

The Sunshine State in Color: The Autochromes of Charles Zoller

by

Selina Lamberti

B.F.A., Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington, DC, May 2008

A thesis presented to Ryerson University and George Eastman International Museum of  
Photography and Film

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2010

© Selina Lamberti, 2010

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this thesis or dissertation by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

## **ABSTRACT**

Charles C. Zoller (1856-1934) was a prolific photographer and native of Rochester, New York. His archive is held at George Eastman International Museum of Photography and Film and consists of over 8,000 photographic objects, just under 4,000 of which are autochrome plates. This thesis focuses on the approximately 317 Zoller autochromes of Florida that make up a small fraction of the fonds.

This thesis furthermore considers the visual representation of Florida in color in the early twentieth century and compares tropes in this imagery to Zoller's representation of the Sunshine State. Traveling and photographing extensively in North America and Europe, Zoller produced both color images with Lumière Autochrome plates and black-and-white images with various photographic products. Upon return to Upstate New York, Zoller gave lectures on a variety of topics, illustrating these lectures with projected autochromes and lantern slides. Since there are few known autochromes of Florida, Zoller's series are some of the earliest examples of color photographs of the state. While Zoller's images are often predictable representations of Florida, they nevertheless provide a window into how Florida was presented in the early part of the last century. This thesis compares Zoller's autochromes to other popular images of Florida in that time.

Dedicated in loving memory of MaiMai and Ellen.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost my gratitude must be extended to the late Charles Zoller, for he is the reason for this thesis, and of course to the subject of the images, my home state. Thanks go out to my first reader, Vid Ingelevics and to my second reader, Alison Nordström, for providing me with direction, insight, and independence. I also want to express my gratitude to the staff at George Eastman House, especially Alison Nordström, Joe Struble, Rachel Stuhlman, Jamie Allen, Jessica Johnston, and Jessica McDonald, who helped me to grow exponentially over the past year; to my fellow PPCM classmates, who provided a most welcome and necessary support system both in and out of class; to Elizabeth McDade for sharing with me both her resources on and enthusiasm for Charles Zoller, and last but certainly not least, to my family for giving me support, encouragement, and space to grow and to Lee, for putting up with my ever-growing piles of books and papers over the past two years.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	vii
APPENDIX .....	viii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	4
CHARLES C. ZOLLER .....	4
FLORIDA .....	5
TOURISM AND PHOTOGRAPHY .....	8
AUTOCHROMES .....	9
CHARLES C. ZOLLER: BIOGRAPHY .....	10
THE AUTOCHROME .....	15
Charles Zoller's Use of the Autochrome .....	18
THE ZOLLER AUTOCHROMES .....	21
Charles Zoller Fonds .....	21
THE FLORIDA AUTOCHROMES .....	22
Landscape (scenic views, wildlife, and plant specimens) .....	24
Harris and Barnhill Prints .....	27
Architecture (houses, cityscapes, and commercial buildings) .....	28
People .....	33
CONCLUSION .....	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	43
Autochromes .....	43
Florida .....	43
Tourism and Photography .....	45
Charles C. Zoller .....	46

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Charles Zoller, <i>Autochrome Storage</i> , unknown date, 2009:0355:0003.....	24
2. Charles Zoller, <i>View of the Tomoka River</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2097:0020.....	26
3. <i>Cypress Trees and Moss in Florida</i> , postcard, ca. 1930s.....	26
4. Charles Zoller, <i>Coconuts at Palm Beach</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2098:0021.....	26
5. <i>Cocoanut [sic] Tree</i> , Florida, postcard, 1920.....	26
6. Charles Zoller, <i>Joe Alligator from Jacksonville</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2099:0003.....	27
7. Ochlawahla River, <i>Home of the Alligator, Florida</i> , postcard, 1905.....	27
8. Charles Zoller, <i>Florida Fruit Trees</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0027.....	27
9. <i>Fifty-two Grapefruit on One Limb, Florida</i> , postcard, ca. 1930s.....	27
10. Charles Zoller, <i>Taken in February, St. Pete</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0010.....	30
11. <i>St. Petersburg, Florida, the Sunshine City, Open Air Post Office, the Only One in the U.S.A.</i> , postcard, 1930.....	30
12. Charles Zoller, <i>House and Trees</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2062:0018.....	31
13. <i>The Flame Vine and Bougainvillea</i> , Miami, Florida, postcard, ca. 1943.....	31
14. Charles Zoller, <i>Ponce de Leon Hotel</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2099:0025.....	33
15. Charles Zoller, <i>Tampa Bay Hotel</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:20--:0034.....	33
16. Charles Zoller, <i>Shuffle Board Players</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2062:0009.....	33
17. <i>Winter Visitors at Play, Daytona Beach, Fla.</i> , postcard, ca. 1930s.....	33
18. Charles Zoller, <i>St. Pete</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982: 2063:0017.....	34
19. Charles Zoller, <i>Gandy [Bridge]</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0030.....	34
20. Charles Zoller, <i>People on Beach</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2062:0047.....	35
21. Charles Zoller, <i>Band Concert Park, St. Pete, 2000 There and More</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918- 1932, 1982:2063:0009.....	35
22. Charles Zoller, <i>Pastime Club</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0024.....	35
23. Charles Zoller, <i>At Passe Grille</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2097:0006.....	35
24. Unknown, <i>Charles Zoller with Sponge on His Head</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0037.....	36
25. Charles Zoller, <i>Picanninnies in 7 Colors</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2097:0029.....	37

26. Charles Zoller, <i>Gyps. [sic] Miami</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2098:0015.....	37
27. Charles Zoller, <i>Sunset at Palm Beach</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2098:0018.....	41
28. Charles Zoller, <i>At Orange Grove</i> , autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0055.....	41

## APPENDIX

1. Checklist of Charles Zoller autochromes of Florida, Compact Disc.

## INTRODUCTION

*Over the past century and a half, photographs have been used not only 'in a multiplicity of ways', but also in profoundly influential ways to shape modern geographical imaginations. From daguerreotypes to digital images, from picture postcards to magazine illustrations, photographic images have been an integral part of our engagement with the physical and human world. A powerful means of 'picturing place', both literally and figuratively, they have participated actively in the making and dissemination of geographical knowledge.*

- Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*<sup>1</sup>

George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film is home to a collection of over 8,000 photographic objects by Rochester-born photographer, Charles C. Zoller. Of these, around 4,000 are autochromes<sup>2</sup>, of which, at least three-hundred-and-seventeen are of Florida. It is these 317 Florida autochromes that are the focus of this thesis.

By approximately 1918, when Zoller began visiting the Sunshine State, Florida was already solidified as a choice winter playground. It was only natural that color came to be representative of the state that many exalted for its year-round blue skies, lush subtropical foliage, exotic wildlife, and turquoise waters. The dissemination of vibrant paintings, postcards, and hand-colored black-and-white prints portraying the state's attributes quickly established a visual reference for the state even before the advent of

---

1. Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, introduction to *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2003), 5

2. Autochrome (with a capital 'A') refers to the specific color screen-plate process manufactured by the Lumière brothers, while autochrome (with a lower-case 'a') has often been used as a more generic term referring to color screen-plate processes in general.

color photography. This thesis will examine Zoller's Florida autochromes in relation to pre-existing tropes in Florida's literary and visual representation.

