MOHAWKS, MODEL Ts, AND MONUMENTS:
The Formulation of an Unlikely Regional Identity in Western Massachusetts

by

Robert I. Quay

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors
in American Studies

WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Williamstown, Massachusetts

April 2004

Textual Note:

I have decided that the best way to examine the first few scenes and the finale of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* is to describe the scenes using information from primary sources, then interpret them. So, I have set off my descriptions of these scenes in italics.

Note on Terminology:

The Mohawk Trail has been defined in various ways at different points in history. Certain phenomena that I will discuss in detail, such as the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* (performed in Hoosac Valley Park in North Adams) and the Fort Massachusetts replica, were arguably not on the Mohawk Trail at all. From now on, I will use the term "Mohawk Trail" to refer to the highway that was constructed in the 1910s (and the sections of highway that have been re-routed since then) between North Adams and Greenfield. I will use phrases such as "Mohawk Trail corridor" to refer more broadly to the region through which the highway passes. When I refer to the footpath that existed prior to the arrival of European settlers, I will call it the "Indian path." Hopefully, my discussion of the origins of the name "Mohawk Trail" in the Introduction will justify these distinctions.

When I use the capitalized "East," "West," Eastern," and "Western," I will be referring to the two halves of North America. In some cases, I will use "West" and "Western" loosely, more to describe a set of romantic ideas than an actual region. On the few occasions when I generalize about what is sometimes referred to as "Western civilization," I will describe that culture as "European."

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Guillaume Aubert for helping me to formulate my topic and develop my ideas. The critical feedback that I received from Professor Aubert, as well as Professors Cassandra Cleghorn and Scott Wong, on numerous preliminary drafts was invaluable. I also appreciated the feedback from the other professors and thesis students who participated in the history thesis seminar. The comments of Jon Langer and Amanda Stout were particularly helpful. I would also like to thank Professor Karen Merrill in advance for serving as a reader during the defense process.

Many people facilitated my research by helping me to find primary sources. Linda Hall of the Williams College Archives and Special Collections and Martha Noblick of the Memorial Libraries in Deerfield deserve special recognition. Over the course of the past few months, each of them has spent several hours helping me to navigate their collections and locate answers to obscure questions. Sylvia Kennick Brown of the Williams College Archives and Special Collections, Mary Hawks and Christine Granat of the Memorial Libraries, Lauren Gaherty of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and Dale Waterman of the Western Gateway Heritage State Park in North Adams also went out of their way to assist me. Librarians, archivists, and volunteers at Sawyer Library, the Massachusetts Archives in Boston, the North Adams Public Library, the House of Local History in Williamstown, the North Adams Historical Society, and the Shelburne Historical Society were also helpful.

One of my favorite aspects of this research was the interaction with people who are not connected with institutions such as libraries and historical societies. Paul Marino, considered by many to be the unofficial city historian of North Adams, was very generous with his time. Among other things, he showed me how to navigate through the *Transcript*

archives, a resource which I have used extensively. Stan Brown, Wayne Canedy, and Susan Bernardy have shared various anecdotes from the Trail's early years with me, along with artifacts that they and their ancestors have collected. Professor Hank Art has shared many postcards and other the Mohawk Trail memorabilia that he has acquired on eBay with me. Clint Richmond, author of *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, has helped me with my early research. Hank Flynt, Marvin Gangemi, Anson Mason, and Lauren Stevens were also helpful. I would not have found many of the people mentioned in this paragraph if it had not been for the free publicity my thesis received in local newspapers. I would like to thank Ralph Renzi for mentioning my research in his column in the *Advocate* and the editors of the *Transcript* for doing the same.

Writing this thesis has been an arduous, though often stimulating and rewarding, process. It would have been much more difficult to complete it without the support of the other thesis students in the history seminar and in the carrels on Sawyer 3. We were all in this together.

Finally, there are a few people who were not directly involved in the process of researching for, writing, and revising this thesis, but deserve some credit for my completion of it. Professors Brad Verter and Regina Kunzel were instrumental in cultivating my interest in American Studies and helping me to develop the research and writing skills I needed to complete this project. My mother's support and encouragement throughout the process has been invaluable.

INTRODUCTION

When I tell people at Williams that I'm writing a thesis about the Mohawk Trail, the two most common responses are probably, "What's that?" and, usually preceded by a smirk, "So, what's the deal with the Big Indian?" The fact that many Williams students don't know that the Mohawk Trail is a highway just to the east of them speaks to the Trail's fall from favor in recent years. The fact that the Big Indian is both memorable and humorous to modern travelers on the Mohawk Trail is speaks to the power and the obsolescence of the Trail's iconography.

The Mohawk Trail, a highway over Hoosac Mountain connecting the western Massachusetts cities of North Adams and Greenfield, was completed in 1914. It was one of the earliest, and in its heyday one of the most popular, scenic highways in America. It is called the Mohawk Trail because it approximately follows an Indian path by the same name Along with scenic views, the highway features businesses and monuments that ostensibly commemorate local Indian history.

The Big Indian is a 28-foot statue of an Indian, clad in an enormous Plains-style headdress, that advertises the Big Indian Shop along the Mohawk Trail in Charlemont.[1] He is flanked by other symbols of life on the Western frontier – a tepee and some fake horses pulling a fake covered wagon. A latecomer to the Mohawk Trail's tourist landscape, the statue was erected in 1954 when the business with the same name opened. The Trail's marked decline would begin only three years later with the completion of the Massachusetts Turnpike. Perhaps the Big Indian was, in some sense, the culmination of the Trail's four decades of relative prominence.

[1] *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail* (Brookline, Mass.: Muddy River Press, 2002), 20. In 1954, the shop was actually called the Mohawk Teepee. The name was changed after the statue became a local landmark.

What *is* the deal with the Big Indian? And what is he doing in Charlemont, Massachusetts? Finally, why does he, along with the other remnants of the tourist industry that once thrived along the Mohawk Trail, seem dated from an early twenty-first century perspective? One could argue that the Big Indian's story began in 1894 when a Williams professor coined the name "Mohawk Trail." Alternatively, an argument could be made that his story began in 1914 when the highway by that name opened. I have written this thesis in order to uncover the Big Indian's story. In it, I hope to discern how the Mohawk Trail brought frontier imagery such as the Big Indian to Western Massachusetts, why that imagery initially drew tourists to the region, and why the imagery has lost its appeal in recent years.

***

It was hardly inevitable that the highway over Hoosac Mountain would become the Mohawk Trail. Early discussion of the plans for the highway did not use the name "Mohawk Trail," nor did they tout the road's historic significance. In May 1909, North Adams City Engineer Franklin B. Locke began to advocate for a state highway over Hoosac Mountain.[2] In the *Transcript* coverage of the governor signing the bill allocating the first $75,000 toward the construction of the highway, the headline and text describe the highway as the "state road over Hoosac Mountain."[3] Similarly, the legislation passed between 1911 and 1914

[2] "Most Beautiful Road in New England Formally Opened This Afternoon…," *North Adams Evening Transcript*, 22 October 1914. The *North Adams Evening Transcript* will hereafter be referred to as the *Transcript* in the text and the footnotes.
The 1914 state highway was not the first road built by Anglo-Americans that traversed Hoosac Mountain. Three roads that roughly followed the Indian path were built in the last half of the eighteenth century. The best of these was operated as a turnpike from 1797 to 1833. According to one source ("Old Stage Lines in Northern Berkshire," *The Berkshire Hills: A Historic Monthly* 2, no. 7(1901)), stagecoaches traveled over the turnpike three times a week on their way from Greenfield to Troy beginning in 1814. The stagecoach trip from Greenfield to Troy took 48 hours. There does not appear to be any evidence that any of these roads were ever known as the Mohawk Trail, nor that any of them were known by any name that referenced the Indian path.
[3] "Governor Foss Today Signed the Bill for State Road over Hoosac Mountain," *Transcript*, 15 July 1911.

allocating funds for the construction of the highway described it in terms of North Adams, Charlemont, Hoosac Mountain, and the Deerfield valley.[4]

The highway over Hoosac Mountain became the Mohawk Trail because it was developed during a unique historical moment. This thesis derives its title, "Mohawks, Model Ts, and Monuments," from the phenomena that made this moment unique. When the highway opened in 1914, Mohawks and their history were important to the people of North Adams because they, like many other Americans living in the Eastern half of the country at the time, were fascinated with the Indians that had existed on the other side of the recently-closed Western frontier. The history of Mohawks and other Indians asserted that North Adams had a stake in the process of American westward expansion. Model Ts and other early automobiles, along with the tourists who traveled in them, were beginning to reshape the national landscape. Since freight and businesspeople traveled across the continent by train in 1914, it was the rise of automobile tourism that created the demand for the highway in the first place. Finally, monuments would become important in the decades that followed as North Adams and other regions throughout the United States sought to concretize their connections to the epic national history of the Western frontier.

The name "Mohawk Trail" first appeared in print in Arthur Latham Perry's *Origins in Williamstown*, published in 1894.[5] Perry, a professor at Williams College, was not only the first

---

[4] See the following chapters in *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts* (Boston: Wright and Potter): An Act to Provide for the Improvement of Highways Connecting the Hoosac and Deerfield Valleys (Acts, 1911, Chap. 677), An Act to Provide for the Construction of a Highway between the City of North Adams and the Valley of the Deerfield River (Acts, 1912, Chap. 646), An Act Relative to the Construction of a Highway between the City of North Adams and the Valley of the Deerfield River (Acts, 1914, Chap. 203). The first use of the phrase "Mohawk Trail" in *Acts and Resolves* may have been in Resolve Providing for an Investigation by the State Forest Commission Relative to Establishing a State Forest along the Mohawk Trail in the Counties of Franklin and Berkshire (Resolves, 1915, Chap. 114).

[5] On page 14, Perry notes that the main road through the White Oaks section of Williamstown , "which we shall call the 'Hoosac Road,' for it has been so named certainly from the time when the captives of fort Massachusetts passed over it in 1746, is a part of the old Mohawk war-path, by which the Five Nations [of the Iroquois] and the Canada Indians (as well) passed to their raids and battles on the Deerfield [River] and the Connecticut [River]." In his index, Perry lists a "Mohawk trail" (note lowercase "t") reference on page 14,

to use the name "Mohawk Trail," but also one of the first to emphasize the longevity of the Indian settlement in the region. At the annual Field Meeting of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in September 1909, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court and amateur local historian John Adams Aiken spoke about his experience tracing the route of the Indian path known as the Mohawk Trail from Williamstown to Deerfield. Aiken claimed that it was from Perry's *Origins*, that "the information came that this Indian trail was the immemorial pathway of the Mohawks to the land of the Pocumtucks."[6] Though the Field Meeting took place just a few months after Locke had begun to advocate for the state highway, there is no evidence that either Aiken or Locke viewed the highway as a historic route that was intrinsically related to the Indian path at the time. Though it appears to have been coined in 1894, the widespread use of the name "Mohawk Trail," particularly outside the immediate vicinity of the corridor, came with the completion of the state highway from North Adams to Charlemont in 1914.[7]

Earlier in the nineteenth century, writers had romanticized the region's natural beauty rather than its Indian past. In 1869, Rev. Washington Gladden offered a romantic description of the view from Whitcomb Summit ("The vision reaches away for miles and miles over the tops of a hundred hills grouped in beautiful disorder…"), then concluded, "Every artist, whether in words or colors, ought to look upon this landscape."[8] Like Perry,

---

which must refer to the above quotation. The *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail* notes on its page 2 that the earliest known printed use of the name "Mohawk Trail" occurred in Perry's 1894 book. Clint Richmond, author of the Muddy River Press guide, explained in a 4 October 2003 email that this assertion is based on his own research. I have not encountered the name "Mohawk Trail" in any earlier source.

[6] John Adams Aiken, "The Mohawk Trail," *History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association* 5 (1912): 334-37. For biographical information about Aiken, see also *Who Was Who in America*. Vol. I (Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1943), 10.

[7] According to "Most Beautiful Road in New England Formally Opened This Afternoon…," construction began in fall 1912 and the road opened in September 1914. The formal dedication ceremony was not held until 22 October.

[8] Quoted in William Bradford Browne, *The Mohawk Trail: Its History and Course, with Map and Illustrations, Together with an Account of Fort Massachusetts and of the Early Turnpikes over Hoosac Mountain* (1920; repr., [Williamstown, Mass.]: Elder, 1998), 27-28. Citations are to the 1998 edition.

Gladden expressed a fascination with the region's primitive past and the immemorial nature of its pre-contact history. However, for Gladden, this primitive state existed primarily in nature. On the Western Summit, he noticed "a smooth surface of rock, with furrows chiseled in it by primitive icebergs."[9] In a later chapter, Gladden did note,

> During the French and Indian wars, the invading forces from Canada more frequently followed the course of the Connecticut River southward into Massachusetts, but occasionally they came down by way of Lake Champlain, the Hudson, and the Hoosac Valleys, crossing Hoosac Mountain at this point and following the Deerfield River down to the Connecticut.[10]

Here, by referring to the "French and Indian wars," Gladden implicitly included Indians in the "invading forces" that attacked settlements in western Massachusetts at various times during the eighteenth century. However, Gladden's Indians appeared only after the English and French had arrived in the region. Furthermore, he suggested that the Mohawks who attacked with the French followed the Mohawk Trail route only "occasionally." Unlike Perry and Aiken, Gladden did not give his readers a sense that local Indian history was particularly important, nor that the Mohawk Trail had been an "immemorial pathway."

Though they certainly expounded them, Perry, Aiken, and other like-minded historians did not invent the historical connection between Mohawks and the region. Although Mohawks never lived in the section of western Massachusetts through which the Trail passes, various groups of Mohawks did use the Trail in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[11] The northern Mohawks (who called themselves the Kahnawake), French allies who lived near Montreal, used the Mohawk Trail in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

---

[9] Quoted in Browne, 29.
[10] Washington Gladden, *From the Hub to the Hudson, With Sketches of Nature, History, and Industry in North-Western Massachusetts* (Boston: New England News Co.: 1869), 121.
[11] According to Browne (pages 10-11), when the Dutch arrived at Albany in the early seventeenth century, the Mahicans occupied the western section of the Mohawk Trail corridor. At that time, according to John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 6, a small tribe known as the Pocumtucks had a settlement in the eastern section of the Trail corridor in the Connecticut and Deerfield valleys, near the present-day town of Deerfield. Browne suggests that the Mohawks' territory extended north and west from Albany (page 11).

in order to attack English settlements in the Connecticut valley. The southern Mohawks, residents of upstate New York who were either allied with the English and Dutch or neutral, used the Trail to trade with and attack the Pocumtucks and other Connecticut valley tribes.[12] Over the course of the early twentieth century, local historians, prominent citizens, and others strove to recast the history of this Indian path into a local historical narrative that paralleled the national narrative of American westward expansion.

In response to the popularity of this historical narrative, local entrepreneurs cultivated a regional identity by marketing popular notions of local Indian and frontier history along the Mohawk Trail. The regional identity was so potent that, by 1925, the local chamber of commerce proclaimed that North Adams was "The City of the Mohawk Trail." This regional identity was lucrative because it fused the Indians and wilderness that had existed on the other side of the recently-closed Western frontier with the automobile that had recently become a viable mode of transportation for middle-class tourists. Along the Mohawk Trail, tourists would be able to experience the Indians and wilderness of the frontier through their automobiles. In a final phase, this regional identity that had been cultivated by entrepreneurs and accepted by tourists, along with the allusions to Indians and the Western frontier that it embodied, was commemorated through the public history of fraternal organizations and historical societies.

According to historian John Jackle, the romanticized past had many uses in the burgeoning American tourist industry of the early twentieth century, but it was particularly useful at sites that were able to associate themselves with persons, events, or activities of national importance.[13] This is precisely what the Mohawk Trail was able to do.

---

[12] Browne, 10-12 and Demos, 120.
[13] John A. Jackle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 288.

CHAPTER 1
Mohawks:
Performing the American Frontier

In June 1914, *The Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* was performed four times at Hoosac Valley Park in North Adams, Massachusetts in order to commemorate the opening of the Mohawk Trail, a state highway over Hoosac Mountain connecting North Adams to Charlemont. The pageant, a massive undertaking that cost over 6000 dollars and involved over 1100 performers, attracted more than 10,000 spectators.[1] Its romantic narrative portrayed the history of the Mohawk Trail as an inevitable progression from primitive Indian wilderness through Anglo pioneer simplicity to modern Anglo American civilization. The presentation of this history on the eve of the opening of the state highway seemed to imply that the construction of a modern highway, symbolizing the triumph of modern Anglo American engineering over the natural barrier of Hoosac Mountain, was the natural culmination of the past several centuries of settlement in the region.

The historical narrative conveyed by the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* echoed the story of American westward expansion. In 1914, residents of North Adams were certainly aware

---

[1] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail in Celebration of the Building of the New Mohawk Trail: Presented in North Adams on the 17, 18, 19, and 20 of June 1914* ([North Adams, Mass.?]: [1914]) and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle," *North Adams Evening Transcript*, 18 June 1914 and "Pageant Ends with Two Performances Saturday," *Transcript*, 22 June 1914 and "Nearly $800 Left for Trail Indian," *Transcript*, 31 July 1916. *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail…*was the program for the pageant, and will sometimes be referred to as "the pageant program*"* in the text and footnotes. The program does not have page numbers. Though the program title refers to the *Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail*, I have chosen to refer to the pageant as *The Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* throughout this thesis. The word "Old" was generally omitted in other sources.
The 1915 edition of *Manning's North Adams Directory* (Springfield, Mass.: H.A. Manning Co.) lists Hoosac Valley Park as a 19.6-acre private park on South State Street. A booklet issued by the North Adams Board of Trade, *North Adams, Mass.* (Glens Falls, N.Y.: Possons, [1896?]), notes that the park had "winding paths and rusted bridges, a small lake with row boats, a pavilion, a collection of animals, merry-go-round, and various other features of enjoyment for the old and young." According to an 18 June 1974 *Transcript* article commemorating the 60th anniversary of the pageant, Hoosac Valley Park used to be "at what is now Hodges Cross Road, Old State Street and Curran Highway." In a 23 November 2003 discussion, Paul Marino confirmed that Hoosac Valley Park was in this general area. It has been at least a few decades since the site was used as a park – even in 1974, *Transcript* writer Charles J. Hoye described the park as "long gone."

of the stories of primitive life on the Western frontier. One week before the opening performance of the pageant, the traveling cast of *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* performed in North Adams. The spectacle included "Vivid Pictures of distinctive scenes and events" and "REAL RED MEN OF THE PLAINS in War Paint" (Figure 1.1).[2] At least one prominent local observer noted the connection between the local historical narrative offered by the pageant and the well-known national historical narrative of the advancing Western frontier. Preaching on the Sunday after the pageant performances, Reverend G.M. Gerrish of the Universalist church in North Adams, who had played the part of Chaplain Norton in the pageant's Fort Massachusetts episode, spoke to his congregation about the pageant. In his sermon, he suggested, "the history of the Mohawk trail in this fair valley mirrors in miniature the history of the country. The receding waters; the primeval wilderness, the Indians, the early settlers, peace, love, war, grief and joy; and then the coming of the strangers."[3] By evoking these parallels between local and national historical narratives, Gerrish implied that there was a conceptual affinity between the local heritage presented by the pageant and the American heritage presented by Wyoming Bill.

The pageant, which had inspired Gerrish's sermon, fundamentally changed the relationship between the scenes performed in *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* and the show's North Adams audience. By presenting the history of the Mohawk Trail as a series of events that "mirror[ed] in miniature" the popular images of the Western frontier that Wyoming Bill vividly portrayed, the pageant made the history of American westward expansion relevant to North Adams residents. After the pageant, North Adams audiences who watched Wild West

[2] All quotes in this paragraph are taken from advertisements for *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* that appeared in the *Transcript* on 6 June and 9 June 1914.
[3] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "Pastors Speak of the Pageant," *Transcript*, 22 June 1914.

shows would see their own local heritage encapsulated in the mythic national heritage of the American West.

Figure 1.1: Advertisement for *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* that appeared in the *Transcript* on 9 June 1914.

Though the pageant appears to be the first medium through which the notion of the Mohawk Trail as Western frontier was codified and popularly disseminated, it was not the first vehicle through which such an idea was presented. One important step in linking the highway over Hoosac Mountain to westward expansion was Arthur Latham Perry's act of

assigning the name "Mohawk Trail" to it. The use of such a name for a modern highway implied that there was continuity between the primitive Indian transportation of the past and the sophisticated Anglo- American transportation of the present. The notion, derived from Perry and John Adams Aiken, of the Mohawk Trail as an "immemorial pathway" resonated with the organizers of the pageant. According to the pageant program, Indians had "traversed or crossed the Old Trail… on errands of peace and war from time immemorial."[4]

Perry and the others who amplified his assertions certainly strived to underscore the contributions of Mohawks to the history of western Massachusetts, and thereby to assert the historical importance of the Mohawk Trail. When discussing a 1735 Deerfield pow wow, Aiken admitted that he was "ambitious in claiming travel for the Mohawk Trail," and therefore disappointed to report that the Indians who traveled to Deerfield from the west did not follow the Trail.[5]

C(linton) Q. Richmond, a prominent North Adams businessman, may have been the first to call the new highway the "Mohawk Trail."[6] Richmond envisioned an immense statue of an Indian at one of the summits of Hoosac Mountain that would concretize the connection between the state highway that was under construction and the Indian trail that the highway approximately followed. Richmond sought to erect such a statue because he knew "by heart the wonderful historical associations of the old Indian pathway." As a means to raise money for the statue, Richmond suggested that a historical pageant be staged in North Adams depicting the history of the Mohawk Trail.[7] At a meeting of the newly formed Mohawk Trail Council on 17 October 1913, "plans for the erection of an heroic statue of an Indian on the summit of Florida mountain were discussed" along with plans for a historical

[4] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*
[5] Aiken, 338.
[6] Paul W. Marino, "Mohawk Trail Addendum," in Browne, 46.
[7] "Pageant Receipts Will Probably Reach $6000," *Transcript*, 22 June 1914 and Marino, 46.

pageant. Richmond and Margaret MacLauren Eager of Deerfield, who would be the director of the pageant, were both present.[8] Through Richmond, the vision of the state highway as the historic Mohawk Trail and the vision of a pageant to codify that history were linked from the outset.

***

On 12 July 1893, one year before the publication of Perry's *Origins in Williamstown*, Frederick Jackson Turner delivered an essay titled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" at a conference of the American Historical Association in Chicago. At least one modern historian still considers this essay to be "the single most influential piece of writing in the history of American history."[9] Turner's essay, often known as his frontier thesis, was based on the premise that the U.S. Census Bureau's 1890 declaration that the United States no longer had a Western frontier line necessitated fundamental changes in American society. Turner claimed, "This brief official statement [by the Census Bureau] marks the closing of a great historic movement. Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West."[10]

According to Turner, "the frontier is the outer edge of a wave – the meeting point between savagery and civilization."[11] In his view, this dichotomy between savagery and civilization played a crucial role in the articulation of an American identity. As Turner described the arrival of the first pioneers in a frontier region, he argued,

> The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the

[8] "Pageant Idea Is Considered," *North Adams Evening Transcript*, 18 October 1913 and "Historical Pageant/Big North Adams Event…," [*Springfield Republican*], [18 June 1914]. The source and date for the [*Republican*] article are based on an annotation next to a clipping in a scrapbook in the Williams College Archives. Since the first performance of the pageant was on 17 June, it is likely that this date is accurate.
[9] John Mack Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), 1-2.
[10] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), in Faragher, 31.
[11] Turner, 32.

> birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, the frontier environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little, he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe… [H]ere is a new product that is American.[12]

Historian Shari Huhndorf calls attention to this passage in order to argue that the "new and striking" aspects of Turner's argument were related to the way he "defined Indians not in opposition to Americanness but rather as predecessors of Turner's quintessential American, the pioneer."[13] For Turner, Indians constituted an important stage in the development of American civilization.

Like the American civilization that Turner's colonists built, the landscape of the modern Mohawk Trail was, in the minds of early twentieth century observers, predicated on the employment of European "industries, tools, modes of travel" to improve upon the Indians' primitive environmental modifications in order to create a "new product that is American."[14] The pageant program alluded to the role of Indians in the evolution of the modern highway by noting that the fact that the highway followed the Indian path was an indication "that the Indian himself, by natural instinct, was a pretty good engineer."[15]A few years after the pageant, local historian William Bradford Browne attempted to place the role of Indians in Mohawk Trail history in the context of a global historical narrative. In a 1920 historical pamphlet, Browne quoted a contemporary edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* to

---

[12] Turner, 33-34. This passage is similar to a passage quoted by Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), on page 56 of her text.
[13] Huhndorf, 56.
[14] Note that when Turner mentioned "wilderness," he was actually referring to a landscape that had been inhabited and modified by Indians. Before Turner's colonist "transforms the wilderness," he "fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails." Some of the alterations that Indians made to the New England landscape before the arrival of European colonists will be discussed below.
[15] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*

explain that the history of the Mohawk Trail typified the transition from a primitive society to a civilized one:

> The Indians were no exception to the rule that one of the fundamental contributions of a primitive people to the culture factors in the life of the race dispossessing them consists of the trails and camping places, waterways, and trade routes which they have known and used from time immemorial. The great importance of these trails and camps has often been emphasized. It was over these trails that the missionary, soldier, adventurer, trader, trapper, hunter, explorer and settler followed the Indian with guides or without.
>
> THE ROAD FOLLOWED THE TRAIL, AND THE RAILWAY THE ROAD." This is exactly the story of our [Mohawk] Trail.[16]

Along the Mohawk Trail, European Americans not only improved upon Indian trails, but also upon Indian uses of rivers. The writer of the pageant program and guidebook writer Charles Canedy were captivated by the idea that at Shelburne Falls, the "Red Men" speared salmon in the same place where "modern man" has "harnessed the rushing waters" by building a dam.[17]

Though the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* was performed two decades after Turner's original presentation of "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," it was performed as Turner's ideas were becoming popular outside of the West and outside of academic circles. In 1910, Turner left the University of Wisconsin (then one of the westernmost major universities) to accept a position at Harvard, and, in 1920, the frontier thesis and Turner's other major essays were published in book form for the first time.[18] Whether or not the growing popularity of Turner's frontier thesis had any direct impact on the formulation of the pageant's plot, the pageant organizers certainly developed a local

---

[16] Browne, 6.

