TIMELESS, MODERN, AND GERMAN?
THE RE-MAPPING OF BAVARIA THROUGH THE MARKETING OF TOURISM, 1800-1939

Adam T. Rosenbaum
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY
2012 FRITZ STERN DISSERTATION PRIZE WINNER

The state of Bavaria is made up of three elements. First, the ancient land of the Franks, then, the more earthy Bajuwaria, and finally, the old cultural region of Swabia ... But the land of Bavaria is not at all a museum of historical memories. Munich and Nuremberg are industrial cities, just like the remote but beautiful Amberg, and the golden Augsburg ... Those who seek pleasurable travel, travel to beautiful Bavaria. Friends of art find incomparable treasures, the sick and weary healing power and strength, and hikers and sports enthusiasts quiet valleys, beautiful lakes, and glacial blue-green rivers, rustling mountain forests and sleepy, peaceful villages.1

Dresdner Anzeiger, June 18, 1938

When this advertisement appeared in the summer of 1938, there was little doubt that Bavaria had secured its status as a multi-faceted tourist region. This brief excerpt points to the diversity of attractions in Bavaria, as well as the careful balancing of nature, tradition, and modernity that defined its marketing. The fact that this advertisement appeared in a Saxon newspaper suggests that these tropes had become common currency throughout Nazi Germany. By 1938, Bavaria embodied the entire German nation, and its timeless landscapes and historical legacy served as the foundations of its modern appeal. Then again, nationalized renderings of Bavarian tourist attractions were common as early as the First World War, just as the deliberate balancing of past and present, tradition and progress, nature and technology, had defined regional tourist propaganda for longer still.

Today, Bavaria is an internationally-renowned vacation destination, and in the eyes of many visitors, the region seems to epitomize Germany itself. The consequences of this development are noticeable internationally, and much to the chagrin of modern Rhinelanders and Berliners, Lederhosen, Oktoberfest, and Neuschwanstein have

1 Dresdner Anzeiger, June 18, 1938.
become the prevailing symbols of German culture around the world, even being profitably reproduced in American amusement parks and theme towns. Still, Bavaria was not always so popular and was once overshadowed by the Rhineland and the Black Forest, conveniently situated along the meandering route of the aristocratic Grand Tour. The rise of the regional tourism industry during the nineteenth century and the subsequent marketing of Bavaria as a bona fide travel destination created a space for collective self-reflection on a number of topics, including nature, history, and collective identity. In his now classic The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class, sociologist Dean MacCannell writes: “Entire cities and regions, decades and cultures have become aware of themselves as tourist attractions.” Tourism led to a massive re-mapping of Bavaria, raising the profile of some locations while making others invisible, but did it make Bavarians self-aware? Did tourism facilitate the creation of a distinctly Bavarian form of “Germanness”?

To address these questions, my research focuses on the self-representation of Bavaria through the marketing of several representative tourist attractions. Although I had initially hoped that travel would provide insight into the construction of a Bavarian, regional identity, I discovered much more. My research uncovers the complex relationship between the promises of tourism and the turbulent experience of modernity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when, in a matter of decades, Germany evolved from a grouping of predominantly agrarian states into an industrial and military superpower. In the midst of unprecedented changes, how did a growing tourism industry respond to widespread feelings of displacement and alienation? How did Germans decide to represent the new nation to visitors from home and abroad? How did their picture of their locality as a tourist attraction reflect changing conceptions of nature, history, and modernity?

On one hand, tourism was a modern phenomenon, pioneered by the nineteenth-century middle classes who dedicated their limited free time to rewarding leisure activities. On the other hand, extended hikes and trips into the countryside were often sold as temporary flights from modern civilization. Still, this was never simple escapism. Tourism provided distance from the contemporary world, but it also provided perspective. In fact, I contend that tourism became an important feature of modern life itself; it was a coping mechanism that allowed men and women to experiment with alternative possibilities. In a post-traditional world rendered unrecognizable...
by industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of the nation-state, tourism promised to reconcile civilization and its discontents, anchoring contemporary urban society in the natural environment and a common past.

The Bavarian tourism industry consistently promoted an image of what I refer to as grounded modernity, a romanticized version of the present that reconciled tradition with progress, continuity with change, and nature with technology and science. This alternative vision provided the traveler with a taste of stability and a glimpse of authenticity, and it was part of a larger process of grounding modernity. The tourism industry worked to make the experience of modernity more tangible by linking impersonal and abstract ideas, like national identity, with familiar experiences and concrete sights. Excursions into nature and vacations in health resorts provided visitors with an antidote to their hectic, dirty, and stressful urban existence. Trips to cities allowed Germans to reacquaint themselves with the historical roots of the fatherland, while also offering a new perspective on the modern nation-state, defined by industrial progress and political triumph. In other words, tourism was always in the shadow of the present, even when it was seemingly fixated on the natural environment and the past. The region of Bavaria provides insight into this process, giving us numerous case-studies that showcase how both visitors and the visited coped with modern life and thus paved the way for the future.