Though visual material of Florida was often propagated in color and the Autochrome was the first available color photographic process, there are few known autochromes<sup>3</sup> of the Sunshine State. A search of some of the most prominent collecting institutions in Florida did not reveal any autochromes within their collections. The reason for this is unknown. One other known collection of Florida autochromes is housed at the National Geographic Society Archives in Washington, D.C. Interestingly, the three Zoller autochromes there were never published. In addition, George Eastman House has several Florida autochromes by a Mrs. Benjamin Russell that are unrelated to the Zoller fonds. Thus, Zoller's Florida autochromes represent some of the earliest direct color images of the Sunshine State and one of the most comprehensive known collections of Florida autochromes. As a professional photographer, touring lecturer, and winter vacationer, Zoller both consumed Florida's entertainments and promulgated the Sunshine State's image. Zoller didn't create Florida's image; that had happened well before his travels to the state. His use of the autochrome process and his traveling lecture series (his primary means of disseminating his images), however, provide a vivid reminder of how photography captured the imagination of the American public in the early twentieth century as well as influenced the development of identity of place.

Key to Zoller's role was the development of the Lumière Autochrome process, which gained wide acceptance amongst both amateur and professional photographers and captivated audiences who could suddenly view natural color images of places they might

never experience for themselves. Not only were Zoller's audiences captivated by this process, Zoller himself was enthralled with the possibilities of such a process. With these autochrome plates Zoller contributed and reinforced the popular image of Florida as circulated in popular magazines such as National Geographic, and postcards and paintings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *CHARLES C. ZOLLER*

Charles C. Zoller was and remains very much a local Rochester figure; he is not widely known outside of the Rochester area. However, in Rochester he has maintained some recognition, especially for his autochrome images. George Eastman House has been the most prominent means of exposure for Zoller's images. His work has recently been incorporated into the museum's website, blog, and the 2009 exhibition, *Where We Live*. In *Where We Live*, reproductions of some of Zoller's autochrome imagery of Rochester and the surrounding area were exhibited. Nevertheless, the breadth of the Zoller collection remains un-explored.

The 1988 article "A Portrait of Rochester, Through the Lens of Charles Zoller" is perhaps the most thorough publication on Zoller, but is still targeted to a limited audience. This twenty-page article, written by Michael Hager, Rick McKee Hock, and Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck for the Rochester Public Library, contains mostly photographs with only around three and a half pages of text. Furthermore, much of the biographical information written about Zoller is not entirely accurate, as it is contradicted by newspaper articles from Zoller's time as well as a 1932 interview with Zoller that was published in the *Rochester Commerce*.

Several recent publications meant for a broader audience briefly address Zoller and his autochromes. Most notably, Pamela Roberts discusses Zoller in her 2007 *A Century of Colour Photography: From the Autochrome to the Digital Age*, in which she writes, "Through Zoller's eyes the everyday is heightened and within such a large archive of work, spanning almost 30 years, it is possible to glimpse elements of Modernism,



Abstraction and Surrealism—as well as images of one more local garden fête that was perhaps just one fête too many.”<sup>4</sup> Roberts even features one of Zoller’s autochromes as the first illustration in this publication.

Some of the most useful sources in terms of biographical information on Charles Zoller have been period newspapers. Zoller’s activities were often chronicled in local newspapers, thus providing extraordinary insight into his photographic practices. In addition the 1932 *Rochester Commerce* interview gives us further insight into the autochromist’s personality--entrepreneurial, yet fun loving. He took pride in his photographic services and at the same time had a quirky sense of humor.

## **FLORIDA**

Of necessity, I have limited my research in this regard to aspects of Florida’s social history during the early twentieth century when Zoller traveled to the state. The Florida History and Culture Series, edited by Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino and published by the University Press of Florida, was particularly useful in dissecting Florida in the early twentieth century. Gary R. Mormino’s *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, and Raymond Arsenault’s *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950*, assisted in the contextualization of Zoller’s images. In addition, these two sources aided in the identification of some of the locations depicted in Zoller’s autochromes.

*The Florida Reader: Visions of Paradise from 1530 to the Present* (1991), edited by Maurice O’Sullivan and Jack C. Lane, provides literary samples of both historic and current writings on Florida. Its two hundred and fifty-eight pages review the evolution of

---

<sup>4</sup> Pamela Roberts, *A Century of Colour Photography: From the Autochrome to the Digital Age* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2007), 42.

the literary representation of Florida. While providing a general understanding of literature on Florida, *The Florida Reader* focuses on the representation of Florida as an Edenic paradise. Emphasizing the literary portrayal of the Sunshine State as a “paradise,” the editors focus not on “paradise” as a singular idea, but rather convey some of the varying notions of paradise that have influenced popular ideas of the state.

In a similar way, Anne E. Rowe’s *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (1992), seeks to “examine the way in which the idea of Florida—the image of a tropical, lush ‘Good Place’—has been developed, explored, and interpreted by a series of American authors...”<sup>5</sup> This thesis explores similar ideas but with a focus on the visual (and, more specifically, the use of color) rather than the literary representation of the state as it was disseminated in early twentieth-century America. Because the earliest accounts of Florida were predominantly literary, I have found it important to convey the clearly established connection between literary and visual representations of Florida. Rowe’s agenda further aligns itself with my own in terms of her efforts to produce a study of the “idea” of Florida as it has been “developed and changed, but nevertheless, persisted.”<sup>6</sup> Again, this thesis provides a similar if more brief exploration of the ‘idea’ of Florida as it was *visually* disseminated.

Two articles published in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, a journal of the Florida Historical Society, provide similar overviews of the creation of Florida’s identity as a state and as a paradisaal escape and further demonstrate the thorough examination that has been made of Florida’s literary representation. “Florida in the American Popular

---

5. Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 9.

6. *Ibid.*, 10.

Magazines, 1870-1970” looks at Florida’s representation in select American periodicals.<sup>7</sup> In detailing the Edenic representation of the state, this article aligns quite closely with the thrust of *The Florida Reader*. Additionally, Stephen J. Whitfield’s “Florida’s Fudged Identity” also chronicles the evolution of the Sunshine State through its various literary representations.<sup>8</sup> Analytically, Whitfield goes further by comparing the literary representation of Florida to that of its West Coast rival, California. Interestingly, Zoller traveled to both Florida and California, often linking the two states in his illustrated lectures.

While the literary representation of Florida has been fairly thoroughly examined, the visual representation has been somewhat neglected as has comparison of these two prominent forms of representation. The 2001-2002 exhibition catalogue for *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida* at the Southeast Museum of Photography, with text by Alison Nordström and Ray and Elizabeth Mechling, provides a visually oriented look at Florida’s representation through hand-painted photographs. Tim Hollis’s *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (2008) offers a number of full color images of Florida. However, it does not provide in-depth discussion or analysis of the representation of Florida in those advertisements.

Other sources that consider this topic, such as Larry Robert’s *Florida’s Golden Age of Souvenirs, 1890-1930* (2001), focus primarily on collector’s guides for tourist

---

7. Tommy R. Thompson, “Florida in American Popular Magazines, 1870-1970,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2003): 1-15, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149273> (accessed March 5, 2010).