[17] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and *The Trail of the Mohawk* (North Adams, Mass.: Charles Canedy, [1917?]). The publication date for *The Trail of the Mohawk* is based on an advertisement in the guide for the Walloomsac Inn in Old Bennington, which states that the Inn had been open for a "Record 153 Years" – from 1764 to 1917. I would like to thank Clint Richmond for pointing this out to me. This book does not have page numbers.

[18] Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 29.

historical narrative through which Turnerian ideas were popularly disseminated. Like Turner's frontier thesis, the pageant's narrative emphasized the role of Indians in the development of Anglo American civilization. Like Turner's colonist, each of the historical figures depicted in the pageant literally "follows the Indian trails." As the pageant title indicates, the fact that all of these historical figures followed a particular Indian path was the theme around which the pageant narrative was organized.

***

It was not only the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*'s narrative that reflected national trends, but also the vehicle through which it presented that narrative. The pageant was performed at the height of the national community pageantry movement, and its director was one of the most prominent pageant directors in the country. Margaret MacLauren Eager, a socialite raised in Newburgh, New York, had been directing musical productions for charity since age 18. Like the North Adams pageant, most of her productions were community histories.[19] Eager directed her first outdoor historical pageant in Duxbury, Massachusetts in 1909.[20] Over the course of the next eight years, she directed pageants in communities throughout Massachusetts and New York state.[21]

Nearly all of the historical information conveyed by the pageant was disseminated by the pageant program. In Eager's Deerfield pageants, "the pageant field was too large for

---

[19] There seems to be a consensus among scholars that the Pageant of the Mohawk Trail was produced during the height of the community pageantry movement. According to Naima Prevots (*American Pageantry: A Movement for Art and Democracy* [Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990], 1), pageants flourished in the United States between 1905 and 1925. Michael G. Kammen (*Mystic Chords Of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* [New York: Knopf, 1991], 277) suggests that the peak of the movement spanned the years 1905-1917. David Glassberg (*American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990], 1) locates the "pageantry craze" in the early twentieth century. For biographical information on Eager, see Ann Marie Shea, "Community Pageants in Massachusetts, 1908-1932" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1984), 67 and Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 38-39.

[20] Shea, 68.

[21] Angela Goebel Bain, "Historical Pageantry in Old Deerfield: 1910, 1913, 1916." *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings* 25 (2000): 121. See also "Appendix A: Chronology of American Pageants, 1908-1917" in Prevots, 177-199. Eager may have directed outdoor historical pageants for more than eight years, but I have not encountered a reference to any pageant that she directed after 1917.

players to engage in extensive dialogue, forcing the audience to rely on the pageant program to understand the plot."[22] The vastness of the field used in North Adams and the size of the crowds suggest that the same situation existed in the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. Like North Adams, the Deerfield pageant programs included historical notes along with episode titles and lists of cast members.[23]

***

> *The* Pageant of the Mohawk Trail *began with the receding waters of a glacial lake that, according to geologists, once covered North Adams, Williamstown, and Stamford, Vermont. This was depicted through choreographed interaction between an unusually tall man representing the "Spirit of Greylock" and a woman and a group of young girls portraying the "Spirit of the Waves." The receding waters were followed by the arrival of the "First Indian on the Trail." The First Indian, played by Theodore Plunkett, "breaks in upon the stillness of the scene with an Indian warble, after which he paddles across the lake in his canoe and sings in the fullness of his voice 'The Chant of the Sunrise.' The 'Spirit of the Pines' [played by Elsa Eager, niece of Margaret MacLauren] approaches him in a friendly manner and, pointing towards the slope, allows the 'Tree Sprites' [another group of young girls] to mark the tral [*sic.*] which the Indian ascends."*[24]
>
> *The next episode portrayed a seventeenth century conflict between the Mohawks and Pocumtucks. In order to avenge the Pocumtuck murder of Mohawk "Prince" Sahada, the Mohawks "mustered a powerful force and marched over Hoosac Mountain… So thoroughly was the*

[22] Bain, 125.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle." The long quotation is taken from "More than two thousand…" Shea mentions that Elsa Eager is Margaret MacLauren Eager's niece on page 74 of her text.

work of the Mohawks done that in one fatal day the chieftains and warriors of the Pocumtuck were laid in the dust."[25]

In the following episode, Moses Rice, the "First Settler on the Trail," arrived in Charlemont. For years after he settled in Charlemont in the early eighteenth century, Rice's "was the westernmost house in Massachusetts." In the pageant, John Rice, a sixth-generation descendant, played Samuel Rice.[26]

The episode after the Moses Rice arrival conveyed the building of Fort Massachusetts in 1745 and the August 1746 siege of the fort by French and Indians. The fort "was built for a threefold purpose; to defend the colony from the French and Indians, to warn the Dutch of New York against encroachments on the western frontier and to tell the people of New Hampshire Grants that they must keep within bounds." The attack on the fort began with Indians "who could be seen creeping through the bushes… French soldiers follow them stealthily." In this episode, as in the episode depicting the Mohawk-Pocumtuck conflict, the Indians were played by members of the North Adams Lodge of the Loyal Order of the Moose.[27]

The next two episodes portrayed the arrival of the "Early Settlers" and "the Quakers" in East Hoosac (the town that was later divided into Adams and North Adams). The "Early Settlers" kneeled in prayer, then went off to build their homes. Descendants of the "Early Settlers" and the original Quaker settlers played many of the parts in these episodes.[28]

---

[25] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle." The quotation is taken from a Historical Note in the pageant program. The murder portrayed in this pageant episode is mentioned briefly by Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney in their chapter "Revisiting *The Redeemed Captive*" in *After King Philip's War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England*, ed. Colin G. Calloway (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997): 50. Haefeli and Sweeney describe Sahada as a "Mohawk peace emissary."

[26] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*

[27] *Ibid.* Browne (page 16) cites the same three reasons for the fort's construction. In 1745, the New Hampshire Grants included present-day southern Vermont.

[28] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle."

The narrative that runs through these first few scenes is clearly one of wilderness and savagery receding to make way for an advancing civilization. Between the primal wilderness of the glacial lake and the arrival of the first Anglo settler lay the Indians. These Indians made their final appearance in the Fort Massachusetts scene, then were absent in all of the scenes after the arrival of the "Early Settlers."[29] This matches the progression at Eager's Deerfield pageants, in which the Indians "were often linked to images of the wilderness, relinquishing their occupation of the pageant grounds when colonists arrived, but returning briefly to fight."[30]

The pageant established a rigid dichotomy between Indians living in harmony with the wilderness and Anglo Americans subduing it. An "Interlude" between two later episodes, one depicting local men departing for the Revolutionary War Battle of Bennington and the other depicting the primitive Slab City settlement at the site of North Adams, was titled "The Protest of the Pines." In the interlude, the pageant program explained that the "Pine Sprites moan and grieve" as the lumbermen continued "ruthlessly chopping down the small pine trees."[31] The Pine Sprites did not "moan and grieve" when the Indians settled in the region. On the contrary, as noted above, the Sprites led the First Indian into the region.

The fact that the pines did not protest until the Anglo Americans began to build a settlement suggests that the Indians that preceded the settlers had lived in harmony with the surrounding forests. At least one modern historian disagrees. William Cronon argues, "It is

---

[29] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*

[30] Bain, 127.

[31] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.* The presence of the Pine Sprites in the pageant seems to be a relatively early example of the romanticization of American wilderness. As Anne Farrar Hyde points out on pages 215-16 of *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that "the [American] wilderness, no longer seen as an enemy threatening to engulf a fragile civilization, suddenly attained new status. Historians, philosophers, and politicians gave the wilderness of the continent credit for providing the nation with character, strength, and inventiveness. Suddenly an object of nostalgia and pride, rather than fear and embarrassment, the American wilderness enjoyed new popularity… The urban civilization that Americans had worked so hard to cultivate now became the enemy."

tempting to believe that when Europeans arrived in the New World they confronted Virgin Land, the Forest Primeval, a wilderness which had existed for eons uninfluenced by human hands. Nothing could be further from the truth."[32] Cronon points out that Southern New England Indians burned the undergrowth in forests surrounding their villages in order to facilitate transportation and hunting, and that these fires changed the ecology of pre-contact New England forests. He concludes that the forests of seventeenth century Southern New England "were so open and parklike" when the English colonists arrived "not because the trees naturally grew thus, but because the Indians preferred them so."[33]

Unlike the Pine Sprites, the First Indian did not "moan and grieve," nor did he fight, when the English settlers arrived. Historian David Glassberg claims, "Any dramatic confrontations in historical pageants occurred between humankind and nature, not between social classes and forces."[34] Clearly, the conflict between abstract "Pine Sprites" and lumbermen representing civilization fit into this framework. The pageant did show that Indians were involved in the attack on Fort Massachusetts, but that attack was primarily the result of a conflict between two European colonial powers. The pageant never depicted conflict between European pioneers and Indians.

The lack of confrontation between pioneers and Indians suggests another connection between the pageant's historical narrative and the narrative of Turner's frontier thesis. Huhndorf calls attention to the ways in which Turner removed human prerogative from the process of frontier expansion and the resultant removal of Indians. Focusing on the language in Turner's essay, she argues that, by claiming the "frontier had leaped over the

[32] William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 12.
[33] Cronon, 48-51. Quotation from page 49.
[34] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 148.

Alleghenies" and "skipped over the Great Plains," Turner implied that the frontier "actually seems to progress westward of its own volition." In her opinion,

> These images of the frontier, which implied that westward expansion and conquest were both natural and inevitable, reframed American history. Responsibility for a massive and bloody conquest no longer lay with human agents… Native peoples, apparently, were casualties of progress rather than of violence.[35]

Turner's omission of violent conflicts between European Americans and Indians is particularly striking in light of the fact that he was writing only three years after the U.S. Army's Seventh Cavalry massacred over 200 virtually defenseless Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee.[36] The Wounded Knee Massacre, which is widely regarded as the episode that concluded the conquest of American Indians, occurred in 1890, the same year in which the Census Bureau declared that the United States no longer had a frontier line. Though Turner's argument concentrated on the Census Bureau's declaration, it is hard to ignore the temporal coincidence between the massacre and Turner's date for the closure of the frontier.

Further temporally removed from violence on the Western frontier than Turner, and perhaps benefiting from the growing salience of Turner's notion of an organic and inevitable process of westward expansion, the pageant was able to seamlessly omit violence between Europeans and Indians. Its narrative certainly implied that the Indians of the Mohawk Trail corridor were, to use Huhndorf's phrase, "casualties of progress rather than of violence." In this sense, the North Adams pageant plot was not only similar to Turner's narrative, but also to contemporary pageant plots that "portrayed social change as a nearly organic process,

---

[35] Turner quotations and direct quotation taken from Huhndorf, 58.
[36] John W. Fiero, "Wounded Knee Massacre," in *American Indian History*, ed. Carole A. Barrett (Pasadena, Calif.: Salem, 2003), 601 and Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American History* (New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2004), 281. For a more detailed description of the Wounded Knee Massacre, see Fiero, 598-601.

smoothly unfolding from forest primeval to 'City Beautiful.'"[37] By replacing violence with progress in local historical narratives that mirrored national ones, the organizers of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* and other contemporary community pageants presented a distorted history of American westward expansion that absolved all European Americans of responsibility for the violent conquest of Indians.

The pageant not only distorted regional Indian history through its plot, but also through the casting and costuming decisions of its organizers. With the exception of the three major Indian roles, members of the North Adams Lodge of the Loyal Order of Moose, a fraternal organization, played all of the Indians in the pageant. Since the Loyal Order of the Moose required that all of its members be Caucasian, all of the Moose who played Indian parts in the pageant must have been white. Presumably, the three actors portraying named Indian parts – Plunkett, William J. Ross (Mohawk "Chief"), and W. Robare (Sahada) – were also whites from the community. In the photo of Ross that was printed in the *Springfield Republican*, he does not appear to be Indian (Figure 1.2a). Though the pageant program and the *Transcript* note that various cast members are descendants of the historical figures that they play, neither source mentions that any of the actors playing the Indian parts have Indian ancestry. This evidence suggests that all of the pageant's Indian parts were played by white actors.[38]

---

[37] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 139.

[38] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "Historical Pageant/Big North Adams Event…" and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle." The Moose retained their Caucasian requirement until the early 1970s. In 1971, the North Adams Moose lodge lost its state liquor license because of racial discrimination (*Transcript*, 8 April 1971). According to the 1913 and 1914 editions of *Manning's North Adams Directory*, William J. Ross was employed at Arnold Print Works. Theodore Plunkett appears to be a descended from the well-known Plunkett family. Speaking of the Plunkett family in *Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Berkshire County, Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1906), editor Rollin Hillyer Cook suggested, "None of Berkshire county's families of exceptional interest has been a more potent factor in its development and none has included so many strong men contributory to progress along manufacturing lines." According to Cook's volume, Theodore graduated from Williams College in 1900 and was employed in 1906 at Berkshire Cotton Manufacturing Company in Adams. Cook did not mention any Indian ancestry among the Plunketts.

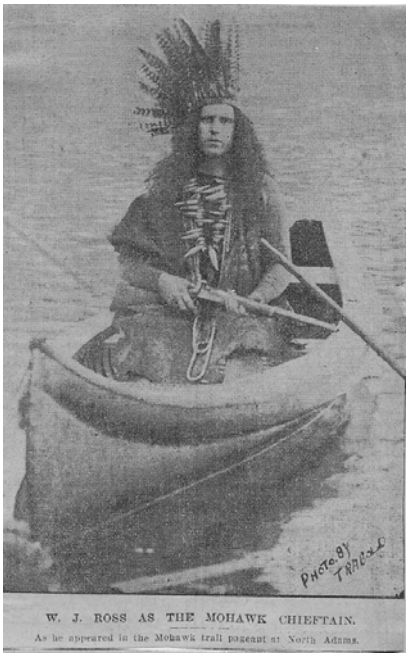


Figure 1.2a: The Mohawk Chieftain (played by W.J. Ross) as he appeared in the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. This photo appeared in the *Springfield Republican* on 18 June 1914 (see note 8). (Courtesy of Williams College Archives and Special Collections)

Figure 1.2b: Indians from the Fort Massachusetts episode of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. This photo appeared in the *Transcript* on 18 June 1914.[39] (Digital image courtesy of Paul Marino)

[39] The caption that appears with this photo in the *Transcript* on 18 June 1914 says that it depicts "Indians in Fort Episode." However, the 18 June 1974 coverage of the sixtieth anniversary of the pageant displays this photo with the caption, "Dutch farmer (Dr. F.D. Stafford) and friends." Paul Marino, who had this digital image, had recorded the caption as, "Arrival of the Dutch Farmers." In a 7 December 2003 email, Marino suggested that he probably took his caption from the *Transcript* files. He and I agree that the 1914 caption seems more plausible because it was assigned during the pageant performances and because most of the people in the photo are Indians.

Though the North Adams Lodge was formed only a few months before the pageant, the Loyal Order of the Moose had a large membership in the city at the time. As of May 1914, the organization had 844 members out of a city population of approximately 25,000.[40] Many fraternal lodges in the early twentieth century "had Indian themes or sponsored Indian-type activities"[41] Given their role as Indians in the pageant, the North Adams Moose appear to be no exception. At least one other Moose lodge in the area, the Mohawk Legion #198 in Greenfield, explicitly promoted its connection to an Indian past, at least in its name.[42] However, the Moose did not appear to be a fraternal organization with an exclusive focus on Indian themes. The fact that members of the Moose portrayed the local soldiers from East Hoosick (the town would later be divided into North Adams and Adams) and Williamstown in the episode in which the soldiers left for the Battle of Bennington suggests that the North Adams Moose had interests that were not related to Indians.[43]

The choice to have white locals play the Indian parts is particularly interesting in light of the fact that many of the key roles in later pageant episodes were played by members of the appropriate ethnic group if not actual descendants of the historical figures. This discrepancy was not unique to North Adams. Pageant directors in various locations realized that the formula of casting descendants in the roles of ancestors

> did not work very well for the "Indian" scenes. Though nearly every historical pageant included at least one such episode, pageant-masters realized that few towns,

---

[40] "Local Moose Close Charter," *Transcript*, 9 June 1914 and "Senator Davis Speaks at Welsh and Moose Affairs," *Transcript*, 27 February 1939. The Loyal Order of the Moose may have been chosen because Dr. Frank D. Stafford, a member of the pageant Executive Committee (see *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail*), was the "dictator" of the Moose lodge (see 1939 article).
[41] Huhndorf, 65.
[42] Lucy C. Kellogg *History of Greenfield, 1900-1929* (Greenfield, Mass.: Town of Greenfield, 1931), 1739-40. Like North Adams, Greenfield's only connection to Mohawks was through the Mohawk Trail. According to Kellogg, the Greenfield chapter was founded on 31 May 1912.
[43] "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle."

> especially in the East, had full-blooded Indians of the proper nation living nearby or local residents willing to identify with their Indian descent.[44]

The most common solution was the one adopted in North Adams – to assign the Indian roles to local organizations with an interest in Indian lore.[45] As Angela Goebel Bain notes, "the fact that it was socially acceptable for non-Natives to portray Native Americans in a pageant reflected an asymmetrical balance of power."[46]

By altering skin color as well as costume, the pageant costumers strove to make the actors playing Indian parts seem as Indian as possible. In the newspaper photos, Ross and the Indians from the Fort Massachusetts episode all appeared to be wearing dark-colored union suits in order to change their skin color (see Figures 1.2a and 1.2b). Dark-colored union suits were used for this purpose in pageants in another Massachusetts community in 1912 and 1913.[47] The *Transcript* mentioned that Ross was "arrayed in all the splendor of war-paint and feathers of a Mohawk."[48]

As they appropriated the costume, skin color, and mode of transportation (canoe) commonly associated with Indians, the white actors who played Indian parts in the pageant enacted a crucial step in the process of American identity formulation that Turner described. To use Turner's language, these actors literally "strip[ped] off the garments of civilization" and "put [themselves] in the birch canoe."[49] This temporary adoption of Indian ways enabled the pageant actors to deepen their connection to the quintessentially American process of

---

[44] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 114. There may have been a handful of Indians in North Adams in 1914. The 1910 and 1920 censuses both report that there were 57 "Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and persons of all other races" living in Berkshire County (out of total county populations of 105,259 in 1910 and 113,033 in 1920). This census data is taken from University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, *United States Historical Census Data Browser*, 1998, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census> (17 April 2004).

[45] *Ibid.* As I mentioned above, the Loyal Order of the Moose did not appear to be an organization whose sole, or even primary, focus was Indian lore. The specific organizations that, according to Glassberg, often played Indian roles in pageants were the Boy Scouts and the Improved Order of Red Men.

[46] Bain, 134.

[47] Laura Shelby Lee, "The West Tisbury Pageant: An Insider's View," *Dukes County Intelligencer* 28, no. 4 (1987): 181-82.

[48] "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle."

[49] Turner, 33.

civilizing the frontier without abandoning the conveniences of civilization. Historian Phillip Deloria argues that this kind of "temporary, costumed play refused to synthesize the contradictions between European and Indian. Rather, it held them in near-perfect suspension, allowing Americans to have their cake and eat it too."[50] Just as the adoption of Indian ways strengthened the actors' connection to the frontier, the incorporation of Indian scenes into the pageant strengthened North Adams's connection to the historical process of American westward expansion. Because the contradictions between European and Indian could be temporarily suspended, the pageant organizers were able to formulate a regional historical narrative based around the Mohawk Trail without reevaluating North Adams's status as a modern city.

***

Like the organizers and promoters of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*, the promoters of the North Adams performance of *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* claimed that the show would accurately portray historical events. Among the scenes offered in the Wild West show was "a true to life representation of the famous Mountain Meadow [*sic*.] Massacre." The use of the word "Historical" in the *Wyoming Bill's* advertisement demonstrates that the show was marketing itself as an educational, as well as entertaining, experience (Figure 1.1). A *Transcript* advertisement that ran a few days before the one shown in Figure 1.1 began with the preposterous assertion that "there is probably no greater educational institution or amusement enterprise in the entire world today than the Wyoming Bill's Wild West Show."[51] These claims of historical accuracy and educational value were certainly dubious. It is not clear how accurate the scenes depicted in *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* were. However, another

[50] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 185.
[51] Both quotes in this paragraph are taken from advertisements for *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* that appeared in the *Transcript* on 6 June and 9 June 1914. The event mentioned in the first quotation is generally known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Wild West show that was touring in the 1910s offered a modified reenactment of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in which cowboys and cavalry arrived in time to save the Eastern emigrants from their Mormon and Indian attackers.[52] Other Wild West shows also emphasized their historical accuracy and educational value. "Arizona" John Burke, the chief press agent for *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, emphasized that the various places where the shows were performed were "exhibition grounds," not "show grounds."[53] To an extent, this emphasis on the historical fidelity of Wild West shows blurred the distinction for their audiences between staged reenactments and actual historical events.

During the early twentieth century in western Massachusetts, the performance of historical pageants and actual historical events seemed to meld into a single phenomenon. In his 1909 presentation to the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in Deerfield about the Mohawk Trail, John Adams Aiken framed his discussion of one historical event in a way that clearly alluded to contemporary historical pageantry. Referring to an eighteenth-century pow wow involving Massachusetts Bay Governor Belcher and 80 Indians, Aiken asserted, "In 1735, Deerfield had a real pageant, not a simulation nor an attempt at facsimile."[54] Aiken's emphasis on the reality of the pageantry at the 1735 pow wow suggests that, as a historian, he was captivated by the performances of history that were taking place throughout Massachusetts in the early twentieth century. Rev. Gerrish, the North Adams Universalist

---

[52] L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 183. The *Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Real Wild West* performed the modified reenactment of the Mountain Meadows Massacre between 1911 and 1913. At the actual event, which took place in September 1857 near Cedar City, Utah, all 137 of the emigrants were massacred except for a few small children. See "Mountain Meadows massacre," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2004, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=55401> (17 April 2004).

[53] Thomas Antony Freeland, "The National Entertainment: Buffalo Bill's Wild West and the Pageant of American Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1999), 6. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, featuring "Buffalo Bill" Cody, was the archetypal Wild West show. It is likely that the name "Wyoming Bill" was inspired by "Buffalo Bill."

[54] Aiken, 338. For a more detailed description of this "pow wow," see Demos, 182-84. Demos refers to the event as a "conference" rather than a pow wow. He explains that it was designed to improve trade and diplomatic relations among the English and various Indian tribes, including the Kahnawake (Canadian Mohawks) and the Housatonic Indians from Stockbridge, Mass.

minister who drew parallels between local and national historical narratives, implied that there was a connection between the pageant's historical narrative and the daily lives of the members of his congregation. Gerrish claimed, "To me, we are on the earthly trail. Life is a pageant."[55] In a guidebook published shortly after the state highway opened, Charles Canedy explained that "thrilling scenes of pioneer times were enacted practically within the shadow of this mountain barrier."[56] Canedy's emphasis on "thrilling scenes" seems to imply that, like episodes in the pageant, pioneer life consisted of a string of contrived vignettes. Apparently, like the corridor's past, the Mohawk Trail's present would eventually be simplified into a series of "thrilling scenes."

Though the pageant purported to tell a local historical narrative, many of its scenes were in fact generic ones that were inserted in order to link North Adams with the well-known national historic narrative. Although the pageant episode in which local men left for the Battle of Bennington ostensibly had local significance, the scene itself merely depicted a generic narrative of men marching off to answer a call to arms and women weeping and baking bread for the troops. The "Early Settlers" episode and the episode depicting the return of local soldiers after the Civil War also appear to have been essentially generic.[57] It is likely that Eager was partially responsible for the insertion of so many generic episodes into the pageant. In a Somerville, Massachusetts pageant that Eager directed in 1898, only five of the 15 episodes were local in character.[58] Though Eager once claimed that her intention was "to strike that tender local chord which, when rightly struck, binds the people of a community together as no other thing can," theater historian Anne Marie Shea notes that "in practice she tended to repeat a stock series of episodes, usually only slightly adjusted to the

[55] "Pastors Speak of the Pageant."
[56] *The Trail of the Mohawk.*
[57] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle."
[58] Shea, 41.

background of the town producing the pageant."[59] Furthermore, the historical accuracy of Eager's productions may have diminished over time. Shea argues that Eager "abandoned historical fidelity after the simple 1910 pageant" in Deerfield.[60]

The insertion of such generic scenes into local pageants was often a response to audience expectations created by images of pageants in other regions circulating through national media such as magazines and movie theater newsreels.[61] Indeed, it is likely that much of the information that the pageant conveyed about local Indian customs, such as the First Indian's "Chant of the Sunrise," was taken from national media sources. In addition to the media listed above, these sources may have included Wild West shows. Reminiscing about her experience in coordinating a pageant in another Massachusetts community in 1912, one writer recalls that few of the people preparing the pageant

> knew anything about the original ancient Indian customs or costumes or dances outside of what we had read in books or seen in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows, except for Captain West who had come in contact with them on the West Coast. Still, with only that sketchy information we somehow managed to stage the Indian Harvest Festival.[62]

The material that made its way into local pageants from national media sources was not only extra-local, but also often inaccurate. Historian Michael Kammen argues that the success of Buffalo Bill's Wild West was due in part to the proprietor's understanding that "most Easterners had no idea what Indian civilization or cowboy life was like, or what existence on the Great Plains really entailed."[63]

***

[59] The Eager quote and the direct quote are both taken from *Ibid.*, 67.
[60] *Ibid.*, 76.
[61] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 123.
[62] Lee, 179-185.
[63] Kammen, 275.