Still, my research does more than reflect on modernity. By focusing on Bavaria, it contributes to a body of scholarship that focuses on the region as a category of historical analysis. In the past twenty years, scholars like Caroline Ford, Celia Applegate, and Alon Confino have called our attention to regions in Germany and France, demonstrating that regional identities are not always reactionary and antimodern, just as regionalism and nationalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive.5 These scholars have shown that the paths of regionalism and the Heimat movement in particular “do not always lead away from modernity, but rather to its very core,” to borrow a phrase from Thomas Kühne.6 My work engages with this literature, but I do not concentrate on a uniform Bavarian identity as a “mediator” or “metaphor” for national identity. Instead, I deconstruct the notion of Bavarian regionalism, recasting the former kingdom and Freistaat as a region of localities. I do not focus on a single, Bavarian identity because that is rarely what the tourism industry chose to sell. Often


enough, the only thing “Bavarian” about these tourist destinations was their location.

My research also contributes to a growing literature on German tourism, which has generally overlooked Bavaria. One of the exceptions is a 1992 article by Helen Waddy Lepovitz that focuses on the origins of the regional tourism industry in Upper Bavaria. In a more recent work, Joshua Hagen addresses the growth of tourism in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, a Franconian town that became “a symbol of rootedness, community, and continuity with a bygone era.” My research provides a more extensive overview of Bavarian tourism as well as a careful reading of the language used to market its diversity of attractions. My case studies are not exclusively from Altbayern, but also from Swabia and Franconia, historical regions that were first incorporated into Bavaria at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, my time period spans from the time of the French Revolution to the Second World War, allowing me to address the evolution of tourism over the course of at least four distinct eras in modern German history.

Throughout this period, local tourism industries in Bavaria responded to the malaise of modernity by inviting contemporary society to become reacquainted with nature, tradition, and history. At the end of the nineteenth century, the tourism industry of “Franconian Switzerland” promised a romantic respite defined by scenic hikes and elevated vistas. While achieving distance from modern society, guests could paradoxically enjoy modern accommodations and conveniences at local inns and restaurants. Similarly, a trip to the spa town of Bad Reichenhall allowed tourists to reconnect with the natural environment in a cosmopolitan environment with modern facilities and cutting-edge medical technology. Bavaria therefore remained timeless and yet decidedly of this time, or modern. The region was quaint and rustic, but also sophisticated and cosmopolitan, additional indications of modernity. After 1914, the demands of total war undermined this carefully cultivated image of Bad Reichenhall, as nationalism helped to transform the international spa into an inexpensive sick bay for German soldiers.

During the interwar period, the word “German” became much more prominent within the marketing of numerous Bavarian attractions. In Augsburg, guidebooks and brochures defined local sights in explicitly nationalist terms, highlighting the importance of the Swabian
city within the narrative of the German nation. Augsburg’s image, however, was not based on its historical record alone but on its contemporary relevance as an industrial center and modern metropolis. Similarly, Munich and Nuremberg triumphed as tourist attractions after 1933 because of their symbolic role within the Third Reich. The sights associated with Hitler and the National Socialist movement, such as the Temples of Honor and the Reich Party Rally Grounds, became the defining features of each city’s tourist profile. This modernity was grounded in selective history and invented traditions, as the Bavarian tourism industry put its own stamp on the idea of the Volksgemeinschaft, a people’s community united by history, culture, and, less obviously, race. Munich and Nuremberg provided insight into the German past and present, as well as hints of future greatness.

The remainder of this article will briefly consider two case studies from my larger research project, one from the beginning and one from the end. In the interest of casting doubt upon the notion of Bavarian regionalism, I have chosen two destinations in the “ancient land of the Franks,” or Franconia, a region that dominates northern Bavaria but retains a separate identity. The first is the mountainous area of “Franconian Switzerland,” which emerged as a popular travel destination at the end of the eighteenth century. The second is the medieval city of Nuremberg, an established tourist attraction that acquired a new significance after the Nazis rose to power. In their own ways, both destinations became sites of grounded modernity. In the case of the former, the natural environment grounded the middle-class tourist in need of something authentic during uncertain times. In the case of the latter, it was German history that grounded both the individual tourist and the Third Reich.

I. Romantic Distance in Franconian Switzerland

With its highest mountain measuring a mere 627 meters, the tourist destination known as “Franconian Switzerland” looks more Appalachian than Alpine, and its landscape is defined by rolling green hills instead of glacier-covered granite peaks. In the nineteenth century, the Swiss label implied more than mountains, promising visitors a space where time seemed to stand still, a sanctuary where they were safe from the noise, traffic, and stress of urban life. As the definitive travel destination of the early nineteenth century, the real Switzerland was synonymous with tourism itself. The Alpine nation was the original Romantic getaway, a site of spiritual transcendence celebrated by the likes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Lord Byron. It
became continental Europe’s foremost travel destination as middle-class tourists began to join the young noblemen, intellectuals, and wandering plebeians who previously monopolized travel. Meanwhile, throughout German-speaking central Europe, promoters of tourism adopted “die Schweiz” as a profitable label for mountainous regions, regardless of altitude. The first was “Saxon Switzerland” outside of Dresden, a landscape of rocky peaks, valleys, and caves that attracted painters like Caspar David Friedrich and Ludwig Richter. The discovery of Saxon Switzerland in the 1770s was followed by the discoveries of “Kroppach Switzerland” in the Taunus Mountains, “Holstein Switzerland” between Kiel and Lübeck, and “Hersbruck Switzerland” in northern Bavaria.