8. Stephen J. Whitfield, “Florida’s Fudged Identity,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (1993): 413-435, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30150390>, (accessed March 5, 2010).

products or on Florida's painterly rather than photographic heritage. Catherine M. Enns' *The Journey of the Highwaymen or Reflections: Paintings of Florida, 1865-1965* (2009), written by Gary R. Libby and published by the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach, Florida, is an example of the latter. The role of color photography in representing the Sunshine State, however, appears to be a topic that has been generally neglected throughout Florida's literature.

### ***TOURISM AND PHOTOGRAPHY***

As a distinct field of study, tourism has received considerable attention. Similarly, the relationship between tourism and the visual image (especially photography) is a widely covered topic. Many sources are useful in helping understand the relationship between photography and a sense of geographical identity. One such exemplary source is *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (2000) by Peter D. Osborne, which considers the relationship between photography and travel from the pre-photographic era through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Jane C. Desmond's *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (1999) is a focused study of tourism in relation to both the visual and physical representation of Hawaii. As such, it provides a comprehensive, in-depth look at the creation of the "idea" of Hawaii and would serve as a guide for anyone wishing to undertake a deeper examination of how Florida's image evolved. Krista A. Thompson's *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (2006) is a similar exploration of various Caribbean countries. The introduction to *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* by Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan offers a theoretical

basis for the construction of local identity that complements these more singular explorations of photography as related to a particular sense of place.

## ***AUTOCHROMES***

The history of color photography has been recounted in various sources over the past few decades. Though it is a rich and fascinating subject, the Autochrome has only recently (in the last few decades) begun to receive scholarly attention. Many books reference or even devote a chapter to the Autochrome or to color screen-plate processes more generally, but fewer focus on the Autochrome itself. One source that does focus exclusively on the autochrome is John Wood's *The Art of the Autochrome: the Birth of Color Photography* (1993). *The Art of the Autochrome* chronicles the use and later abandonment of the medium by the Photo-Seccessionists as well as some lesser-known but nevertheless important autochromists. It is these relatively unknown autochromists to whom Wood attributes the most important contributions to the medium: amateurs and professionals in some ways reminiscent of Charles Zoller, including Fritz Paneth, Leonid Andreyev, and Arnold Genthe. *The Dawn of the Color Photograph: Albert Kahn's Archive of the Planet* focuses on select autochromes from the Albert Kahn Archive of 72,000 Autochromes just outside of Paris, France. This book provides an overview and good quality reproductions of the largest Autochrome archive in the world.

## CHARLES C. ZOLLER: BIOGRAPHY

*If you have any scenery you'd like to keep in its natural beauty—just call on Mr. Zoller.*

- Unknown, *Rochester Commerce*<sup>9</sup>

Charles Zoller first practiced photography as an amateur hobbyist, eventually forsaking his work in the furniture business to make his living from photography. Born in Rochester on June 8, 1854, Zoller was educated in local public schools. Ever the entrepreneur, as an adult Zoller opened a local furniture and upholstery business. In 1881 he married Mary A. Boss and together they had one son, George W. Zoller. Charles Zoller's granddaughters, Marietta and Margaret, frequently appear in his photographs. Captivated by the new color process, the Autochrome, Charles Zoller gave up his furniture business and devoted his future entrepreneurial efforts to establishing his photographic career. The George Eastman House's collection of over 8,000 photographic objects show just how prolific he was.

Taking photographs was only one aspect of Zoller's photographic career. Zoller also used his extensive stock of photographs, brought back from regional, national, or international travel, to create and present illustrated lectures on a variety of topics. This practice is not dissimilar to the act of stock photographing today. A 1932 interview with Zoller in *Rochester Commerce* notes the following: "With the tremendous store of more than 5,000 color plates, Mr. Zoller devotes part of his time to giving exhibitions of the show place of the world before groups, ranging from social gatherings to the International Flower Show. His lectures are keenly interesting and he is in great demand as a

---

9. "A Business Where Every Prospect Pleases: An Interview with Charles C. Zoller, Color Photographer," *Rochester Commerce* (October 24, 1932): 3.

speaker.”<sup>10</sup> It would be hard to gauge the demand for Zoller’s lectures from this alone. However, this statement is further supported by the countless number of local newspaper notices and articles on Zoller’s lectures in “natural colors.”

A partial list of Zoller’s lecture titles, gleaned from these newspaper notices and from the George Eastman House collection, is testimony to his productivity. They include Rochester Area Parks and Gardens, Beauty Spots in Rochester Suburbs and Along the Genesee River, Ten Countries in Europe, California, Color Photography, Chasing a Rainbow—and Catching It, Photographs in the Colors of Nature by the Lumière Process, and Natural Color Views of Florida. Many of Zoller’s lectures were given to associations in which he retained membership, or was otherwise affiliated. A member of The Rochester Academy of Science, The Kodak Park Camera Club, The Art Club of Rochester, the official board of the Asbury Methodist Church, and one-time Vice President of the Burrough Audubon Nature Club, it is clear that Zoller was an active member of Rochester’s community. In addition, Zoller occasionally gave lectures while traveling, further confirming that his travels were multi-purpose—for leisure, to add to his repertoire of images, and to gain exposure as a photographer and lecturer.

The 1932 interview with Zoller in *Rochester Commerce* informs us not only that Zoller was “keenly interesting and in great demand as a speaker,”<sup>11</sup> but also that he had standing orders from many prominent Rochesterians to photograph their gardens in color while they traveled during the summer months and that he made images both for his own illustrated lectures and for sale to customers with their own lantern slide projectors.

---

10. “A Business Where Every Prospect Pleases: An Interview with Charles C. Zoller, Color Photographer,” *Rochester Commerce* (October 24, 1932): 3.

11. Ibid.

Coincidentally, 1932 was also the year that the Lumière Company ceased production of glass Autochrome plates in favor of producing a flexible film version of the Autochrome that never achieved the same popularity as the glass plates. The peak of Zoller's lecturing career was from the mid 1910s to the late 1920s, when the Autochrome had already been available for a number of years. And yet from the local newspapers of the time we know that the public was still keen to see the world projected in "natural" colors; for some, the novelty of color had not yet worn off. It is reported that seventy-five people turned up at the Eastman Building for Zoller's April 8, 1908, presentation of the Lumière Autochrome process.<sup>12</sup> The Proceedings of the Rochester Academy of Science states that attendance at society meetings in 1908 ranged from eleven to seventy-five (the latter being on the occasion of another Zoller lecture on color photography).<sup>13</sup>

### *Zoller in Florida*

From some of the earliest literary references to Florida, by definition "the land of flowers," the region has been described as an "Edenic" land of flora and fauna, an untamed wilderness, and a land of prosperity and opportunity. As Anne E. Rowe wrote in *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*, "Florida has been for the American imagination not merely a geographical region but an image, a garden Eden-like, where the striving and seeking, the rigorous pioneering and getting ahead that characterize the Land of Opportunity has been tempered and diverted by the langours of a

---

12. *Proceedings of the Rochester Academy of Science* 14, no. 1 (April, 1981): 17.

