

2005

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Recommended Citation

Youngs, Larry R. (2005) "The Sporting Set Winters in Florida: Fertile Ground for the Leisure Revolution, 1870-1930," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 84: No. 1, Article 6.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol84/iss1/6>

The Sporting Set Winters in Florida: Fertile Ground for the Leisure Revolution, 1870-1930

by Larry R. Youngs

Maurice Fatio made his first visit to Palm Beach, Florida, at the height of the social season in February 1923. The young Swiss architect planned on trolling for business among the resort's elite guests, hoping to supplement his New York City firm's clientele. The pace and nature of the Palm Beach scene, however, caught him by surprise. In a letter to his parents written on the fourth day of his visit, he exclaimed, "I have never led a more intense life." Describing a typical day, he explained that "one gets up at 10 o'clock to play tennis; at noon one bathes at a splendid beach . . . golf in the afternoon . . . and the day ends with magnificent balls in private homes which are veritable palaces." While he admitted that he "had not yet had time to attend to his business," the exhausting lifestyle made him "feel physically marvelous."¹ Fatio's letter hints at the central role sport and outdoor recreation played in shaping everyday activities and the sense of place that helped define wintering in Florida.

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1. Maurice Fatio, Palm Beach, Fla., to Marguerite and Guillaume Fatio, Geneva, Switzerland, 15 February 1923, in *Maurice Fatio: Architect*, ed. Alexandra Fatio (Stuart, Fla., 1992), 33, facsimile.

The Palm Beach scene Fatio experienced has long served as an icon of conspicuous consumption for America's upper classes. In his 1904 book, *The American Scene*, novelist Henry James culminated his critique of American society by reflecting on Henry Flagler's St. Augustine and Palm Beach resorts. He observed that visitors to these winter enclaves came "from 'all over,' . . . converg[ing] upon Palm Beach from every prosperous corner of the land." Eight decades later, historian Donald Curl described this "play ground of the elite" as "the winter capital of American high society." Yet, beyond the reflection of economic excess and cultural flamboyance, the Palm Beach resorters should also be understood as members of Florida's sporting set and, more importantly, as part of an on-going leisure revolution that took on trans-regional, even transnational, dimensions.²

Scholars have typically glossed over the historical significance of the winter sporting experience. On the one hand, those interested in Florida history acknowledge that resorters engaged in various forms of outdoor recreation and sport, but they marginalize the participants' and spectators' actual experiences by treating each activity simply as one of an assortment of available pastimes. While recognizing that Florida's winter visitors spent time hunting and fishing, bathing and motoring, or playing tennis, golf, and polo, little effort has been made to analyze the meaning of such choices for those involved or for the manner in which sport shaped the state's development. On the other hand, sport historians have contributed a steady stream of new research over the past few decades that offer intriguing insights into the role recreation and sport has played in American society, but along with scholars interested in tourism and vacationing more generally, they largely ignore the south Atlantic states, including Florida. Yet, Florida played a crucial role in the sporting revolution that began in England, moved to North America, and subsequently spread into certain regions in the Caribbean, and around the world.

Development of Florida between 1870 and 1930 can be seen partly as a consequence of the emerging significance that industrialized nations' business and professional classes placed on sport

2. Henry James, *The American Scene* (New York, 1967), 453; Donald W. Curl, *Palm Beach County: An Illustrated History* (Northridge, Calif., 1986), 59. Historian Dale A. Somers offered an early analysis of what he termed a "leisure revolution" in America's cities in "The Leisure Revolution: Recreation in the American City, 1820-1920," *Journal of Popular Culture* 5 (January 1971): 125-47.

and outdoor recreation. Having acquired the necessary time and disposable wealth, certain affluent men and women put increasing value on the quality and meaning of their time away from work and home. They began extending summer-time activities year round by spending part or all of the winter in Florida, and later in the Carolinas, Georgia, the Bahamas, and Cuba.³ Such people increasingly embraced the idea that participating in outdoor recreation, including certain competitive sports, helped to immunize against the unhealthy aspects—both mental and physical—of modern urban life, especially life in an industrial and capitalistic society. While a majority of Florida's sporting set traveled southward along railways or steamship lines from the nation's northern cities—as did much of the seasonal workforce—the Americans' ranks were swelled with visitors from other nations, including Canada, Scotland, England, Cuba, Argentina, and even Japan. Activities of this international sporting set marked temporal and geographic shifts in the manner and style in which certain members of industrialized nations, and the upper classes of less developed nations, incorporated sport and outdoor recreation into their lives.

Florida's sporting scene also shaped, and was shaped by, the state's permanent residents. Beginning during Reconstruction, as escalating numbers of invalids, tourists, and sportsmen traveled to Florida during the winter months, the state's natives, residents, and newly-arrived immigrants gradually took on the task of accommodating the seasonal visitors. In 1886, for example, visiting fisherman James A. Henshall seemed relieved to discover "plenty of boats and experienced boatmen that can be chartered to convey parties . . . to any portion of East Florida." He characterized the boatmen as "intelligent and accommodating," further describing them as "a peculiar and unique combination of sailor, fisherman, hunter, guide, cook, woodsman, and philosopher." As F. Campbell Moller advised readers two years later, "unless well acquainted with the region," bird hunters visiting Florida should

3. Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston, 1982); Steven Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana, Ill., 1991); Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, vol. 2: *From the Ending of Slavery to the Twenty-First Century* (Athens, Ga., 1998); Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba* (Lincoln, Neb., 1997); Louis A. Perez, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999).

hire “a driver and guide, be he ‘Cracker,’ ‘Nigger,’ or ‘Indian.’”⁴ Wherever fishermen and hunters traveled in the untamed regions of Florida, there seemed to be locals able and willing—for the right price—to aide the visiting adventurers. Gradually, individual and informal relations between residents and travelers developed into a thriving industry.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, northern business men stimulated southern tourism by creating independent and self-contained resorts designed to cater to the sporting set, among others. These seasonal sanctuaries thrived until Florida’s real-estate collapse in the late 1920s. The Great Depression and World War II continued the industry’s temporary decline and stagnation.