One of the most popular “Switzerslands” was located in Upper Franconia, between the cities of Erlangen, Bamberg, and Bayreuth. Commonly referred to as “the land in the mountains,” or “the Muggendorfer Mountains,” the region first became a popular destination during the late eighteenth century, when natural scientists flocked to its many subterranean caves in search of unique rock formations and prehistoric fossils. During the summer of 1793, the Romantic authors Ludwig Tieck and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder spent several days touring the mountainous region. While Wackenroder displayed some enthusiasm for the treasures underneath the mountains, both men were even more enamored of the landscape itself, with Tieck proclaiming in a letter: “Oh, nature is truly inexhaustible in its beauty! Here is genuine pleasure, for a picturesque terrain purifies men.” The travel reports of Tieck and Wackenroder sparked the imagination of their literary contemporaries, with men like Ernst Moritz Arndt and Jean Paul following in their footsteps around the turn of the century.

In 1812, geographer Johannes Christian Fick became the first to use the label “Franconian Switzerland” in reference to the Muggendorfer Mountains, and later travel writers would incorporate die Schweiz into the titles of their works. In 1820, local poet Jakob Reiselsberger independently published a booklet entitled Little Switzerland, or Invitation to Travel in Streitberg, Muggendorf, Weischenfeld, and their Environs. In the book’s preface, Reiselsberger justified his use of the Swiss label by insisting that the natural environment of the Franconian mountains also featured “many sublimely beautiful and admirable curiosities” but in a “reduced degree.” In 1829, Bamberg historian and travel writer Joseph Heller published the first “tourist handbook” on Franconian Switzerland. Entitled Muggendorf and its Environs, or

---

13 Ludwig Tieck and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, Die Pfingstreise von 1793 durch die Fränkische Schweiz, den Frankenwald and das Fichtelgebirge (Helmcrechts, 1970), 16.
14 Jakob Reiselsberger, Die Kleine Schweiz, oder Einladung zur Reise nach Streitberg, Muggendorf, Weischenfeld and deren Umgebungen (Weischenfeld, 1820), 1.
Franconian Switzerland, this work targeted middle-class hikers, supplying them with a map, an overview of travel routes, an alphabetical inventory of sights, and two illustrations. Like Reiselsberger, Heller insisted that Franconian Switzerland boasted all that the real Switzerland possessed in abundance, but here it was available “on a condensed scale, and therefore more pleasant to behold, as it was possible to look across it and grasp it as a single image.”

If the Swiss Alps were the quintessential “sublime” landscape, possessing a sort of terrifying beauty, then the rolling mountains of Franconian Switzerland were more of a “pastoral” landscape, idyllic and peaceful, and therefore less intimidating to potential visitors. This was tourism for beginners and it sold well. Franconian Switzerland became one of the early stars of the Bavarian tourism industry, long before the railway or the package tour debuted. The timeless landscape, the prehistoric caves, and the medieval ruins were the defining attractions of the region, drawing German tourists as well as international visitors. In 1861, Harper’s New Monthly Magazine published a piece on Franconian Switzerland by the American travel writer Bayard Taylor. Taylor’s accounts of hikes through the region mirrored the romantic endorsements found in German publications. For example, he described his walk between Streitberg and Muggendorf as follows:

The dew lay thick on the meadows, and the peasants were everywhere at work shaking out the hay, so that air was sweet with grass-odors. Above me on either side, the immense gray horns and towers of rock rose out of the steep fir-woods, clearly, yet not too sharply defined against the warm blue sky. The Wiesent, swift and beryl-green, winding in many curves through the hay-fields, made a cheerful music in his bed.

15 Joseph Heller, Muggendorf und seine Umgebungen oder die fränkische Schweiz: Ein Handbuch (Bamberg, 1829), V.

16 This piece was later reprinted as “A Walk through the Franconian Switzerland.” See Bayard Taylor, At Home and Abroad: A Sketchbook of Life, Scenery, and Men (New York, 1862), 286-318.

Drawing upon both sublime and pastoral conceptions of nature, Taylor described a premodern wonderland without dwelling on the origins of medieval sites like the Neideck ruins or the castle of Gössweinstein. Like many future visitors and guidebook authors, Taylor was interested in sentiment, not historical specifics.

After German unification, economic growth, increased wages, and legislation guaranteeing paid vacations for civil servants all contributed to an increase in middle-class tourism. In Franconian Switzerland, locally published guidebooks proliferated and continued to define the region in terms of natural beauty, pastoral simplicity, and medieval mystery. These publications typically avoided the jingoism of the better-known Baedeker and Grieben’s guidebooks, rarely endorsing any sort of regional or national identity. They defined the destination only as “romantic,” appealing to modern society’s growing desire to find solace in natural settings. When these guidebooks used the term “romantic,” they suggested an understanding of the word that lacked the ideological sophistication of turn-of-the-century intellectuals. The travel writers used the term to characterize the landscape, villages, and medieval architecture of the region as idyllic, secluded, and evocative of a bygone era that became more attractive in the shadow of industrialization and urbanization. This was a simplified romanticism, colored by vague notions of Bildung and spiritual redemption but ultimately focused on achieving distance from the modern city. As the majority of nineteenth-century tourists were city-dwellers, this motivation is not surprising.