13. *Proceedings of the Rochester Academy of Science* 14, no. 1 (April, 1981): 19.



tropical climate washed by the Gulf Stream and the balm of an always warm sun.”<sup>14</sup> Though Florida is home to St. Augustine, the oldest continuously occupied city in the United States (having been established in 1565), prior to the mid nineteenth century Florida was largely inaccessible. It was around this time that Americans began to take notice of Florida’s unique assets, especially those associated with the region’s temperate winter climate. During this time, sickly patients, often those suffering from consumption (tuberculosis) were urged south to avoid the harsh northern winters that could prove detrimental to their health.<sup>15</sup> Around the turn of the last century, Florida was established as a choice destination for the wealthy as well as the unwell. By the time Zoller began visiting Florida around 1918, Florida was already a popular winter destination.

The number of years that Zoller wintered in Florida is unknown, but we do know that he wintered there in 1920, 1925, and 1928. The tourism industry was, and is, one of Florida’s largest and most profitable markets, with tourists also being the target audience for many of the photographic illustrations of the Sunshine State. The availability of more affordable automobiles brought a burgeoning middle class to Florida in the early twentieth century. The 1920s ushered in the Florida Land Boom, a period that marked not only tremendous growth in the tourism industry but also an influx of new residents and investments in land and property. From 1920 to 1926, Florida saw enormous prosperity, making many of its investors’ rich overnight.

---

14. Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 4.

15. Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History, With an Account of Charleston, Savannah, Augusta, and Aiken, and a Chapter for Consumptives; Being a Complete Handbook and Guide* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875).

However, this extraordinary prosperity was not to last. The price of property and land had become absurdly high during this period. In addition, many people had fallen victim to various financial scams. This, coupled with two devastating hurricanes in 1926 and 1928, sent the state into the Great Depression early.<sup>16</sup> With fortunes lost and many cities virtually bankrupt, Florida remained in its depression with minimal signs of recovery throughout the 1930s. In the midst of this financial turmoil, tourism kept much of the state afloat, with tourists like Zoller continuing to flock down for winter.

---

16. Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 26.

## THE AUTOCHROME

*Color photography is no longer a dream, nor purely a laboratory experiment. It is a splendid reality, come to stay, and moreover, is gaining greater recognition daily as a gigantic field for art of the highest order and merit. Thousands are now making the most beautiful and artistic color plates, and if you are not among these workers you are missing one of the greatest charms that photography has yet offered.*

- William Ireland Starr, *The American Annual of Photography*<sup>17</sup>

As histories of photography elucidate, photography as a medium was never meant to be monochromatic. From its beginning, the many ingenious men and women who contributed to the invention of photography were attempting to make exact copies of nature, in full color. Because this was not immediately possible, it became common practice to hand color or tint monochromatic images. It was not until 1907 that color photography would become a reality with the first practical and commercially viable color process, the Autochrome.

Color photography, like photography itself, was not a singular invention but the result of the contribution of many individuals over a prolonged period of time. The Autochrome was not the first color process; it was, however, the first color process to achieve practical and commercial success. This distinction is important, as there were not only other color processes patented before the Autochrome, but also other screen-plate processes patented and produced.

The Autochrome was patented in 1904 and introduced by brothers Auguste (1862-1954) and Louis (1864-1948) Lumière. Their father, Claude-Antoine Lumière gave the Lumière name fame when he began manufacturing dry plates. Lumière dry

---

17. William Ireland Starr, "Why Not Make Color Photographs?," *The American Annual of Photography* 26 (1912): 228-234.

plates were regarded as some of the finest plates in production, propelling the Lumière Company into becoming the largest photographic manufacturer in Europe.<sup>18</sup> Auguste and Louis Lumière eventually took over their father's company and achieved further fame for both their advancements in cinematography and for their Autochrome plates. Detailed descriptions of the Autochrome process are available elsewhere; what is important here, however, is how quickly and enthusiastically the process was adopted and received. Upon commercial introduction, Autochromes elicited much excitement. The demand for plates in France was so great that it was some time before they were available to the rest of the world. In his 1993 book *The Art of the Autochrome*, John Wood writes that commercial supplies of Autochrome plates did not appear in England until September of 1907 and that by October, Americans were still being told that plates would not be available in New York for a few weeks.<sup>19</sup> Because of this, the earliest Americans to use Autochrome plates were those who either by design (like Edward Steichen) or by chance (like Charles Zoller) were in Europe during the summer of 1907.

Edward Steichen (1879-1973) was among the crowd at the June 1907 Autochrome demonstration at the Paris Photo-Club. A prominent photographic figure, Steichen not only secured plates for himself, but also for his friend and fellow photographic icon Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946). Within a month, Steichen, Stieglitz, Heinrich Kuhn (1866-1944), and Frank Eugene (1865-1936) were working together to master the process.<sup>20</sup> The microscopic potato starch grains that made up the Autochrome,

---

18. Jack H. Coote, *The Illustrated History of Colour Photography* (Surbiton: Fountain, 1993), 35.

19. John Wood, *The Art of the Autochrome: The Birth of Color Photography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 10.

20. Ibid.

along with the process's subdued color palette, have often been characterized as stylistically reminiscent of Impressionist paintings. Because of this stylistic effect, Autochromes, even though the plates could not be manipulated, found much early popularity with Pictorialists, including those prominent figures listed above. Zoller was among the earliest Americans to use the Autochrome process. In Europe at the time of their introduction, Zoller quickly traveled to France to secure a supply of plates. Though there were doubtless other American characters that could be "recognized as the American pioneer in color photography,"<sup>21</sup> this accolade was given to Zoller by Rochester's local newspaper, the *Democrat and Chronicle*, after his death in 1934.

In addition to the Pictorialists, Autochrome plates also enjoyed much popularity with the growing amateur market. However, the expense of the plates in comparison to black-and-white plates restricted use to wealthier amateurs. Photographic journals of the time often encouraged such amateurs to take up the Autochrome process as both a means of enjoyment and as a means of financial gain.<sup>22</sup> The mass production of photographic materials such as flexible film, and the ease of new processes meant that both the amateur and professional photographic markets were burgeoning. The Autochrome was, in theory, an easy process to master, but photographic journals of the time were riddled with essays

---

21. 'Charles C. Zoller Gives All to Wife,' *Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, NY), February 16, 1934.

22. H.F. Perkins, "Color Photography as a Paying Proposition," *The American Annual of Photography for 1910* 24 (1909): 102. "The amateur who isn't ashamed to make pictures for money can earn much more in a day in the field of color photography than with the old methods." And Bennett McCord, "Why Not the Autochrome?" *The Camera* 18, no. 11 (November, 1914): 679. "He [the amateur] will find it a source of pleasure both to himself and his friends, and, if he feels so inclined, a source of profit as well, for the autochrome is the most readily salable of all photographs."

on the difficulties of perfecting the process.<sup>23</sup> Contradicting that view were articles such as Bennet McCord's "Why Not the Autochrome?" in *The Camera* (1914), in which he states, "It seems a great shame to me that more amateur photographers do not realize how easily they can obtain highly satisfactory pictures on the modern color plate, particularly the autochrome—for, after trying several other brands, it seems to me that the autochrome plate is far and away the superior of its competitors."<sup>24</sup> McCord then adds, "the autochrome is as easy to handle and to take satisfactory pictures with as is the ordinary plate."<sup>25</sup> From the time of the autochrome's introduction, early twentieth-century photographic journals feature countless articles on its positive and negative aspects, a testament to the interest the process inspired.