This essay focuses on the nexus between the “production” of Florida’s sporting enclaves in terms of the built environments as they were conceived, constructed, and promoted, and the “consumption” of these technological systems by each resort’s clientele.⁵ It also makes reference to the complex network of resort employees who earned their livelihoods by realizing entrepreneurs’ visions and fulfilling visitors’ expectations. Developers commissioned architects, engineers, and landscape artists to design the resorts; they hired masons, carpenters, electricians, and other craftsmen and laborers to construct and maintain the facilities; they employed chefs, caddies, waitresses, and maids to serve hotel guests; and they retained musicians, actors, and athletes to entertain the resorts’ patrons. Thus, this complex cast of historical characters—seasonal visitors, year-round residents, entrepreneurs, and local and migrant workers—all participated in the social construction of sporting lifestyles that emerged and endured at Florida’s winter enclaves.

Before the resort industry took root, the state remained an enigma to most Americans as well as to foreigners. Initially, northerners, particularly people in search of a climate that cured consumption, ventured into Florida to escape the long, frigid winters

4. James A. Henshall, “Sport in Florida,” *Outing* 8 (April 1886): 57-61; F. Campbell Moller, “Winter Shooting in Florida,” *Outing* 13 (March 1888): 542.

5. The definition of technology “as discrete commodities, such as radios and flatirons, but also as technological systems, such as hotels, experienced by consumers as environments or services” comes from Roger Horowitz and Arwen Mohun, eds., *His and Hers: Gender, Consumption, and Technology* (Charlottesville, Va., 1998), 1.

of New England or the Midwest.⁶ Other inducements for wintering in the south Atlantic states included fashionable tourists' quests for picturesque and novel destinations,⁷ the romance and nostalgia identified with notions of the "Old South,"⁸ the search for "Arcadian" values inherent in the "back-to-nature movement,"⁹ the challenge and adventure associated with the Florida frontier,¹⁰

6. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the term "consumption" usually meant tuberculosis. Experts, both authentic and self-proclaimed, carried on a heated public debate over the nature of the disease, whether its victims could be cured, and if so, how. Many early Florida travel guides addressed the issue; see for example, Daniel G. Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida & the South: For Tourists, Invalids, and Emigrants* (1869; reprint, Gainesville, Fla., 1978), 115-36; Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves* (1873; reprint, Gainesville, Fla., 1999), 116-36; Sidney Lanier, *Its Scenery, Climate, and History* (Philadelphia, 1875), 210-18.
7. For scholarly treatments of "fashionable" touring during the nineteenth century, see Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington D. C., 1995), 15-40; Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York, 1999), 86-100; Charlene M. Boyer Lewis, *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860* (Charlottesville, Va., 2001).
8. Traditionally, scholars have focused on northerners' romantic notions about the South's antebellum culture. For an insightful analysis on the influence that ideas about the Old South had on northern tourism in the post-Reconstructed South, see Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993), 66-92. For an analysis of how northern writers of fiction and non-fiction helped shape the northern public's romantic and nostalgic notions about the "lost civilization" of the Old South, see Anne Rowe, *The Enchanted Country: Northern Writers in the South, 1865-1910* (Baton Rouge, La., 1978).
9. Unlike traditional agrarianism—turning back to the land—the "back-to-nature movement" involved the search for "Arcadia," defined by nineteenth-century social reformers as a "scene of simple pleasure and untroubled quiet"; see Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (1969; reprint, Baltimore, Md., 1990), xix.
10. For a scholarly analysis of Florida as a last frontier, see Floyd Reinhart and Marion Reinhart, *Victorian Florida: America's Last Frontier* (Atlanta, 1986). From the perspective of early Florida settlers, see Charles W. Pierce, *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida*, ed. Donald W. Curl (Coral Gables, Fla., 1970); Julia Winifred Moseley and Betty Powers Crislip, eds., "Come to My Sunland": *Letters of Julia Daniels Moseley from the Florida Frontier, 1882-1886* (Gainesville, Fla., 1998). From the perspective of contemporary male sportsmen and travelers, see Charles Hallock, ed., *Camp Life in Florida: A Handbook for Sportsmen and Settlers* (New York, 1876); Whitlaw Reid, *After the War: A Tour of the Southern States, 1865-1866*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New York, 1965), 158-88; Brinton, *Guide-Book of Florida & the South*. For a perspective of a woman who wintered annually in Florida during the post-bellum era, see Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*. Other women who wrote about their travels to the Florida frontier include Margaret Deland, *Florida Days* (Boston, ca. 1889); Helen K. Ingram, *Tourists' and Settlers' Guide to Florida* (Jacksonville, Fla., 1895); Abbie M. Brooks [Silvia Sunshine], *Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes*, 2d ed. (Nashville, Tenn., 1883).

and the interconnected intellectual currents that swirled around the notions of neurasthenia and faith in therapeutic activities designed to serve as antidotes to modern living.¹¹ The authors of travel guides attempted to unravel this confusing array of motives by offering potential visitors advice about where one should go, what one should do, and why a winter sojourn was worth the time and money. This prescriptive aspect of southern travel literature linked wintering in Florida to upper-class Britons' and Americans' well-established practice of taking summer vacations, and to their long tradition of relying on advice literature when making the Grand Tour in Europe or New England.¹² Each of the motives travel authors employed in enticing would-be visitors to the South—health, fashion, nostalgia, nature, adventure, and therapy—were ultimately adopted by Florida's emerging sporting set.

