

Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past

Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram, editors
Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 2004
316 pp., b/w illustrations, \$____ cover

Reviewed by Troy R. Lovata, Ph.D.

A global perspective on the commodification of the past has been assembled by Yorke Rowan of the Smithsonian and the University of Notre Dame, and Uzi Baram of the New College of Florida. These editors make a compelling argument that cultural- and history-based tourism has moved beyond nationalism and must be understood as a global phenomenon. This single volume offers a wide-ranging series of case studies about tourism's impact on heritage preservation, community identity, and how people experience history and prehistory. Seventeen individual essays by 19 authors present examples from the United States, Mexico, the British Isles, Germany, the Middle East, and Cambodia. They also explore international heritage preservation law, the targeting of heritage sites in modern conflicts, and the role of the World Archaeology Congress.

Rowan and Baram's book is valuable to the readers of the *SCA Journal*, who tend to focus on North American sites, for two reasons. First, the American examples are detailed studies in and of themselves. Second, the global cases highlight what is unique about American commercial archaeology and what is common worldwide.

Two chapters dealing with sites in the U.S. are especially enlightening. The history of Colonial Williamsburg, an entire Virginia town rebuilt and restored to re-create the dawn of the American Revolution, is outlined by Eric Gable and Richard Handler. In the mid-1920s, local civic leaders and John D. Rockefeller began a decades-long process of turning a fully functioning, inhabited city into a massive, open-air tourist attraction. Today, over a million visitors annually come to see how Americans lived in the 18th century and learn about the United States' founding principles of responsible leadership, public service, self-government, and individual liberty. Gable and Handler do well describing how

Colonial Williamsburg functions, how it has changed over the last three-quarters-of-a-century, and why it has thrived in presenting both a seemingly authentic, dirt-caked past and the spotless ideal of progress.

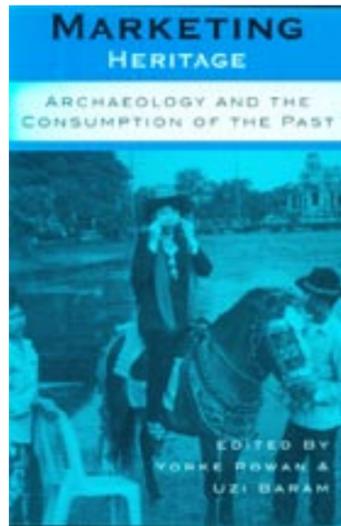
In a later chapter, Yorke Rowan examines the Holy Land Experience outside Orlando, Florida. This 15-acre biblical theme park opened in 2001, yet Rowan demonstrates continuity between it and numerous other holy land displays erected in the U.S. since the late-19th and early-20th century Chautauqua Movement and the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. He leads readers on a detailed journey through the Experience and outlines what the site offers tourists

in the way of entertainment, education, sustenance, and physical experience. But he also explores the basic appeal of biblical parks for American visitors. This essay is a serious consideration of how patently out-of-place and out-of-time roadside attractions function.

Several chapters from the global perspective are based on specific sites and practices. Two appear especially useful in comparisons with American commercial archaeology and roadside attractions. Erin Addison presents a detailed study of the roads between historic tourist sites in Jordan and the signs that direct visitors. She examines how specific locations have become icons and how signs separate visitors to Christian and Islamic sites. This essay demonstrates the ways in which the same images are used with different text written

in English or Arabic and the impact they have on tourism. Addison shows how those who put up signs and those who use signs are not always in agreement.

In another chapter, Joel Bauman explores tourism at Israel's Zippori/Sepphoris National Park. Americans have long used visits to their National Parks to build and affirm identity, and the federal designation of a park is a coveted form of recognition. Bauman shows how Israelis have to face a history of Greek, Roman, Ottoman and Palestinian presences in Zippori/Sepphoris, while at the same time the government attempts to validate Jewish ideals in the context of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. American readers should find the opportunity to explore a foreign National Park a useful tool in re-examining the context of our own parks and historic sites.



Many of the rest of the global examples present entire country overviews or broadly outline heritage practices in different regions. These chapters are less detailed when it comes to individual sites and specific tourist experiences, but this does not mean they lack insight. For example, Jason James' study of post-unification Germany is especially meaningful. The process by which people use heritage to meld two countries into one is not an easy undertaking. James' essay has implications for understanding any attempts at bringing people together based on the attractions they choose to visit versus the places their governments deem significant enough to preserve.

Overall, *Marketing Heritage* is a successful combination of individual case studies and a high level of theory. This volume is not a coffee table guide, but a fairly dense discussion from both academics and public historians. Rowan and Baram have put together a wide-ranging set of examples that capture the current state of the discipline and show the utility of a global perspective. ●

Professor Troy Lovata is an Archaeologist at the University of New Mexico and serves on the Albuquerque Arts Board, which oversees the city's extensive collection of public art and monuments. These positions let him study both the past and the ways in which we use the past to define ourselves today. See his feature article in this issue.