### ***Charles Zoller's Use of the Autochrome***

There are three main ways to view Autochromes: holding the plate up to a light source; viewing the plate through a specialized device called the diascope (meant for personal viewing); or viewing the plate through projection. Zoller employed the latter in his illustrated lectures and travelogues. Projection of glass positives was not unique to the Autochrome, but rather was in practice centuries before.

The predecessor of this type of visual experience was the magic lantern slide show which some suggest dates back to as early as 1657.<sup>26</sup> However, it was not until the

---

23. See William Kunz, "Color Photography," *American Annual of Photography* 26, 1912: 32. And, Edited by Percy Y. Howe; David J. Sheahan, "A Few Words About Autochroms [sic]," *American Annual of Photography* (1917): 105.

24. Bennett McCord, "Why Not the Autochrome?," *The Camera* 18, no. 11 (November 1914): 679.

25. Ibid.

26. Jen Ruchatz, "Travelling by Slide: How the Art of Projection Met the World of Travel," in *Realms of Light: Uses and Perception of the Magic Lantern from the*

mid nineteenth century that photography was integrated in such practices. Jen Ruchatz notes in “Travelling by Slide: How the Art of Projection Met the World of Travel” that the alliance between photography and travel slide shows formed naturally and quickly, stating, “...this mode of representation was also good at suggestion: the projected travel photograph seemed to transport its audience to the very spot where it had been recorded.”<sup>27</sup> Advancements in technology and the rise of the middle-class in the mid nineteenth century opened up travel to an ever-expanding demographic. For those who could not travel, armchair travel through stereoviews and postcards was a popular Victorian pastime. One of the most vivid ways of experiencing far away lands was through the art of projection.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, photography itself was becoming more and more accessible. Magic lantern slideshows and lectures became a popular form of entertainment. Viewers were delighted with vivid depictions of distant lands. Travel slideshows have yet to lose their popularity, though now they are more likely to be viewed and shared over computers and the Internet. Their endurance seems such that they are not in danger of going out of fashion in the near future.

The introduction of the Autochrome in 1907 offered a new tool to such lectures and slideshows. Whereas before, color was only available through the hand coloring of glass plates, now a direct color process was available that rendered colors more naturally than the human hand. The 1910 article “Color Photography as a Paying Proposition” alludes to the possibilities afforded by these plates, stating, “Their usefulness to the

---

*Seventeenth to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Richard Crangle, Merryn Heard, and Ine van Dooren (London: Magic Lantern Society, 2005), 34.

27. *Ibid.*, 35-36.

public lecturer and class-room instructor is immensely greater than that of the ordinary slides.”<sup>28</sup> The popularity of Zoller’s twentieth-century autochrome illustrated lectures is a testament not only to the importance of the projected image as a form of entertainment, but of the incredible amount of interest elicited by the projection of images in “natural color.”

---

28. H.F. Perkins, “Color Photography as a Paying Proposition,” *The American Annual of Photography for 1910* 24 (1909), 103.



## THE ZOLLER AUTOCHROMES

### *Charles Zoller Fonds*

Though a detailed description of the entire Charles Zoller fonds is not possible within the scope of this paper, it is important to place the Florida autochromes within the context of Zoller's larger body of work. This body of work is remarkably extensive, including 8,440 photographic objects in the George Eastman House Photographic Collection alone. Of these, there are 449 lantern slides, 3,992 black-and-white negatives, two gelatin-silver prints, and 3,996 autochromes.

The subject matter that appears throughout Zoller's body of work remains consistent, despite the photographic process he used. His images often feature his family, whether at family gatherings at home or while traveling. Zoller's wife Mary, son George, daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters, Marietta and Margaret, appear in both the black-and-white negatives and the autochrome plates. Together, Zoller's autochromes, lantern slides, and negatives document both his local region of Rochester and Upstate New York as well as his extensive national and international travel. These travels served a dual purpose—both for leisure and to add to his stock of images for his popular illustrated lectures. His destinations included Europe and Canada, California, the District of Columbia, Virginia, South Carolina, Colorado, and, of course, Florida. New York State, California, and Florida are the most extensively represented in the autochrome collection. Some common themes in these images include nature (plant specimens, landscapes), architecture (houses and commercial buildings), and people.

### ***THE FLORIDA AUTOCHROMES***

*The green of grass and foliage and the intense blue of the skies are so exactly duplicated that the pictures are almost startling in their reality.*

-Unknown Author, *Times Union*<sup>29</sup>

Of the 3,996 Charles Zoller autochromes in the George Eastman House collection, at least 317 were made in Florida. These 317 have been identified both from prior cataloguing efforts by museum staff and from my own research with this collection. It is probable that there are other Zoller autochromes of Florida within the George Eastman House collection that remain unidentified. Zoller's travels to Florida encompassed the state's most prominent cities, including St. Augustine, Tampa, Jacksonville, Miami, Palm Beach, Orlando, and St. Petersburg. The latter city was one of Zoller's favorite destinations. While some of the images have captions handwritten by Zoller in the borders, others do not and were previously unidentified. As demonstrated by the reproduction on the following page, Zoller's own markings have proven to be the key to identifying many of the images.

---

29. "Plan Exhibit of Photos of Florida Scenes: Art Club Sponsor for Showing by Charles C. Zoller, Who Recovers Lost Glasses by Novel Method," *Times Union* (Rochester, NY, July 9, 1924).