Among the many features of Franconian Switzerland identified as “romantic,” it was the natural landscape that received the most attention and praise from late nineteenth-century guidebooks. Here was a landscape that was not only beautiful, but also peaceful and pure, even more remarkable when juxtaposed with the filth and noise of the modern city. An 1890 Leo Woerl guidebook identified “simplicity and idyllic charm” as the defining characteristics of the entire landscape. The same year, in Romanticism of Franconian Switzerland, Adam Koch-Neuses described the region as “a little piece of earthly paradise” that managed to remain sheltered from the “rational and practical achievements” of modern civilization. An 1889 guidebook published by Andreas Deichert painted an even more striking picture:

Whenever long shadows stretch out from the wooded slopes of the mountains in the east, whenever the stunning rock formations stand before the splendor of the sunset,

---


19 Rudy Koshar, German Travel Cultures (Oxford, 2000), 64.

20 Leo Woerl (Firm), Führer durch Mittelfranken, die Hersbrücker und Fränkische Schweiz (Würzburg, 1890), 45-46.

21 Adam Koch-Neuses, Die Romantik der Fränkischen Schweiz (Forchheim, 1890), 3.
whenever we see the pure water of the river winding between beautiful meadows and the diligently-cultivated fields of the peasant, then the region gives us a vision of peace and rural tranquility, and we begin to enjoy the pleasant feeling of distance from the consuming life of crowded cities.\textsuperscript{22}

Although numerous authors cast Franconian Switzerland as an idyllic retreat and a refuge from urban life, it was not exactly a “wilderness.” The region’s mountains and forests were dotted with medieval ruins and rustic mills, which served as reminders of a romanticized past and a simpler way of life. All of these elements were understood as part of nature, or of what Celia Applegate has described as “an alternative milieu that did not fundamentally challenge the necessity of cities.”\textsuperscript{23} This environment existed in a careful balance with the modern world, providing a reprieve from urban life but not a complete escape from civilization itself.

Just as the guidebooks incorporated the medieval ruins and rustic mills into the broader landscape, they also reduced the region’s inhabitants to mere decoration. Although earlier guidebook writers like Joseph Heller called attention to the customs of the “simple and hard-working” natives, the guidebook writers of the late nineteenth century generally overlooked the local population. The 1889 Deichert guidebook called the tourist’s attention to “diligently-cultivated fields” while failing to identify the peasants responsible for this work.\textsuperscript{24} Another guidebook mentioned Charlemagne and the medieval artist Veit Stoss in a brief paragraph on the town of Forchheim, but avoided reference to human beings throughout the rest of the text.\textsuperscript{25} These guidebooks were preoccupied with the natural wonders of the tourist region, a common phenomenon in late nineteenth-century tourist propaganda. When the local inhabitants did appear, they were cast as hospitable hosts or as idyllic representations of rural life, similar to those featured in Ludwig Richter’s well-known engravings of the region. Woerl’s 1890 guidebook portrayed the region’s inhabitants as “friendly and obliging, and not to mention hospitable,” listing them alongside an agreeable climate and fresh air as the destination’s greatest amenities. The same guidebook also featured a full-page picture of the landscape around Gößweinstein, with a number of peasant children playing in the foreground.\textsuperscript{26} In this case, the human inhabitants of the region became part of the natural landscape itself, another detail in the holistic representation

\textsuperscript{22} Die Fränkische Schweiz und die Kur-Anstalt zur Streitberg: Ein treuer Führer für Reisende und ärztlicher Rathgeber für Kurgäste nebst Naturgeschichte der Fränkischen Schweiz (Erlangen, 1889), 6.

\textsuperscript{23} Applegate, A Nation of Provincials, 77.

\textsuperscript{24} Die Fränkische Schweiz und die Kur-Anstalt zur Streitberg, 6.

\textsuperscript{25} Die Fränkische Schweiz, das Schwabachthal und die Gräfenberger Umgebung (Erlangen, 1895), 13.

\textsuperscript{26} Woerl, Führer durch Mittelfranken, die Hersbrücker und Fränkische Schweiz, 45–46.
of Franconian Switzerland. These were not real people but symbols of an alternative way of life.

For late nineteenth-century tourists, the most popular method of enjoying the landscape of Franconian Switzerland was hiking, which was still a relatively recent phenomenon. Recreational walking only became an established practice during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, after Rousseau and his disciples rehabilitated the natural environment. Over the course of the nineteenth century, this practice became a celebrated vehicle of “empirical edification and self-cultivation,” distinguishing the middle classes from the aristocracy, who preferred to travel by coach. Movement aside, hiking in the Franconian Switzerland was ultimately a means of arriving at the best vantage point. The merit of a particular trek had little to do with physical activity but rested on the quality of the views encountered along the way. For example, an 1889 guidebook described the route from Muggendorf to Gößweinstein as a series of “picturesque views,” during which one could “joyfully survey … the lovely charms of nature.” The same guidebook advised travelers to slow their pace between Gößweinstein and Pottenstein so that they would not fail to enjoy the panoramas of this “romantic landscape.” Friedrich Ende’s 1894 guidebook likewise praised the “wild and romantic” scenery around the village of Pottenstein, which did not possess any specific tourist attractions other than “an impressive view” of the “grotesque rock formations” that surrounded the community.

