

We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France since 1930. By *Harvey Levenstein*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. xiv + 382 pp. Index, notes, illustrations, photographs. Cloth, \$35.00. ISBN: 0-226-47378-3.

Reviewed by Stephen L. Harp

In this sequel to *Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age* (1998), Harvey Levenstein traces developments in American tourism to France from 1930 to 2003. In fifteen relatively short, well-written chapters, Levenstein provides a veritable survey of the varied ways that individuals and groups of Americans viewed France, how individual French men and women perceived of the United States, and what both French and Americans said about Americans who traveled to France.

At first glance, the nearly simultaneous appearance of Christopher Endy's *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004) must have been worrisome to both authors and their presses. In fact, the two works are quite different and complementary. Whereas Endy focuses particularly on the Marshall Plan and subsequent French and U.S. government efforts to sponsor, restrict, or otherwise influence American tourism to France between 1945 and 1970, Levenstein is more comprehensive, in that he covers the (*plus*) *longue durée* while offering less sustained analysis. It is precisely Levenstein's long-term view that makes this book useful, as he is able to describe important continuities in American travel to France.

Embedded in the book are several themes that no student of modern France and the United States should miss. The best sections are those in which Levenstein hints at the changing definition of culture itself in American assumptions about France. Clearly, even into the 1960s, Americans associated France with the best that Western Civilization had to offer. Culture was, for most people most of the time, unidimensional, and France was at or near the top of the cultural hierarchy. Much of the decline not only in French tourism but also in Americans' knowledge about France, willingness to learn French, and interest in things French—all admirably charted by Levenstein—results from changing notions of culture itself.

This book, particularly if taken in conjunction with *Seductive Journey*, also illustrates the demographic and cultural feminization of American travel to France and appreciation of things French in general. By the late twentieth century, more women than men visited France. “Francophilia had become,” in Levenstein’s words, “concentrated in the upper-class social elite, upper-middle-class liberals, and women” in ways that it had not been just after the Second World War (p. 280). As Levenstein notes, in popular American discourse the war in Iraq only reified the notion of France as a place for women and sissies (with little distinction between the presumably effeminate French men who live there and the liberals who go there). It is a far cry not only from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Grand Tours by young male Americans with some fluency in French, but also from the long-standing image of Paris as a sexual playground for American men.

Some historians of business will be disappointed that we learn relatively little here about the businesses that sold tourism to the American public. Levenstein concentrates on what individuals, including tourists, and the press said about American tourism to France. Although he includes some reports from the French and U.S. governments, his sources are primarily the many American and French newspapers, magazines, and memoirs. So we learn, for example, what PanAm and TWA said to the press or about the announcements of Hilton or Holiday Inn expansion into France, but very little about business strategies, franchising agreements, advertising, or American companies’ struggles with French firms and the French government.

Levenstein is largely content to repeat what American tourists reported to the American or French media, what French observers said to the French media, and what individuals touring France said in interviews to Levenstein. At times, the reader might long for at least a tentative summation. This is very much a book of tasty morsels, many of which will give other scholars food for thought.

*We’ll Always Have Paris* appeared too soon for Levenstein to make use of new work on related topics (he was able to see Endy’s dissertation, and he cites it appropriately). In addition, Robert Young’s recent *Marketing Marianne: French Propaganda in America, 1900–1940* (2004) examines in some detail French efforts to peddle a certain idea of France to Americans, thus providing a context for Levenstein’s

account. Moreover, Levenstein's portrayal of Americans in Paris will be enriched by the work of Nancy Green, who is studying the nonliterati, those businessmen, lawyers, and their families who made up much of the mass of Americans living in interwar Paris. Similarly, though Levenstein charts the important expansion of American study-abroad programs since the 1920s, making very good use of archival records of Smith College's pioneering program during the early years, Whitney Walton's work will offer a broader analytical perspective for understanding the phenomenon.

In the end, while some will be frustrated by Levenstein's choice to survey more than to analyze, this remains a well-researched, very interesting, and quite entertaining book. It would be good vacation reading for Americans, particularly those who still read on holiday—and of course for those traveling to France.

*Stephen L. Harp is professor of history at the University of Akron. He is the author of numerous books and articles on French national identity, including Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850–1940 (1998) and Marketing Michelin: Advertising and Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century France (2001). He is currently writing a book tentatively titled “From Coolies to Consumers: A Global Cultural History of Rubber.”*