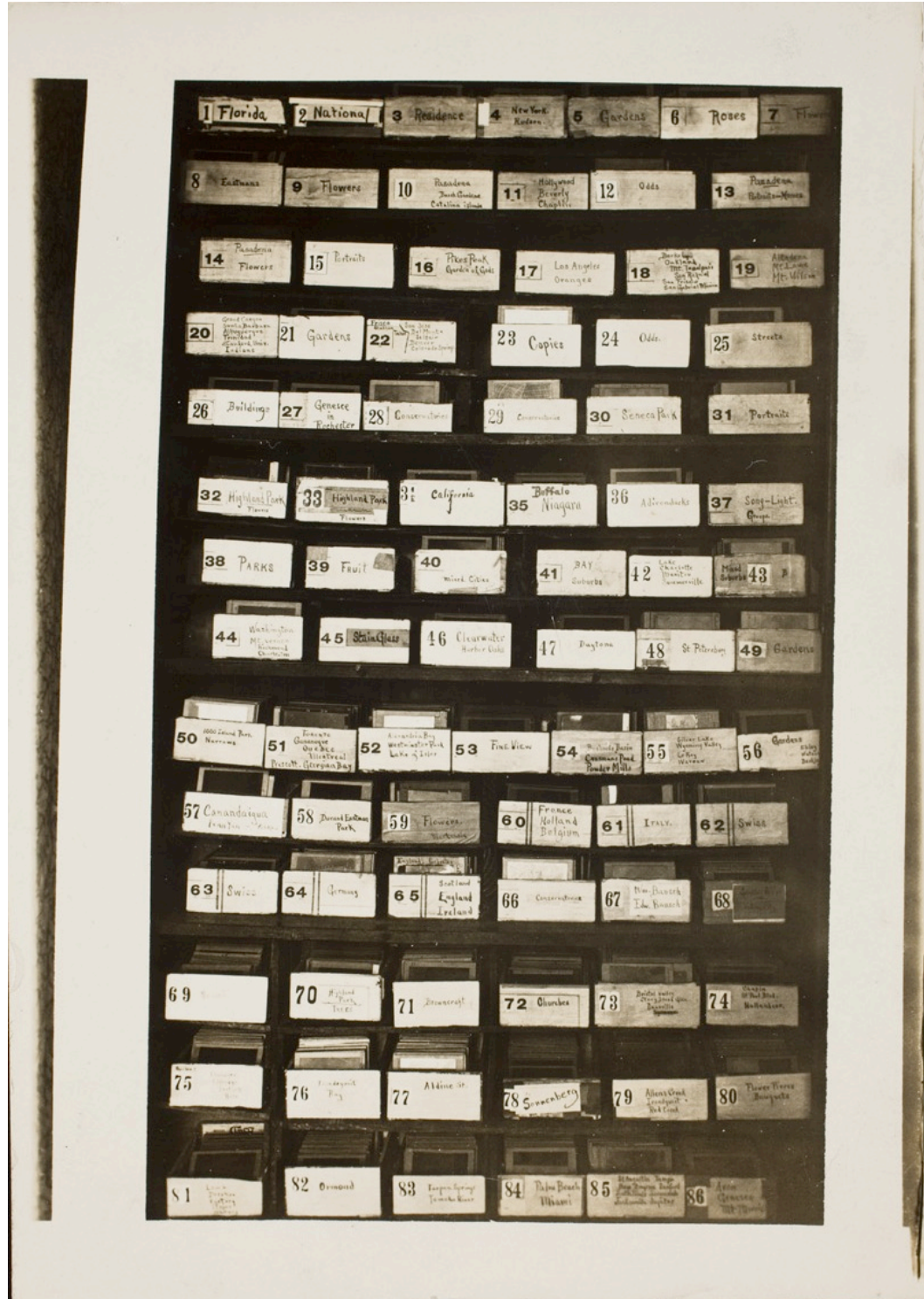


Figure 1: Charles Zoller, autochrome storage, unknown date. Notice the numbers and locations listed on each box. These correspond to numbers on Zoller's autochromes, helping to identify locations

For the purpose of this study I have divided the Florida autochromes into three discernable and prominent categories, each with its own subcategories: landscape (scenic views, plant specimens, and wildlife), architecture (private residences, commercial buildings, and cityscapes), and people (involved in leisure activities and individual and group portraits). Rather than just analyze Zoller's images by themselves, we will now look at examples of Zoller's images with other images of Florida circulated in popular culture in the early twentieth century.

*Landscape (scenic views, wildlife, and plant specimens)*

Images in this category make up around forty-five percent of Zoller's Florida autochrome series and as such forms the largest group. Typical scenic views in this series include sunsets over water, "jungle" views, trees (palm trees, Spanish moss hanging from oaks and cypress trees), and views of the St. Johns, Anecdote, and Tomoka Rivers. These images tend to focus on Florida's vibrant and lush scenery, with a tendency towards romantic aestheticization. These are the same themes identified by scholars Ray and Elizabeth Mechling in the 2001 exhibition catalogue for *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida*. The Mechlings not only identify riverscapes, junglescapes, and swamps as prominent tropes in postcards of Florida, but also large oaks, Spanish moss, cypress trees, and palm trees.<sup>30</sup> Also encompassed within the landscape category are images of wildlife, including pelicans and alligators and images

---

30. Jay Mechling and Elizabeth Walker Mechling, *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida* (Daytona Beach: Daytona Beach Community College, 2001), 18. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida" shown at the Southeast Museum of Photography in Daytona Beach, FL.



featuring Florida's subtropical plant life. These images often emphasize the exotic nature of the region.



*Figure 2: Charles Zoller, View of Tomoka River, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2097:0020.*



*Figure 3: Cypress Trees and Moss in Florida, postcard, ca. 1930s.*



*Figure 4: Charles Zoller, Coconuts at Palm Beach, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2098:0021.*



*Figure 5: Cocoanut [sic] Tree, Florida, postcard, 1920.*



Figure 6: Charles Zoller, Joe Alligator from Jacksonville, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2099:0003.



Figure 7: Ochlawahla River, Home of the Alligator, Florida, postcard, 1905.



Figure 8: Charles Zoller, Florida Fruit Trees, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0027.



Figure 9: Fifty-two Grapefruit on One Limb, Florida, postcard, ca. 1930s.

### *Harris and Barnhill Prints*

Two artists dominated the market for hand-colored photographs of Florida in the early twentieth century. These two figures are William James Harris (1868-1949) and Esmond G. Barnhill (1894-1987). Both of these artists depicted a romanticized and idealized Florida landscape congruent with the tropes we have seen thus far. Their use of color further advanced this aesthetic notion. Because of the prominence of their art, Harris and Barnhill played a significant role in the evolution of Florida's image.

W.J. Harris began photographing in Florida in 1898, and from 1900-1913, Harris made his living from producing postcards and other photographic services.<sup>31</sup> Toward the end of this time period, Harris began to create hand-colored souvenir photographs. In *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida*, the Mechlings remark of Harris's style, "The Florida in most of Harris's landscapes is presented as an Edenic wilderness; he even titled one of his photographs 'To the Garden of Eden.'"<sup>32</sup> Harris's images furthermore represent a romantic Florida that is both discernibly subtropical and southern.

While Harris's work is soft and romantic, E.G. Barnhill's work retains the romanticism while having a more graphic use of color. Barnhill moved to St. Petersburg in 1914, not long before Zoller began visiting the state, and opened up shop producing hand-painted photographs. Barnhill is noted not only for having marketed his own

---

31. Larry Roberts, *Florida's Golden Age of Souvenirs 1890-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 122.

32. Jay Mechling and Elizabeth Walker Mechling, *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida* (Daytona Beach: Daytona Beach Community College, 2001), 18. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida" shown at the Southeast Museum of Photography in Daytona Beach, FL.



photographs, but also for having bought and marketed the work of Florida landscape painter and photographer James Ralph Wilcox following Wilcox's early death. He even occasionally colored and signed Wilcox's work posthumously.<sup>33</sup>

The work of Harris and Barnhill is remarkably similar, and yet distinct from one another, with similarities in subject matter (mainly Florida landscapes) and in color palettes, though Barnhill used distinctively brighter hues than Harris. The soft and romantic (Harris) and the sub-tropical and exotic (Barnhill) palettes capture Florida's at once southern and sub-tropical scenery. In a way, the unique color and grain of the Autochrome plates used by Zoller mimic the romantic vision of Florida portrayed by Barnhill and, especially, by Harris.