This obsession with the natural environment was a distinctly modern phenomenon linked to urbanization. Nature only became a marketable commodity when it was removed from the realm of the ordinary. Geographer Steven Bourassa explains: “[A]s the intimate tie between land and its users was severed with the development of capitalism, the idea of the landscape arose. In other words, it became possible to distance oneself from the land so that it could be viewed as landscape.” Distance allowed for the nineteenth-century idealization of natural landscapes but distance was also the definitive feature of most of the views endorsed in guidebooks on Franconian Switzerland. Practically, this meant being far enough away to get a good view of something. In discussing the best views of the region’s medieval ruins, one English tourist concluded: “All these castles require to be seen from a distance, as it is only thus one can realize the height of the rocks on which they stand.” In other cases, it was not just distance from the landscape that was important but distance from civilization. The fortress of


28 Die Fränkische Schweiz und die Kur-Anstalt zur Streitberg, 38, 41-42.

29 Friedrich Ende, Praktischer Führer durch die Fränkische Schweiz (mit ausführlicher Orientierungs-Karte) (Nuremberg, 1894), 13-14.


Gößweinstein, for instance, was supposedly most striking when it suddenly appeared on the horizon after the tourist rounded a bend following the Wiesent River from Muggendorf. Upon arriving in the village of Gößweinstein itself, the visitor was typically not invited to tour the fortress or even the historical pilgrimage church, but instead compelled to climb the nearby Wagnershöhe and enjoy the “magnificent view” of the Wiesent, Püttlach, and Eschbach river valleys, as well as a “gorgeous panorama” of the Upper Pfalz, the Fichtel Mountains, and the cities of Bayreuth and Kulmbach in the distance.32 Such distance allowed the tourist to consume several sights simultaneously, conserving time and mastering the larger landscape.

While tourism in Franconian Switzerland promised distance from modern civilization, it was also a distinctly modern activity. Eager to vacation in a region that evoked a bygone era, the middle classes also enjoyed modern standards of cleanliness, comfort, and convenience at local accommodations. In his now classic article, Hans Magnus Enzensberger identifies this as one of the central paradoxes of tourism: “The destination has to be both: accessible and inaccessible, distant from civilization and yet comfortable.”33 Guidebooks on Franconian Switzerland catered to this predisposition, including advertisements from inns and restaurants promising gemütlich and bürgerlich accommodations as well as many of the modern conveniences of the city. Local inns like the Gasthof zur Terrasse in Pinzberg pointed to a list of inviting features, including: “Beautiful, shaded garden. Lovely view into the Regnitz and Wiesent valleys. Recognized quality kitchen with an extensive selection for every time of the day. Guest rooms with good beds.”34 Johann Distler’s Gasthof in Pottenstein similarly advertised a large veranda with views and “numerous and friendly guest rooms” as well as “Munich beer (in bottles),” reaching out to residents of the Bavarian capital.35 Other inns promised beer from Munich, Nuremberg, and Bamberg.36 Some inns tried to appeal to wealthier patrons by cultivating a more refined character. Pottenstein’s Gasthaus zum Goldenen Anker, for example, marketed itself not only with “lovely views and good beds” but also a “bürgerliche kitchen” and “real service,” indirectly ensuring the satisfaction of its middle-class clientele.37 In some cases, visitors could even receive mail and telegraph messages within the inns themselves, as was the case at Behringersmühle’s Gasthof zur Post, and other locations in Streitberg and Muggendorf.38 Middle-class visitors may have sought a romantic respite but they were not willing to leave their modern life behind.

32 Ende, Praktischer Führer durch die Fränkische Schweiz, 16-17.
34 Anton Schuster, Kleiner Führer durch die Fränkische Schweiz (Bamberg, 1891), 5.
35 Ende, Praktischer Führer, 25.
36 Kleiner Führer durch die Fränkische Schweiz, sowie Wegweiser durch das Schwabachtal von Erlangen nach Gräfenberg und die sogenannte Herbrucker Schweiz (Erlangen, 1891); the advertisements at the end of this guidebook are unpaginated.
37 Friedrich Ende, Vollständiger Führer durch die ganze Fränkische Schweiz und Teile der Oberpfalz (Nuremberg, 1895), 8, 63.
38 Kleiner Führer durch die Fränkische Schweiz, sowie Wegweiser durch das Schwabachtal von Erlangen nach Gräfenberg und die sogenannte Herbrucker Schweiz; Ende, Praktischer Führer, 18, Franz Dittmar, 400 Ausflüge in die Umgegend von Nürnberg und Fürth, in das Pegnitztal, in die Altdorfer Gegenden, in die Rednitz- und Attmühlgebiet und in die Fränkische Schweiz (Nuremberg, 1897), 100-101.
The tourist destination of Franconian Switzerland provided a break from modern civilization but it was also a catalyst of modernization. In the end, tourists helped to corrupt the very nature that they came to venerate. In spite of such unintended consequences, leisure travel in Franconian Switzerland helped to ground the experience of modernity in late nineteenth-century Germany. Excursions into a relatively natural environment offered a balance to a hectic, dirty, and stressful urban existence, a cure that enabled the individual to return to everyday life rested and reinvigorated. In this regard, the tourist culture of Franconian Switzerland did not just provide an escape from modernity; it provided a more acceptable version of it.