Two of the pageant's last historic episodes depicted Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1838 visit to North Adams, which he wrote about in his *American Notebooks*. The first of these episodes showed Hawthorne's arrival in the city and the second portrayed Hawthorne at the 1838 Williams College commencement.[64] The visit of Hawthorne, a major literary figure, symbolized the triumph of culture or civilization in the region. The Williams commencement did the same. Through the discussion of various places associated with Hawthorne and other literary figures in early twentieth century tourist guides, "Culture became another example of the forward march of progress."[65] While much of the pageant served to legitimate the historical connection between North Adams and the Western frontier, the Hawthorne episodes seem to assert that North Adams had transcended its frontier past to become a modern cultured city. As Warren Susman points out, early twentieth century critics of the American fixation with the Western frontier claimed that neither the frontier nor the West was capable of producing an American high culture.[66] As an early American literary figure visiting North Adams, Hawthorne demonstrated that both North Adams and America were capable of establishing high culture in the post-frontier phase of settlement.

Insofar as the Hawthorne episodes were attempts to articulate a distinctly American identity in which the Mohawk Trail corridor had a stake, they were similar to the pageant's earlier Indian episodes. Michael Kammen argues, "The history of Native Americans only became useful when cultural resistance to Europe began to be important."[67] Like the presence of Hawthorne in the history of North Adams, the presence of Indians in the city's history demonstrated that it was unequivocally American.

---

[64] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "More Than Two Thousand People Witness Spectacle."
[65] Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism And National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 198-99.
[66] Susman, 35-36.
[67] Kammen, 187.

The Hawthorne episodes were followed by an "Interlude" that also highlighted the achievements of civilization, but focused on technology rather than culture. The interlude depicted the "Victory of Light Over Darkness" upon completion of the Hoosac Tunnel. In the episode that followed, the governor of Massachusetts inspected the completed tunnel.[68]

In other Massachusetts pageants that Margaret MacLauren Eager had directed in the years leading up to 1914, she had sited the initial scenes in England, sometimes depicting events from English history dating back as far as the eleventh century, in order to emphasize the influence of Anglo culture on the New World settlers and to establish continuity between an English past and an American present. The program of her 1910 Deerfield pageant explained, "Our pageant begins, as does our history, in England."[69] Perhaps Eager's choice not to include any English episodes in the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* reflects in part the desire of the pageant organizers to emphasize instead the importance of Mohawks and other Indians to the history of the Mohawk Trail, and the quintessentially American nature of the region. Indeed, the choice to adopt Indian history rather than English history as the pre-contact story of the Mohawk Trail corridor reflects a broader trend in turn-of-the-century American thought. Beginning in the 1880s, Anglo Americans saw that they could use Indian history "for their own cultural needs." Like Turner's frontier thesis, Indian history "gave whites a past linked to the American continent, rather than to distant European landscapes."[70]

***

[68] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*
[69] Ann Marie Shea, "Community Pageants in Massachusetts, 1908-1932" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1984), 69 and Angela Goebel Bain, "Historical Pageantry in Old Deerfield: 1910, 1913, 1916." *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings* 25 (2000): 126. The quote from the 1910 Deerfield program is taken from Bain. In addition to the 1910 Deerfield pageant, Massachusetts pageants directed by Eager that began in England include a 1909 pageant in Duxbury, a 1910 pageant in Worcester, and a 1911 pageant in Northampton. The Northampton pageant opened with an eleventh century scene depicting the marriage of the daughter of William the Conqueror.
[70] Hyde, 212.

*The pageant finale featured a parade of the recent immigrant groups of North Adams. It began with the entrance of an allegorical figure representing the State of Massachusetts, a "beautiful girl student" of the Normal School who rode on horseback and carrying the state flag. The State was followed by a similar allegorical figure representing the Spirit of Education, then by a procession of "citizens living along the Trail who have come from other lands." The "other lands" included England, Scotland, Wales, "the Jewish Nation," France, Syria, and Italy. The band played "Rule Britania" [*sic.*] as the English entered. "As symbolic of their offering to the region of the Mohawk trail, this nationality followed a large banner bearing the emblem 'Peace'"*[71]

*The Italians in the procession "brought out effectively the three traits of their nationality that resulted in their great gifts to this world, the Spirit of Navigation, Musical Talent and Building Ability." Their navigation abilities were responsible for bringing Columbus to the New World. The group of Italians carrying picks and shovels were meant to honor "not merely the part that these people have taken in the actual building of the [Mohawk] trail, but also the work that they have done in the buildin gand [*sic.*] construction line throughout the country."*[72]

*Meanwhile, the "Jewish people" simulated "the bringing of the moral low [*sic.*] by Moses." A procession of 75 local Jews, led by Rabbi Kessler (presumably of the North Adams synagogue), culminated at the Pageant stage "where Mayor Wallace E. Brown was presented with the tablets by Moses (signifying the gift of the Jews to this world." The procession "was very striking because of the fact that the costumes, all designed and made in this city, kept with close accuracy to the early Biblical days."*[73]

Historical pageants of the period often presented narratives in which "recent immigrants perform colorful national dances and do not vie for social and economic

---

[71] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* and "Pageant of Mohawk Trail a Gorgeous Union of History, Romance, Grace and Brilliancy" and "Performers and Spectators Show Enthusiasm of Pioneers," *Transcript*, 18 June 1914.
[72] "Performers and Spectators Show Enthusiasm of Pioneers."
[73] *Ibid.*

position with native-born Americans and one another."[74] Pageants achieved this virtual exclusion of recent immigrants in part by focusing on the distant past and providing only a cursory depiction of the recent past.[75] As in the case of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*, the finales often consisted of a location-specific allegorical figure (in this case Massachusetts) welcoming groups of recent immigrants.[76] The finale was usually the only scene in historical pageants of the period in which ethnic or racial groups other than Indians (in early scenes) and Anglos were included.[77] Non-Anglo groups in the procession were described in quaint terms that implied that, though they were present in the modern city of North Adams, they existed outside of the city's mainstream.

The *Transcript*'s descriptions of the various non-Anglo ethnic groups in the finale were similar to its descriptions of Indians in earlier episodes. The newspaper's description of the Jews in the finale is a good example: "The weird chant of the ancients, their odd costumes, the ceremonies ages old were clothed with an interest that was irresistible."[78] Like language that was used to describe Indians, the combination of "weird," "odd," and "ancient" implies that Jews were part of the heritage of the modern city of North Adams rather than part of its present. According to Huhndorf, there was a conceptual link between Indians and recent immigrants in Turner's speech:

---

[74] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 133. See Also Kammen, 280.
[75] Kammen, 280. In the case of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*, the only episodes that depicted events from the century leading up to the pageant were the Hawthorne episodes, the return of the troops from the Civil War, and the opening of Hoosac Tunnel.
[76] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 131.
[77] Shea, 257. There was one notable exception to this norm in the North Adams pageant. According to the pageant program, there were several "Colored People" among the crowd in the Williams commencement scene. Based on available evidence, this appears to be the only instance other than the early depictions of Indians and the when non-whites were depicted in the Pageant. Glassberg (*American Historical Pageantry*, pages 131-32) notes that blacks and Asians were rarely included in historical pageants of the period. The "Colored People" were probably included in the scene only because Hawthorne mentioned them in his account of the commencement. It is not clear whether African Americans played the roles of the "Colored People."
[78] "Second Performance of Pageant Eclipses Even the Very Successful First Presentation," *Transcript*, 19 June 1914.

> By rendering Native Americans the predecessors of the pioneers, Turner bestowed the status of 'true' Americans (the status, in other words, of the native) on contemporary white men, the heirs of these pioneers. His thesis thus symbolically resolved the challenges that the influx of immigrants posed to the political dominance of these men.[79]

By casting Anglo descendants in the roles of their pioneer ancestors (who were, according to the linear narrative of the pageant, conceptually descended from the Indians) and relegating recent immigrants to quaint vignettes in the finale, the pageant clearly established the hegemony of its Anglo citizens over recent immigrants.

Remarks in North Adams sermons given the Sunday after the pageant performances indicate that there was a sense in the community that the pageant's Anglo-centric portrayal of local history would encourage recent immigrants to assimilate into the dominant Anglo American society. Rev. Gerrish claimed that he thought the pageant's "historical value not only to ourselves and our children but especially to children of the alien, cannot be overestimated." Rev. T. E. Bushfield of the city's First Congregational Church suggested that the pageant was an important event for North Adams because "it secured the co-operation of so many members of all races, creeds and occupations for it is this mingling in common enterprises which helps to fuse and weld the people into a homogeneous whole."[80] The hope expressed by Gerrish and Bushfield, and likely shared by others in the city, that the pageant could help to assimilate immigrants, was not unique to North Adams. Throughout the country, community leaders "extolled the value" of finale scenes that featured displays of various groups of recent immigrants "for providing a tangible demonstration of how disparate ethnic groups could unite into one community."[81]

---

[79] Huhndorf, 59.
[80] "Pastors Speak of the Pageant."
[81] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 131.

Interethnic relations were manifest not only in the pageant's narrative about the Mohawk Trail, but also in the highway itself. An article in the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* written during the construction of the highway described a division of labor along ethnic lines. The engineers and their assistants, who were presumably Anglo Americans, slept in a multi-room structure with running water, while "the Italians [who, apparently, were all laborers] are quartered in three big camps and numerous picturesque shacks along the road."[82] Though they were building a modern highway, the Italian workmen and their living conditions were still considered "picturesque" in this context.

The insertion of a Biblical past that had influenced the present through the development of the Moral Law complicated the linear historical narrative told by the Pageant. The episode featuring local Jews was only included in two of the pageant's four performances, which suggests that the contribution of the Biblical past in the pageant's narrative was less important than the contribution of the Indians in the early scenes.[83] The fact that the promotion of North Adams's Americanness through Indian history superseded the promotion of its Christianity through Biblical history underlines the determination of the pageant organizers to convey a distinctly American local historical narrative.

***

[82] "Remarkable Engineering Feat Proceeding on Florida Mountain," *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, 27 September 1913.

[83] "Jewish People in Fine Episode," *Transcript*, 15 June 1914. There were other allusions to Christianity in the pageant such as the conspicuous praying on the part of the Early Settlers and the inclusion of a scene focusing on Quaker settlers (both discussed above). However, none of the allusions to Christianity seem as prominent, or as relevant to the pageant's narrative, as the depiction of the First Indian. A *Transcript* article that was published about two weeks before the first performance of the pageant ("Pageant Puts Places on Map," June 5) suggested that the English delegation in the finale would bring the translation of the Bible. Since the neither the pageant program nor the *Transcript* coverage of the performances themselves mentioned this, it was probably cut during the final days of rehearsals. However, the fact that a depiction of the English translating the Bible was almost included in the pageant further exemplifies the Anglo hegemony discussed above. It suggests that, like the culture and landscape of the Indians, the religion of the Jews would have to be modified by Anglos before it could be incorporated into modern civilization.

C.Q. Richmond had originally conceived of the pageant as a means to raise money for an enormous Indian statue to be erected on the Mohawk Trail, but the statue never materialized. Though optimistic initial estimates suggested that there would be $3000 in pageant proceeds, expenses were much higher than anticipated, and the proceeds were only $770.85 out of total receipts of $6,404.44. Apparently, no one knows what happened to the $770.85. The *Transcript* seemed to be glossing over accusations of scandal when it noted, "The continued delay in the making of the [pageant's expense] report caused no end of speculation and no little recrimination on the part of many people." Even when the proceeds were expected to be $3000, the *Transcript* suggested that the construction of such a statue "represents a big enterprise, but the inspiration of the Pageant itself, the people of the Mohawk Trail will not regard it as impossibility."[84]

Though the ticket sales generated by the pageant failed to infuse the Indian statue campaign with enough seed money to make the project viable, the historical narrative disseminated by the pageant provided the basis for the popularization of the corridor's Indian history in the years that followed. According to the program for the pageant, the Indian statue that had been proposed by Richmond would be "conceived to perpetuate in steadfast dignity the spirit of a vanished past" and "will possess a significance founded in a unique association of historic facts."[85] The popularization of the corridor's Indian history, which would be realized primarily through guidebook narratives and Indian-themed

[84] "Pageant Receipts Will Probably Reach $6000," *Transcript*, 22 June 1914and "Nearly $800 Left for Trail Indian," *Transcipt*, 31 July 1916 and Marino, 46. According to the 1916 *Transcript* article, pageant expenses included $756.79 for "Printing, postage, advertising and stationery"; $2,416.14 for "Costumes, scenery, horses, carriages and other properties"; $836.42 for "Expenses of pageant director – Miss Eager and assistants"; $178.22 for "Freight, express, trucking and transportation charges"; $604.30 for "Music"; $172.80 for "Services of labor – attendants, watchmen and policing grounds"; $183.50 for "Halland headquarters – rent"; and $385.42 for Eager's commission, which was, by contract, one third of net receipts. According to the author's calculations, these itemized expenses add up to exactly $100 less than the total expenditure of $5633.59 reported by the *Transcript*.

[85] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail*.

businesses, would certainly perpetuate the early twentieth century vision of "the spirit of a vanished past." The guidebooks would disseminate "historical facts" as they were conveyed by the pageant that Richmond helped organize. If Richmond's intent with the pageant was to establish a tangible link between the highway and American Indian history, he was successful in spite of the failure to construct a large Indian statue.

***

After "Buffalo Bill" Cody's death in January 1917, the editor of *The Outlook* lamented, "Alas for the boy of to-morrow! [Cody] was the last link clearly visible to the boy of today between the golden age of American romance and the commercial present."[86] The editor noted that the authenticity of Cody's show was derived from the fact that Cody "was not playing the part of a mimic. He was reliving his actual past."[87] This description of Cody is similar to historian David Glassberg's critique of the use of descendants to portray their ancestors in historical pageants, a casting technique that, as noted above, was used throughout the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. According to Glassberg, this type of casting had the effect of displaying "descendants, especially elderly ones, as living links with the past."[88] An advertisement for *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* proclaimed that each member of the cast had "experienced the hardships of early pioneer days, and are this season portraying to the American public in a decidedly realistic manner, trials and tribulations that it was necessary to experience in the far West, during the time the Red Man reigned supreme."[89] Herein lay the vision for the Mohawk Trail – a highway that was not mimicking the frontier of the American West, but was, in fact, "reliving" its own "actual past" as a frontier route of the

[86] Quoted in Moses, 193.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 114.
[89] Advertisement for *Wyoming Bill's Wild West* that appeared in the *North Adams Evening Transcript* on 6 June 1914.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* vividly presented the strength of this connection.

As far as the pageant's connection to the commercial present is concerned, in the same sermon in which he called attention to the pageant narrative's connection to national history, Rev. G.M. Gerrish argued that "one of the finest things was the [pageant] program, free from the disfigurement of advertisements, placed in our hands through the generosity of the Merchants' association."[90] Of course, the *Outlook* editor's implication of a tenuous link between "American romance" and "the commercial present" disregards the extent to which Cody's Wild West show, not to mention the underlying motives for American westward expansion, was itself driven by a series of commercial objectives. The discussion of the emergence of businesses along the Trail in the next chapter will show that, like *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, the Mohawk Trail attempted to perpetuate "the golden age of American romance" through the "commercial present," and did so in a way that was coherent enough to draw thousands of tourists to the corridor in the years that followed.

[90] "Pastors Speak of the Pageant."

CHAPTER 2
Model Ts:
Democratizing the Tourist's Frontier

Just as Frederick Jackson Turner claimed that "the wilderness masters the colonist" by taking "him from the railroad car and put[ting] him in the birch canoe," historian John Jackle suggests that "automobiling, as a sport… took [tourists] off the passenger trains and steamships to play active roles in seeing places."[1] After calling attention to a 1911 pamphlet for Missouri auto tourists that evoked "both history and progress in democratic terms," Marguerite Shaffer argues that "auto tourists could not only vicariously reenact the nation's pioneer history but also embrace the democracy and independence of the open road through the modern technology of the automobile, thus reaffirming their true American character."[2] Along the Mohawk Trail, as in other regions of North America, the automobile became a technologically advanced version of Turner's birch canoe. It served as a mode of transportation that provided tourists with the freedom to determine their own itineraries and the imperative to actively interact with the landscapes through which they moved.

The Mohawk Trail was inaugurated at an opportune moment in history. As an early scenic highway, it was able to capitalize on the rising popularity, and increasing feasibility, of middle-class automobile travel. The number of private automobiles registered in the United States grew from 8000 in 1900 to 458,000 in 1910, 8 million in 1920, and eventually to 23 million in 1930.[3] One significant factor in the seventeen-fold increase in automobile ownership in the 1910s was the development of the affordable Ford Model T. Ford originally released the Model T in 1908 at a price of $850, but it was in 1914 that Ford perfected the assembly line system so that the entire production process only took an hour

[1] Turner, 33 and Jackle, 303.
[2] Shaffer, 142. The pamphlet was published by the Good Roads Committee of the Missouri Daughters of the American Revolution.
[3] Jackle, 121.

and a half per car. In 1914, the year the Mohawk Trail opened, Ford sold 260,720 Model Ts at almost half the original price. The development of the Model T was a significant step toward the democratization of automobile ownership, and transportation in general. Members of the middle class were no longer constrained by the routes and schedules of the railroads. This democratization of transportation was a significant factor in the rise of middle-class tourism.[4]

Early travel literature often explored the link between the freedom offered by automobiles and the freedom offered by the mythic Western frontier. The program for the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* encouraged tourists to reexperience the historical frontier narrative presented in the pageant by driving the Mohawk Trail. The Historical Note in the program about the Fort Massachusetts episode explained that, so far as a contemporary English settler in "Boston and Eastern New England was concerned that territory now known as Williamstown and North Adams was the western frontier."[5] While pageant spectators could watch members of their community reenact scenes from the frontier, automobile tourists could reenact these scenes themselves. The history section in the opening pages of the pageant program announced that the area through which the Mohawk Trail passes "is, from the standpoint of the tourist, the undiscovered section of the world-famed Berkshire Hills, where they reveal to the initiated the true inwardness of their beauties, much as the white man first came upon them."[6]

On 5 June 1914, *Transcript* photographers Charles R. Canedy and James A. Hardman drove the first automobile along the full length of the highway from North Adams to Charlemont. Their journey, which required driving through a one-foot-deep stream at a

[4] Shaffer, 137 and Kammen, 304.
[5] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*
[6] *Ibid.*

crossing where a bridge was still under construction, took them nine hours. Employing frontier imagery, the two noted, "While long stretches of the road on the eastern slope are practically finished (and a beautiful road it is) there are connecting links in the heart of the wilderness along Cold river that are as yet mere narrow ledges along the mountain side."[7] This account seemed to echo John Gast's famous 1872 depiction of the advancing frontier (Figure 2.1a). Using Gast's imagery, the road that Canedy and Hardman traveled was beyond the point where the rails stopped. The clear implication was that the new highway was about to conquer the "heart of the wilderness" by allowing automobiles to travel through it. When the highway was completed, the automobile tourists who traveled it would be embarking on the final phase of the landscape's transformation from wilderness to civilization. The Turnerian progression on the cover of William Bradford Browne's 1920 history pamphlet clearly implies that this imagery was still salient several years after all of the "connecting links in the heart of the wilderness" had been completed. Browne's image shows automobile tourists (and, by association, the highways on which they traveled) completing the process of civilizing the frontier that began with Indians on horseback (Figure 2.1b).

[7] "First Auto Through Trail," *Transcript*, 6 June 1914.

Figure 2.1a: *American Progress* by John Gast (1872).
(From webpage of Professor Gonzalo Santos, California State University Bakersfield)[8]

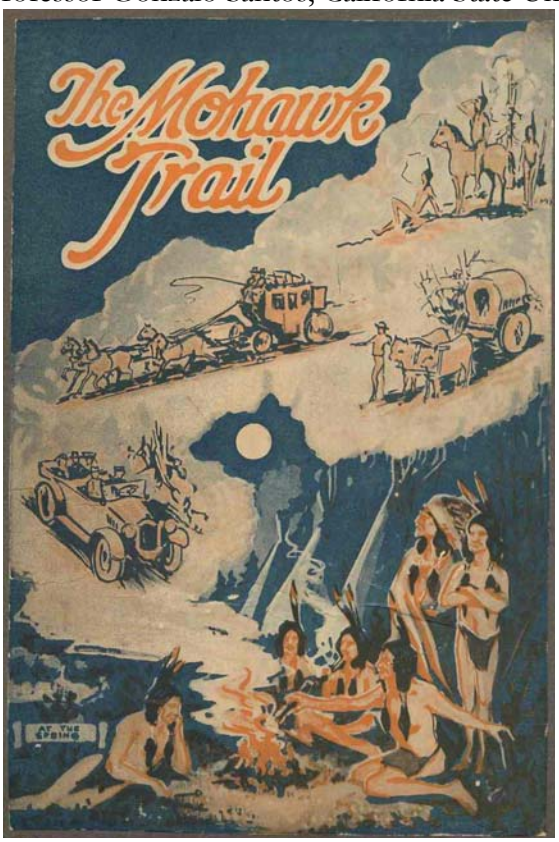


Figure 2.1b: Cover of William Bradford Browne's 1920 historical pamphlet.[9]
(Courtesy of Williams College Archives and Special Collections)

[8] < http://www.csubak.edu/~gsantos/img0061.html> (9 April 2004).
[9] This image is taken from the copy of the original 1920 edition in the Williams College Archives, not from the 1998 reprint mentioned in the bibliography.

The resemblance between *American Progress* and Browne's cover demonstrates that Browne was grafting notions of the frontier and progress that had been salient for at least half a century onto the landscape of the Mohawk Trail.[10] However, Browne transcended the linear narrative offered by Gast by adding a final step that made the process of American westward expansion a somewhat cyclical one. Aptly capturing the experience of Turnerian pioneers and Mohawk Trail tourists, Browne's automobile tourists were simultaneously evolving beyond the Indians in the upper right corner and seeking the campfire of the Indians in the lower right corner.

Paradoxically, along early touring routes such as the Mohawk Trail, the technological achievement of the automobile allowed drivers to feel as though they were escaping modernity and reconnecting to nature. According to historian Warren Belasco, "From the beginning of car culture, when motorists first fled cities for wilderness campgrounds and sylvan suburban retreats, cars have had a symbiotic relationship with nature[…] this idealistic harmony between technology and nature is at the heart of the pastoral ideal."[11] Through the freedom afforded by automobiles, tourists could leave cities for the quintessentially American wilderness that could be found in rural areas.

Early automobile tourists felt that their excursions were bringing them closer to the history that had unfolded in the landscapes through which they passed, and, by association, the national historical narrative that encompassed the local history that could be found along the highways. Shaffer calls attention to a shift from "the celebration of scenery and standardized destinations that characterized most railroad promotional literature" by rail

[10] Since Gast was painting in 1872, he did not include automobiles.
[11] Warren James Belasco, "Motivatin' with Chuck Berry and Frederick Jackson Turner," in *The Automobile in American Culture*, edited by David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 269.

tourists to the exploration of history and local color by automobile tourists. As a result, "Automobile enthusiasts[…] linked the experience of touring by automobile to a coherent narrative about America, its history, and its development."[12] Along the Mohawk Trail, the symbiotic relationship that Belasco describes between automobile and nature should perhaps be broadened to encompass the relationship between the automobile and the (natural and built) environment through which it passed. The corridor's natural beauty was preserved so that automobile tourists would be attracted to the region and its human history was promoted for the same reason.

One important step in establishing a symbiotic relationship between the automobile and the regional history of the Mohawk Trail corridor was assigning the romantic name to the highway. "Mohawk Trail" connoted a direct connection to the pre-Anglo inhabitants of the region, and an implicit connection to the narrative of American westward expansion. In the early twentieth century, named roads such as the Mohawk Trail proliferated throughout the United States. Perhaps the most famous of these was the Lincoln Highway, a transcontinental route developed during the 1910s that passed through several sites with historical connections to Abraham Lincoln on its way from New York to San Francisco.[13] Several roads of the period that, like the Mohawk Trail, ostensibly followed "Indian trails" were also named after local Indian tribes. For instance, the highway from Chicago to St. Louis that was completed in 1915 was known as the Pontiac Trail.[14] Due to the popularity of these highway names, there was strong opposition to initial attempts to develop a uniform numbering system for highways. One opponentclaimed, "One of the glories of a great

[12] Shaffer, 165.
[13] *Ibid*., 148-52. See also Jackle, 123-25.
[14] Peter Brigham Dedek, "Journeys on the Mother Road: Interpreting the Cultural Significance of U.S. Route 66" (Ph.D. diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 2002), 142. The Pontiac Trail would eventually become part of Route 66.

highway system is the romance reflected in its nomenclature."[15] Along the Mohawk Trail and elsewhere, movement through these named local landscapes not only gave early automobile tourists a sense that they were gaining intimate knowledge of specific places, but also that they were gaining a more nuanced understanding of America and Americanness. As Shaffer put it,

> In traveling over named or numbered roads that followed the historic trails of westward expansion, in moving into the landscape, in having the opportunity to stop and explore historic sites, and literary shrines, and in coming into contact with the regionally diverse people of American society, tourists were encouraged to see and understand America as a coherent whole. According to the prescriptive literature, through automobile touring one gained an intimate and authentic understanding of the nation, thus reaffirming one's American-ness.[16]

Like Turner's pioneer, the automobile tourist developed a uniquely American identity though contact with the landscape.

By driving into what the pageant program described as an "undiscovered section of the world-famed Berkshire Hills" along the Mohawk Trail, automobile tourists could experience the frontier of the late nineteenth century American West from the pioneer's perspective without placing themselves in any real danger. After all, the pageant program reassured them that their journey would end with "the descent into the city [North Adams], where all the conveniences of civilization await us."[17] Much like performers in the pageant, these automobile tourists were given the opportunity to reenact the process of American westward expansion by temporarily descending into the uncivilized realm of Indians and wilderness in order to eventually attain a modern, but quintessentially American, city.

Belasco argues that, because of this freedom afforded by automobiles, Turner's claim that the closure of the frontier would fundamentally alter American society was erroneous:

---

[15] Quote taken from Shaffer, 163.
[16] Shaffer, 165-66.
[17] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail*. Note that this pageant program was written a few months before the Mohawk Trail was opened to automobile traffic.