*Architecture (houses, cityscapes, and commercial buildings)*

Along with landscapes and scenic views of tropical plant life and sunsets over the water promoting Florida's natural assets, Zoller's views of private residences and hotels advertise the easy lifestyle often associated with the Sunshine State. While the landscapes make up approximately forty-five percent of the collection, images within this category make up the second largest group, with approximately thirty-two percent. With captions such as "Taken in February St. Pete," one can imagine the reception of this image during Rochester's famously harsh winter, beckoning those bundled in heavy coats and boots to the land of flowers. In a similar way, "Open Air Post Office, The Only One in the U.S.A" reminds the viewer that Florida is the land of eternal sunshine and temperate weather.

---

33. Larry Roberts, *Florida's Golden Age of Souvenirs 1890-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 124-25.





Figure 10: Charles Zoller, Taken in February St. Pete, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0010.

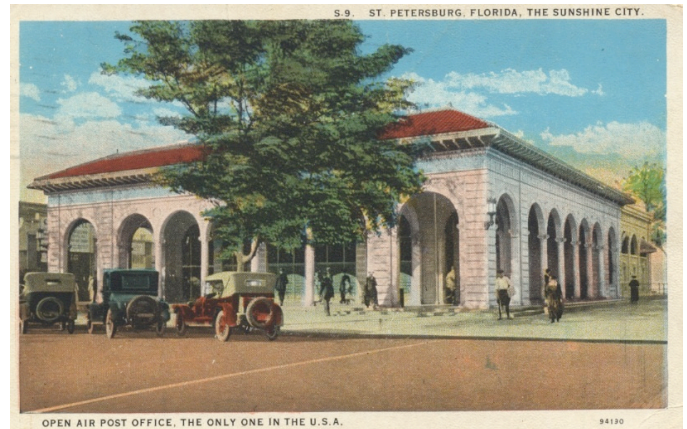


Figure 11: St. Petersburg, Florida, The Sunshine City, Open Air Post Office, The Only One in the U.S.A., postcard, 1930.

Zoller, whom we know to have received commissions from many prominent Rochester residents to photograph their homes and gardens in the summer months, is also known to have photographed the Florida homes of a few of the state's many prominent visitors. The Wednesday, July 9, 1924, *Times Union* newspaper informs us that Zoller photographed the homes of "Mrs. A.M. Lindsay at Ormond, Lucius Robinson at Jupiter on Hobe Sounds, Frank Pulver, former mayor St. Petersburg [sic] and Frank M. Atwood at Lake Maggiore."<sup>34</sup> As one-time president of the St. Petersburg Club of Western New York, Zoller socialized with many people from his hometown and surrounding area while in Florida.<sup>35</sup> It is perhaps through these types of connections that Zoller not only made friends and acquaintances, but also got permission or earned commissions to photograph private homes and gardens while in Florida.

34. "Plan Exhibit of Photos of Florida Scenes: Art Club Sponsor for Showing by Charles C. Zoller, Who Recovers Lost Glasses by Novel Method," *Times Union* (Rochester, NY, July 9, 1924).

35. St. Petersburg was known for having countless numbers of clubs for tourists from particular regions.



*Figure 12: Charles Zoller, House and Trees, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2062:0018.*



*Figure 13: The Flame Vine and Bougainvillea, Miami, Florida, postcard, ca. 1943.*

In addition to private homes, Zoller also documented distinguished buildings in many of the Florida cities he visited. Often included are images of prominent hotels, such as St. Augustine's Ponce de Leon Hotel and Tampa's Tampa Bay Hotel. In *Embellishing Eden: Hand-Painted Photographs of Florida*, Ray and Elizabeth Mechling identify such sites as among the most popular subjects for hand-painted photographs. Also popular, they note, were the more modest hotels frequented by middle-class tourists, the Singing

Tower in the Bok Tower Gardens of Lake Wales, pastimes such as golf, tennis, sailing, tea gardens and dances, bathing at the beach, and, of course, citrus groves.<sup>36</sup>

Again, Zoller's images of Florida are congruous with previously established conventions in the visual representation of Florida. What is the reason for this lack of originality? As a commercial photographer, Charles Zoller's images would perhaps not have been as well received if he had deviated much from the popular conception of Florida as a land of sunshine and leisure. Through his autochromes, Zoller was in some ways promoting the Sunshine State as well as himself. The similarity between Zoller's images and these early postcards is perhaps not at all surprising when one considers that Florida tourism advertising in the early twentieth century often represented Florida's winter assets to seasonal tourists. Zoller was, after all, a winter tourist himself. Among the targeted demographic, Zoller produced images that furthered such visual tropes and in doing so played a role in the perpetuation of what the Mechlings refer to as the "Florida Edenic myth."<sup>37</sup>

---

36. Jay Mechling and Elizabeth Walker Mechling, *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida* (Daytona Beach: Daytona Beach Community College, 2001), 12-16. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida" shown at the Southeast Museum of Photography in Daytona Beach, FL.

37. Ibid., 18.





*Figure 14: Charles Zoller, Ponce de Leon Hotel, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2099:0025*



*Figure 15: Charles Zoller, Tampa Bay Hotel, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2099:0034.*

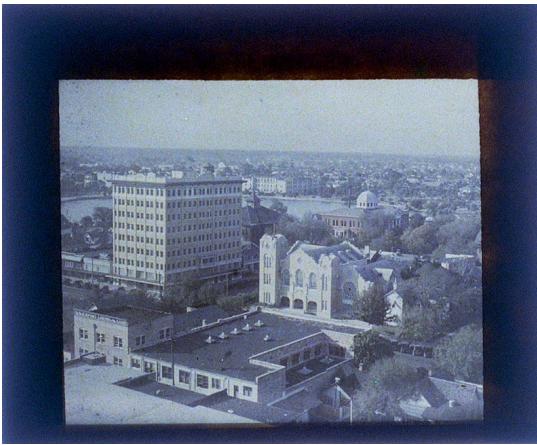


*Figure 16: Charles Zoller, Shuffleboard players, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2062:0009.*

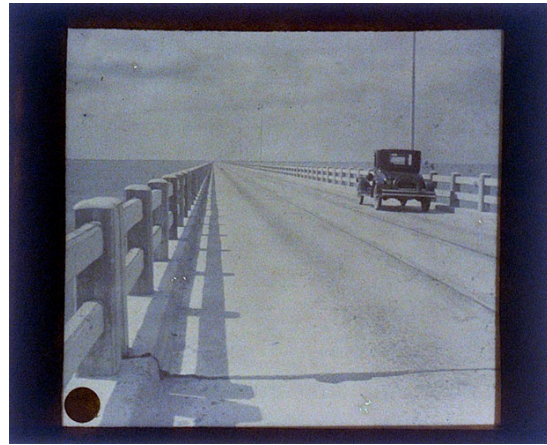


*Figure 17: Winter Visitors at Play, Daytona Beach, Fla., postcard, ca. 1930s.*

Images of city life, including cityscapes, birds-eye views of the city, and downtown commercial streets are also included in the architecture category. While less numerous, these images provide a glimpse of Florida's modernization and progress. Zoller's earlier trips to the Sunshine State were during the Florida land boom, a time of unprecedented growth in the early to mid 1920s. Zoller's images document some of this growth, as do the postcard counterparts to his images.