Only four years after the Union's defeat of the Confederate States of America, Union army surgeon Daniel Garrison Brinton published *A Guide-Book of Florida & the South: For Tourists, Invalids, and Emigrants* in his hometown of Philadelphia. Writing for a northern audience without a hint of animosity toward the citizens of the former Confederacy, Brinton's detailed description of the south Atlantic states, especially Florida, read at times like an adventurer's trek into an untamed and exotic wilderness. For the hardy adventurer, advised Brinton and his fellow travel authors, the

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11. Concerning neurasthenia, see such contemporary works as George M. Beard, "Causes of American Nervousness," in *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences* (1881), reproduced in Henry Nash Smith, ed., *Popular Culture and Industrialism* (Garden City, N. J., 1967), 57-70, facsimile; "Diagnosis of Neurasthenia," *Current Literature* 29 (August 1900): 433-34; "Nervous Century," *Era* 12 (July 1903): 257-59. For scholarly works on neurasthenia, nervousness, and the search for therapeutic remedies to modern living, see John S. Haller Jr. and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, Ill., 1974), 4-53; Tom Lutz, *American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991); T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago, 1981); Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*, 68.
 12. On the general pervasiveness of advice books in the lives of Victorian Americans, see Haller and Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America*, x. The establishment of the summer vacation as a middle-class institution is analyzed thoroughly in Aron, *Working at Play*. Concerning European guidebooks, see Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750-1915* (New York, 1997), 69-74, 253-55. On British vacationing, see John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (New York, 1983). On guidebooks about New England travel during the early nineteenth century, see Brown, *Inventing New England*, 28-33, 51-52, 61-62.

Florida frontier offered sportsmen marvelous opportunities to hunt and fish. In 1876, Charles Hallock, editor of the gentlemen's sporting magazine, *Forest and Stream*, compiled a collection of essays entitled *Camp Life in Florida: A Handbook for Sportsmen and Settlers*. Hallock's book provided a wealth of information that he and his colleagues had gathered while making two excursions into the least developed areas of the state. His book aimed to serve a wide range of sportsmen, from those wishing to rough it by living in tents while exploring Florida's uncharted regions to those interested in a bit of hunting and fishing while touring in more comfort and style.¹³

Travel writers carried on a lively debate over the propriety and etiquette of tourists hunting and fishing while on the Florida Tour. It was a discussion that was often divided along gender lines: travel guides make repetitive references to an on-going dispute between men and women over the issue of shooting Florida wildlife, especially alligators, from steamboats while cruising on the St. Johns River. This clash reinforces the assertion made by historian Patricia Cline Cohen that "travel offered a cultural space for interactions that reflected negotiations in the power relations between men and women, even as it offered opportunities for some women and men to explore alternative behaviors and identities." Most male travel authors treated hunting and fishing as harmless diversions. As simple matters-of-fact, Brinton, Sidney Lanier, and Hallock each pointed out several locales where sportsmen would find game and fish plentiful. Brinton informed travelers that "Florida is the paradise of the sportsman, and those who are able should not omit to have a 'camp hunt' while there." Lanier described the joy of eating at a boarding house that had prepared "fresh fish of one's catching and game of one's own shooting."¹⁴

13. Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida & the South*, 11; Hallock, ed., *Camp Life in Florida*.

14. Patricia Cline Cohen, "Women at Large: Travel in Antebellum America," *History Today* 44 (December 1994): 50; Brinton, *A Guide-Book for Florida & the South*, 11; Lanier, *Florida*, 12-13. Susan A. Eacker discovered that out of 106 single-authored travel guides on Florida published between 1865 and 1900, only thirteen were written by women. She argued that women like Stowe, who wrote about postbellum Florida, "attempted to develop not only an alternative gendered narrative of travel but also an alternative gendered space: the *constructed* and *experienced* Florida in a manner distinct from male writers"; Eacker, "Gender in Paradise: Harriet Beecher Stowe and Postbellum Prose in Florida," *Journal of Southern History* 64 (August 1998): 497 n 13, 511.

In an article in Hallock's *Camp Life in Florida*, Dr. Charles J. Kenworthy, writing under the pseudonym "Al Fresco," enthusiastically endorsed the sport of alligator hunting. Recounting an elaborate method of capturing the animals at night by "baiting a shark hook with a coot, or some other bird" and tying the line to a flexible tree, he assured his readers that the "sportsman" was sure to have his prey the next morning. Of course, he also explained that "to get your hook, after you are done playing with him [the alligator], you must shoot him." In another article in Hallock's book, L.A. Beardslee wrote about a cruise up the St. Johns River where "countless alligators dozing upon the banks furnish rare sport to the sportsman." As he and his fellow hunters "eagerly shot" at the "great monsters," he confessed that

at first the more timid of our lady companions objected shrinkingly to our firing from their midst, but after a few palpable misses they became convinced that our rifles were not dangerous, even to the game, and from protesting against it became rather fond of the sport; and they all forgot that it was Sunday till a sharp rain drove us in and broke up the shooting match; then they expressed themselves!

The male and female travelers may have shared the same space while cruising up the St. Johns River, but women typically seemed to see no point in men's desires to shoot Florida's wildlife; nor, apparently, were the females reluctant to criticize their companions' behavior.¹⁵

Female travel authors consistently questioned the "sport" of killing alligators and other game. While on her first tour up the St. Johns, Stowe complained that "one annoyance on board the boat was the constant and pertinacious firing kept up by that class of men who think that the chief end of man is to shoot something." Describing the popular sport of hunting game at night, Abbie Brooks wrote sarcastically that "the deer hunter is in for his share of amusement: he loves to camp at night, and, when he can 'shine the eyes' of the unsuspecting animal, send a bullet with unflinching certainty through its head." Perhaps Margaret Deland best expressed her bewilderment about the act of killing animals simply for the fun of it when she wrote,

15. Hallock, ed., *Camp Life in Florida*, 87, 99.

A man's desire to kill a snake never leaves him. Here, paddling noiselessly up the creek, so steeped in the wonder and beauty of the woods and water that he cannot even remember the bitterness and passion of yesterday, a man will suddenly and violently fling himself out of Nirvana, because he has caught sight of a moccas[i]n. To kill the pretty creature, sunning himself on a cypress knee, quite harmless, at least for the moment, because entirely out of the track of the traveler, he will leave Paradise. And he is aware, too, of a new, unwonted cruelty in his soul. That the snake slips into the water, his glossy back cut and broken, with hours of agony before death comes, does not distress him at all; his only regret is that his paddle was split in the encounter, and the canoe has to be pushed from a mud-bank on which it is grounded. Of course, this blind rage which kills the cold and gliding outcast to the swamp has nothing to do with the passion of the sportsman. In that there is a generous appreciation of the prey.