"As long as we can move somewhere and somehow, it doesn't matter if the geographical frontier was closed." According to Belasco, the automobile, which "canny entrepreneurs were developing" as Turner delivered his frontier thesis in 1893, "would take over where Turner's West left off."[18] Indeed, Peter Ling argues that

> the motor car itself and Henry Ford, its leading producer, were presented as embodiments of American values derived from the Turnerian process of character-formulation on the moving frontier. The automobile could convey urban Americans back to the regenerative realms of Nature, while businessmen like Ford could safely be trusted with the leadership of a nation for which a 'frontier' upbringing had trained them.[19]

Though the geographical frontier was terminated in 1890 according to the Census Bureau and Turner, Belasco claims, "the days of figurative, frontier*style* movement were just beginning."[20]

***

Like the pageant program, many early guidebooks to the Mohawk Trail and other highways presented automobile tourists with opportunities to experience the process of westward expansion through their automobiles. Shaffer suggests that such guidebooks implied that "automobile touring situated the tourist so that he or she might be able to identify with the events of history, in effect making history one's own without suffering, controversy, or responsibility."[21] Writing in 1917, North Adams guidebook author Charles Canedy offered a frontier-based historical narrative about the Mohawk Trail in which automobile tourists played a role:

> First, as we have seen, traveled as a footpath by the savage, the trail became the highway for the wheeled vehicles of civilization, only to fall into practical disuse

[18] Belasco, "Motivatin' with Chuck Berry and Frederick Jackson Turner," 263.
[19] Peter J. Ling, *America and the Automobile: Technology, Reform, and Social Change* (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1990), 111.
[20] Belasco, "Motivatin' with Chuck Berry and Frederick Jackson Turner," 263.
[21] Shaffer, 167.

> through one of the great engineering works of the age and now to be revived as a highway for wheels, the miracle wheels of all ages, the wheels of the motor car.[22]

Following the example of the pageant, Canedy recast certain events from the history of the Mohawk Trail corridor in order to strengthen the connection between the corridor's history and the frontier narrative of the American West. For instance, he asserted that, during the construction of the Hoosac Tunnel, "villages, comparable to mining villages, sprung up which were marked by a rough picturesqueness, rude joys, and tragic sorrows, for the tunnel killed its workmen just as the mine."[23] Canedy's guide and others like it ensured that tourists, like pageant audience members, would view the Mohawk Trail as a region with a quintessentially American history.

In addition to coinciding with the rise of middle-class automobile travel, the Mohawk Trail's inauguration also coincided with the rise of the See America First movement. The movement began around 1906 in response to an "anti-European nationalism that took pride in the American differences,"[24] but did not gain much momentum until the 1914 onset of World War I made trans-Atlantic travel dangerous for American tourists.[25] The message of the See America First movement was certainly on the minds of early Mohawk Trail boosters. Before the Mohawk Trail was even completed, an article about its construction in the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* implied that it was superior to international destinations: "When this road is completed it would seem to be a good idea if some enterprising person should have a moving picture made, and it is safe to say it would rival many of the foreign travel pictures so often seen on the screen in moving picture

---

[22] *The Trail of the Mohawk*. The "great engineering work" to which Canedy refers is the Hoosac Tunnel, a 4.75-mile tunnel through Hoosac Mountain that was once the longest railroad tunnel in the Western Hemisphere.
[23] *The Trail of the Mohawk*.
[24] Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1979), 25.
[25] Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 25.

places."[26] At the 22 October 1914 dedication ceremony for the Trail, which took place just a couple of months after the declarations of war by the major European powers, former Congressman Lawrence asserted, "At a time when many of the great scenic routes of Europe are closed for at least an indefinite period, we can well adopt as a slogan, 'See America first.'"[27]

A company on the other side of Massachusetts shared Lawrence's sentiments. In 1914, the Page Company of Boston began publishing the See America First series of travel guides in order to capitalize on the movement's rising popularity.[28] Between 1914 and 1931, the company published twenty-one See America First guides covering regions and states as diverse as New England, Florida, California, and Panama. Like the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*, the See America First guides presented "an evolutionary view of history that favored Anglo-American settlement and the march of progress that followed."[29]

The See America First movement and the guides it spawned were intent on articulating an American identity and an American culture that were as legitimate as their European counterparts. As an obvious example of the uniquely American, Indians were used in order to articulate American superiority. A 1915 guidebook to the American Southwest written by the author of the original See America First guide claimed, "The Hopis, Havasupais, Apaches, and Navajos are more picturesque than the Swiss, Irish, Serbian, or Russian peasants."[30] Essentially, the argument was that the American primitive was more

---

[26] "Remarkable Engineering Feat Proceeding on Florida Mountain."
[27] "Most Beautiful Road in New England Formally Opened This Afternoon…," *Transcript*, 22 October 1914. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914. In the weeks that followed, Germany, Russia, France, and Great Britain entered the war. The United States remained neutral until 6 April 1917.
[28] Shaffer, 181.
[29] *Ibid*., 181-83.
[30] Quote taken from Hyde, 208. Hyde's citation for this quote is George Wharton James, *Our American Wonderlands* (Chicago, 1915). Though James wrote several volumes for the See America First series, it does not appear that this particular guide was part of the series. Shaffer does not mention it in her enumeration of the

picturesque than its European counterpart. Given the anti-European and nationalist foundations of the See America First movement, the use of Indians in guides spawned by the movement seems to lend credence to historian Michael Kammen's claim that "the history of Native Americans only became useful when cultural resistance to Europe became important."[31]

In some ways, the See America First guides and the pageant program were quite similar. Like the scenes narrated by the pageant program, the guides "constructed a tourist spectacle of primitive Indian societies living in harmony with nature that served to augment an ideal of nature as a refuge from modern society."[32] Essentially, the guides and the program suggested that the legacies of Indian societies, which were quintessentially American, were preventing the overcivilized modern society, which was often associated with Europe, from engulfing the regions they described. In this way, the guides and the program asserted the Americanness of their regions.

***

The ease with which Indian themes could be appropriated by a primarily Anglo American group of guide writers implies that the Indians themselves were passive actors in the process of promoting tourist regions in the early twentieth century. After quoting a passage from a 1904 guidebook that juxtaposed "the light, airy, frail-looking steel bridge by which the Santa Fe leaps the deep, dark chasm of Cañon Diablo" with "the rude ruins of the Cliff-Dweller's castle," Leah Dilworth argues that "the loss that this passage insists on seems inevitable in the face of progress as represented by the railroad. The violence of conquest is

---

guides in the series on pages 183-84 of her text. Also, this volume was published in Chicago, while the See America First guides were published in Boston by the Page Company.

[31] Kammen, 187.

[32]Shaffer, 190. Though the pageant audience was comprised primarily of local residents rather than the tourists of which Shaffer speaks, these residents were gazing on the spectacle of the pageant in much the same way that a tourist would gaze upon a landscape.

erased and replaced by loss or 'vanishing,' and the response to this process is rendered as nostalgia or 'tragic fascination.'"[33] Other early twentieth century guidebooks to the American Southwest confronted the violence that facilitated the pacification of Indians rather directly, but still suggested that such pacification was inevitable in the face of the progress of Anglo civilization. A 1914 guidebook to the Southwest explained that until the Apaches had been "decimated and rendered harmless," they could not form "a romantic background to a thriving Anglo-Saxon civilization."[34]

Using similar rhetorical techniques, a North Adams minister suggested that the violent pacification of Indians was a prerequisite for the eventual attainment of Anglo prosperity in North Adams. As noted above, the English residents of the Mohawk Trail corridor brought Peace to the region during the finale of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. In the same sermon about the pageant in which he mentioned the pageant's depictions of "[t]he wild Indian attack and midnight massacre on the Mohawk trail and the perils of the early pioneers their privations heroism and endurance," Rev. Bushfield of the First Congregational Church made an implicit reference to the role of Anglos in the pacification of North America and other regions when he mentioned that the pageant's finale included "the English, too, now that they have conquered the world, wanting peace."[35]

The pacification of Indians was an important step in the process of making Indian history and culture available for consumption by tourists. According to Kammen, "Real Indians had largely disappeared by [the turn of the century] from the mainstream view; so their legends could be approvingly used for aesthetic and symbolic motifs… and to promote

[33] Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 104.
[34] Hyde, 231.
[35] "Pastors Speak of the Pageant."

tourism."[36] Once pacification was accomplished, tourists could venture safely and temporarily into the world of Indians As Shaffer explains,

> Although the [See America First] guides did not encourage tourists to adopt the ways of the Indians, in viewing the Indians, tourists were instructed on the ameliorative effects of a life in harmony with nature. In consuming this spectacle, tourists vicariously experienced a life close to nature. In effect they purchased and thus participated in the primitive lifestyles embodied in romanticized tourist Indians, and that process reinvigorated and renewed them so that they might return to the ordinary – work, home, modern society – with a refreshed and purified outlook on life.[37]

The pageant program narrated the pageant's portrayal of the Mohawk Trail's romantic past but also reassured its readers that their journey would end with "the descent into the city [North Adams], where all the conveniences of civilization await us."[38] Like their colonial predecessors, the Anglo American tourists of the early twentieth century could achieve peace in the form of "a refreshed and purified outlook on life" through the conceptual conquest of Indians they encountered in their travels.

***

Businesses along the Mohawk Trail embraced local Indian history as quickly after the highway's opening as the writers of the pageant program and various guidebooks did. In 1914, the North Adams city directory listed no businesses with names beginning with the word "Mohawk." In the 1915 edition, probably the first edition published after the pageant and the opening of the highway, the Mohawk Garage was listed. Its name suggests that it was trying to capitalize on both the regional identity and the automobile traffic being generated by the Mohawk Trail. An ad announcing the opening of the garage illustrated the paradox inherent in the new Mohawk Trail – it emphasized the fact that this was the "Largest and Most Modern Garage in West Mass," but the only images in the ad depicted

[36] Kammen, 187.
[37] Shaffer, 190.
[38] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail.*

primitive Indians (Figure 2.2). By 1923, there were five North Adams businesses whose names started with "Mohawk," which suggests that it was profitable for business owners to promote the local Indian history offered by the pageant.[39]

Figure 2.2: Advertisement announcing the opening of the Mohawk Garage in North Adams. It appeared in the *Transcript* on 22 May 1915.

Just as the pageant could only be fully understood by those who had access to the narrative information in its program, the tourist landscape of the Mohawk Trail could only be comprehended by those with knowledge of the historical narrative the highway was presenting. Without some sort of signifier, it certainly would not have been obvious to early twentieth century tourists that the highway from Charlemont to North Adams had a romantic Indian history attached to it. In addition to guides and other printed material, the highway communicated its cultural significance through the built environment itself.

[39] This information is taken from the editions of *Manning's North Adams Directory* published between 1913 and 1923. These are available on microfilm at the North Adams Public Library.

Within a few months after the Mohawk Trail opened, businesses targeting the automobile tourists it attracted opened along its length. In 1915 at the age of 30, Charles Canedy, the *Transcript* photographer who had been the first member of the public allowed to drive the Mohawk Trail, purchased the Whitcomb farm in Florida in order to build a gift shop and cabins on the site. The Summit House, the original structure that Canedy built, was a small souvenir stand. In 1917, Canedy added the first of the tourist cabins. Canedy gave the former site of the farm, which includes the Trail's highest point, a name that is still used today: Whitcomb Summit. In 1918, Canedy opened a second gift shop at the Hairpin Turn. Eventually, Canedy stopped working as a photographer for the *Transcript* and began to run the tourist businesses full time. Charles Canedy died prematurely in 1927, but his sons Donald and Lewis continued to operate the Mohawk Trail businesses after his death. Both Whitcomb Summit and the Hairpin Turn still have tourist-oriented businesses today.[40]

Several other tourist-oriented businesses emerged along the highway in the years that followed. The Longview Gift Shop in Greenfield was built in 1922. The original gift shops at the Western Summit in North Adams and the Eastern Summit in Florida were opened in 1924 and 1925 respectively.[41] The original business on the Western Summit included a tearoom operated by the Mansfield sisters, who also owned the Longview.[42]

---

[40] Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Mohawk Trail Early Automobile Corridor Preliminary Survey Plan," by Arthur Krim (Boston, 2001), 7 and 22 November 2003 interview with Stan Brown and "Multi-Million Dollar Tourist Trade Blooms From Charles Canedy's Tiny 1915 Trail Stand," *Transcript*, 26 August 1954.
[41] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 7. The name "Mohawk Trail" originally referred only to the section of highway between North Adams and Charlemont, so the Longview was not technically considered to be on the Mohawk Trail in 1922. However, the Longview's success was certainly dependent on the ability of the Mohawk Trail's reputation to draw tourists to the region and the potential for automobile travel from Boston to Albany and other destinations further west upon the Mohawk Trail's completion. Furthermore, it appears that, in spite of the official state designation, the highway from Charlemont to Greenfield was commonly known as the Mohawk Trail by 1916. A 30 December 1916 Transcript article ("Mohawk Trail Signs Start Gov. McCall on Billboard War") suggested that the Mohawk Trail ran from North Adams to Greenfield. The roads between Charlemont and Greenfield were improved at the same time that the highway from North Adams to Charlemont was constructed. According to *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts*, An Act to Provide for the Improvement of Highways Connecting the Hoosac and Deerfield Valleys (Acts, 1911, Chap. 677) and An Act

Many of these businesses had Indian or frontier themes. In order to develop and promote their Indian themes, these businesses employed popular Indian iconography such as tepees, wooden Indians, and totem poles. Canedy purchased a large wooden Indian for the Whitcomb Summit property around 1920 and a totem pole several years later (Figures 2.3 and 2.4b).[43]

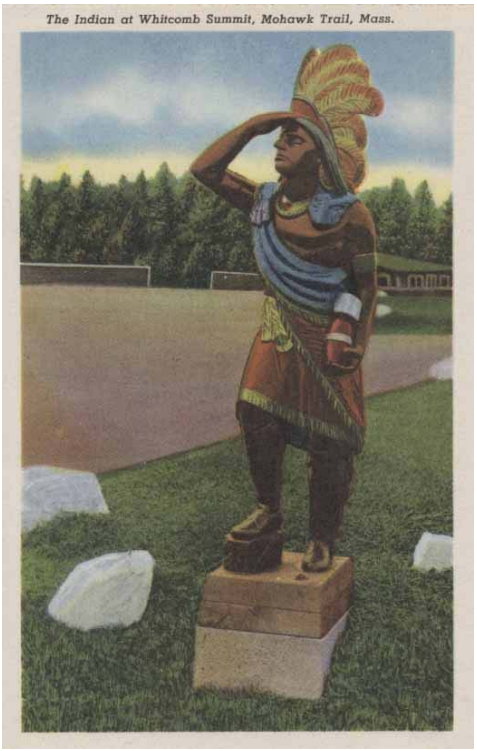


Figure 2.3: Postcard from 1930s depicting wooden Indian at Canedy's Whitcomb Summit shop.[44]
(Courtesy of Hank Art)

---

to Provide for the Construction or Improvement of a Highway Between the Towns of Shelburne and Greenfield (Chap. 678) were both passed on 15 July 1911.

[42] Wayne Canedy mentioned this in a 15 February 2004 interview.

[43] 15 February and 19 February 2004 interviews with Wayne Canedy. Canedy is not sure of the exact dates on which his grandfather acquired the wooden Indian and totem pole for Whitcomb Summit.
Perhaps the most egregious and best-known uses of the tepee and "big Indian" symbols by a Mohawk Trail business were both produced by the East Charlemont business now known as the Big Indian. Because it was built on the Shelburne Falls bypass that was constructed in the early 1950s, it was one of the last Indian-themed businesses to open along the Trail. It opened in 1954 as the Mohawk Tepee (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 8 and *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 20).

[44] The exact date of this postcard is not known, but it was sold as part of a souvenir folder that also included an image of the Hail to the Sunrise monument, which was not erected until 1932.

By reinforcing the region's connections to Indians and the frontier, these Trail businesses augmented the natural scenery in order to enhance the landscape's appeal to tourists. The businesses did not simply furnish tourists with essentials such as food and gasoline, but also with a frontier landscape for them to gaze upon. The amalgamative tourist landscape that these businesses created did not emerge entirely haphazardly. Though the landscape grew out of a series of uncoordinated business openings, the narrative of Mohawk Trail history put forth by local historians such as Perry and Aiken and popularized by the pageant allowed it to take shape. John Urry argues that, in the tourist industry, "the other services provided are in a sense peripheral to the fundamental process of consumption, which is the capturing of the gaze."[45] This observation certainly seems to apply to the Mohawk Trail of the early twentieth century. Landmark businesses along the Trail provided some peripheral services, but their most prominent function was the crucial role that they played in formulating a Western frontier landscape that tourists could visually consume as they moved through it.

According to Jackle, tourists were more attracted to the West than any other region on the continent because the region "epitomized the American frontier experience, and was an accessible area of outstanding scenic beauty."[46] By evoking Indian themes, Mohawk Trail businesses such as the Mohawk Garage purported to transport their visitors to the frontier of the Wild West, a region geographically removed from the lives of the business owners and tourists. Even if one argues that these businesses were transporting visitors back to the frontier phase of settlement in western Massachusetts rather than to the Wild West, one must acknowledge that the Mohawk Trail's romantic narrative was cultivated in response to a desire to associate western Massachusetts with a nationwide frontier narrative. As Jackle

[45] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 44.
[46] Jackle, 206.

notes, "Historical attractions are as much a product of present-day values and needs as a product of past history."[47] Whether historical (Massachusetts colonial frontier) or exotic (Wild West), Mohawk Trail businesses and the tourist landscape they formed were products of the contemporary national fascination with the American West.

It is likely that, as far as the early twentieth century tourists were concerned, it did not matter whether Mohawk Trail businesses were promoting legitimate local history, the history of the Wild West, or some amalgamation of the two. The tourist businesses along the Trail reflected the contemporary democratization of tourism at least as much as they reflected any coherent local or national historical narrative. Indian-themed landmarks along the Trail were often unabashedly non-Indian in their origins. The totem pole that was erected at Whitcomb Summit in the late 1920s was carved by Florida resident Steve Denyer. At approximately the same time, Denyer carved the hot dog on the roof of the Havasnak Kitchen (Figure 2.4). Denyer had served in the Merchant Marine, where he had carved wooden figures on ships.[48] Jackle argues that changes in the architecture of roadside buildings such as restaurants reflected "a new public taste" that "had emerged reflecting the involvement of the lower classes in leisure-time activities. Previously, leisure activities were essentially imitations of a superior elite – the so-called leisure class." In Jackle's opinion, "the wage-earning class with leisure time and money sought not superior social worlds, but worlds remote in terms of time and space."[49] This is precisely what the Mohawk Trail offered – restaurants, cabins, and gift shops that were unabashedly democratic, but made pretensions about their temporal and spatial locations. Like entrepreneurs appealing to

[47] *Ibid*., 289.
[48] 15 February and 19 February 2004 interviews with Wayne Canedy.
[49] Jackle, 167.

tourists in other parts of the country, the Mohawk Trail business owners were catering "to an audience who viewed the road as a combined theater and amusement park."[50]

[50] Warren James Belasco, "Commercialized Nostalgia: The Origins of the Roadside Strip," in *The Automobile in American Culture*, edited by David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 105.

Figure 2.4a: The Havasnak Kitchen in Florida with the large wooden hot dog on its roof, around 1940.[51]
(Courtesy of the *Berkshire Eagle*)
Figure 2.4b: The totem pole that was displayed at Whitcomb Summit (photographed by author at Wayne Canedy's house in 2004).

***

[51] This photograph was originally published in Bernard A. Drew, *Berkshire County Photo Album* (Pittsfield, Mass.: Berkshire Eagle, 1999), 33. The photograph is not dated in Drew's book, but Stan Brown noted in a 12 March 2004 email that he thinks that Havasnak looked like this in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Though authenticity and historical accuracy were certainly not priorities of early Mohawk Trail businesses, these businesses did establish some direct connections between the Indian-themed tourist trade and actual Indians. Perhaps the most significant of these connections was the involvement of Indians in the production of Indian-themed souvenirs that were sold by the various Mohawk Trail businesses. Indians on the Penobscot reservation in Maine and the Iroquois reservations (including at least one Mohawk reservation) in New York would make souvenir items to sell through tourist merchants such as Charles Canedy. Some of the goods that were sold along the Mohawk Trail were produced through a combination of cottage industry production on Indian reservations and centralized manufacturing. For instance, Indians on reservations in various parts of the country would make the moccasin tongues by hand, then ship the moccasins off to a factory to be completed and eventually sold at tourist-oriented businesses along the Mohawk Trail.[52] In addition to moccasins, Indians on reservations were involved in the production of various birchbark goods. Ellen Larson, a tourist from Dorchester, Massachusetts (near Boston), purchased a birchbark wastepaper basket at a gift shop along the Mohawk Trail in 1923 (Figure 2.5). The wastepaper basket "is an example of the way in which Native craftspeople used a traditional material to create an object that would appeal to a non-Native buyer. Simple, inexpensive birchbark goods were often manufactured in bulk for non-Native consumers."[53]

[52] 19 February 2004 interview with Wayne Canedy.
[53] "Birch bark waste paper basket," *Memorial Hall Online – Digital Collection*, <http://www.memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=5281> (20 January 2004).

Figure 2.5: Birchbark wastepaper basket purchased along Mohawk Trail in 1923. (Courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts)

The notion of a birchbark wastepaper basket epitomizes the paradox between the primitive and the modern that is inherent in the Mohawk Trail. Like the Indian history the Trail purports to promote, the wastepaper basket was tied to the primitive through its makers (Indian craftspeople) and its material (birchbark). However, like the automobiles that travel along the Trail, the wastepaper basket was an object that was only useful to those who lived a modern lifestyle. In his discussion of the European American appropriation of Indian culture during the early twentieth century, Phillip Deloria argues,

> Through purchase and travel, upper- and middle-class Americans made a series of moves back and forth from the city to the country, from work to leisure, from

> industrial production to handcrafted souvenirs, from the anonymous crowd to the ethnic community, from the insincere contemporary to a more authentic primitive past.[54]

Larson's purchase of the birch bark wastepaper basket encompassed many of the moves that Deloria describes. The wastepaper basket was a purchase that Larson made while traveling with her family from Dorchester to Barre, Vermont, a trip they often made on holidays.[55] She likely traveled along the Mohawk Trail on her trips to Vermont in part to move away from the city and into the country and from work to leisure. Though the wastepaper basket may have been manufactured in bulk, it was clearly an object meant to look handcrafted. Interestingly, "Mrs. Larson was especially fond of this basket because it reminded her of the birch trees in her home country of Sweden."[56] In contrast to overtly manufactured goods targeted at anonymous crowds, the wastepaper basket brought Larson closer to the ethnic community of the Indians who made the basket and her own Swedish ethnic heritage. Finally, the basket certainly brought Larson closer to a primitive past.

At least one business near the Mohawk Trail promoted its direct connections to local Indian history. In the late 1920s, an Indian skeleton was unearthed during the construction of a gas station in Greenfield. Observers believed that the skeleton, and several others that had been found nearby were Indian because "the bodies had been buried after the Indian fashion, in a sitting posture, facing east."[57] Because of the concentration of Indian skeletons, observers concluded that the site was an old Indian burying ground and the proprietor of the gas station decided to name it the Indian Rest.[58]

---

[54] Deloria, 115.
[55] "Birch bark waste paper basket."
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] Kellogg, 1402.
[58] *Ibid.*

In addition to the attempt to associate a business with real Indian history, there was an attempt to associate the Mohawk Trail with real Indian life. In 1921, the North Adams Chamber of Commerce attempted to negotiate with members of the Penobscot tribe from the Oldtown, Maine reservation about the possibility of camping along the Mohawk Trail during July, August, and September each year. In an article titled "Real Indians for the Trail," the *Transcript* explained,

> Real live Indians, garbed in full tribal regalia, living in wigwams a life not unlike their forefathers in the days when North Adams was a forest with Main street a narrow path, will be a daily sight on the Mohawk Trail this summer if present plans of the North Adams Chamber of Commerce materialize.[59]

The Chamber of Commerce hoped to bring "two or three families of Indians, numbering from 12 to 14 in all" to the Trail. Apparently, the Penobscot declined the invitation.[60]

***

There were early Mohawk Trail businesses that did not attempt to capitalize directly on the corridor's romantic narrative by adopting Indian or frontier themes, but were certainly outgrowths of the region's newfound automobile tourist traffic. In 1920, Harold Brown, Stan's father, opened Brown's Garage in Florida. The garage may have been the first business between Charlemont and North Adams to offer gasoline and auto repair. Harold's sister-in-law, Betsy, had been operating the adjacent White Birch store since about 1917.[61] Unlike Canedy and others who purchased land along the new highway in anticipation of

---

[59] "Real Indians for the Trail," *Transcript*, 29 June 1921.

[60] *Ibid.* Though the officials from the North Adams Chamber of Commerce were optimistic about the prospects of the Penobscots accepting their invitation, the *Transcript* did report that a press dispatch had come from Oldtown, Maine the day before that suggested that the Penobscots had decided not to go to the Mohawk Trail. It is not clear why the chamber of commerce chose to invite Penobscots instead of members of another tribe. There were hardly any Indians living along the Mohawk Trail corridor in 1921, but there were several other reservations in New England and New York. The 1920 census reported that there were 57 "Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and persons of all other races" in Berkshire County and 21 in Franklin County (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center).

[61] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 7 and 22 November 2003 and 16 December 2003 interviews with Stan Brown.

future tourist traffic, Harold and Betsy simply added highway-oriented businesses to the farmland of Harold's father Jerome Brown after the highway was built in front of it.