Route 66: Iconography of the American Highway

By Arthur Krim, Edited by Denis Wood
University of Chicago Press, 2006
288 pp. 83 halftone illustrations, \$35 hardcover

Reviewed by Douglas Towne

Do we really need another trip down Route 66? After all, this is the highway that has spawned countless books, its own magazine, TV show, Kmart clothing line, and a pop song that is a staple of performers from lounge singers to punk rockers.

It's a highway which has had sections excavated for placement in museums, a roadway in which every curve and straightaway once part of the fabled route have been painstakingly documented by ardent fans.

The massive publicity and research Route 66 has spawned is—counter intuitively—exactly why Arthur Krim's recent book is such an important publication. As the title implies, it bypasses the little roadside puzzles to tackle the big question: how Route 66 developed its powerful mystique and why it became so ingrained in the psyche of the nation—and world.

To answer this complex inquiry, Krim chronologically examines the highway, which he calls, "the Apian Way of the auto generation" from three perspectives: idea, fact, and symbol.

The "idea" perspective investigates influences to the highway that often existed long before the automobile. Although some "pop culture" readers might be put off with Krim's research on the Route 66 pathway dating back to the Clovis and Folsom Ice Age peoples, I personally found such inquiries worthwhile, especially since Krim is excellent at linking wider issues with the highway. Connecting Route 66 with the mythical water passage once thought to cross the country, he says,

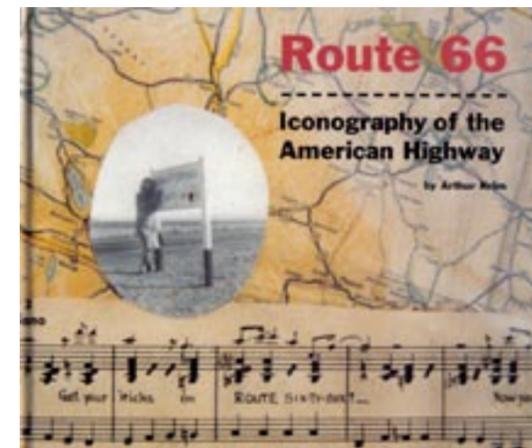
Through this process the dream of a Northwest Passage was gradually being transformed into the reality of a Southwest highway, one which would carry forward through the twentieth century all the promise of the original vision.

The "fact" perspective examines the period in which various roads linked to create a single route, its designation as Route 66 and its renown as the "Main Street of America." Although tales of the Bunion Derby and the Dust Bowl Highway have been recounted before, the author breaks new ground by making a convincing argument that much of Route 66 was in place long before any gravel and concrete were laid down. The highway's path—and its place names—were frequently the result of Indian trails, explorer's routes, and railroad lines. Krim insightfully writes,

U.S. Highway 66 wasn't conceived in a conference room on a Friday afternoon in Springfield, Missouri, in 1926, but in the thousands of years of human effort to forge a connection across the Southern High Plains between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Ocean.

Route 66 is finally scrutinized as "symbol" to determine how mere pavement became a metaphor for exploration and freedom. Important events to understanding the highway's transcendence include how the 1939 novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, irrevocably bonded Route 66 with American life on the open road for a worldwide audience as well as Bobby Troup's famous 1940s tune which promoted Route 66 more as a state of mind than a highway. Most importantly, the author articulates the essence of the highway's peculiar inverse relationship with fame:

As its physical identity was erased, nostalgia for Route 66 in the popular media grew, and the transformation of the route from physical road to national symbol accelerated. It was almost as if the more difficult it was to find the route on the land, the easier it was to locate its sense of



unlimited opportunity in the mind. As the open road began to disappear in fact, it began to blossom as Route 66 in the mind of a youth generation that had never known it.

This is the wrong publication to throw into your roadster if you're looking for an obscure bypassed section of Route 66 in the Texas Panhandle or a delectable blue plate special in San Bernardino. But it's an excellent book if you want to understand why people seek such roadside information almost 25 years after Route 66 was officially decommissioned and 50 years after interstates began to replace it. It's also valuable for answering other relevant questions, like why the term "commercial archeology" inevitably elicits a blank stare while the mere mention of "Route 66" instantly identifies your interests to the public. Or the reason why the independent motels and cafes in your town have closed at the same time every other vehicle sports a "Get Your Kicks on Route 66" bumper sticker.

No matter how much we may—or may not—try to distance ourselves from "The Mother Road," we'll be forever defined by it and should understand the amazing power it wields. To do so, this book is an enjoyable—and probably necessary—read. Written in an engaging style and illustrated with historical documents, photographs, and maps—as well as maps created specifically for the book by the author—Krim (A founding board member of SCA) makes this important vicarious journey down Route 66 pleasurable indeed. ●

Ripe for adventure in 1981, Douglas Towne and his friend, David Cordova, climbed into an Olds 88 at the University of Denver, aimed for points southwest, hit the gas, and eventually stopped for dinner at the neon-drenched Grand Canyon Café in Flagstaff. This was their first Route 66 experience and the start of an amazing journey that culminated 10 days later when—in keeping with the spirit of the roadway—the penniless pair swapped fireworks for a tank of gas at a Chevron station to make it home from Green River, Utah.