II. Historical Proximity in Third-Reich Nuremberg

If a visit to Franconian Switzerland promised romantic distance, then a visit to the Franconian city of Nuremberg promised historical proximity. The city’s history was especially rich. Established in the eleventh century, it became one of the most important cities of the Holy Roman Empire, especially after the Golden Bull of 1356 decreed that every Holy Roman Emperor must hold his first Imperial Diet in the free city of Nuremberg. As the “unofficial capital of the Reich,” the city enjoyed three hundred years of political significance and economic affluence and also served as the center of the German Renaissance. By the time of the Napoleonic Wars, a weaker Nuremberg had become part of the new kingdom of Bavaria just as its star began to rise among German romantics. Like Franconian Switzerland, Nuremberg seemed to represent a “simpler world” free of modern worries. The so-called “Pearl of Medieval Cities” played a prominent role in Ludwig Tieck’s and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder’s 1798 novel, Franz Sternbald’s Wanderings, in addition to serving as the backdrop for E.T.A. Hoffmann’s 1816 short story, “The Nutcracker and the Mouse-King.”

History was central to Nuremberg’s identity, but it was a vague sort of history. In the early twentieth century, the city’s primary tourist attraction was its general medieval look, epitomized by the buildings of the Altstadt, including the Imperial Fortress, the gothic churches of St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, and the Hangman’s Tower and Bridge along the Pegnitz River. A 1907 guidebook published by a regional tourism association praised Nuremberg’s historical architecture, especially the medieval fortifications that were such a novelty in twentieth-century Germany. The guidebook also described Nuremberg as the “German Reich’s Treasure Chest,” home to Renaissance master Albrecht Dürer and the legendary poet Hans Sachs, immortalized in Richard Wagner’s opera, The Mastersingers of Nuremberg. This identity as the “Pearl of Medieval Cities” and the “German Reich’s Treasure Chest” began to be transformed after the First World War, when the regional tourism industry placed greater emphasis on “the Nuremberg of the present.” Thus one 1929 publication offered details on the city’s local factories before even mentioning Albrecht Dürer.

Nuremberg’s identity became more complicated after the Nazis rose to power. Not only was the city at the heart of Franconia, a hotbed of German nationalism and anti-Semitism, it was also home to Julius Streicher, member of the Nazi “Old Guard” and the editor of the anti-Semitic newspaper Der Stürmer. Nuremberg proved fertile ground for the National Socialist movement, especially after the failed putsch in 1923 and the subsequent ban on the party in Upper Bavaria. The city hosted the Nazi Party Rally in both 1927 and 1929, until violence between brown-shirts and leftist opponents compelled the Nuremberg city council to forbid the Nazis from returning. After his appointment as chancellor, Hitler returned in late August 1933, proclaiming a “Victory of Faith,” and bringing with him over 300,000 followers, from then on the Nuremberg party rally became an annual event. No longer just a “celebration of the party,” it was now a “celebration of the nation,” as well as an opportunity for the people to see the Führer. Visiting Nuremberg in 1938, Scottish writer A.P. Laurie recounted the reaction of an Austrian woman upon seeing Hitler in person: “[S]he was silent, her eyes filled with tears. She turned to me and said in English, ‘I have never seen the Führer before — I think my heart is breaking.’” Even if spectators just caught a glimpse of Hitler or heard his voice projected through a loudspeaker, they experienced history first-hand by sharing a common space with Germany’s messiah.

40 Ernst Platz, Unser Bayernland, hrsg. Vom Verein zur Förderung des Fremdenverkehrs in München und im bayerischen Hochland (München, 1907), 30-31.
42 Richard Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich (New York, 2004), 188.
44 Hebung des Fremdenverkehrs, sowie Fremdenverkehr überhaupt, 1936-1939, III. Band, Stadtarchiv Nürnberg [hierab StadtAN], Hauptregistrar, 1292.
46 A.P. Laurie, The Case for Germany: A Study of Modern Germany (Berlin, 1939), 40.
47 Ian Kershaw has described the Reich Party Rally as “above all a vehicle for the transmission of the Führer cult... now he towered over the Party.” Ian Kershaw, The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich (New York, 1987), 69.
The Reich Party Rally drew both pilgrims and tourists, typically over half a million each year.\(^4\) The spectacle began with the “Day of Greeting,” when Hitler arrived by plane, and rode into the heart of the Altstadt. The opening sequence of Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* captures this procession well: narrating Hitler’s drive through historic Nuremberg, the camera repeatedly cuts from his smiling face to the jubilant crowd and to various monuments of the city’s illustrious past, from the Imperial Castle to the “Beautiful Fountain.”\(^4\) The climax of the Reich Party Rally was the elaborate ceremony at the “Hall of Honor” in the Luitpold Meadow. This monument, originally dedicated to the casualties of the First World War, now served as a shrine for the sixteen martyrs of the Beer Hall Putsch. Each year, the party honored these men with a pseudoreligious ritual, with new recruits watching as the *Blutfahne*, the blood-stained relic of the 1923 putsch, was rededicated with new Nazi standards.\(^5\) Before a monument honoring fallen soldiers, in a structure commissioned by Luitpold, former Prince Regent of Bavaria, the Nazis commemorated their past and framed it with myths of heroism and rebirth. Watched these events in a movie theatre in Dresden, Viktor Klemperer noted in his diary: “Contemporary history on film! This time the Nuremberg rally of the Nazi Party. What stage direction of the crowds and what hysteria!”\(^5\) Even opponents of the regime could not deny the spectacle’s power. Such rituals allowed the regime to gather the disparate threads of the German past and weave them into a single, comprehensible narrative leading to the Third Reich.\(^5\)