Charles Canedy never sold gasoline or repaired automobiles, but his son Don used to sell water for car radiators along the highway in front of the Whitcomb Summit shop. The proliferation of these services demonstrates that the Mohawk Trail did strain early automobiles. One 1916 guide cautioned drivers that the grades along the highway "are long, and water tanks should be filled before starting."[62]

Like the Brown family, Frank and Hattie Taylor of Charlemont owned a farm along the new highway. Within a few years of the opening of the Trail, the Taylors opened a roadside stand on their farm to sell maple syrup from their own property, honey, and various refreshments. The Taylor roadside stand provides an example of how farmers who owned property along early highways such as the Trail could generate income from passing tourists without making substantial capital investments (Figure 2.6).[63]

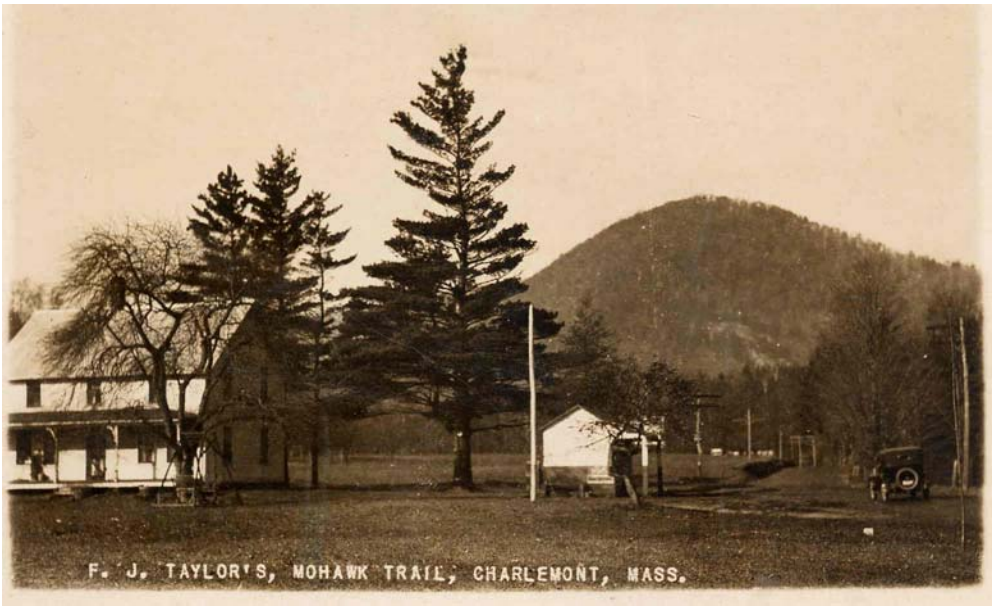


Figure 2.6: Roadside stand at Taylor farm circa 1920.
(Courtesy of Susan Bernardy)

[62] Porter E. Sargent, *A Handbook of New England* (Boston: Ellis, 1916), 411.
[63] 8 March 2004 interview with Susan Bernardy.

Perhaps the most famous of the Mohawk Trail businesses started by the families who happened to own the farms adjacent to the new highway was the Sweetheart Tea House, which opened on 28 June 1916 in Shelburne Falls. A year before the tea house opened, Sweetheart proprietor Alice Brown tried to capitalize on the automobile tourists that were passing her house by selling maple sugar from the region in heart-shaped molds. She initially sold the maple sugar from a small one-story building at which customers approached a counter rather than entering. She originally named her business the Sweet Heart Place after the heart-shaped maple candy that she sold, but changed the name to the Sweetheart Tea House when she began to serve other food. In 1916, she remodeled her barn into a 60-seat dining room where she began to supplement her maple candy sales by serving chicken and waffles. In 1922, she remodeled the "Old Home" on her property into the 200-seat dining room that still exists today. In the years that followed, the Sweetheart evolved into a landmark Mohawk Trail business. According to a local historical committee in Shelburne, the Sweetheart "catered to tourists of the more prosperous type."[64]

Brown's meticulous record-keeping provides insight into the meteoric rise of the Mohawk Trail's popularity in the years following the opening of the highway. In 1916, Brown recorded 3516 guests visiting the Sweetheart, producing receipts of $2183.41. In 1920, the teahouse hosted 21,603 guests who spent $29,105.22. In 1931, over 65,000 guests were served. The teahouse continued to gain popularity through the 1930s. It seems likely

[64] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 7 and "Let's Go to the Sweetheart," *Mt. Massaemet Shadows: A Quarterly Published by the Shelburne Historical Society Inc.* 15, no.4(1989): 3 and Antoinette Burnham et al., *History and Tradition of Shelburne, Massachusetts* (Springfield, Mass.: History and Tradition of Shelburne Committee, 1958), 40-41. The direct quotation is taken from Burnham et al., 41. The *Mt. Massaemet Shadows* article is attributed to "J.W.H." Like the Longview, the Sweetheart was not considered to be on the Mohawk Trail when it opened in 1916 – see note 41.

that other Trail businesses experienced similarly rapid growth during the highway's inaugural years.[65]

Regardless of whether specific businesses were articulating a new regional identity or simply catering to increased automobile traffic, these new businesses transformed the landscape of, and the economic activity along, the Mohawk Trail. In a 1926 guidebook, Irvin Cobb described Maine as "a land where venerable farmsteads fought a losing battle against the invading vacationists from New York and Boston." Describing a scenario similar to that of the Sweetheart, Cobb suggested that some of the Maine farmsteads "succumbed, becoming boarding-houses or tea-houses, mostly called Ye Olde Something or Other. Others stood forth, defiant and angular and four-square… the homes of a stalwart, humorous, self-reliant race."[66] Ultimately, the changes that these new businesses made to the landscape of the Mohawk Trail transformed the Trail into a frontier on yet another level – as the place where the burgeoning tourist landscape of a simulated Wild West began to displace primitive pastoral farmers in order to replace them with a landscape that would allude to the region's historical connection to primitive Indians.

***

In the passage quoted above, Irvin Cobb described natives of rural Maine as members of "a stalwart, humorous, self-reliant race." Cobb's use of the word "race" in this context may help to explain how Anglo farmers were incorporated into the primitive past of the Mohawk Trail alongside the Indians that the Anglos had displaced. Others also articulated the idea of rural New Englanders as a race. Two years after the publication of Cobb's guidebook, Calvin Coolidge described Vermonters as "a race of pioneers who have almost impoverished themselves for love of others." This Coolidge quote appeared in

[65] "Let's Go to the Sweetheart."
[66] Quoted in Jackle, 210.

Vermont tourist literature as late as 1950.[67] If residents of rural New England could be classified as a separate race from residents of the ostensibly more civilized urban areas of New England, the rural residents could be cast as Others in much the same way that Indians could.

The Vermont tourist industry, like its counterpart along the Mohawk Trail, burgeoned in the years following World War I. Urbanites of the period sought out Vermont in order to reconnect with the wholesome simplicity of the rural agrarian lifestyle that the state and its residents had apparently preserved.[68] Paradoxically, at the same time, the Yankee farmers that tourists hoped to find when they traveled in Vermont were migrating to cities because of the declining economic viability of Vermont agriculture. The farm families that remained, whose existence was often described in terms of "rural subnormalcy," were too destitute to be presentable to tourists. Many of these families capitalized on the state's nascent tourist industry by taking in summer boarders, but in order to do so, they "had to adjust their homes, their manners, and their appearance in order to sell the rustic Vermont image, often at considerable inconvenience."[69] By the early 1930s, it was not only the tourist industry that was encouraging the conversion of the state's declining agricultural industry into a viable tourist landscape and its impoverished farmers into a race of self-reliant pioneers, but also the state's own political leaders and academic experts. In a 1931 report, the Vermont Commission on Country Life, an organization chaired by the governor, described its mission in terms of human conservation: to maintain the fertility and genetic superiority of the state's early pioneers, who ostensibly comprised "one of the most reliable

---

[67] *The Columbia World of Quotations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), <http://www.bartleby.com/66/56/14856.html> (21 February 2004) and John Margolies and Eric Baker, *See the USA: The Art of the American Travel Brochure* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 21. According to *Columbia*, Coolidge said this on 22 September 1928 in a railroad observation car in Bennington, Vt.
[68] Nancy Gallagher, *Building Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999), 49.
[69] *Ibid.*

seedbeds of our national life."[70] Like Cobb, these political leaders were determined to delineate and maintain the integrity of a race of rural New Englanders.

Historian David Glassberg suggests that Indians and rural farmers were not only cast as Others in various parts of the country during the period in which the Mohawk Trail rose to prominence, but also held up as antidotes to some of the ills of modern urban civilization: "Along with attacks on modern progress for the destruction of distinctive landscapes and places in the 1920s and 1930s came the romanticization of displaced peoples – Yankee farmers, Southern sharecroppers, Native Americans – as being close to the earth."[71] Perhaps in part because they were considered to be "close to the earth," groups such as Indians and rural farmers were thought to be more authentic than modern urbanites. In her discussion of tourism in the American Southwest during the same period, Leah Dilworth suggests, "The tourist narrative is a story of a quest for contact with authenticity and gains its authority from the journey into and return from the realm of the other."[72]

Along the Mohawk Trail, the notion of an Indian past and an Anglo pastoral past collided vividly in the names of tourist businesses with agricultural themes. One tourist home in East Charlemont was known as Mohawk Farm. There is still a business along the Trail in Shelburne known as Mohawk Orchards. On the same property as the Mohawk Park cabins was the Ox Yoke Cocktail Lounge, complete with a collection of yokes from local farms. The author of the *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail* suggests that the lounge's former promotion of Narragansett ale and beer "was fitting, because the name comes from one of the Algonkian Native American peoples of Southern New England." The adjacent

---

[70] *Ibid*., 91-92 and 115.
[71] David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 120.
[72] Dilworth, 120.

dining room featured a mural titled "Landing of the Pilgrims."[73] Returning to Browne's cover (Figure 2.1b), it is possible that this juxtaposition of Indian and Anglo history suggests that the Mohawk Trail was romanticizing the Turnerian frontier progression more generally rather than Indian history in particular.

Souvenir sales also reflected an amalgamation of various Mohawk Trail narratives. In the early years of the Canedy businesses, popular souvenirs included Indian-themed items (moccasins and bows and arrows), items with a connection to the surrounding pastoral landscape (maple sugar), and more universal tourist mementos (pennants with the inscription "Mohawk Trail" and postcards). At Whitcomb Summit, Canedy also sold basic concession items such as popcorn, peanuts, hot dogs, and hot chocolate.[74] In Figure 2.7, several of these items are on display in the Whitcomb Summit shop.

Figure 2.7: Interior of Whitcomb Summit Tourist Shop around 1920. (Courtesy of Wayne Canedy)

[73] *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 24, 31.
[74] "Multi-Million Dollar Tourist Trade Blooms From Charles Canedy's Tiny 1915 Trail Stand" and 15 February 2004 interview with Wayne Canedy and Wayne Canedy, "Footprints from the Past," 1996.

The program for the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* had set the stage for this romanticization of the corridor's Anglo pastoral past in 1914 when the short history in its opening pages described the "white spire of an old church" in Florida as "a relic of the past." According to the program, the church served the Florida residents who "still cling to the heights."[75] Automobile tourists throughout the country were interested in quaint town centers. Belasco notes, "Nostalgic motorists gravitated to picturesque villages."[76]

The Mohawk Trail itself was literally built upon artifacts from the corridor's pastoral past. The original highway was constructed with stones of various sizes, ranging from larger stones on the lower layers to fine gravel on the surface that could be graded. It had wooden railings and rock cribs along the slopes. The only permanent structures were the concrete bridges over the Deerfield and Cold Rivers and the rock cuts through the Cold River Canyon in Florida and the Hairpin Turn in North Adams.[77] Stan Brown, longtime resident of Florida and operator of Brown's Garage prior to its closing in May 2003, notes that there are no longer any stone walls along the Mohawk Trail because all of the stones were used in the construction of the road (Figure 2.8).[78] As Brown's anecdote suggests, romanticization of the primitive Anglo lifestyle along the Trail did not provide an impetus for the preservation of relics of the corridor's early agricultural history.

---

[75] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail*.
[76] Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 28.
[77] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 2. This was a relatively common road building technique at the time. See William H. Marnell, *Vacation Yesterdays of New England* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 110.
[78] Stan Brown mentioned this in a conversation with the author on 16 December 2003 and in an interview broadcast on *Chronicle*, WCVB-TV Boston, 23 November 1994.

Figure 2.8: A section of the original Mohawk Trail highway while under construction sometime between 1912 and 1914.
(Courtesy of Stan Brown)

Like the amalgamation of local and national frontier history, it is likely that the juxtaposition of Indian and Anglo primitive pasts along the Mohawk Trail did not detract from tourists' enjoyment of the highway or lead tourists to doubt the legitimacy of the historical narrative it presented. In fact, the combination of Indian and pastoral pasts probably broadened the Trail's appeal to tourists seeking a destination reminiscent of the frontier. Jackle observes, "Although the tourist's sense of history was often inaccurate, it was usually a well-developed preoccupation in travel."[79] Though tourists gravitated toward the Mohawk Trail because of an interest in the history it presented, it is likely that they were not particularly concerned with the accuracy or consistency of the Trail's historical narrative.

***

At the time when the Mohawk Trail was completed, automobile touring, in contrast to railroad travel, was considered a primitive exercise that brought drivers closer to nature. A

[79] Jackle, 286.

1915 guide to the transcontinental Lincoln Highway warned that the journey was "still something of a sporting trip, and one must expect and put up cheerfully with some unpleasantness, just as you would on a shooting trip." However, the guide claimed, "to those who love the side spaces, who enjoy exertion in the clear ozone of the great out-of-doors, the trip is a delightful outing." According to Belasco, these remarks imply that "motoring… answered Theodore Roosevelt's call for a revival of the 'strenuous life' that had supposedly preceded turn-of-the-century decadence."[80]

Early Mohawk Trail tourists certainly felt this sentiment. Reflecting back on his early travels on the Mohawk Trail from the perspective of the 1970s, William Marnell recalls the arduousness of those journeys:

> Today it is a slower but more scenic way to Albany than the Mass Pike, but a half century ago it was an adventure and an achievement. Some friends of motoring man placed strategic barrels of water at the steeper rises, that overlaboring motors might be refreshed; those sagacious in the ways of the Trail plotted strategy involving resting places and the harboring of motive power for the final push through a hamlet called of all things, Florida, to the Elks Statue and the eastern overlook. The Elks Statue and the eastern overlook were the crowning glory of the drive and the supreme achievement; Hairpin Turn and the view down the valley were the reward. There was, of course, also the true reward, the boast that one had made the Mohawk Trail.[81]

In this passage, Marnell seems to offer his tacit agreement with Belasco's assertion that "it was the intrinsic appeal of being in a car that induced the earliest motor pioneers to endure poor roads and uncertain machines."[82]

Closely related to the automobile's ability to bring drivers closer to a strenuous and primitive lifestyle was its ability to bring drivers to more primitive or natural landscapes. In an article about the construction of the highway, the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* declared,

---

[80] The quotes from the 1915 guide and direct quote are taken from Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 30.
[81] Marnell, 124-25. The "Elks Statue" that Marnell mentions was erected on Whitcomb Summit in 1923. It will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.
[82] Belasco, "Motivatin' with Chuck Berry and Frederick Jackson Turner," 266.

"When completed, this road will be a paradise to the lover of nature." According to the newspaper, the scenic views the Trail afforded would "hold the observer spell bound and make [the Mohawk Trail] one of the most, if not the most popular automobile ride in New England."[83] It was not only local newspaper writers who emphasized the Trail's natural beauty. Sargent's *Handbook of New England*, published in Boston in 1916, declared that the Mohawk Trail "is one of the most beautiful [roads] in New England and discloses wonderful views."[84]

Increasingly, automobile tourists sought remote destinations renowned for their natural beauty. The number of automobiles entering national parks grew from 55,000 in 1917 to over 400,000 in 1926.[85] Like the early roads into these scenic regions, the early cars that tourists drove to them reflected the rugged nature of these journeys. The Model T was sturdily built with a high wheelbase for rough terrain.[86]

The preservation of this natural beauty became an important goal of political leaders. On 30 December 1916, the *Transcript* reported,

> Gov. McCall intends to write into his inaugural a request that the disfigurement of Massachusetts highways by the erection of billboards be stopped.
> The governor has in mind the Mohawk Trail from Greenfield to North Adams, one of the most beautiful highways in the country, cluttered up with billboards. The state built the road, and the governor feels that it should be able to protect it from the disfiguring bill-poster.
>
> Bills of various sorts directed at this evil have been in the legislature before, but no progress has been made.[87]

The use of words such as "disfigurement" and "evil" demonstrates the vehemence of the newspaper staff's opposition to billboards in the Mohawk Trail landscape. However, the

---

[83] "Remarkable Engineering Feat Proceeding on Florida Mountain," *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, 27 September 1913.
[84] Sargent, 411.
[85] Jackle, 71.
[86] Shaffer, 137.
[87] "Mohawk Trail Signs Start Gov. McCall on Billboard War," *Transcript*, 30 December 1916.

failure of past bills suggests that advertisers had more political influence than preservationists. Beginning in 1919, the legislature did take steps toward the regulation of billboards.[88]

The creation of the Mohawk Trail State Forest was another significant step toward the preservation of the natural landscape along the Mohawk Trail. On 22 May 1915, the Massachusetts legislature passed a resolve directing the state forest commission "to investigate the practicability and advisability, and to estimate the cost, of establishing a state forest along the Mohawk trail, so-called, in the counties of Franklin and Berkshire."[89] In his 1917 guidebook, Canedy noted that "a movement is well underway and with bright prospects of success to secure legislation committing the State to the purchase of a wide strip of land along the side of the Trail to protect its wooded side and prevent disfigurement by unsightly signs and other structures."[90] On 30 April 1921, the legislature passed an act authorizing the creation of the Mohawk Trail State Forest. The act gave the Commissioner of Conservation the authority to purchase between 4000 and 5000 acres of land along the Mohawk Trail between the junction of the Cold and Deerfield Rivers and the village of Drury (in the town of Florida). The Commissioner could even take land by eminent domain for the purpose of establishing the state forest.[91]

---

[88] In 1919, the legislature established a commission to consider the regulation of billboards, and in 1920, it required the Division of Highways to "make rules and regulations for the proper control and restriction of billboard and other advertising devices on public ways or on private property within public view of any highway, public park, or reservation." The 1920 legislation also gave municipalities the authority to regulate roadside advertising within their borders. "See these chapters in *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts*: Resolve Providing for an Investigation by a Special Commission of the Question of the Regulation of Billboards and Other Advertising Devices Adjoining Public Highways (Resolves, 1919, Chap. 69) and An Act to Provide for the Regulation of Advertising Signs and Devices within the Public View (Acts, 1920, Chap. 545).

[89] Resolve Providing for an Investigation by the State Forest Commission Relative to Establishing a State Forest along the Mohawk Trail in the Counties of Franklin and Berkshire, *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts*, Resolves, 1915, Chap. 114.

[90] *The Trail of the Mohawk*.

[91] Act Providing for the Establishment of the Mohawk Trail State Forest, *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts*, Acts, 1921, Chap. 344.

Canedy's vocal support for the creation of a state forest to prevent the "disfigurement" of the landscape was likely motivated, at least in part, by his desire for the Trail to continue to attract tourists who would purchase his guides and patronize his businesses at Whitcomb Summit and the Hairpin Turn. It may also have occurred to Canedy that the creation of a state forest would decrease the amount of land along the highway that could eventually be developed into competing tourist-oriented businesses. To use the language of the obituary writer quoted at the end of Chapter 1, the dichotomy between Canedy's desire to profit from the Trail's tourist trade and his desire to preserve its scenic beauty epitomizes the role of the "commercial present" in the promotion of "American romance" along the Mohawk Trail. The Trail's romantic traits, most notably its natural beauty and its connection to the romantic frontier, were preserved in large part because they sustained the lucrative tourist trade along the highway.

Beginning relatively early in the Trail's history, private businesses tried to capitalize on the natural (and pastoral) beauty of the corridor by building observation towers and charging visitors to climb them. Charles Canedy built observation towers at his Whitcomb Summit and Hairpin Turn properties in the early 1920s. Ten years later, Canedy installed the Trail's first coin-operated telescope at Whitcomb Summit.[92]

By bringing automobile tourists closer to a natural primitive state through a strenuous mode of travel and opportunities for interaction with natural landscapes, the Mohawk Trail facilitated yet another encounter between the civilization in which its tourists normally lived and that civilization's primitive past. Like the encounters the Mohawk Trail offered with Indians, the encounters it offered with nature served as antidotes to the ills of

[92] 19 February 2004 interview with Wayne Canedy. Canedy is not sure of the exact dates that the towers were erected, but he said that there is a photo of the tower at Whitcomb Summit that was taken no later than 1921. The telescope was installed in 1931.

the ostensibly overcivilized present. Shaffer argues that, according to the authors of the See America First guides and other adherents of "the prevalent framework of liberal individualism that characterized the expanding consumer society" of the early twentieth century,

> the balance between nature and progress or nature and civilization could only be preserved if the individual had contact with nature, even if only temporarily. The technology of tourism provided that opportunity. Both the railroad and the automobile promised to make nature more accessible to the individual.[93]

***

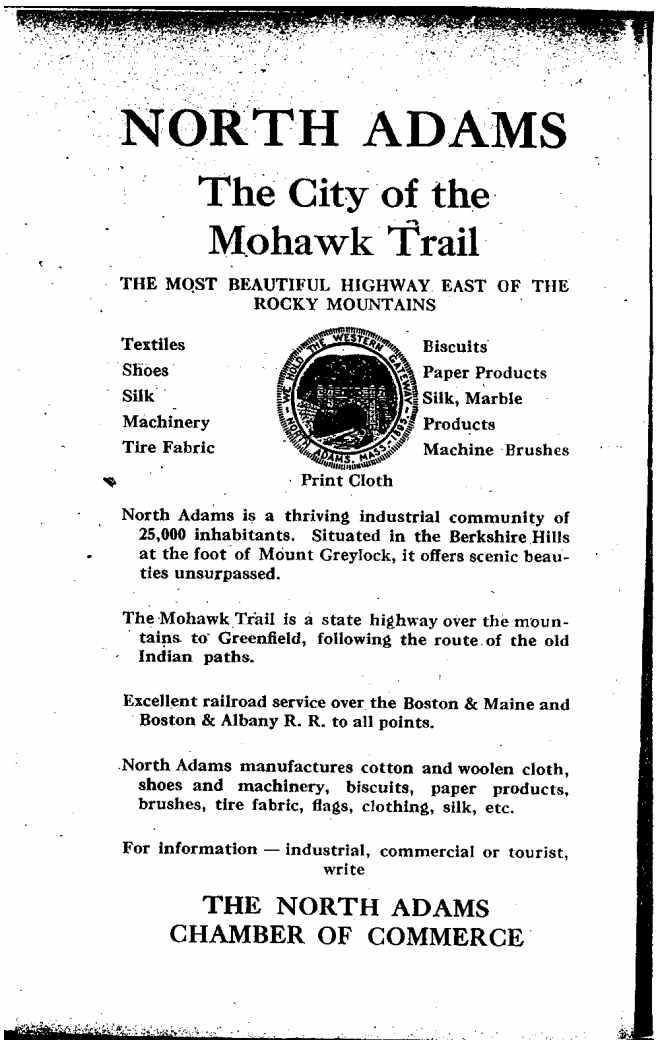
The notion of the Mohawk Trail and the history that accompanied it were not only appropriated by guidebook authors and business owners, but eventually by the city of North Adams itself. The 22 October 1914 issue of the *Transcript*, which covered the dedication ceremony for the new highway, hinted that the Mohawk Trail was already beginning to assume its role as part of North Adams' identity. That edition of the *Transcript* appeared to be saturated with boosterism. It not only contained coverage of the dedication ceremony and photos and history of the Mohawk Trail, but also an article titled "Evidences of Prosperity Mark Every Phase of North Adams" in which the writer explained that North Adams's "opportunities today are of a character that would astound her sons whose passing has not been distant, and would cause any community throughout the broad universe to be filled with the feeling of optimism."[94] An unsigned ad, presumably sponsored by the paper itself, advised its readers, "When You Finish With Your *Transcript* Tonight, Send It to a Friend. /

[93] Shaffer, 192. When Shaffer suggests that the railroad and the automobile both "promised to make nature more accessible to the individual," she means that they both provided greater access to natural landscapes. As noted above, the automobile provided a more strenuous mode of travel that brought tourists into more intimate contact with the natural landscapes through which they passed.
[94] "Evidences of Prosperity Mark Every Phase of Life in North Adams," *Transcript*, 22 October 1914.

And do your part in promoting the interests of your home. / Everybody can do this much to spread the fame of the Mohawk Trail and every bit of publicity helps."[95]

Beginning in 1921, the North Adams Chamber of Commerce ran an advertisement proclaiming that North Adams was "The Home of the Mohawk Trail" and that the Trail was "The most beautiful highway east of the Rocky Mountains." Along with information about the size of the city's population, the goods that were manufactured in the city, and the railroad lines that serviced the city was this statement: "The Mohawk Trail is a state highway over the mountains to Greenfield, following the route of the old Indian paths." Interestingly, the information in the lower half of the ad is arranged in a progression that roughly parallels the frontier narrative of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. It starts with natural beauty, then moves to Indian history before concluding with modern railroads and manufacturing facilities. By 1925, the wording of the ad was changed so that the headline announced that North Adams was not merely "The Home of the Mohawk Trail," but "The City of the Mohawk Trail" (Figure 2.9).[96] This semantically minor change is significant because it elevated the Mohawk Trail from its previous status as one of many things that considered North Adams its home to the primary feature with which the city identified itself. The pageant, the dedication ceremony, and the entrepreneurs who opened Indian-themed businesses along the Trail had established the frontier narrative imbedded in the Mohawk Trail as the dominant narrative of North Adams history.

[95] *Transcript*, 22 October 1914.
[96] *Manning's North Adams Directory*. These directories were accessed on microfilm at the North Adams Public Library. The 1920 directory was not available at the time that the directories were filmed, so it is possible that the Chamber of Commerce began submitting these ads in 1920.



NORTH ADAMS

The City of the Mohawk Trail

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HIGHWAY EAST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Textiles
Shoes
Silk
Machinery
Tire Fabric

Biscuits
Paper Products
Silk, Marble
Products
Machine Brushes
Print Cloth

North Adams is a thriving industrial community of 25,000 inhabitants. Situated in the Berkshire Hills at the foot of Mount Greylock, it offers scenic beauties unsurpassed.