Deland, like other female travelers, clearly distinguished between hunting as sport and arbitrarily killing animals, a difference that was apparently unappreciated by many male travelers.¹⁶

Fishing, in contrast, provided common sport as well as good eating for members of both sexes. Although Harriet Beecher Stowe chose not to fish herself, she described with enthusiasm her young, female companions' fishing expertise. While on an afternoon excursion with her neighbors, the sudden excitement of others catching fish roused her to write,

There!—a cry of victory is heard from the forward boat; and Mademoiselle Nelly is seen energetically working her elbows: a scuffle ensues, and the captive has free berth on a boat, without charge for passage-ticket. . . . And now Elsie in our boat; and all is commotion, till a fine blue bream, spotted with black, is landed. . . . Each fisherwoman has her fish to exhibit, and her exploits to recount; and there is a plentiful fish-breakfast in each of the houses.¹⁷

16. Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, 258; Brooks, *Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes*, 304; Deland, *Florida Days*, 164-65.

17. Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, 75, 86.

Although Stowe winced at the idea of killing for food (she claimed to “pity” the poor fish), she rationalized the practice as being natural. And like Brooks, she described in detail a method of preparing the fish in the wild that entailed building a fire, wrapping the freshly-caught fish in palmetto leaves, burying them in hot coals, and finally savoring the moist and tender meat. Male travel authors, even the contributors to Hallock’s *Camp Life in Florida*, neglected to recount such personal details. Clearly, men and women both enjoyed the sport of fishing, but the experience tended to hold distinctive meanings for members of each gender. While male authors focused on the trappings of a fishing adventure, describing in detail the types of boats, tackle, and bait most suited for Florida fishing, female authors emphasized experiences associated with catching, preparing, and eating the fish. Regardless of the gender-specific ways that travel authors related their fishing experiences, for male and female readers sitting in their parlors in the bitter cold of a New England winter, the idea of catching fish in the Florida sunshine must have kindled many a desire to head southward.

Other publications also contributed to the public discourse defining sport as an integral aspect of wintering in Florida. A survey of the premiere sporting magazine of the era, *Outing: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Sport, Travel, and Recreation*, helps contextualize Florida within the expanding leisure revolution. Published in London and New York, *Outing* treated sport in transnational terms. During a single decade in the late-nineteenth century, for example, an array of articles appeared that included such titles as “A Reindeer Hunt in Iceland,” “A Wolf Hunt in France,” “Sturgeon Fishing in Russia,” and “Bear Hunting in Japan.”¹⁸ At the same time, the magazine increasingly identified Florida as a worthy destination for sportsmen seeking authentic experiences in the wild.

During the 1880s, hunters and fishermen wrote numerous articles characterizing the state as “wonderfully weird and beautiful” and as “strange and desolate.” No one wrote of a hunting experience anywhere in the world in more romantic and exotic

18. William Lee Howard, “A Reindeer Hunt in Iceland,” *Outing* 10 (August 1887): 466-71; “Zu Befehl,” “A Wolf Hunt in France,” *Outing* 17 (February 1891): 381-83; Robert F. Walsh, “Sturgeon Fishing in Russia,” *Outing* 21 (November 1892): 157-60; ‘Rellin,’ “Bear Hunting in Japan,” *Outing* 26 (June 1895): 221-23.

terms than Maurice Thompson's Florida adventure, "Three Weeks of Savage Life." He began by revealing that he "had longed to hunt with a native Indian archer." Describing his initial encounter with his guide and hunting partner, Tommy the Seminole, Thompson wrote, "Imagine a great square-shouldered, half-nude savage, whose features betokened stolidity, cruelty, cunning, and maybe dishonesty, if nothing worse." Still, Thompson confided that he "recognized Tommy as my master in the noble science of archery, and I labored hard to win his approbation by some achievement worthy of his notice." He accomplished as much, and the two men bonded after sharing in the kill of a "yearling panther." While Thompson proudly admitted using a long bow manufactured in London and arrows handcrafted by Boston woodturners and blacksmiths, Tommy demonstrated his superior skills using only the most crudely-fashioned weapons. As Thompson confessed to his readers, "Here was a triumph of savage cunning and skill over enlightened science and art." After returning home from his Florida adventure, Thompson reflected, "It was a short, deep draught of the kind of life I had so often dreamed of and longed for. I became a savage of the purest type."¹⁹

The sporting world and the state of Florida were changing rapidly, however. Only one year later, in "Tarpon Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico," Thomas C. Felton observed that "birds and game can last but a short time longer" because "hunters of Florida, Cuba, and the tourist 'sportsmen' of our northern and western cities have made short work of them." "Thanks to railroads and steam vessels, and good hotels . . . at intervals along the shore," Felton predicted an "onslaught of hordes of sportsmen." Trumpeting the joys of tarpon fishing along Florida's gulf coast, Felton advised residents and sportsmen to join in passing "restrictive laws" to protect the tarpon from the inevitable fate of Florida's game.²⁰ Yet, by the beginning of the twentieth century, fishing and, to a greater extent, hunting declined in popularity among Florida's changing sporting set. Visitors quickly became interested in a new array of recreational activities and sports.

19. 'K'noo,' "Lake Okeechobee, Florida," *Outing* 7 (October 1885): 88; Thomas C. Felton, "Tarpon Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico," *Outing* 11 (January 1888): 332; Maurice Thompson, "Three Weeks of Savage Life," *Outing* 8 (June 1886): 205-209.