As the number of visitors grew each year, it became obvious that the grounds around the Luitpold Meadow were inadequate, both logistically and symbolically. As a result, Hitler and his associates developed plans for a complex of buildings and parade grounds that would rival the forum of ancient Rome. By 1939, Nuremberg was the largest building site in the world.\(^3\) Although it was ostensibly built for the party, the Nazi architecture was equally popular among tourists, who visited year-round.\(^4\) As early as 1935, the Nuremberg Tourism Association reported that visitors were requesting tours of the rally grounds in the southern part of the city. Shortly thereafter, the organization began offering official tours, conducted along prearranged routes with carefully chosen local guides.\(^5\) Meanwhile, both local and national tourism associations incorporated the Reich Party Rally Grounds into the sightseeing itinerary. As early as 1934, the Nuremberg Tourism Association printed 100,000 copies of a brochure detailing the plans for the Reich Party Rally Grounds, while the official


\(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) Dietzfelbinger and Liedtke, *Nürnberg — Ort der Massen*, 30, 45–46.


\(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) Dieter Wuttke, *Nuremberg: Focal Point of German Culture and History* (Bamberg, 1988), 12.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York, 2005), 46.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) Führungen im Reichsparteitagsgelände — Fremdenrundfahrten, 1935–1943, StadtAN, Zweckverband Reichsparteitag, 337.
guidebook of the city began featuring a description of the grounds in its list of tourist attractions. In 1937, an English-language brochure produced by the official Bavarian Travel Bureau acknowledged Nuremberg’s medieval charm and industrial might before moving on to the rally grounds: “Having seen and enjoyed all the sights of the great past of Nuremberg one ought to pay a visit also to the sites of our modern times ... No visitor should fail to see the gigantic Parade Ground.” Gigantic, great, tremendous — these words defined the marketing of the Reich Party Rally Grounds. Since Hitler understood architecture primarily as a “statement[s] of power,” the buildings of the Reich Party Rally grounds were supposed to make Nazi strength seem tangible. Structures like the Zeppelin Field and Congress Hall would reflect the weight of recent German history and showcase the magnitude of the Third Reich to future generations. At the same time, the sheer size of these buildings indirectly produced a sense of community by dwarfing the individual.

In Nuremberg, a city that did not exhibit the particularism that defined places like Munich, both German and international tourists could watch history being made. In his account of Nuremberg as modern Germany’s “imaginary capital,” Stephen Brockmann argues that the city “had always seen its fate as intimately connected to the fate of the German whole. Nuremberg was indeed a synecdoche for Germany itself.” This tendency was even more pronounced during the Third Reich, when Nuremberg joined Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Linz as one of the “Führer Cities” that represented all of Germany. The city’s marketing now celebrated the power of the Third Reich but grounded it in the vague and malleable past of the Franconian city. Locally produced publications confirmed that contemporary history was taking place at the Reich Party Rally Grounds, just as the buildings themselves represented a long tradition of German culture that extended into the medieval city of Dürrer and Sachs.

Tourist publications endorsed Nuremberg’s new status as the “City of the Reich Party Rallies” by listing it among the city’s various titles. An advertisement in an August 1934 issue of the **Neue Leipziger Zeitung** insisted that every German must become acquainted with Nuremberg, the “German Reich’s Treasure Chest, the City of the Mastersingers, and the Reich Party Rallies.” These claims did not contradict each other; they coexisted and complemented one another. Other publications employed similar combinations. The twelfth edition of the **Nuremberg Official Guidebook**, for example, featured...
the new slogan: “City of the Mastersingers and Reich Party Rallies.”

A 1938 brochure issued by the State Tourism Association of Nuremberg and Northern Bavaria used the same tagline, praising the coexistence of the “immortal Nuremberg of the German Romantics and German history” and the new Nuremberg of the “Reich Party Rallies.” Past and present remained balanced in the marketing of Nuremberg, but now the Reich Party Rally Grounds replaced factories as the dominant symbol of the city’s modernity. Conversely, the “Nuremberg of the German Romantics and German history” was never clearly defined.

Whether they visited during the rally itself or during another time of year, tourists to Nuremberg found a place where the past and present connected and seemed to point toward a glorious future for Germany. A 1938 guide published by the Nuremberg Tourism Association distinguished the city as the “living embodiment of German history,” where every year at the Reich Party Rally “new currents of national energy and enthusiasm” originated and subsequently spread across the German fatherland.