The Mohawk Trail is a state highway over the mountains to Greenfield, following the route of the old Indian paths.

Excellent railroad service over the Boston & Maine and Boston & Albany R. R. to all points.

North Adams manufactures cotton and woolen cloth, shoes and machinery, biscuits, paper products, brushes, tire fabric, flags, clothing, silk, etc.

For information — industrial, commercial or tourist, write

THE NORTH ADAMS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Figure 2.9: North Adams Chamber of Commerce advertisement that appeared in the 1925 edition of *Manning's North Adams Directory*.

Through the nickname "City of the Mohawk Trail," the chamber of commerce clearly established North Adams as a city that culminated the narrative of American progress that Gast and Browne so vividly portrayed (Figure 2.1). Tourists would reach North Adams after journeying through the Indians and wilderness of the Mohawk Trail in their automobiles, which would have become Turnerian birch canoes. The City of the Mohawk Trail reconciled the frontier landscape of the Mohawk Trail with the American progress that had produced the automobile.

As Jackle notes, tourism was "an important motive underlying highway development, especially in areas where tourism was a significant commercial enterprise." Over time, a symbiotic relationship formed between tourists and highways. Tourists not only used roads, but also became advocates of new road construction. "The building of parkways in the 1920s and 1930s reflected recognition that tourists were important highway users."[97] Though the Mohawk Trail was not designed as carefully or regulated as strongly as parkways and national park roads generally were, its promotion as a scenic route, the drive to eliminate billboards along it, and the creation of state forest land that could not be developed suggest that it was conceived as a highway that could appeal to tourists. The enjoyment of natural scenery was certainly a consideration in the design of the Mohawk Trail. Like contemporary national park roads, which functioned "like the pathways of the romantic garden" by controlling "the place images that tourists carried away," the Mohawk Trail was designed to offer the tourists who traveled it the most picturesque vistas available.[98] In the opinion of local historian William Bradford Browne,

> It is quite probable that had it not been for consideration of Whitcomb Summit as a spot for the enjoyment of the scenery by travelers, the new Mohawk Trail [the highway] would have kept to the line of the Indian path even more closely, and followed the Cold River for its entire distance.[99]

In the early years of the Trail, the most efficient way to travel from Boston to Albany was presumably still by train, so the highway primarily received recreational use.[100]

The Mohawk Trail was conceived as part of a system of highways serving tourists embarking on auto tours that would take them throughout New England and New York. At

---

[97] Jackle, 145.
[98] *Ibid*., 71.
[99] Browne, 9.
[100] I was unable to locate the train timetables that would be needed to prove this assertion. The highway was closed in winter until 1929, so the train was certainly a more reliable year-round mode of transportation during the highway's early years.

a 1912 hearing, the city engineer of North Adams and the Massachusetts Highway Commissioner had advocated for the construction of the Mohawk Trail on the grounds that it would provide a northern route to the White Mountains. The Highway Commissioner explained at the hearing "that to get to the White Mountains, the Green Mountains and the New England shore resorts, automotive tourists would necessarily be obliged to go over either the northern or southern routes, and nine times out of ten would go one way and return the other."[101] The Trail was also designed to connect Boston and the rest of Massachusetts to New York and destinations further west. In its coverage of the highway's opening, the *Transcript* explained that "the Mohawk Trail will not stop in Berkshire. Already there is a tacit understanding that the new road is to be continued along the course of the old Indian pathway across the corner of Vermont and into New York state, connecting with the beautiful Adirondack tours." The pageant program expressed similar sentiments.[102] In his 1917 guidebook to the Mohawk Trail, Canedy includes mileages to Bretton Woods (a famous resort in the White Mountains) and Lake George (a tourist destination in upstate New York) in a list of destinations comprised primarily of various cities in western Massachusetts and New York's Capital District.[103] The inclusion of these two tourist destinations outside of the region implies that Canedy felt that some of his readers were traveling along the Mohawk Trail as part of longer tours.

***

The 1920s were perhaps the zenith of the Mohawk Trail. In 1923, the Automobile Club of America dubbed the Mohawk Trail a leading "honeymoon route." According to the

---

[101] "Most Beautiful Road in New England Formally Opened This Afternoon…"
[102] *Ibid.* and "Trail Long Used as Line of Travel by Mohawk Indians," *Transcript*, 22 October 1914. The introduction in *Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail* also mentioned that highways in Vermont and New York would connect the Mohawk Trail "with the beautiful Adirondack tours."
[103] *The Trail of the Mohawk*.

automobile club, over 1000 newly married couples had "registered at prominent hotels along the route" in 1922.[104] Marnell recalls that the two most popular destinations for overnight weekend scenic drives from Boston in the 1920s were the Mohawk Trail and the White Mountains.[105] Reflecting in 1978 on several decades of involvement with his family's two Trail businesses, Donald Canedy recalled, "The late 20's were boom days for the family. There was more business then than there is now." Wayne Canedy confirmed this in a 2004 interview.[106] The Mohawk Trail offered automobile tourists of the 1920s exactly what they sought – a drive close enough to Boston to be a weekend trip but remote enough physically and conceptually to allow them to feel that they were escaping the city for a simpler and more quintessentially American existence.

However, in the decades that followed, changes in the nature of American automobile touring and in the Mohawk Trail itself made the Trail a less essential destination for later tourists. During the decades between the world wars, the average number of miles traveled by a motorist in a day increased significantly, from 125 in 1916 to 400 in 1936. Belasco reflects that 1936 tourists could have covered the same 125 miles in less time each day, leaving more time for leisure and sightseeing. However, these increases in daily mileage demonstrate that "as tourists became more road wise, the intrinsic pleasures of being on the road, no matter where, tended to wear off… Motoring emerged as a means to get somewhere rather than as an end in itself."[107] A glance at a map shows that these increases in distance traveled made many more destinations accessible to tourists leaving from Boston and New York who wanted to spend a weekend on the road. Furthermore, the abundance of

---

[104] *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 15 and "The Honeymoon Trail," *Transcript*, 4 June 1923.
[105] Marnell, 121-22.
[106] "Canedy's Tourists: Like Family," *Transcript*, 9 December 1978 and 15 February 2004 interview with Wayne Canedy.
[107] These statistics and Belasco's observations are taken from Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 89.

early tourist businesses along the Mohawk Trail suggests that these businesses were geared more toward the frequent stops of the early 125-mile-a-day traveler.

During the late 1920s, the Mohawk Trail entered a new phase in its development. On 28 September 1929, several thousand spectators gathered at Whitcomb Summit for a ceremony commemorating the opening of the reconstructed highway. The reconstruction, which had taken two years and cost over one million dollars, widened the highway and paved it with asphalt (instead of the earlier oil and gravel macadam surface). With the introduction of the first state plows to the section of the Mohawk Trail through Florida during the winter of 1929-30, the Trail became a year-round highway. Prior to the arrival of the state plows, residents of the town had gathered together to plow the Trail by hand after major storms (Figure 2.10).[108] The resurfacing and the arrival of state plows were concrete innovations that made Florida less isolated, but also made it less self-sufficient, and perhaps less of a frontier in the eyes of tourists.

Figure 2.10: Florida residents plowing the Mohawk Trail during the winter of 1926. (Courtesy of Stan Brown)

[108] 16 December 2003 interview with Stan Brown; *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 34; "Trail Opening is Celebrated" and "Rebuilding Cost is Over Million," *Transcript*, 28 September 1929; and "Mohawk Trail is Placed on Winter Highway List," *Transcript*, 30 October 1929.

By 1930, the Mohawk Trail was a highway that could reliably transport businesspeople and freight throughout the year as well as seasonal tourists. However, the innovations that facilitated the highway's year-round functionality also removed the element of frontieresque struggle that the uncertain road conditions had produced for earlier travelers. Automobile tourists such as Marnell had relished that struggle. Without it, the frontier experience would not be an intrinsic part of the journey over the Mohawk Trail and Marnell's "boast that one had made the Mohawk Trail" would no longer be particularly impressive. Though the automobile was still a mode of transportation that arguably fostered individualism and democracy, the drive over Hoosac Mountain on a paved highway could hardly be compared to the journey of the Turnerian pioneer in his birch bark canoe. Post-1930 tourists would have to settle for accessing the frontier along the Mohawk Trail by gazing upon the preserved natural landscapes that alluded to wilderness and the built landscape that alluded to the corridor's Indian and pastoral history, and by consuming souvenirs related to those primitive phenomena. Perhaps partly in response to the frontier's diminished position in the experience of Mohawk Trail tourists, there was a drive in the early 1930s to communicate the Trail's frontier history more vividly through the monuments that will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3
Monuments
Commemorating Frontier Heritage

On Monday, 3 October 1932, the *Transcript* declared, "The Mohawk Indian returned to the Mohawk Trail on Saturday when the bronze statue of an Indian chieftain, with arms outstretched to 'hail the rising sun,' was unveiled at Mohawk Park."[1] The statue, known as *Hail to the Sunrise*, had been dedicated over the weekend at the point where the Mohawk Trail crosses the Deerfield River in Charlemont (Figure 3.1). It was erected by the Old Deerfield Conference of the Improved Order of Red Men, an Indian-themed fraternal organization whose membership was limited to white men. The dedication ceremony attracted over 2000 spectators, including "Red Men" from every New England state and New York.[2] Clearly, as far as the *Transcript* writer was concerned, the erection of the statue reconnected the highway with the history from which it derived its name.

[1] "Statue of Indian Chief Is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail," Transcript, 3 October 1932.
[2] *Ibid.* and Alan Axelrod, *The International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders* (New York: Facts on File, 1997), 206-07.

Figure 3.1: Postcard of *Hail to the Sunrise* (undated).[3]
(Courtesy of Hank Art)

Hail to the Sunrise built upon the previous work of the North Adams Chamber of Commerce and the various tourist-oriented businesses by facilitating the cultivation of strong connections between the Mohawk Trail and the corridor's Indian history. At the statue's dedication ceremony, Andrew Kendrew, President of the Old Deerfield Conference, verged on offering a revisionist view of the Mohawks' role in the history of the Mohawk Trail when he thanked the members of the statue committee for their part in "restoring the Mohawk Indian to the land of his forefathers."[4] Contemporary historians such as William Bradford Browne, and even earlier ones such as John Adams Aiken, knew that Mohawks had never lived along the Mohawk Trail.[5] It is possible that Kendrew was simply referring to the corridor through which the Mohawks passed on various occasions as the "land of their

[3] The postcard was printed by Curt Teich and Co.
[4] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[5] See Browne, 10-11. The research and writings of Browne and Aiken are discussed in Chapter 1.

forefathers," but an area through which members of the tribe transiently moved hardly seems worthy of such a label. Later in the ceremony, Kendrew implied that even he knew that the statue's site and the Mohawk Trail were not an actual homeland of the Mohawks when he referred to the corridor as "the trail formerly traveled by the friendly Mohawks" as opposed to the trail formerly inhabited by the Mohawks.[6] In this instance, it appears that the romantic appeal of the "Mohawk Trail" regional identity to the "Red Men" had rendered the knowledge of local historians into an afterthought. The Mohawk Trail had become the land of the Mohawk Indian's forefathers.

Though perhaps the most iconic, *Hail to the Sunrise* was not the first major monument installed along the Mohawk Trail. It was preceded by the *Elk on the Trail* (commonly known as "the Elk"), a statue of an elk erected on Whitcomb Summit in June 1923 by the Massachusetts Elks Association in honor of the members of their organization who died in World War I (Figure 3.2). Like the dedication ceremony for the Mohawk Trail itself that had taken place nearly nine years earlier on the same site, the dedication of the Elk attracted a large crowd of spectators. In fact, the ceremony attracted "more that 10,000 people in at least 3,000 cars." The crowd included such dignitaries as the governor of Louisiana, the president of the Massachusetts Senate, the speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, and the Mayor of Boston.[7]

[6] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[7] "Great Throng Thrilled as Memorial to World War Dead is Dedicated," *Transcript*, 18 June 1923. It is not clear whether any of these officials had a direct connection to the Elks.

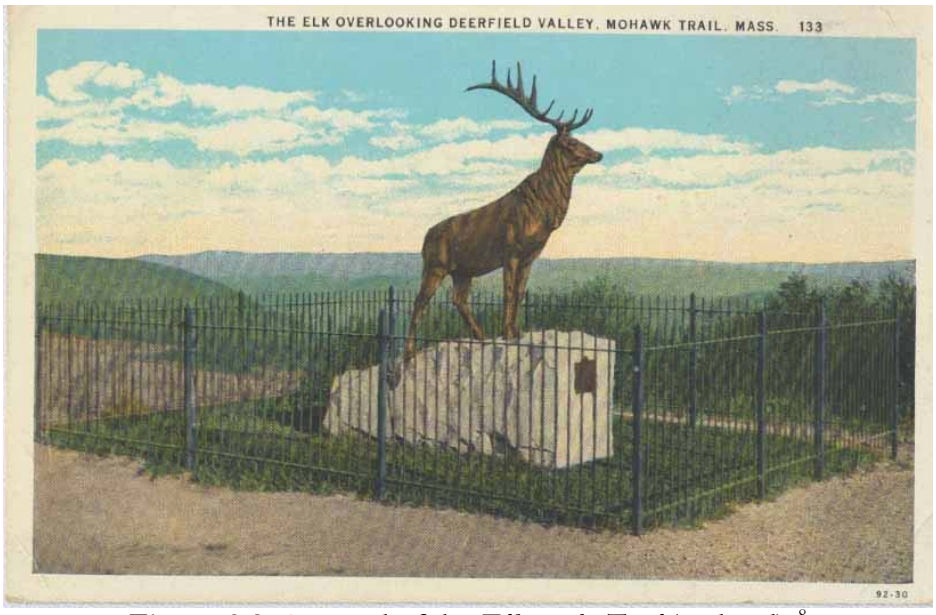


Figure 3.2: Postcard of the *Elk on the Trail* (undated).[8]
(Courtesy of Hank Art)

Hail to the Sunrise and the *Elk on the Trail* did not supersede the chamber of commerce and the corridor's tourist-oriented businesses as interpreters of local frontier history, but instead forged a symbiotic relationship with them. Though the monuments were erected by fraternal organizations, they received support from Mohawk Trail business owners in the form of donated land. In both cases, owners of adjacent businesses donated the parcels of land on which the statues were erected in order to increase tourism along the Mohawk Trail and patronage of their businesses in particular.

After hearing of the plans for the Elk, Charles Canedy offered to donate 15,000 square feet of land along the Mohawk Trail to the Massachusetts Elks Association for the statue.[9] Wayne Canedy notes that his grandfather's donation of land was not entirely altruistic. Being the shrewd businessman that he was, Charles Canedy knew that the

[8] The postcard was printed by Curt Teich and Co.
[9] John P. Brennan, "'The Elk on the Trail': Its Inception and Fruition" ([Cambridge, Mass?]: Massachusetts Elks Association, 1948), 3-5.

proximity of the future statue to Whitcomb Summit would encourage more tourists to patronize his shop.[10]

Cecil Kennedy and his wife, the original owners of Mohawk Park, were members of the Improved Order of Red Men. They donated an acre of land to Andrew Kendrew, President of the Old Deerfield Conference, for the statue.[11] The Kennedys did not waste any time in their efforts to capitalize on the proximity of their business to the *Hail to the Sunrise* monument. Presumably referring to *Hail to the Sunrise*, a Mohawk Park advertisement that appeared in the *Transcript* the day that the dedication was scheduled encouraged readers to "Visit Mohawk Park/The Home of the Indian on the Trail" (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Advertisement for Mohawk Park that appeared in the *Transcript* on 1 October 1932.

***

[10] 15 February 2004 interview with Wayne Canedy.
[11] *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 30 and "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail" and "Dedication Held at Mohawk Park," *Transcript*, 23 September 1935. Only men could be members of the "Red Men," so presumably Mrs. Kennedy was a member of the Degree of Pocahontas, the Red Men's auxiliary.

Though the connections that the *Elk on the Trail* and *Hail to the Sunrise* had to adjacent tourist businesses cannot be ignored, these monuments were unlike the buildings along the Trail that were constructed solely to capitalize on passing tourists in several important ways. Unlike the individual Mohawk Trail businesses that were generally conceived and financed by a single entrepreneur, these monuments were planned and funded through bureaucratic processes within fraternal organizations. Each monument allowed the members of the organization that erected it to collectively commemorate a group (World War I veterans or Indians) that their organization admired. In the case of the Elk, the dedication coincided with the annual Convention of the Massachusetts Elks Association, which was held in Greenfield. A planning committee for the Greenfield convention conceived the idea for the statue.[12] The letter and commemorative coin displayed in Figure 3.4 were apparently distributed to "Red Men" throughout New England as part of the effort to raise money to cover the $4000 cost of *Hail to the Sunrise*. The committee in charge of *Hail to the Sunrise* spent seven years planning and fundraising for the statue.[13] Also, the proponents of the monuments made grand claims about their future venerability. Writing twenty-five years after the dedication, John P. Brennan, former President of the Massachusetts Elks Association, claimed, "The Elk on the Trail will hereafter stand as a shrine by the wayside for travelers to recall the duty they owe to God, Country, and Mankind."[14] These connections to fraternal organizations and claims of future venerability suggest that the *Elk on the Trail* and *Hail to the Sunrise* were conceived as works of public history.

[12] Brennan, 4 and 8 and "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[13] "Statue of Indian Chief Is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[14] Brennan, 8.

HARK YE TO THE VOICE OF THE PROPHET

(For what the Prophet says is good)

A MOHAWK INDIAN *for the* MOHAWK TRAIL

OLD DEERFIELD CONFERENCE

INDIAN-ON-THE-TRAIL COMMITTEE

OF THE

IMPROVED ORDER OF RED MEN

CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS, *Room* 214 COLONIAL BLDG.

100 Boylston St., Boston

Open daily from 12 noon *to* 8:30 p.m.

Help Us Build this Monument

PHONE HANCOCK 5075

Dear Chief and Brother:—

You, as a Red Man of the New England Reservations know that for the last four years, the "Indian On The Trail" Committee has been endeavoring to raise sufficient wampum to erect a monument of a "Mohawk Indian on the Mohawk Trail". A small portion of the wampum has been raised but not near enough to proceed with the erection of the monument, which we anticipate dedicating this year. To achieve this goal more wampum is needed as quickly as possible.

Practically every Tribe in the New England Reservations can use additional wampum, so a share of the profits on each card sold will be sent to the Keeper of Wampum of the Tribe of which the one selling his card is a member.

The Committee also will donate a share of the profits of the campaign to the Orphans' Fund. This fund is always dear to the members of this great American Fraternity.

To raise the necessary funds and to give every member an opportunity of participating on an equal basis, your committee has devised a pleasing and profitable plan which will not alone give us the money for our funds, but whereby you will receive your choice of any article illustrated inside of this folder ABSOLUTELY FREE.

The plan is outlined fully on the back page of this letter. Read carefully and then dispose of the enclosed DONATION CARD for which you will not alone be rewarded, but will rest happy in the conscious thought of a good deed well performed.

Your good will and co-operation is needed in this campaign and we rely on you with confidence.

Fraternally yours in F. F. & C.

INDIAN ON THE TRAIL COMMITTEE

3— IMPORTANT REASONS WHY WE APPEAL TO YOU —3

First— The erection of the Mohawk Indian on the Mohawk Trail.
Second— The noble humanitarian work of helping the Orphan.
Third— Increase your own Tribal Wampum Belt.

8 WEEKS — CAMPAIGN — 8 WEEKS

Figure 3.4a: Letter used by Improved Order of Red Men to raise money for construction of *Hail to the Sunrise* (circa 1929).
(Courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts)

Figure 3.4b: Front and back of commemorative coin distributed by the Improved Order of Red Men to raise money for construction of *Hail to the Sunrise* (circa 1930).[15]
(Courtesy of Hank Art)

[15] The letter and the coin are undated. The letter states that the Red Men had been fundraising for four years for *Hail to the Sunrise*, and, as noted above, one of the speakers at the 1932 dedication ceremony mentioned that the planning and fundraising process had taken seven years. So, it is likely that the letter was written around 1929. Presumably, the coin was distributed at approximately the same time. Note that, because the coin was distributed prior to World War II, the swastikas on it were still considered to be good luck charms.

Not surprisingly, *Hail to the Sunrise* became a pilgrimage site for "Red Men." On 22 September 1935, almost exactly three years after the statue's dedication, "Red Men" gathered at Mohawk Park to dedicate a fountain in front of the statue. "Random stones… which form a low parapet about the pool are inscribed with the names of the tribes of the Old Deerfield conference, comprising tribes in New England, although a New York and a Maryland tribe are also represented."[16] On 11 September 1949, 2000 "Red Men" from all of the New England and Mid-Atlantic states made their 17th annual pilgrimage to the *Hail to the Sunrise* monument. They rededicated the fountain at the park, to which additional stones had been added so that, by 1949, it contained "stones from nearly every state in the union and from Alaska and Hawaii."[17] Further improvements to the park, such as pools stocked with rainbow trout, were planned but they never materialized.[18]

***

A third important example of public history along the Mohawk Trail is the replica of Fort Massachusetts, dedicated by the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society in front of a crowd of 700 on 19 August 1933. The replica was erected on the site of the colonial fort along the western segment of the Trail in North Adams (Figure 3.5). According to the *Transcript*, the replica would serve "as a permanent and appropriate memorial to the brave defenders of the original fort and the hardy pioneers who first had the courage to settle in the unprotected wilderness of the Hoosac valley."[19]

---

[16] "Dedication Held at Mohawk Park." According to Alvin J. Schmidt and Nicholas Babchuk, *Fraternal Organizations* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 287, "tribes" of Red Men are local lodges. Presumably, conferences are regional groups of tribes.
[17] "Colorful Ceremony Held by Red Men," Transcript, 12 September 1949. In 1949, Alaska and Hawaii were American territories, not states.
[18] "Dedication Held at Mohawk Park" and Marino, 50.
[19] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain," *Transcript*, 21 August 1933.

Figure 3.5: Postcard of Fort Massachusetts replica (undated).[20]
(Courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts)

The *Transcript* offered this description of the replica:

> In size, the fort measures about 80 by 100 feet. It consists of a stockade of roughly squared logs, hewn by hand and mortised and dowelled together. The stockade has but a single entrance closed by a solid gate of heavy timbers which can be barred from the inside. On the northeast and southwest corners of the stockade are sentry boxes which overhang the sides of the walls, as did the original boxes, in order that the two sides of the fort might be covered from the loopholes in the boxes.
>
> Within the stockade stands the long barracks building, of similar construction to the stockade. It is in this building that the valuable and interesting collection of relics which are connected with the history of the old fort and of the surrounding country of that period… will be placed on display as soon as possible.[21]

The erection of the replica was not the first effort to commemorate the site of the fort. In the late 1850s, Professor Arthur Latham Perry of Williams College, the same professor who was likely the first person to use the phrase "Mohawk Trail," and several of his students planted an elm tree, subsequently known as the "Perry elm," to mark the site of

[20] The postcard was printed by C.W. Hughes and Co. of Mechanicville, N.Y. Presumably, it was produced sometime between 1933 and the early 1940s, the period during which the fort replica was maintained.
[21] "Combination of Two Buildings," Transcript, 21 August 1933.

the fort. The 1933 replica was built around the Perry elm (clearly visible behind the American flag in Figure 3.5), which would survive until it succumbed to disease in April 1977.[22] In 1895, a North Adams women's organization known as the Monday Club raised the necessary funds to purchase the land on which the colonial fort had stood. This land purchase was a catalyst for the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society, the organization that would construct the fort replica nearly four decades later.[23] The Fort Massachusetts Historical Society kept a flag flying continuously at the fort site during the week of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* in 1914.[24]

The story of Fort Massachusetts had long been a source of local pride. For instance, its story was featured prominently in the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the fort "was built for a threefold purpose; to defend the colony from the French and Indians, to warn the Dutch of New York against encroachments on the western frontier and to tell the people of New Hampshire Grants that they must keep within bounds."[25] On 19 August 1746, during King George's War, a force of about 900 attacked the fort. The attacking force, comprised of French regular troops, Canadian militia, and their Abenaki allies, faced a defending garrison of only 22 British soldiers (along with a few women and

---

[22] "Combination of Two Buildings" and "Sapling Stands at Fort Massachusetts, *Transcript*, 26 April 1977and Gladden, 121. The *Transcript* suggests that the tree was planted in 1859, while Gladden suggests that it was planted in 1857. For a discussion of Perry's early use of the name "Mohawk Trail," see the Introduction.
[23] "Hundreds Attend Dedication Despite Threat of Rain" and "Woman's Edition Save Fort Site," Transcript, 21 August 1933. The members of the Monday Club raised the $1000 that they needed to purchase the fort site by writing and editing all of the material for the 23 November 1895 edition of the *Hoosac Valley News*. An inscription on this edition of the *Hoosac Valley News* proclaimed that it was "Issued by the Women of North Adams that the site of Fort Massachusetts might be preserved to the people FOREVER." Approximately 12,000 copies were sold for 10 cents each. Presumably, the surplus covered the printing costs. A poem titled "Captivity," which was originally published in the special edition of the *Hoosac Valley News*, was read at the 1933 dedication ceremony. Sometime between 1895 and 1933, the Fort Massachusetts chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) purchased another parcel of land adjacent to the fort site. The regent of the DAR chapter presented the deed to this parcel to the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society at the 1933 dedication.
[24] *Transcript*, 9 June 1914.
[25] *The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail*. Browne (page 16) cites the same three reasons for the fort's construction. In 1745, the New Hampshire Grants included present-day southern Vermont.

children). After 28 hours, the British surrendered and the French and their allies burned the fort and marched the British survivors to Canada. Before burning the fort, the French flew their flag over the fort; this was the only time that the French flag flew in Massachusetts. The fort was rebuilt in 1747 and garrisoned with a British force of 100. The French attacked it unsuccessfully on 1 August 1748. The fort was abandoned around 1760.[26]

The history of Fort Massachusetts was intertwined with the history of the Indian path from which the Mohawk Trail ostensibly gained its name and identity. Browne discussed it in his Mohawk Trail history.[27] At the dedication ceremony for the replica, two speakers briefly mentioned the Indian trail that preceded the Mohawk Trail, but neither referred to it as the Mohawk Trail. Sanford Robinson, a New York lawyer who grew up in North Adams, mentioned that, at the time of the French attack on Fort Massachusetts, there had been "a well-defined Indian trail" that extended from the fort "over Hoosac mountain to the Deerfield river and connecting with the Connecticut." Similarly, Spargo noted, "Near the old Indian trail connecting the Deerfield and the Hudson, close to the ford across the Hoosac, which was part of the trail, Fort Massachusetts was built." Spargo also mentioned that the French and their allies followed "the old Indian trail" through Williamstown and Eagle Bridge, New York as they transported the English prisoners from Fort Massachusetts to Crown Point (in present-day New York state).[28]

Just as the history of the original Fort Massachusetts was related to the history of the original Indian path, the history of the fort replica was related to the history of the Mohawk Trail highway. Much like the tourist-oriented businesses that had been constructed along the

---

[26] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain" and "History of Ft. Mass. is Story of Bravery," *Transcript*, 21 August 1933 and "Fort Massachusetts – North Adams, Mass." *Memorial Hall Online – Digital Collection*, <http://www.memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=15722> (18 March 2004) and Browne, 16-18.
[27] See Browne, 16-18.
[28] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain."