20. Felton, "Tarpon Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico," 331-35.

In 1905, the national periodical *Harper's Weekly Advertiser* published, "Where Shall I Spend the Winter?" The article surveyed the south Atlantic states' premiere winter resorts, announcing that "outdoor recreation is becoming a necessary part of our modern life, and nowadays, those who are fortunate enough to spend their winters under genial skies are enabled to enjoy the full pleasure of field shooting, golf, tennis, bathing, and kindered sports." During the final decade of the nineteenth century, a new generation of winter resorters began seeking out retreats that met their particular notions about the meaning of leisure and sport. Simultaneously, entrepreneurs such as Henry Plant and Henry Flagler stepped in, each motivated by desires to create the most popular resort.²¹

In effect, consumers and producers negotiated in creating a thriving new winter-resort industry with sport at its core. Entrepreneurs like Flagler and Plant scrambled to keep pace with the public's demand for novel outdoor recreation and sport that emulated the practices of the English gentry. Tennis represented an early example of the type of sport that certain northern urban dwellers began playing at elite summer resorts and country clubs, and subsequently brought to the South for the winter. By 1887, a small contingent of winter visitors in St. Augustine organized the inaugural Tropical Tennis Championship on the privately-owned court of Franklin W. Smith. *Outing* claimed that among the tournaments of the Southern Lawn Tennis Association, "enthusiasm reached its highest point in the St. Augustine tourney." Quick to capitalize on this latest fad, Flagler sponsored the 1888 Championship after building asphalt courts at his Alcazar Hotel and offering a "beautiful and massive sterling trophy" to the winner. Describing Flagler's facilities for the second Championship, the Tennis Editor of *Outing* reported, "Its environments are all that luxury, good taste, and refinement can require." In comparison with Maurice Thompson's celebration of "savage liberty" while

21. "Where Shall I Spend the Winter?" *Harper's Weekly Advertiser* 49 (7 January 1905): 28. On the ideologies of middle- and upper-class attitudes about sports, see Riess, *City Games*, 27-30, 46-47, 60, 92; Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns to Play: A History of Popular Recreation, 1607-1940* (Gloucester, Mass., 1963), 182-247. On the changing attitudes toward youth sports, see Benjamin Radar, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports* (Lincoln, Neb., 1999), 146-73. Concerning attitudes about leisure in general, see Aron, *Working at Play*, 5-8, 34-36, 146-49, 181-82.

hunting with Tommy the Seminole, *Outing's* appraisal indicated a dramatic change in the meaning of sport among Florida's visitors. St. Augustine's tennis tournament was so popular among the Newport set that the Tropical Championship became part of the emerging tennis circuit. *Outing* applauded St. Augustine for "attracting players from both sides of the Atlantic."²²

Soon tennis was being played at all Flagler's resorts, as well as at many other locales throughout Florida. By the early twentieth century, well-maintained tennis courts and regularly-scheduled tournaments became integral amenities for any first-class winter resort. Tennis had become part of wintering in Florida. In 1920, for example, *Palm Beach Life* proudly announced the upcoming Florida Championship, commenting that "with such players as Ichiya Kumgae, the Japanese star, leading the field the week is sure to give patrons of the sport some great matches to watch." Fans were not disappointed. Not only did Kumgae capture the singles title, but he and his partner, Seiichiro Kashio, won the doubles matches. On the women's side, reported *Palm Beach Life*, "Mrs. Frederick Singer, formerly singles champion of France, was one of the leading contenders." Clearly, Florida had become one of the winter destinations for the finest tennis players in the world.²³

Tennis was only one of a novel array of sports that resorters embraced. By the turn of the twentieth century, Royal Poinciana's *Daily Program* listed an assortment of new "diversions" guests might enjoy as participants or spectators, including going for a "dip in the surf," playing a round of golf, or watching a baseball game between waiters from the Royal Poinciana and Flagler's second Palm Beach hotel, the Palm Beach Inn. Because swimming had become such a popular activity among his guests, Flagler constructed a bathing casino on the Atlantic side of the island, just south of the Palm Beach Inn. Guests staying at the resort could enjoy a plunge in the casino's sea-water pool or frolic along the resort's private beach. In 1903, the owner and editor of the resort weekly, *The Tattler of Society in Florida*, Anna Marcotte observed that "ocean and pool bathing is perhaps the most characteristic and popular of Palm Beach sports." But swimming was only one of many fashionable diversions. Within a decade of the Royal

22. "Lawn Tennis in the South," *Outing* 12 (August 1888): 496; "St. Augustine Lawn Tennis Tournament," *Outing* 16 (August 1890): 180-82.

23. *Palm Beach Life*, 17 January 1920, 13.

Poinciana's opening, Flagler had indulged his guests' demands—as spectators, players, and competitors—for such recreational and sporting activities as fishing, sailing, shooting, baseball, motoring (in boats and automobiles), bicycling, tennis, and golf.²⁴

Still, he did not give in to every demand. Although sportsmen flocked to Flagler's resorts to enjoy a range of recreational amenities, Flagler remained stubbornly defiant of his clientele's desires for changes that he believed compromised his principles. For example, when he closed all sporting and recreational facilities on Sundays, many guests complained. According to his most-recent biographer, Edward Akin, Flagler responded to the criticism by stating that "If they do not like it they need not come, I am not asking their opinion in this any more than I consult them about my other affairs."²⁵ He also forbade horses on the island, requiring enthusiasts of equestrian sports to go elsewhere to enjoy their favorite pastime. Until his death in 1913, Flagler continued to oblige his affluent visitors, but without surrendering his sense of control.