A 1937, English-language brochure proclaimed:

In no other city in Germany are tradition and old German culture as harmonically blended with the new life and struggles of the present times as here in Nuremberg. He who visits Nuremberg for the first time, even though it be only for a short stay, will undoubtedly as soon as he enters the town be impressed by the imposing developments of the present, amidst the many signs that bear witness to a great and glorious past.

Whether directed at domestic or international visitors, tourist propaganda consistently balanced historical significance and contemporary relevance in its endorsements of Nuremberg.

This new version of grounded modernity helped to make the abstract concept of Germany real by providing tangible evidence of the past and present achievements of the Volksgemeinschaft. For Germans in particular, this fleeting engagement with history helped to overcome the sense of discontinuity and rupture that characterized the interwar period. An exhibit at the Germanic National Museum that coincided with the 1937 party rally sought to accomplish this quite overtly. Entitled “Nuremberg, the German City: From the City of the Imperial Diets to the City of the Reich Party Rallies,”
and organized by Alfred Rosenberg’s Fighting League for German Culture, the exhibit highlighted the historical continuities between the early modern assemblies and the modern-day rallies in order to substantiate the Third Reich’s claim that it was the ideological heir to the First Reich. What is more, the official guidebook of the exhibit explicitly linked the fate of Nuremberg to the fate of the German nation, arguing that when the Reich was strong, Nuremberg was strong, and when the Reich was divided, Nuremberg was divided. After immersing themselves in the nation’s rich history at the museum, visitors could witness history firsthand at the nearby rally grounds.

The “City of the Reich Party Rallies” symbolized the creative spirit of the German people, as well as the power of the National Socialist Party, a violent, anti-Semitic organization. These were not exactly selling points to international tourists. However, a 1935 report by the Nuremberg Tourism Association denied rumors that the city’s anti-Semitic reputation had damaged the local tourism industry. In spite of an alleged boycott of Nuremberg organized by the international Jewish community, statistics confirmed that tourism had improved since 1933. While representatives of the tourism industry neither rejected nor downplayed Nuremberg’s anti-Semitic reputation in internal memos, they rarely stressed it in tourist propaganda, presumably for fear of alienating international tourists. One exception can be found in a brochure issued by the Nuremberg Tourism Association in 1939, that is, after the violence of Reichskristallnacht. The brochure boldly stated: “The healthy national and racial instincts that reside in the Franks ensured Nuremberg’s transformation into a stronghold of National Socialism, even before other cities had heard Adolf Hitler’s call.” By emphasizing the proper “national and racial instincts” of the Franks, the local tourism association implied that some people simply were not welcome.

For those who were welcome, the Franconian city of Nuremberg provided proximity to German history, both contemporary and medieval. Touring the city facilitated a reconceptualization of time and space that confirmed the special place of the Third Reich within the larger narrative of the German nation. This balancing of tradition and progress, past significance and contemporary relevance, had been the modus operandi of the Bavarian tourism industry for decades. It worked especially well during the Nazi period, when the malleable past of Nuremberg grounded the individual tourist and the Third Reich.

---

70 Brockmann, Nuremberg, 176, 179.
71 Semmens, Seeing Hitler’s Germany, 67.
73 “Nürnberg Kurzführer,” 1939, BayHStA, Sammlung Varia, 268.
Conclusion

As a modernist endeavor in its own right, tourism led to a remapping of Bavaria in several regards. This new Bavaria was characterized by a sense of perpetuity. Destinations like Franconian Switzerland were defined by their natural landscapes, which seemed to exist outside of time. These locations appealed to the allegedly primordial bond between the German people and the untamed wilderness but they became especially appealing in the wake of nineteenth-century urbanization. Assertions of timelessness were also recognizable in the Bavarian tourism industry’s treatment of history. Guidebooks and brochures often focused on ahistorical forces, like the “creative spirit of the German people,” that transcended particular eras and established a sense of continuity between past and present. Still, even though the Bavarian tourism industry relied on natural and historical destinations, these sites also contained evidence of modernization. Tourist propaganda did not obscure this fact; it celebrated it, and in this manner, helped to remap Bavaria as a modern place. Premodern nostalgia was not necessarily incompatible with a positive experience of modernity, just as a Bavarian location was not incompatible with German nationalism, as demonstrated by the case of Nuremberg. By the 1930s, tourist propaganda had also remapped Bavaria as a German place.

The people who visited Bavaria between the French Revolution and the Second World War lived in a period of rapid social, economic, and political change. Whether departing from New York or London, Mainz or Munich, these people travelled in the shadow of the present, carrying modern baggage that influenced their expectations and determined their desires. My research not only showcases where people traveled and what they chose to see, but illuminates why they traveled and what their chosen destinations represented. The cultural landscapes and historical cityscapes of Bavaria provided temporary access to the foundations of the modern world. By pointing visitors to the past, tourism illuminated the present and cleared the way to the future.

Adam T. Rosenbaum is an Assistant Professor of Modern European and Asian History at Colorado Mesa University. He has an article in a forthcoming issue of Central European History and is currently completing a book manuscript tentatively entitled In the Shadow of the Present: Bavarian Tourism and Grounded Modernity, 1800-1939.