Mohawk Trail during the preceding two decades, the fort replica was built on land that had formerly been used for agriculture. During the replica dedication ceremony, the president of the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society noted that much of the land surrounding the fort site was still "devoted to a cornfield, which is fitting for we are told that at the time of the attack on the fort the nearby fields were cornfields in which the men stationed in the fort were accustomed to spend much time."[29]

***

In the early twentieth century, Indians were being commemorated through public history throughout Massachusetts. In order to commemorate the Pilgrim Tercentenary in 1921, the Improved Order of Red Men erected a statue of Massasoit on Coles Hill in Plymouth, overlooking Plymouth Rock. The minutes of a meeting of the Red Men's Great Council in 1915 explained that the statue "will be a tribute to the great chief whose friendship to the white race kept life in those few pioneers." The 1915 minutes also noted, "The statue is to be the work of America's greatest sculptor of Indians, Cyrus Dallin." At the dedication ceremony for the Massasoit statue, Dallin suggested, "The Indian of today is essentially a peace-loving, hospitable man, courageous and loyal to the core, and extremely hospitable. So was his ancestor in primal days."[30] These comments about Massasoit, and Indians in general, clearly tout passivity. They imply that two of the most important things that Indians can do are to befriend "the white race" and to be "loyal to the core."

Another Dallin bronze, also on public display in Massachusetts, addresses the theme of the pacification of Indians. *The Appeal to the Great Spirit*, a statue of an Indian on

[29] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain."
[30] Robert E. Davis, *History of the Improved Order of Red Men and Degree of Pocahontas, 1765-1988* ([Waco, Tex.]: R. E. Davis, 1990), 381-82 and 406-09 and Kammen, 186-87. The quotations from the 1915 Great Council minutes are taken from Davis, 381 and the quotation from Dallin is taken from Davis, 409. The Pilgrims landed in Plymouth in December 1620, so this tercentenary commemoration was a few months late.

horseback, has stood on a pedestal in front of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston since 1913. The statue, a 1909 work by Dallin, was the final work in a four-part series meant to convey "the tragic saga of white-Indian relations." The statue depicts "a despondent Indian whose cause on earth has failed," and therefore decides to call "upon Powers of the Spirit for deliverance and ultimate sanctuary." The first statue in Dallin's series was *The Signal of Peace*, an equestrian Indian that earned a first-class medal at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This exposition coincided with the American Historical Association conference in the same city at which Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his frontier thesis.[31]

Hail to the Sunrise was sculpted by Joseph P. Pollia, not Dallin, but the fact that it and *Massasoit* were both commissioned by the "Red Men" in the early twentieth century suggests that there is an affinity between *Hail to the Sunrise* and Dallin's works. At least one speaker at the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication explicitly made the connection between *Massasoit* and *Hail to the Sunrise*. Joe Mitchell Chapple, a "nationally known writer, lecturer, and radio artist" who was the principal speaker at the ceremony, claimed that the two public history monuments erected by the "Red Men" "are fitting moccasin prints on the sands of time."[32]

The notion of the passivity of Indians did surface at the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication. In his remarks, Chapple noted that those assembled for the dedication were commemorating the "race of Red Men from whom we have taken and inherited the boundless territory of this great republic."[33] Chapple's decision to use two verbs – taken and inherited – with different connotations suggests that he was ambivalent about the degree to which Indians

---

[31] Kammen, 186 and Patricia Janis Broder, *Bronzes of the American West* (New York: Abrams, 1974), 98 and 421. Quotations are taken from Kammen.

[32] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail." It is not clear exactly what Chapple's connection, if any, was to the Red Men or the Mohawk Trail corridor. The *Transcript* mentioned that Chapple gave the principal address at the dedication because Massachusetts Governor Joseph B. Ely, who was originally scheduled to give the address, was unable to attend the ceremony.

[33] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."

actively resisted the European conquest of North America. "Taken" seems to acknowledge that various European and European American governments gained control of the continent by defeating Indians in battles, while "inherited" seems to imply that the Indians vanished through Providence.

***

The *Elk on the Trail*, *Hail to the Sunrise*, and the Fort Massachusetts replica embodied the complex ways in which local history and national frontier history were intertwined along the Mohawk Trail. For instance, at the dedication ceremony for the Elk, Frank G. Allen, President of the Massachusetts Senate, strove to establish a stronger connection than geographical coincidence between the Elk and the Mohawk Trail. Allen suggested in his remarks that the "soldier comrades" of the soldiers that the monument was commemorating "did not name life's last great adventure death, but with a fine appreciation of their heroic spirit simply said – 'They have struck the trail; they have gone West.'"[34] Allen's statement also connected the Elk and the Mohawk Trail to the national historical narrative of American westward expansion.

The *Elk on the Trail* was related to the American West by its form as well as its location. The statue was not an original design, but an enlarged copy of the 34-inch *Bull Elk* sculpture by Eli Harvey that the national Elks organization had originally commissioned in 1907. Other copies have ended up on display in art galleries and public places as far flung as Los Angeles, Cody, Wyoming, and Marshalltown, Iowa.[35]

---

[34] "Great Throng Thrilled as Memorial to World War Dead is Dedicated."

[35] Broder, 409. Neither Brennan nor the *Transcript* mention that the *Elk on the Trail* is a copy of *Bull Elk*, but the Transcript mentions that the sculptor of the *Elk on the Trail* was Harvey and Broder lists "Mohawk Trail, Mass." as one of the locations at which a copy of Bull Elk is displayed. The visual resemblance between *Elk on the Trail* and *Bull Elk* is obvious. According to the *Transcript* ("Great Throng Thrilled as Memorial to World War Dead is Dedicated"), the *Elk on the Trail* is ten feet tall from the hooves to the tops of the ears, with the antlers protruding higher. It rests on top of a granite boulder that is about three feet high.

The *Elk on the Trail* amalgamated the American West with the local landscape along the Mohawk Trail. Appropriately, the *Elk on the Trail*, like the other versions of Harvey's *Bull Elk*, was cast in the highly industrialized East by the Gorham Manufacturing Company of Providence, Rhode Island. However, local labor and materials went into the base on which the monument stood.[36] The base, a granite boulder, was quarried from the Chester Granite quarries in Chester, Massachusetts. Members of the Adams and North Adams Elk Lodges "engaged themselves to place the foundation" for the base.[37] It is not clear whether this task involved simply grading the ground or preparing some sort of cement foundation.

In a somewhat similar fashion, *Hail to the Sunrise* was an amalgamation of the physical landscape in which it was sited and the regional identity to which it alluded. The *Transcript* described it this way:

> Standing on a rugged, nine-ton boulder, secured from the nearby fields, and on the edge of a grassy knoll near the ancient fording place of the Mohawks, who traveled the Trail and were friendly with the white settlers, the bronze warrior faces east and greets the rising sun, and will stand forever as a memorial to the Mohawk Indian.[38]

Attached to the boulder was a "bronze tablet in the shape of an Indian arrowhead with an appropriate inscription."[39] These descriptions blend the local landscape ("rugged, nine-ton boulder) with Anglo-centric history ("friendly with the white settlers") and an Indian past ("in the shape of an Indian arrowhead").

The incorporation of real local Indian artifacts into the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication ceremony helped to assert the legitimacy of the Mohawk Trail corridor's connection to real Indians. At the close of the ceremony, "Genuine Indian arrowheads which were dug up on the trail and along the banks of the Deerfield" were presented to various dignitaries who

---

[36] Broder, 409 and "Dedication of Elk Comes on Sunday," *Transcript*, 16 June 1923.
[37] Brennan, 6.
[38] "Statue of Indian Chief Is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[39] *Ibid.*

attended.[40] While it does not seem that anyone at the ceremony attempted to link these arrowheads directly to Mohawks, it is clear that the arrowheads were significant in part because they proved that there was a direct link between actual Indians and the Mohawk Trail corridor. Ultimately, the use of these artifacts augmented the efforts of Old Deerfield Conference President Andrew Kendrew to establish the Mohawk Trail as the land of the Mohawk Indian's forefathers.

Not surprisingly, Indian-themed displays pervaded the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication ceremony. In order to announce the ceremony, smoke signals were sent up from the campfires surrounding the statue. The first activity of the ceremony itself was the "singing of two Indian songs." After the conclusion of the formal ceremony, local boy scouts were scheduled to "give Indian dances and exhibitions of their [presumably Indian-themed] crafts." The boy scouts of Easthampton Troop 205 were "dressed in full tribal ceremonial costumes and many were interested in watching them don the war paint and costumes in preparation for the ceremonies and war dances later in the afternoon." The two young girls who officially unveiled the statue by removing the drapes that covered it "were dressed in Indian costume from moccasins and war paint to head dress."[41] It is likely that these Indian-themed costumes and ceremonies were derived from a generic concept of Indianness rather than from actual Mohawk culture.

Perhaps the most fundamental way in which the *Elk on the Trail* fused the two halves of the continent was through the relationship between its subject and its model. During the opening decades of the twentieth century, Harvey, the sculptor of the *Elk on the Trail*, was the most popular animal sculptor in America. Many of his bronzes depicted animals of the

[40] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[41] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail" and "Red Men Gather at Mohawk Park," *Transcript*, 1 October 1932.

Western woodlands, but most of the live models that he used were animals from urban zoos.[42] The *Transcript* mentioned that the model for the *Elk on the Trail* was "an elk now in the Bronx park in New York." Apparently, the elk was given to the Bronx park by William Collins Whitney, a famous native of nearby Conway, Massachusetts.[43] Just as the Mohawk Trail was an Eastern highway that encapsulated the famous trails of the Western frontier, the elk upon which the *Elk on the Trail* was based was an animal in an Eastern institution that encapsulated the animals of the Western wilderness. Furthermore, the Mohawk Trail and the elk from the Bronx were both brought to the East because of the initiative of prominent citizens of western Massachusetts. Harvey's popularity, like the popularity of the Mohawk Trail, suggests that, even though Americans of the early twentieth century were intrigued by Western subjects such as wild animals, they were willing to unquestioningly accept Eastern reproductions as surrogates.

Along the Mohawk Trail, it was not only possible for Eastern reproductions of Western subjects to serve as surrogates, but also for Eastern and Western historic artifacts to be juxtaposed in such a way as to suggest that both were part of a single coherent narrative of the history of American westward expansion. Inside the Fort Massachusetts replica was a collection of artifacts owned by the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society, thematically organized in display cases. The collection apparently included at least a few Indian artifacts, some of which were local and others of which were clearly extralocal. Case 1 included a tomahawk along with a cannonball and other "relics exhumed from this site [site of the colonial fort]." Case 6 featured a collection of "Indian Relics" that included the "Great Horn

[42] Broder, 56.
[43] "Great Throng Thrilled as Memorial to World War Dead is Dedicated." According to the *Transcript*, Whitney was Secretary of the Navy during the second Cleveland administration.

Spoon of Sitting Bull."[44] The presence of the spoon at the fort replica may say more about the eclecticism of historical society's collection than about any deliberate attempt to connect the fort's history to the history of the American West. Nevertheless, the spoon's presence at the fort replica probably made sense to contemporary viewers of the collection because it and the fort replica were both connected to Indians.

Ultimately, the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication ceremony and the artifacts on display at the Fort Massachusetts replica worked to establish the corridor as the homeland of the Mohawks while simultaneously working to use the connection to Mohawks to present more general models of Indian culture. This juxtaposition of Eastern and Western historical artifacts and symbolism along the Mohawk Trail was not limited to the realm of public history. The early Mohawk Trail guidebook cover in Figure 3.6 shows an Indian figure in full headdress and tepees with a figure of a buffalo painted on the side. Clearly, the symbols incorporated into this cover design allude to regions much further west than the Mohawk Trail corridor.

[44] In a 15 March 2004 email, Paul Marino explained that, not surprisingly, the Great Horn Spoon of Sitting Bull had no connection to Fort Massachusetts or North Adams. Marino noted that the collection of artifacts at the fort replica was rather eclectic, and speculated that the spoon was probably donated to the historical society by someone from North Adams who purchased it while traveling in the West. According to Marino, the Great Horn Spoon of Sitting Bull is no longer in the possession of the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society or its successor, the North Adams Historical Society. The North Adams Historical Society recently auctioned off all of the items in their collection that were not directly related to North Adams in order to raise money for the renovation of the North Adams Public Library. The spoon may have been sold then.

Figure 3.6: Cover of Mohawk Trail guidebook (circa 1920).[45]
(Courtesy of Hank Art)

***

From an art historical perspective, the *Elk on the Trail* fused high culture with popular culture. Harvey's career vacillated between these two realms. He was born in Ohio and he studied sculpture in Cincinnati and in Paris. In art historian Patricia Janis Broder's opinion, "Harvey's bronzes are closer in spirit and execution to Paris than to the American West, for they are exact in naturalistic detail and have the polished surface modeling of the French school."[46] However, many of the subjects he chose, such as the elk, were unmistakably American. In this case, high culture (a bronze monument) was concretely fused

[45] This guidebook is not dated. However, since it does not contain an image of the *Elk on the Trail* and another edition of the same guidebook does, it was probably produced before 1923. In the pictures inside, the road does not appear to have a hard surface.
[46] Broder, 57.

with the American West (symbolized by the elk). As the organizers of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* managed to do with the Hawthorne episodes, the planners of the Elk managed to imbue the monument with high culture while retaining its quintessential Americanness.[47]

One reason for the fusion of high and low culture, and in some cases European and non-European symbolism, along the Mohawk Trail may be that some of the purveyors of the Trail's iconography had connections to both realms. As a young man, Charles Canedy, the *Transcript* photographer and entrepreneur who was instrumental in the early success of the Mohawk Trail as a tourist highway, attended photography school in Chicago. Afterward, he spent two or three years traveling throughout Mexico working on documentary photography assignments for the *Chicago Sun Times*.[48] Perhaps his fascination with the non-European aspects of Mexican culture was one of the impulses that drove him to create the first Mohawk Trail tourist business at Whitcomb Summit. The logo that Canedy used in the Mohawk Trail guides that he printed was a silhouette of him wearing a sombrero that he had purchased in Mexico (Figure 3.7).[49] Like Harvey's, Canedy's education and career exposed him to formal art instruction and quintessentially non-European subject matter.

Figure 3.7: Logo from back cover of Canedy's 1917 guide *The Trail of the Mohawk*. (Courtesy of Hank Art)

[47] The Hawthorne episodes of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail* are discussed in Chapter 1.
[48] Canedy, "Footprints from the Past."
[49] 15 February 2004 interview with Wayne Canedy.

Prior to the 1870s, there were only two works of American sculpture in which native animals appeared. This was largely because the classical tradition encouraged the study and reproduction of the human form as opposed to animal forms. The increased interest of sculptors in animals during the late nineteenth century coincided with the founding of zoos and museums of natural history in cities throughout the United States and Europe. The zoos would commission hunters to bring back live animals from the American West and Africa. Like the turn-of-the-century fascination with Indians, this interest in animals grew out of the romanticization of the natural and the primitive. According to Broder, "It is the Romantic who looks to nature for a subject and chooses an animal, preferably wild or exotic, as worthy of artistic representation and idealization."[50]

The Elk was also subtly connected to American high culture through the inscription on its base. The statue's planning committee decided to ask President Emeritus Eliot of Harvard to write the inscription for the bronze plaque displayed on the boulder.[51] The inscription was simply:

The Elk on the Trail
In memory of the Brothers of the Massachusetts Elks Association who died in the World War
Erected by the Association
17th June 1923

Clearly, this inscription could have been written by almost anyone. Aside from a self-conscious desire to connect the Elk to American high culture, there does not appear to be any viable rationale for requesting the services of a former president of Harvard.

This interest in fusing ostensibly primitive subjects, such as animals and Indians, with the civilized realms of culture and academia gained credence throughout the United States in

[50] Broder, 48-49.
[51] Brennan, 7-8. Eliot's first name is not mentioned. It is not clear how, if at all, Eliot was affiliated with the Elks.

the years following the erection of the *Elk on the Trail* and *Hail to the Sunrise*. During the 1930s, there was increased interest in American literary and academic circles in cultures, such as those of Indians and Mexicans, that seemed to be threatened by modern American civilization. Ultimately, the hope was that, through study of such cultures, a culture-based American Way of Life, "distinguished from the material achievements (and the failures) of an American industrial civilization," would develop.[52]

As Susman points out, this search among ostensibly less modern societies for a better model for American society represented a retreat "from the glorious hopes of the Progressive era when 'progress,' 'power,' and indeed 'efficiency' or 'organization' were magic words."[53]

***

There were public efforts to promote not only the human history of the Mohawk Trail during the 1930s, but also the Trail's natural beauty. The original log cabins at Mohawk State Park along the Cold River in Charlemont were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1935 and 1936.[54] Throughout the country, the CCC and the Works Progress Administration built campgrounds, picnic facilities, roads, and other structures on public land during the 1930s.[55] The work of the CCC augmented efforts of other public agencies to preserve the landscape of the Mohawk Trail, such as the state government's acquisition of forest land.

***

[52] Susman, 155-57. The direct quotation is taken from page 156.
[53] *Ibid*., 156.
[54] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 8.
[55] Jackle, 72. See also Dedek, 164. In a 12 March 2004 email message to the author, Stan Brown noted that the area now known as the Mohawk Trail State Forest was known as Mohawk State Park at the time that the cabins were built.

The increased interest in commemorating Indians through public history in Massachusetts was part of a nationwide proliferation of public history that crescendoed during the 1930s. The presidential busts on Mt. Rushmore were first conceived in 1925 and completed in 1939.[56] It was during the first half of the 1930s that the National Park Service assumed a significant role in the acquisition and preservation of historic sites.[57] During Congressional hearings about the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which would become the first piece of legislation to clearly assign the tasks of historic preservation and interpretation to the National Park Service, Secretary of the Interior Howard Ickes suggested that the bill would facilitate the building of a system of parks and monuments that would collectively present the American people a "graphic illustration" of their past.[58] Though *Hail to the Sunrise* and the Fort Massachusetts replica preceded the Historic Sites Act, their creators had similar intentions to those of Ickes. Both were erected in order to provide "graphic illustration[s]" of what was perceived as the frontier phase of the settlement of western Massachusetts.

Through its sculptor Joseph Pollia, *Hail to the Sunrise* was linked to other monuments of the late 1920s and 1930s that were erected throughout Massachusetts. Many of Pollia's other Massachusetts works were memorials to the Spanish-American War and World War I. However, several of these war monuments presented the same kind of "graphic illustration" of history offered by *Hail to the Sunrise*. In particular, Pollia gained a reputation for the quality

---

[56] Kammen, 490 and 509.

[57] See John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 170-71 and 178-79. When the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration assumed control of the federal government in 1933, it consolidated all federally owned historic sites, many of which had previously been controlled by the War Department, under the control of the National Park Service (NPS). In 1933, NPS staff planned a survey of "historical-educational development possibilities" at each site under its jurisdiction and the NPS made plans to hire professionally trained historians to augment its interpretive staff of naturalists (178).

[58] Bodnar, 179.

of the realistic World War I doughboys he sculpted for various veterans' memorials in western Massachusetts.[59]

This nationwide proliferation of public history in the 1930s was partially attributable to a national sense of social and economic insecurity. Americans hoped that, through the preservation of historic sites, they could reconnect to an epic national heritage that could inspire them to overcome the hardships that they faced. As historian Michael Kammen put it, "During the early to mid-1930s… American society increasingly needed and sought a meaningful sense of its heritage in crisis times."[60] To some extent, the nation could find this "meaningful sense of its heritage" in monuments depicting icons of the American West. Broder argues, "On every level – historical, environmental, spiritual, and ethnic – the bronze sculptures of the West are the most permanent expression of America's national heritage."[61] She suggests that Western sculptors were conscious of the unique place of their works in the in the evolution of American art and the interpretation of American heritage. In her opinion, each sculptor "felt that he was witness to a side of American life that would soon belong only to memory or to history."[62] This "side of American life" to which Broder refers was what was at stake in the "crisis times" that Kammen described. In the case of the Mohawk Trail, elks and Mohawks already did "belong only to memory or to history" when the *Elk on the Trail* and *Hail to the Sunrise* were erected in the early twentieth century.

---

[59] Glassberg, *Sense of History*, 37.
[60] Kammen, 460.
[61] Broder, 18. Broder notes on page 18 that, for her purposes, "the term *American West* refers to both a geographical and historical concept." Though the sculptures along the Mohawk Trail were certainly not in the American West from an early twentieth century geographical perspective, they were in the West from a historical perspective insofar as they were related to the romanticization of the Western frontier. Broder's inclusion of both the Elk on the Trail and *Hail to the Sunrise* in her book titled *Bronzes of the American West* demonstrates that she feels that these sculptures belong in what she might call the historical American West (see pages 409 and 422 in her text).
[62] Broder, 14.

Nationwide insecurity was certainly palpable during the dedication ceremony at the Fort Massachusetts replica. At the dedication ceremony for the fort replica, John Spargo concluded his remarks with these words:

> In this time of national anxiety and stress, as we watch strange and amazing changes with bewilderment mingled with fear, God give us firm and steadfast faith in the future of this land! Let us have the courage to envision generations of free and freedom-loving Americans holding dear and sacred the heroic memories of those pioneers who first essayed the task of making these hills and valleys safe habitations for men. By such Americans the memories of Fort Massachusetts will not be suffered to perish![63]

Spargo gave a sense of the immediacy of this "national anxiety and stress" when, after being interrupted by passing trains on the nearby Boston and Maine tracks, he "remarked that we should not complain of freight hauling activities in these days when we are working for industrial recovery."[64]

Sentiments such as Spargo's were expressed not only in formal orations such as those given at the dedication ceremony. Though the caption on the back of the postcard displayed in Figure 3.5 did not tie the fort replica's message directly to contemporary "strange and amazing changes," it did seem to imply that the replica's promotion of what Spargo referred to as "dear and sacred and heroic memories" would be important for later generations of Americans. In the words of the postcard caption writer, the replica was "a point of interest for tourists, and a fitting memorial of days which tried men's souls."[65]

In a special message supporting the Historic Sites Act of 1935, President Roosevelt claimed that the preservation of historic sites for the public benefit, "together with their proper interpretation, tends to enhance the respect and love of the citizen for the institutions

---

[63] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain."
[64] "Sidelights," *Transcript*, 21 August 1933.
[65] "Fort Massachusetts – North Adams, Mass."

of his country."[66] Speaking at the 1935 dedication of the fountain at Mohawk Park, Great Incohonee Arthur J. Ruland, national leader of the "Red Men," emphasized the importance of American institutions in the eventual resolution of the contemporary national crisis. After condemning the seven million immigrants who were in the United States but were not American citizens, he argued, "While America must be the melting pot of the world, we must yet make America safe for Americans. If those who have come to us will not become American citizens, they should be deported to lands more suited to their ideals and ideas."[67] Earlier in the same speech, Ruland suggested that *Hail to the Sunrise* and the work of the "Red Men" would help to solve these problems:

> During the three years since the dedication of Pollia's "Hail to the Sunrise," this splendid work has presented thousands with a message of the Americanism of our ancestors and of the Improved Order of Red Men… I believe this nation in its emergency needs more than anything else, the Americanism of the Red Men.[68]

Ruland did not elaborate on how *Hail to the Sunrise* or the "Red Men" were perpetuating "the Americanism of our ancestors." Presumably, one important way that the "Red Men" were perpetuating this Americanism was by appropriating various aspects of Indian culture. If Ruland believed that the Americanism of his ancestors and the Americanism of the Improved Order of Red Men were closely linked, then he, like the organizers of the *Pageant of the Mohawk Trail*, must have believed that he and the other members of his organization were conceptually descended from Indians. This is particularly striking in light of the Red Men's requirement, which was retained until 1974, that all members had to be white.[69]

In his remarks at the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication, Joe Mitchell Chapple, the principal speaker, tied the "Red Men" to the Boston Tea Party, the event that is perhaps the

---

[66] Bodnar, 179.
[67] "Dedication Held at Mohawk Park."
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] Schmidt and Babchuk, 288. This requirement not only existed to prevent African Americans from joining. Schmidt and Babchuk note, "Native red men (American Indians) were not eligible to join the Red Men."

archetypal instance of the simultaneous assertion of Indianness and Americanness. Chapple suggested, "Few fraternities have a greater or more inspiring exclusively American tradition than the Improved Red Men of America. It began with the dauntless patriots, who, disguised as Indians, threw the tea in the harbor of Boston, and continued on in the 'Minute Men' of '76."[70] By evoking the Boston Tea Party and the Minutemen in a single sentence, Chapple fused Indian impersonators and patriots into a cohesive notion of American identity. Historian Phillip Deloria calls the Boston Tea Party "a catalytic moment, the first drumbeat in the long cadence of rebellion through which Americans redefined themselves as something other than British colonists."[71]

Ruland's evocation of the "Americanism of our ancestors" implies that he felt that there were fundamental American messages that needed to be communicated from older generations to younger ones. In a World War I veterans' memorial in Orange, Massachusetts, Pollia, the *Hail to the Sunrise* sculptor, depicted the passing of information from one generation to the next. In the Orange memorial, a World War I veteran in uniform describes the war to a boy. The message on the bronze tablet on the memorial's base – "It Shall Not Be Again" – suggests that the stories that the veteran was telling the boy had a didactic message.[72] The *Transcript* coverage of the 1932 dedication of *Hail to the Sunrise* suggested that the monument was already inspiring boys with its presence. According to the newspaper, the night before the *Hail to the Sunrise* dedication ceremony, seventy-five boy scouts from Hampshire and Franklin counties camped "in snug little teepees that had been

---

[70] "Statue of Indian Chief is Unveiled on Mohawk Trail."
[71] Deloria, 2. Chappele's assertion that the tradition of the Red Men began with the "dauntless patriots" of the Boston Tea Party is unfounded. Though the Red Men still claim that their organization is descended from the Sons of Liberty, they have not been able to offer any conclusive proof of this assertion. Axelrod suggests that there are similarities between the rituals and terms of the Sons of Liberty and those of the Red Men (page 207). According to Deloria, the various histories of the Red Men that have been published since the mid-1850s have been aimed at making the organization a direct descendant of both Indian people and Tea Party Mohawks (page 68 of his text).
[72] Glassberg, *Sense of History*, 37-38.

pitched in an improvised Indian village near the heroic bronze Indian figure."[73] In this description, the "heroic bronze Indian figure" seemed to assume the role of the veteran in Pollia's other monument.