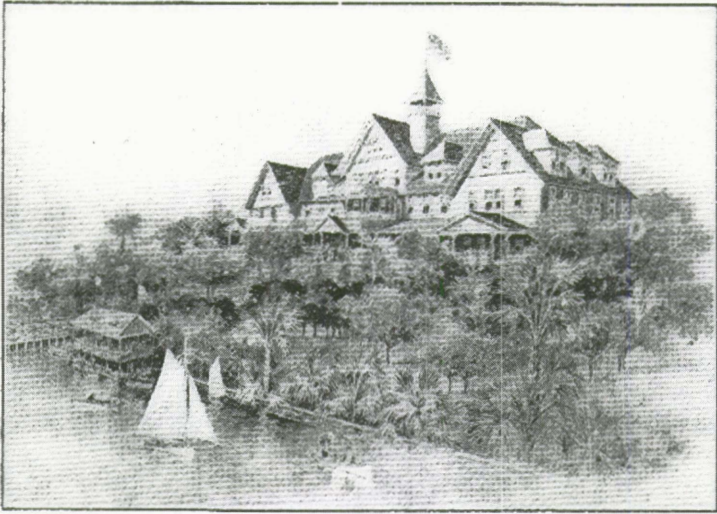
Anna Marcotte's *The Tattler* offered keen insights into the relationship between Flagler, the management of his various Florida and Bahamian resorts, and their clientele. Intuitively, she appreciated how specific resort environments, natural and built, shaped the social patterns of the people who congregated there. In fact, the distinctiveness of a particular resort is what attracted particular guests. She explained how, "at Nassau (in the Bahamas) the official society of the Colonial Government is naturally dominant—everyone hopes to be entertained at 'Government House.'" Emphasizing Nassau's distinctiveness, she explained that "a social function is scarcely a function at all unless some representative of the Government is there, 'a condition' that is scarcely possible in this country, even in Washington, but very charming and attractive withal."²⁶

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of any resort, however, concerned the emphasis that developers and guests placed on particular sports. In Aiken, South Carolina, locals called the members of the winter colony "the horsey set" because of their

24. *Daily Program*, 9 March 1904, 1; *The Tattler of Society in Florida*, 16 March 1903.

25. Edward N. Akin, *Flagler: Rockefeller Partner and Florida Baron* (Kent, Ohio, 1988), 156.

26. *The Tattler of Society in Florida*, 31 January 1903.



HOTEL ROYAL PALM, Fort Myers, Fla.

BOATING, FISHING, SHOOTING, GOLF.

This advertisement reflects the changing nature of the sporting scene in Florida. Instead of roughing it on hunting and fishing excursions into a tropical wilderness, visitors began enjoying a variety of recreational activities amidst luxurious accommodations; *The Pinehurst Outlook*, 10 December 1910.

passion for equestrian sports. Thomasville, Georgia, became famous for its quail plantations; Daytona, Florida, capitalized on its wide, packed beaches used for racing the latest automobiles from Germany, France, and the United States; and Pinehurst, North Carolina, became internationally recognized for its golf courses. At each of these resorts, annual visitors arrived from scores of distant locales. In typical fashion among the many resort weeklies published in the south Atlantic states, *Palm Beach Life* listed the names and hometowns of visitors arriving at Flagler's resort hotels. A representative sample of arrivals in Palm Beach during the 1909-1910 season reveals that guests came from ninety cities in twenty-five states and three foreign countries.²⁷ The enduring success of the resorts, and their significance within the broader leisure revo-

27. My survey of twelve hundred two arrivals was gleaned from a representative sampling of *Palm Beach Life* from 1910 to 1911. A complete run of *Palm Beach Life* (1907-) can be found at the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, Fla.

lution, rested on their ability to foster a familiar sense of place and temporary camaraderie—a virtual community—among their diverse clientele. The common denominator, the magnet that drew certain people to particular resorts, was the resorters' shared passion for a sporting lifestyle.

No activity offers a better example for understanding the complex interactions at work in defining the winter scene in Florida than golf. In 1895, *The Tattler* first mentioned the game being played in Florida on a three-hole course in St. Augustine. Only two years later, Flagler commissioned Scottish golfer Alexander Findley to lay out a crude nine-hole course in Palm Beach. The golf links took center stage at the resort, stretching between the grand Royal Poinciana on Lake Worth and the more modest Palm Beach Inn on the Atlantic Ocean. Astutely recognizing the popularity of this novel sport, Flagler hired Findley to oversee the “planning, constructing and operating” of golf courses at all of his resorts. Not to be outdone, Henry Plant hired his own Scottish professional, John Duncan Dunn, to plan, build, and operate courses owned by Plant's Florida West Coast Railroad.²⁸

Only ten years earlier, no officially recognized golf course existed in the United States. In 1888, William H. Morse, M.D., penned “The American Naturalization of Golf,” for *Outing*. He informed readers that golf had been the Scots' “national pastime” for five centuries, and that golf clubs appeared “wherever Scots gather.” What seemed to bother Morse was that the game was “gaining favor in England” and that Canadian sportsmen had claimed the game for themselves. His reaction was to challenge his fellow countrymen to “make [golf] ours.” Likewise, reasoned Morse, “given our interpretation, combined with Scotch zest, and feast, and fun, and golf will not only be a pastime to be appreciated, but it will be a true American game.” He could not have anticipated the rapid success of his own formula. By 1895, novice American golfers had established seventy-four golf courses in nineteen states. Then during the last three years of the nineteenth cen-

28. *The Tattler of Society in Florida*, 2 March 1895; Geoffrey S. Cornish and Ronald E. Whitten, *The Golf Course* (New York, 1987), 181, 187. The modern use of the term “links” usually refers to a golf course located near an ocean and similar in design to courses in Scotland. According to Robert Browning, *A History of Golf* (New York, 1955), and Cornish, *The Golf Course*, the origin of the term refers to the particular land on the Scottish coast, called “linksland,” where golf was first played.



EAST COAST OF FLORIDA

GOLF TOURNAMENTS Season 1924

AT ST. AUGUSTINE St. Augustine Links, Par 73
Wilfred E. Retzl, Professional

Championship of St. Augustine.....	Jan. 22-26
Eighth Annual Spring Tournament.....	Feb. 19-23
Women's Third Annual Tournament.....	March 4- 8
Winter Championship of Florida.....	March 18-22

AT ORMOND Beach Golf Course, Par 75
Wm. Potts, Professional

Ormond Beach Championship.....	Feb. 18-23
Women's Championship.....	Feb. 27-March 1
Championship of Volusia.....	March 10-15

AT PALM BEACH Arthur Fenn, Professional

Palm Beach Country Club, Par 68	
Palm Beach Golf Club, Par 69	
Lake Worth Tournament.....	Jan. 21-25
South Florida Championship.....	Feb. 4- 8
Women's Championship.....	Feb. 11-15
Championship of Palm Beach.....	March 3- 7

AT MIAMI Miami Country Club, Par 72
Mike Brady, Professional

Annual Mid-Winter Tournament.....	Jan. 21-25
Championship of Miami.....	Feb. 11-25
Women's Championship of Miami.....	Feb. 18-21
Annual Spring Tournament.....	March 10-14

PALM BEACH TENNIS TOURNAMENT
CHAMPIONSHIP OF FLORIDA..... Feb. 25-March 7

Women's Singles and Doubles.....	Feb. 25-March 1
Men's Singles and Doubles.....	March 3-7

No mixed Doubles unless Committee arrange.

