengthy stay. As greater numbers of Americans from east of the Rocky Mountains ventured westward either to vacation or to settle, other California beach areas began to attract more middle- and lower-class vacationers who came mainly on weekends to bask in the sun and frolic in the waves.

The accessibility of beach resorts such as Santa Monica, Newport Beach, and Long Beach (the “Atlantic City of the Pacific”) by electric streetcar from Los Angeles made them early popular attractions for tourists. These resorts quickly developed cheaper hotels and boarding houses, as well as boardwalks to match their East-coast counterparts. The introduction of affordable cars dramatically increased the accessibility of remote Southern California beaches to the general tourist. Weekend beachgoers in places like Laguna Beach typically brought their own accommodations, usually tents, and camped out on the beaches.

Attracting tourists to Southern California deserts proved a more difficult matter, given their reputation as desolate, terrifying wastelands. Through the 1880s deserts were portrayed in popular literature as “repellent to the eyes and other senses” and the cactus as “the reptile of the vegetable world.” The routing of rail lines in 1883 to within 25 miles of the Grand Canyon began a gradual change in the viability of the desert as a tourist destination, and the railroad companies played a significant role in promoting desert vacations. The work of ethnographers and geologists in the late 19th century also were key in promoting the appeal of deserts, contributing to an interest in Native American tribes and ruins and an appreciation of desert scenery.

While the increasing pervasiveness of automobile travel after 1920 was important in bringing travelers to the desert, driving there was still best done at night. Resort hotels and the availability of water remained critical to providing tourists with comfortable daytime activities.

56. J. Smeaton Chase.
Our Araby: Palm Springs and the Garden of the Sun.
New York: Little & Ives, 1923.

57. Edna Brush Perkins.
The White Heart of Mojave: An Adventure with the Outdoors of the Desert.
New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922.

58. **Photograph of Mr. Arthur Humiston in a Joshua tree on the way to Wasco.**
By Alice Gulick Gooch, ca. 1920.

59. **Death Valley: Season 1935-36.**
Los Angeles: Death Valley Hotel Co., 1935.
Illustrated brochure highlighting the sights and accommodations in the newly-created Death Valley National Monument.

60. **California's Unique Winter Resort in Death Valley: Land of Mystery and Romance.**
Omaha: Union Pacific System, 1929. Brochure.



61. **Hand-tinted photograph of Laguna Beach tent city.**

Probably by Edward Cochems, 1919.

62. **Santa Monica, Ocean Park, California:
Where the Mountains Meet the Sea.**

Santa Monica: Outlook Print Shop, 1930.
Brochure.

63. **Souvenir of the Sister Counties of Southern California.**

Los Angeles: Pacific Souvenir, ca. 1904. Souvenir book
promoting the counties of Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange,
Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Kern.

64. **Photograph of tent camp and cars on Aliso Beach.**

By Edward Cochems, ca. 1920.

65. **Newport-Balboa: Ocean and Bay.**

City of Newport Beach, 1927.
Brochure.

66. **There's More to Live for in San Diego: California
at its Best.**

San Diego-California Club, ca. 1940.
Brochure.

Boosterism in Los Angeles

"A most advantageous spot on the map"

Boosterism pervades the promotional literature on California from the 1870s through the 1940s. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines boosterism as "the tendency to seek to raise the estimation of oneself, one's town, or product by praise." Beginning in the 1870s, writers regularly used superlative language to overcome Easterners' Gold Rush-era perceptions that California was a land of human discomforts, high prices, and lawlessness.

The railroads were the first organized promoters of tourist travel to Southern California, commencing after the completion of the first San Francisco-to-Los Angeles rail link in 1876 by the Southern Pacific. After nearly a decade, the Santa Fe Railroad developed a competing link, sparking a price war and increasingly aggressive promotional literature. Railroad companies were given thousands of acres of land along rights-of-way as enticement for developing transportation routes. The prospect of profits from the sale of this land gave railroads an incentive to sell tourists on the healthful climate and recreational opportunities in the "Garden of Eden" that was Southern California.

By the early 20th century, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the *Los Angeles Times* joined the railroads in leading a concerted effort to bring to Southern California the water and business required to facilitate the growth, and accompanying profits, that they envisioned. Guides, maps, and brochures blanketed the nation, encouraging tourists and permanent emigrants in equal measure and contributing to the more than doubling of Los Angeles' population every 10 years, from 11,000 in 1880 to 1,238,000 by 1930.

From small associations and municipal convention and tourist bureaus, to well-oiled organizations such as the All-Year Club of Southern California—founded in 1921 to develop a summer vacation season in California to rival that of the winter—publicists employed colorful imagery combined with florid promotional text to impress upon tourists the “infinite variety” of activities available to them in this “all-year playground of America.” Their success proved to be a double-edged sword following the Depression, when visitor information packets were accompanied by admonitions to those seeking employment “not to come to Southern California.”

67. Southern California’s Standard Guide Book.

Los Angeles: Times-Mirror, 1910. “The only complete guide of the kind ever published.”

68. Tourist and event brochures (4 items).

California’s Mission Trails: Hotels and Resorts.

Los Angeles: California Mission Trails Association, ca. 1940.

Long Beach: Welcome to Nature’s Convention Metropolis.

Long Beach: Municipal Convention and Publicity Bureau, 1934.

California Flower Show & Horticultural Exhibition, Exposition Park, Oct. 20-26, Los Angeles.

Los Angeles: California Association of Nurserymen, 1921.

Tenth Annual Auto Show: Program.

Los Angeles: Motor Car Dealers Association of Los Angeles, 1922.

69. Map of California With a Brief Description of Its Resources, Attractions, Topography, and Climate.

San Francisco: Southern Pacific, 1914.

70. California.

Omaha: Union Pacific Railroad Co., 1925. Illustrated booklet detailing attractions in California and en route from Chicago.

71. Suggestions for Summer Vacations.

Los Angeles: Southern Pacific, 1909.
Brochure advertising rail excursions in California and the West.

72. A Digest of Southern California.

Los Angeles: Southern California Railway Co., 1894.
Booklet containing descriptions of towns and communities along the railway line in Southern California.

73. How to “Do” Southern California the All-Year Club Way.

Los Angeles: All-Year Club of Southern California, 1940.
Brochure telling tourists how to “globe-trot for months in Southern California.”

74. Southern California: Year ‘Round Vacation Land Supreme.

Los Angeles: All-Year Club, 1926.



75. **Southern California: All the Year.**

Los Angeles: All-Year Club, 1923.

76. **How to Plan Your Trip to Southern California.**

Los Angeles: All-Year Club, 1941. Vacation-planning booklet containing a welcoming letter for tourists, coupled with an explicit warning to discourage those planning to seek work in California.

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