Probably due in large part to the fact that they fought on the side of the French during the siege of the fort, Indians tended to be portrayed more as savage Others than as predecessors of modern Americans during the dedication of the Fort Massachusetts replica. The British, who were the enemies in the Boston Tea Party, were portrayed as the predecessors of modern Americans. Throughout the ceremony, the speakers strove to forge a connection between the Anglo Americans of early twentieth century North Adams and the British colonists who defended Fort Massachusetts in the eighteenth century. At one point, the *Transcript* refers to the defenders of the fort "who fought to prevent the invasion of the Bay State colony by foreign forces." During his remarks at the ceremony, Sanford Robinson asked the members of the crowd to "think of the hideous yells and fierce shrieks of the savage French and Indians." Apparently, from Robinson's perspective, the savagery of the Indians subsumed the French who attacked with them. Perhaps the most blatant attempt by a dedication speaker to forge a connection between modern Anglo Americans and eighteenth century British colonists was John Spargo's claim that, after the defense of Fort Massachusetts while it was under siege, "another thrilling chapter of heroic deed and daring had been written into the annals of the English speaking peoples."[74]

These attempts to cultivate Americanness through the promotion of a unified national heritage were particularly widespread during the 1930s, but they did have antecedents in earlier decades. In his 1920 history of the Mohawk Trail, William Bradford

[73]"Red Men Gather at Mohawk Park."
[74] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain" and "To Dedicate Ft. Mass. Replica This Afternoon," *Transcript*, 19 August 1933.

Browne implicitly promoted the role of Anglo Americans as the true Americans. Though he was referring to a period during which Anglos living in Massachusetts were British subjects, he described the four major French-English wars between 1689 and 1764 as "conflicts between the American colonists and the French in Canada."[75] Marguerite Shaffer argues that, in the See America First travel guides, published from 1914 to 1931, "the ruins and relics of English colonization were presented as vibrant and inspiring examples or remnants of American society."[76] Though Shaffer does not mention the French specifically, she does note that, unlike the relics of English colonization, the relics of Indian settlement and Spanish colonization "were celebrated in an elegiac tone."[77]

***

Jackle observes, "surrogates to authentic structures were in many ways superior to real relics. Messages about a heroic past could be communicated without mundane counterevidence clouding issues."[78] Cleary, the Fort Massachusetts replica was a surrogate for the actual colonial fort that communicated "a heroic past." In a somewhat less tangible sense, the *Hail to the Sunrise* served as a surrogate for the Mohawks after whom the Trail was named. As the *Transcript* quote that opened the chapter demonstrates, contemporary observers were willing to accept the role of *Hail to the Sunrise* as a surrogate for the Mohawks and other Indians who once traveled along the Trail. Clearly, *Hail to the Sunrise* deflected complicated debates about the strength of the connection of Mohawks to the Mohawk Trail and the means through which Mohawks and other Indians were removed from the region.

By deflecting these debates, the public history articulated by *Hail to the Sunrise* and the fort replica perpetuated the simplistic historical narrative of the *Pageant of the*

[75] Browne, 9.
[76] Shaffer, 181-83 and 196.
[77] *Ibid.*, 196.
[78] Jackle, 289.

Mohawk Trail. Ultimately, these two surrogate structures fulfilled the role that C.Q. Richmond had originally envisioned for the colossal Indian statue that was supposed to be funded by pageant proceeds. In light of the fact that C. Q. Richmond was president of the Fort Massachusetts Historical Society at the time of the dedication of the fort replica, this is not particularly surprising.

Even in the early twenty-first century, Mohawk Trail tourist literature tends to feature the *Elk on the Trail* and *Hail to the Sunrise* prominently.[79] Insofar as *Hail to the Sunrise* has provided a lasting icon of a Mohawk along the highway, the Mohawk Indian may have returned to the Mohawk Trail with the dedication of *Hail to the Sunrise* in 1932. Yet his return has simply provided a tangible symbol through which Anglo Americans could continue to assert their Americanness by touting their connection to the Indians whom their ancestors had conquered.

Though the tourist-oriented businesses along the Mohawk Trail were never quite as successful in the 1930s as they had been during the Trail's zenith in the late 1920s, they continued to prosper during the decade. This reflected a national trend toward continuing to travel inexpensively in automobiles during the Depression years. Though 80 percent of American hotel mortgages were in default in 1932, tourist cabins and motels continued to flourish throughout the 1930s.[80] However, the reputation of Trail tourist businesses was beginning to deteriorate. The Trail had come under fire in an editorial piece in the *New York Herald Tribune* about the proposed Green Mountain Parkway in Vermont, which criticized the "rural Coney Island that a parkway breeds." The writer cited the Mohawk Trail as an example of what could happen to Vermont if the parkway were constructed: "The trail and

[79] For instance, see the history section on the website of the Mohawk Trail Association <http://www.mohawktrail.com/html/history.html> and the 2003 guide published by the same organization.
[80] Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 146 and Dedek, 100-01 and 165.

the hooliganism it carried into a rural, unpoliced area drove countless summer folk from the land it crossed. I know the sort of people it brought in and I can name at least two dozen families it chased out."[81]

The status of the *Elk on the Trail*, *Hail to the Sunrise*, and the fort replica as public history lent these three monuments a legitimacy that the similarly themed businesses along the Trail were never able to achieve. Perhaps a final reason why monuments such as these were needed by the 1930s was to maintain the integrity of the Mohawk Trail corridor. The presence of these monuments, and the ability of the Trail's tourist businesses to persevere with the help of the additional traffic the monuments brought, reflected the Trail's ability to adapt to a new set of national trends – this time trends toward inexpensive travel and public history. As the Epilogue will explain, the Trail would not be able to adapt so easily to the national trends it would encounter after World War II.

[81] "Cites Mohawk Trail as Warning to Vermonters," *Transcript*, 2 March 1936.

EPILOGUE

In his speech at the dedication of the Fort Massachusetts replica, John Spargo claimed,

> These timbers will decay and perish, like those which were laid here in 1747, but we hope and pray that before that time comes, through the inspiration gathered from this memorial, there will have been kindled in the hearts of countless men and women deep and reverent regret for Fort Massachusetts and what it represents which will insure the perpetual maintenance here of a memorial and shrine.[1]

A pessimist might suggest that Spargo's hopes and prayers were in vain. The Fort Massachusetts replica died a slow death. The site is still memorialized in a much less conspicuous fashion, but the fort replica was torn down by a crane on 14 January 1973.[2] In August 1976, the Perry elm, which had been planted to mark the site in 1859 by Professor Perry of Williams College, was removed after being infected with Dutch Elm Disease. A disease-resistant tree, which is still alive, was planted on the site to replace it the following spring.[3] A Price Chopper supermarket and a Friendly's Restaurant have sprouted in the corn fields that surrounded the replica at the time of its dedication.

On 17 August 1946, the *Transcript* published the story of Fort Massachusetts on the eve of the bicentennial of the fort's siege. The writer lamented that "no observance has been planned to commemorate this, one of the most important events and by all odds the most exciting in all the history of this area."[4] Given the excitement that surrounded the dedications of *Hail to the Sunrise* and the fort replica, it is hard to imagine that such an important date in local history would have been allowed to pass without any fanfare if it had occurred a decade earlier.

---

[1] "Hundreds at Dedication Despite Threat of Rain."
[2] "Fort Massachusetts Falls to Power Crane," *Transcript*, 20 January 1973.
[3] "Sapling Stands at Fort Massachusetts, *Transcript*, 26 April 1977.
[4] "200th Anniversary of Siege of Ft. Massachusetts Monday," *Transcript*, 17 August 1946.

Perhaps the elm tree, chimney (from the 1933 replica), and boulder that now languish at the back of the Price Chopper parking lot to commemorate the fort site serve as an apt metaphor for the ninety-year-old Mohawk Trail. A 1997 article in the *Boston Sunday Globe* travel section about the Mohawk Trail began:

> "Tourist trails" can be a slog any time of year, worse during foliage season when traffic thickens. An exception is New England's oldest tourist trail, still a beautiful way through abrupt hills and into deep valleys but just funky and forgotten enough to harbor some unusual finds…[5]

This passage speaks to the dated nature of the Mohawk Trail's tourist attractions and also implicitly nods to the reason that the attractions look dated, the fact that the Trail has been "forgotten" in recent years. Though the tree, chimney, and boulder may not be funky in and of themselves, the notion of a supermarket parking lot that harbors such an eclectic tribute to a historic site certainly verges on funkiness. In any case, this triumvirate is certainly forgotten or ignored by most passersby.

The single event that had the greatest negative impact on the Mohawk Trail was certainly the opening of the Massachusetts Turnpike (Mass Pike) in 1957. The limited-access highway superseded the Mohawk Trail as the primary route from Boston to Albany and other destinations further west. According to Donald Canedy, the opening of the Mass Pike cut his business in half, abruptly ending the resurgence of Mohawk Trail tourist traffic during the decade that followed World War II.[6] Labor Day Weekend traffic along the Trail in Florida declined 22 percent from 1956 to 1957.[7]

The Mass Pike's supersession of the Mohawk Trail reflected a national trend toward the development of limited-access highways to serve through traffic. Between 1940 and 1960, limited-access toll roads such as the Mass Pike proliferated throughout the

---

[5] Christina Tree, "On and Off the Mohawk Trail," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 14 September 1997.
[6] "Canedy's Tourists: Like Family." Canedy did note that business picked up some after 1963.
[7] "Trail Auto Poll Shows Pull of Pike," *Transcript*, 5 September 1957.

northeastern United States. In the late 1950s, the first sections of the federally-funded interstate highway system were completed. These turnpikes and interstates separated tourists and other motorists from the landscapes through which they passed, but the tourists did not seem to mind. Post-World War II tourists tended to gravitate toward the modern divided highways, focusing more on reaching specific destinations than on partaking in roadside amusements along the way.[8] This destination-oriented approach to automobile travel was devastating to corridors such as the Mohawk Trail whose roadside attractions were designed to convince passing tourists to make impulsive stops.

The years surrounding the Mass Pike opening marked a watershed in the presentation of history along the Mohawk Trail. The declines of some of the Trail's commercial and public historical landmarks began before the turnpike opened. During the 1940s, the Sweetheart Tea House closed and the role of the Fort Massachusetts replica as a public historical site was greatly diminished.[9] However, no significant businesses or public historical monuments rose to take their place after the opening of the Mass Pike. The Trail's last landmark tourist-oriented business, the Mohawk Teepee (later to become the Big Indian Shop) in East Charlemont, opened three years before the Mass Pike did.[10] The last significant contribution to the Trail's public history was made four years after the Mass Pike opened when Mohawk busts on the Mohawk Bridge, near Mohawk Park, were dedicated by the Improved Order of Red Men.[11]

---

[8] Jackle, 140 and 189.
[9] The Sweetheart was reopened by new owners in 1956, and is still operated as a restaurant. However, it has never attained the same level of fame or success that it enjoyed before World War II. See Burnham et. al., 41. After World War II, the fort replica was converted to a restaurant that promoted itself using the slogan ""Good Food With History" (see *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 45).
[10] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 8 and *Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail*, 20.
[11] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 9 and *Transcript* 4 January 1955 and 28 March 1960 and 11 September 1961.

Efforts were made to rejuvenate the Mohawk Trail in the decades following the Mass Pike opening. The half-century-old concept of establishing a settlement of live Indians along the Mohawk Trail was rekindled. There were plans for several Indian families to live at Mohawk Park in Charlemont, across the highway from the *Hail to the Sunrise* monument, for several months each year beginning in 1970. Only "Indian families of good moral character, able to fully support themselves, would be invited to the village." While in residence, the Indians would give public demonstrations of various Indian crafts. This Indian village was proposed at a meeting of the Mohawk Trail Association because there was a sense that "what is needed is a 'gimmick' to encourage the tourists to stay over in the area, thus affording some income to the many businesses which make up the Mohawk Trail Assn."[12] It is not clear where the Indians for the village would be recruited from, nor is it clear whether they would live in traditional dwellings. It seems that, like the earlier attempts to bring actual Indians to the Mohawk Trail, these plans failed to materialize.

The political climate created by the American Indian Movement and other like-minded organizations may have been one reason that Mohawk Trail Association officials were unable to recruit Indians to live along the Mohawk Trail in 1970. It was on Thanksgiving 1970 that over 100 members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) used Dallin's *Massasoit*, the other significant bronze statue erected by the Improved Order of Red Men in Massachusetts, as a backdrop for a protest in Plymouth on the 350th anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing. Standing on the statue's base, Russell Means, a Sioux from Cleveland who was one of the national leaders of AIM, proclaimed, "The white people came here to seek religious freedom and they have denied us our freedom." Later in the demonstration, the protesters boarded the Mayflower II, a twentieth century replica of the ship that had

[12] "Real Indians to Live on Trail," *Transcript*, 18 December 1969. A similar proposal from 1921 is discussed in Chapter 2.

brought the Pilgrims to America, and threw down the British flags that were displayed in the ship's rigging.[13] The targets of this demonstration, a bronze statue erected by the "Red Men" and a replica of a symbol of English colonization, were analogs of *Hail to the Sunrise* and the Fort Massachusetts replica. Once they became targets of modern Indian protesters with modern political complaints, their effectiveness as tributes to the passive Indians of the past was diminished. In this political context, it is difficult to imagine *Massasoit*, the Mayflower II, or even *Hail to the Sunrise* on the other side of the state, serving as a background for Indians demonstrating traditional crafts.

Perhaps the most notable facet of the Thanksgiving 1970 protests was the role of the tourists. Several hundred tourists listened to Means as he spoke from the base of *Massasoit*, then stood on an adjacent pier as the Indian demonstrators boarded the Mayflower II. As local police cleared the Mayflower II of demonstrators, non-Indian tourists encouraged the demonstrators to confront the police. The demonstrators did not heed the tourists' advice, and the demonstration ended quietly.[14] In the midst of the heroic public history of Plymouth, the tourists of 1970 chose to focus their attention on a divisive demonstration. Unlike the early twentieth century tourists who unquestioningly embraced the Anglo-centric narrative of American westward expansion offered by the creators of the Mohawk Trail's public history, the 1970 tourists embraced the American Indian Movement's reinterpretation of Plymouth's public history. The choice that these tourists made in Plymouth affirms Shaffer's assertion that "Postwar tourists no longer felt the need to connect with a national

[13] Robert Carr and Andrew Blake, "Indians Take Over Mayflower II," *Boston Globe*, 27 November 1970 and "Mourning Indians Dump Sand on Plymouth Rock," *New York Times*, 27 November 1970 and Calloway, 418. For more information on the activism of AIM and Means during the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Calloway, 417-22.
[14] *Ibid.*

ideal of collective memory and tradition."[15] In the absence of this need, the Indian and frontier history presented by the Mohawk Trail would be less salient to tourists of the late twentieth century.

Just as the Mohawk Trail rose to prominence because it embodied American fascinations with cars and the frontier, it declined because the automobile-oriented landscape and the frontier imagery that it presented had become dated. The opening of the Mass Pike and the 1970 demonstration in Plymouth reflected national trends toward limited-access highways and reevaluation of the mythic narrative of American westward expansion.

In a 15 August 1955 letter, Milton Fitch, Secretary of the Mohawk Trail Association, suggested, "the Trail has played such an important role in the history of the continent."[16] Perhaps this was true in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but more recently, it seems that the continent has played an important role in the history of the Mohawk Trail. Like the trends that allowed the Mohawk Trail to rise to prominence in the early twentieth century, the trends that led to the Trail's decline several decades later were national ones.

Though the Mohawk Trail declined in the late twentieth century along with the appeal of the historical narrative it presented, it continued to manifest itself in unpredictable ways. In Plymouth in 1970, a Sioux from Cleveland was demonstrating alongside Mohawks, Wampanoags, Chippewas, and Passamaquoddy in a gesture of pan-Indian solidarity. The *New York Times* coverage of the demonstration described the crowd as a "conglomeration of Indians – some in cowboy boots and bellbottom trousers – and tourists – some wearing moccasins and colorful headbands."[17] Perhaps it was partly because of the presentation by places such as the Mohawk Trail of a single all-encompassing narrative of American

---

[15] Shaffer, 320.
[16] Milton L. Fitch to Rev. Arthur V. Litchfield, 15 August 1955, Mohawk Trail file, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Mass.
[17] "Mourning Indians Dump Sand on Plymouth Rock."

westward expansion that the unified Indian cause and the cultural exchange between Indian demonstrators and white tourists made sense to observers.

The Trail's identity, along with some of its early businesses and entrepreneurial families, has persevered through the decades since the opening of the Mass Pike. Whitcomb Summit remained in the Canedy family until the early 1980s. Brown's Garage remained in the family until it closed in May 2003.[18] As of April 2004, there are still two businesses in North Adams whose names begin with "Mohawk." As noted above, there were five in 1923. There are a few more in surrounding communities, including a Mohawk Garage in Beckett.[19] A few of the early Trail businesses have been converted recently into businesses that appeal to the new wave of tourists. Shelburne Falls Coffee Roasters was remodeled from one of the Trail's earliest automobile service businesses, Goodnow's Garage of circa 1920.[20] Though it may be more likely to conjure up images of a "funky and forgotten" landscape of early automobile tourism than a footpath traveled by Indians three centuries ago, the name "Mohawk Trail" does not seem likely to vanish in the near future.

[18] 22 November 2003 interview with Stan Brown.
[19] Verizon, *SuperPages*, <http://superpages.com> (15 April 2004).
[20] Massachusetts Historical Commission, 10.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Aiken, John Adams. "The Mohawk Trail." *History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association* 5 (1912): 333-50.

Brennan, John P. "'The Elk on the Trail': Its Inception and Fruition." [Cambridge, Mass.?]: Massachusetts Elks Association, 1948.

Brown, Stan. Interview. *Chronicle*, WCVB-TV Boston, 23 November 1994.

Browne, William Bradford. *The Mohawk Trail: Its History and Course, with Map and Illustrations, Together with an Account of Fort Massachusetts and of the Early Turnpikes over Hoosac Mountain*, 1920. A facsimile of the first edition with an addendum by Paul Marino. [Williamstown, Mass.]: Elder, 1998. Page references are to the 1998 edition.

Cook, Rollin Hillyer, ed. *Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Berkshire County, Massachusetts*. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1906.

Gladden, Washington. *From the Hub to the Hudson, With Sketches of Nature, History, and Industry in North-Western Massachusetts*. Boston: New England News Co., 1869.

Kellogg, Lucy C. *History of Greenfield, 1900-1929*. Greenfield, Mass.: Town of Greenfield, 1931.

Manning's North Adams Directory. Springfield, Mass.: H.A. Manning Co., [published annually; various editions used].

North Adams, Mass. Glens Falls, N.Y.: Possons, [1896?].

"Old Stage Lines in Northern Berkshire." *The Berkshire Hills: A Historic Monthly* 2, no. 7(1901).

The Pageant of the Old Mohawk Trail in Celebration of the Building of the New Mohawk Trail: Presented in North Adams on the 17, 18, 19, and 20 of June 1914. [North Adams, Mass.?]: [1914].

Perry, Arthur Latham. *Origins in Williamstown*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894.

Sargent, Porter E. *A Handbook of New England*. Boston: Ellis, 1916.

The Trail of the Mohawk. North Adams, Mass.: Charles Canedy, [1917?].

Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893). In *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays*, with commentary by John Mack Faragher, 31-60. New York: Henry Holt, 1994.

University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. *United States Historical Census Data Browser*. 1998. <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census> (17 April 2004).

Verizon. *SuperPages*. <http://superpages.com> (15 April 2004).

Secondary Sources

Axelrod, Alan. *The International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders*. New York: Facts on File, 1997.

Bain, Angela Goebel. "Historical Pageantry in Old Deerfield: 1910, 1913, 1916." *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings* 25 (2000): 120-136.

Belasco, Warren James. *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945*. Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1979.

_____. "Commercialized Nostalgia: The Origins of the Roadside Strip." In *The Automobile in American Culture*, edited by David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.

_____. "Motivatin' with Chuck Berry and Frederick Jackson Turner." In *The Automobile in American Culture*, edited by David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.

"Birch Bark Waste Paper Basket." *Memorial Hall Online – Digital Collection*. <http://www.memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=5281> (20 January 2004).

Bodnar, John. *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Broder, Patricia Janis. *Bronzes of the American West*. New York: Abrams, 1974.

Burnham, Antoinette F. et al. *History and Tradition of Shelburne, Massachusetts*. Springfield, Mass.: History and Tradition of Shelburne Committee, 1958.

Calloway, Colin G. *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*. New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2004.

Canedy, Wayne. "Footprints from the Past." 1996.

The Columbia World of Quotations. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. <http://www.bartleby.com/66/56/14856.html> (21 February 2004).

Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.

Davis, Robert E. *History of the Improved Order of Red Men and Degree of Pocahontas, 1765-1988*. [Waco, Tex.]: R. E. Davis, 1990.

Dedek, Peter Brigham. "Journeys on the Mother Road: Interpreting the Cultural Significance of U.S. Route 66." Ph.D. diss. Middle Tennessee State University, 2002. DAI, 2002.

Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Demos, John. *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Dilworth, Leah. *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.

Drew, Bernard A. *Berkshire County Photo Album*. Pittsfield, Mass.: Berkshire Eagle, 1999.

Faragher, John Mack. *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays*. New York: Henry Holt, 1994.

Fiero, John W. "Wounded Knee Massacre." In *American Indian History*, edited by Carole A. Barrett, 598-602. Pasadena, Calif.: Salem, 2003.

"Fort Massachusetts – North Adams, Mass." *Memorial Hall Online – Digital Collection*. <http://www.memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=15722> (18 March 2004).

Freeland, Thomas Antony. "The National Entertainment: Buffalo Bill's Wild West and the Pageant of American Empire." Ph.D. diss. Stanford University, 1999. DAI, 2000.

Gallagher, Nancy L. *Building Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999.

Glassberg, David. *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses Of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

_____. *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.

Haefeli, Evan and Kevin Sweeney. "Revisiting *The Redeemed Captive*." In *After King Philip's War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England*, edited by Colin G. Calloway, 29-71. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997.

Historic Auto Trail Guide: The Mohawk Trail. Brookline, Mass.: Muddy River Press, 2002.

Huhndorf, Shari M. *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Hyde, Anne Farrar. *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920*. New York: New York University Press, 1990.

Jackle, John A. *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

Kammen, Michael G. *Mystic Chords Of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*. New York: Knopf, 1991.

Lee, Laura Shelby. "The West Tisbury Pageant: An Insider's View." *Dukes County Intelligencer* 28, no. 4 (1987): 179-185.

"Let's Go to the Sweetheart." *Mt. Massaemet Shadows: A Quarterly Published by the Shelburne Historical Society Inc.* 15, no.4 (1989): 3-9.

Ling, Peter J. *America and the Automobile: Technology, Reform, and Social Change*. Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Margolies, John and Eric Baker. *See the USA: The Art of the American Travel Brochure*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000.

Marino, Paul W. "Mohawk Trail Addendum." In *The Mohawk Trail: Its History and Course, with Map and Illustrations, Together with an Account of Fort Massachusetts and of the Early Turnpikes over Hoosac Mountain*, by William Bradford Browne, 45-50. [Williamstown, Mass.]: Elder, 1998.

Marnell, William H. *Vacation Yesterdays of New England*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

Moses, L. G. *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

"Mountain Meadows Massacre." *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 2004. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=55401> (17 April 2004).

Prevots, Naima. *American Pageantry: A Movement for Art and Democracy*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990.

Schmidt, Alvin J. and Nicholas Babchuk. *Fraternal Organizations*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980.

Shaffer, Marguerite S. *See America First: Tourism And National Identity, 1880-1940*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001.

Santos, Gonzalez. "John Gast – 'American Progress,' 1872." <http://www.csubak.edu/~gsantos/img0061.html> (9 April 2004).

Shea, Ann Marie. "Community Pageants in Massachusetts, 1908-1932." Ph.D. diss. New York University, 1984. DAI, 1985.

Susman, Warren I. *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze*. London: Sage Publications, 1990.

Who Was Who in America. Vol. I. Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1943.

Government Documents

Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Mohawk Trail Early Automobile Corridor Preliminary Survey Plan." By Arthur Krim. Boston, 2001.

Newspapers

Boston Globe and *Boston Sunday Globe*
Greenfield Gazette and Courier
New York Times
North Adams Evening Transcript
Springfield Republican