Write for full information and booklet
containing complete list of all events.

FLORIDA EAST COAST HOTEL CO.
(Flagler System)

2 West 45th St., New York	General Offices
Telephone, Murray Hill 4411	St. Augustine, Fla.

St. Augustine Links

By the 1920s, golf and tennis enthusiasts could plan on a variety of regularly scheduled tournaments at Florida's premiere resorts; *Golf Illustrated* 20 (December 1923): 3.

ture, as the American economy rebounded from the depression that began in 1893, the number of golf courses and players skyrocketed as Americans formed clubs throughout the nation. By 1900, according to golf historians Geoffrey Cornish and Ronald

Whitten, "the number of golf courses multiplied to 982, with at least one course in all forty-five states."²⁹

By necessity, playing golf in the North was a seasonal activity. In a 1900 article for *Harper's Weekly* titled "The Rise of the Country Clubs," E.S. Martin wrote, "There are days in the spring and again in the fall when all rightly constituted persons feel that they must get into the country." Martin advised such people to join a country club. Between the end of fall and the beginning of spring, however, how could the "rightly constituted persons" fulfill their desire to enjoy the benefits of the great out-of-doors? For more and more people, the answer was to spend time playing golf in the warmer climates of the South. Winter resort developers responded by building golf courses, an economic windfall for a cadre of Scottish golfers newly immigrated to the United States. In 1899, John Duncan Dunn published "Winter Golf in Southern Sunshine," in *Outing*. The article chronicled his tour of resort courses in Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. As the grandson of the famous Scottish champion, Willie Dunn, and the son of the prolific golf course designer, Tom Dunn, John Duncan's opinion carried considerable weight. His tour ended in the sunshine state where he claimed, "I never knew what winter golf in idealic [*sic*] winter was until I made the acquaintance of Florida." This international publicity from a member of one of golf's great families marked the beginning of the game's profound and lasting effect on Florida's development.³⁰

At the winter resorts, golf gradually took on greater cultural significance than being just another sport or recreational activity. Over the first three decades of the twentieth century, as the popularity of the game escalated, entrepreneurs expanded most existing golf courses from nine to eighteen holes, built additional courses, and continually improved course conditions and golfing facilities. They also introduced tournament play, built luxurious and elaborate clubhouses, supported the formation of private clubs, and used the game as a marketing tool for soliciting would-be visitors and as an inducement for real estate development.

29. William H. Morse, M.D. "The American Naturalization of Golf," *Outing* 11 (January 1888): 285-90; Cornish, *The Golf Course*, 44.

30. John Duncan Dunn, "Winter Golf in Southern Sunshine," in *Outing* 38 (February 1900): 486-95.

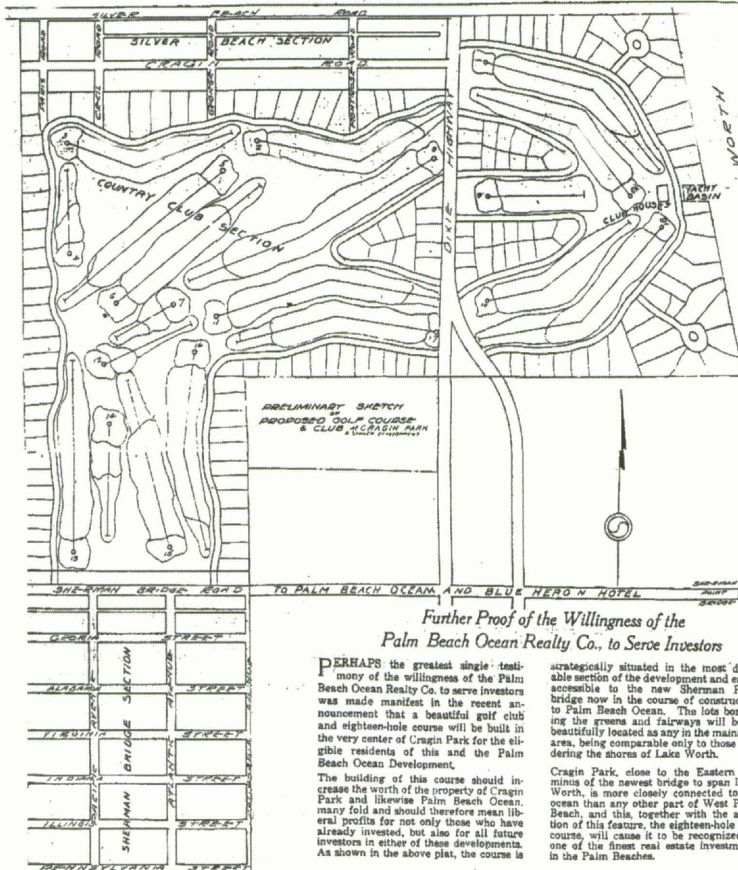
Because the vast majority of golf courses built in the United States before World War II were created for the use of members belonging to private country clubs, many contemporary observers and scholars understandably have treated the rise of American golf as synonymous with the emergence and proliferation of these clubs. However, the development of golf at the winter resorts helps to place the game within a broader context. Spatially, golf played at the winter resorts loosened the game's dependence on city and suburb; temporally, playing winter golf in southern climes allowed enthusiasts to enjoy the game year round; and culturally, the winter resorts provided public arenas at which men and women from local clubs participated in socially constructing a national, even transnational, community of golfers.

In the article "Gold Mines Buried in Golf Courses," published in 1916 in *The Pinehurst Outlook*, A. Linde Fowler claimed that "There never was a time when golf and country clubs were more ready to go deep into the exchequer to provide a first-class golf course than is the case today." This certainly applied to the East Coast Hotel Company and its new Palm Beach Golf Club, paid for at a price of more than one-half million dollars. The investment proved to be sound as America's entry into World War I marked an unexpected period of change in the resort activities in Florida, the Bahamas, and Cuba. Change did not occur as a result of sacrifices and hardships but as a consequence of growing demands from an increasing number of visitors. The booming wartime economy of the United States and the restricted travel opportunities to Europe translated into a thriving and expanding business for winter resorts.³¹

After the war, as the Florida land boom gained momentum in the early 1920s, developers chose golf to symbolize the lifestyle that prospective visitors, winter residents, and potential investors could expect in the sub-tropical paradise. In a 1924 issue of *Outlook*, J. Lewis Brown claimed that without golf "the South would have been

31. A. Linde Fowler, "Gold Mines Buried in Golf Courses," *The Pinehurst Outlook* 19 (winter 1916): 7; *Palm Beach Post*, 23 January 1916, 1. World War I also marked the expansion of tourism in Cuba, especially for the sporting set. Rosalie Schwartz argued that World War I stimulated the tourist industry as developers realized that "The island possessed the potential to compete favorably with Europe for the luxury tourist trade, with California for adventurers, with Florida for golfers and boaters, with Saratoga for horsemen, and with New York for entertainment"; Schwartz, *Pleasure Island*, 15.

"Watch Palm Beach Growing North"
 18 Holes of the Sportiest Golf in Florida at
CRAGIN PARK



Further Proof of the Willingness of the
 Palm Beach Ocean Realty Co., to Serve Investors

PERHAPS the greatest single testimony of the willingness of the Palm Beach Ocean Realty Co. to serve investors was made manifest in the recent announcement that a beautiful golf club and eighteen-hole course will be built in the very center of Cragin Park for the eligible residents of this and the Palm Beach Ocean Development. The building of this course should increase the worth of the property of Cragin Park and likewise Palm Beach Ocean, many fold and should therefore mean liberal profits for not only those who have already invested, but also for all future investors in either of these developments. As shown in the above plat, the course is

strategically situated in the most desirable section of the development and easily accessible to the new Sherman Point bridge now in the course of construction to Palm Beach Ocean. The lots bordering the greens and fairways will be as beautifully located as any in the mainland area, being comparable only to those bordering the shores of Lake Worth. Cragin Park, close to the Eastern terminus of the newest bridge to span Lake Worth, is more closely connected to the ocean than any other part of West Palm Beach, and this, together with the addition of this feature, the eighteen-hole golf course, will cause it to be recognized as one of the finest real estate investments in the Palm Beaches.

Like many other developers during Florida's land boom, Paris Singer promoted his Cragin Park development with a series of advertisements using golf to sell property; *Palm Beach Times*, 20 December 1925.

just an attractive winter resort vying with winter sports and the allure of European travel. With golf the South has proved the annual [M]ecca." In fact, argued Brown, because Florida made the game a year-round sport, "golf may be said to making the South." Overlooking Brown's excessive claim, advertising demonstrated the perceived importance of golf in selling Florida real estate. By the mid-1920s, a flood of newspaper and magazine

advertisements touted the wonders of winter golf in Florida, featuring existing courses as well as courses “soon to be built.” Richard Tufts, owner and operator of Pinehurst, the premiere golf resort in North Carolina, complained in a letter to his associate Donald Ross that “Florida spends \$10 for every \$1 we do in advertising.”³² Florida’s advertising campaign reflected two simultaneous phenomena: the mass influx of northerners and the continued link between golf and selling property

As an article in a 1926 *Outlook* stated, “in recent years the greatest contributions to golfing welfare in the winter playgrounds have been the realtors, who have literally shoveled in money.” The article concluded with the observation: “That these courses in many cases have been laid out as bait for the Northern lot buyer is of no moment.” For golf enthusiasts, the end justified the means: many new courses were being built. For the developers, the end also justified the means: if building golf courses helped sell property, the investment paid off. Even better, however, if simply promising to build a golf course sold property, developers could postpone construction, save their own capital, and later build the course with investors’ money. As professional golfer Walter Hagen stated in the “Florida Boom” chapter in his autobiography, “all real estate development operators were basing their promotions strongly on the golf course they planned to build.” This marketing technique proved quite popular, especially for such developers as Paris Singer, Addison Mizner, Harry Kelsey, and Maurice Fatio to name but a few. Even prospering cities such as West Palm Beach invested heavily in developing a country club community to attract “the best class of people” and the “foremost citizens.” By the time the boom in Florida turned to bust, the state’s realtors and developers had permanently established the idea of associating golf with the Florida lifestyle.³³

For six decades beginning during Reconstruction, men and women traveled to Florida each winter to pursue summertime

32. J. Lewis Brown, “Why Men Migrate,” *Outlook* 138 (17 December 1924): 642-43; Richard Tufts, Pinehurst, N. C., to Donald Ross, Boston, Mass., 26 June 1925, Donald Ross Collection, Tufts Archives, Pinehurst, N. C.

33. “Golf in Winter Quarters,” *Outlook* 139 (3 March 1926): 353; Walter Hagen, *The Walter Hagen Story: As Told to Margaret Seaton Heck* (New York, 1956), 117; *Palm Beach Times*, 15 February 1926, 13. In *Islanders in the Stream*, 326, Craton and Saunders discussed a 1960s developer’s technique of building “an eighteen-hole golf course that would, Florida-style, raise the value of surrounding real estate.”

recreation and sport. Along with certain accommodating residents, ambitious entrepreneurs, and local and migrant workers, members of the sporting set participated in the social construction of lifestyles that placed increasing value on sport in their lives and, consequently, in the development of Florida. This essay has offered a mere sketch of this complex phenomenon—more suggestive than comprehensive certainly. Hopefully, other scholars will join in the effort to better understand Florida's role in the global leisure and sport revolution still underway.