*Figure 18: Charles Zoller, St. Pete, autochrome ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0017.*



*Figure 19: Charles Zoller, Gandy [Bridge], autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0030.*

### *People*

In Florida for both leisure and to photograph for his lectures, Charles Zoller participated in and documented various leisure activities of Florida's winter tourists. Some of these leisure activities included playing chess and horseshoes in the park, lounging beachside, playing shuffleboard, and attending park concerts. These images effectively advertise Florida as a leisurely winter destination.





*Figure 20: Charles Zoller, People on Beach, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2062:0047.*



*Figure 21: Charles Zoller, Band Concert Park St Pete 2000 there and more, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0009.*



*Figure 22: Charles Zoller, Pastime Club, autochrome, ca. 1918-1930, 1982:2063:0024.*



*Figure 23: Charles Zoller, At Passe Grille, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0037.*

Zoller's images of people in Florida are often of groups or individuals participating in activities such as those listed above rather than conventional portraits. However, some more conventional portraits do exist within the collection. Notably, there are several portraits of orator William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) at his Florida home, Villa Serena, as well as giving one of his popular tourist Bible studies in a Miami park.

Mixed in with these images are more personal images of Zoller and his family. We do not know whether these images would have been included in his lectures. This would likely depend on the formality of the specific lecture in question. Notably, there are fewer of these personal images than one finds in Zoller's black-and-white body of work. These images convey a light-hearted, fun-loving, and even silly side of the photographer, who like many photographers is usually absent from the frame.



*Figure 24: Charles Zoller with sponge on his head, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2097:0006.*

In addition to depicting tourists involved in leisure activities, Zoller occasionally photographed people as “types.” Examples of these “types” are images of Seminole Indians at an alligator farm, Gypsies in Miami, and what appears to be an African American family whose portrait Zoller titled “Picanninnies in 7 colors.” Such images remind us of Florida’s southern ties. The term ‘picanninny’ may not have been considered at the time to be a racial slur, but the modern viewer of such images becomes self-consciously aware of such connotations. There is no evidence to confirm or deny

Zoller's views on race, however, the presence of such images and text within his body of work must be acknowledged.



Figure 25: Charles Zoller, *Picanninnies in 7 Colors*, autochromes, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2097:0029



Figure 26: Charles Zoller, *Gyps. [sic] Miami*, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2098:0015

Slide scripts for Zoller's lectures have not been located. However, we can draw some conclusions on this matter from Zoller's own written words. In a letter to the editor of the *St. Petersburg Evening Independent* on Saturday, February 12, 1921, Charles Zoller mentioned some of the more popular views exhibited at his lectures, noting:

Among the slides in natural colors I made there are some that take the special notice of the audience, such as the great masses of bignonia vines on Beach drive, Fourth avenue north, Roser park and Arlington Terrace. The picture of the pelicans at the dock, which you all remember; and Mirror lake, with the high school in the background; and the Birdseye views from the Plaza theatre roof, all excite the admiration of the people. Another good number is the bunch of grapefruit at Eaton lodge showing seventeen big globes of mammoth fruit on one branch, in a close-up view.<sup>38</sup>

---

38. *The Evening Independent*, "Zoller Boosts St. Petersburg, Color Photography Artist Showing Sunshine City Beauty Views in North," (St. Petersburg, FL), February 12, 1921.



Zoller, in communicating his regrets for missing the 1921 winter season in St. Petersburg due to an injury, relates that he had by that time shown his views of the St. Petersburg area one hundred and twenty times in the North. Zoller further communicates that not only were the images met with great interest, but that, “after each travelogue I had to give interviews as to how, when, where, and which the best place was to go. And as the truth is easy telling, it was St. Petersburg—sure!”<sup>39</sup> As this indicates, Zoller must have felt a great deal for this particular city to speak so highly of his time there. The popularity of the images described by Zoller above is perhaps not surprising. They do, however, leave one to wonder which was of the greatest interest to viewers: the subject matter itself, or the “natural colors” in which they were presented? Whichever it was, the combination evoked much interest.

The novelty of color, and the uniqueness of subject matter so different from the regional scenery of Western and Upstate New York seem to have made Zoller’s illustrated lectures of Florida something of a spectacle in his hometown. In addition, the spectacle of the projection itself, though far from new technology, still elicited much interest. As Zoller himself informs us, some members of his audience used his travelogues to plan their own trips while others no doubt traveled vicariously through Zoller’s images and descriptions, just as readers today can use travel magazines and television shows to visit places without ever having to leave the comfort of their own homes.

No other travel magazine has achieved such steadfast loyalty and renown as *The National Geographic Magazine*. Though Zoller sent three autochromes (non-Florida

---

39. Ibid.

related) to the National Geographic Society in the hopes of having them published, they never were. However, as one of the most recognizable magazines, *The National Geographic* established and perpetuated many visual tropes related to travel. There have been numerous mentions of and articles on the Sunshine State printed in this popular magazine over the years. Two of these issues warrant attention because of their use of autochromes and the years they were produced. Notably, the first underwater color photographs were reproduced in the January 1927 edition of *The National Geographic*. The images featured in this issue were taken off the coast of Florida. The appearance of these underwater photographs in color further demonstrates the region's association with color; black-and-white images of the sea could not do justice to the extraordinarily colorful underwater life. However, there is one other issue that deserves more attention in regards to its coverage of Florida.

The January 1930 edition of *The National Geographic* features forty-one “natural color photographs” that accompany approximately ninety pages of text and images devoted to Florida. Notably, these color images are reproduced from autochrome plates. The feature article of this issue is entitled “Florida—the Fountain of Youth” and was written by John Oliver La Gorce. This main text is illustrated with seventy-one black-and-white images. Interspersed within are sections titled “High Lights of the Sunshine State,” which include the forty-one autochrome reproductions. In this article, the author declares Florida an “odd character,” noting:

On one side, the real Florida: vast, sparsely settled, strewn with fruit and farm colonies, cow ranches, sawmills, turpentine stills, seaports, cigar factories, smelly fisheries, and industries that produce among other things, in commercial quantities, fuller's earth, kaolin, titanium oxide, and—be it proudly said—about 85 per cent of this country's supply of phosphate rock. On the other side, familiar to winter visitors, a strangely different

State. Through long, dull months she drowns and suns herself; yet from December to the Ides of March, gay, boisterous, and bizarre, she affords an astounding spectacle of massed humanity, idle, yet often athletically active, probably without parallel anywhere.<sup>40</sup>

The author goes on to describe both the everyday Florida of commerce, agriculture, and growth, and Florida as experienced and created by winter tourists like Zoller. Just like Zoller, La Gorce devotes a number of pages to Zoller's favorite Florida destination, St. Petersburg. La Gorce describes the Sunshine City as a gathering place for middle-class Americans: "Here flourish 31 different clubs and societies, formed among tourists from various cities and States."<sup>41</sup>

In addition, there are many similarities between Zoller's autochrome imagery of the state and the autochromes reproduced in this issue. Shared tropes in both Zoller's autochromes and the January 1930 *National Geographic* include pools, Mirror Lake and outdoor concerts in St. Petersburg, the sponge market in Tarpon Springs, flowers and other vibrant plant-life, palm trees and citrus. Overall, at least fourteen color images and nine black-and-white images reproduced in the article bear a strong resemblance to Zoller's own imagery of the state. The most notable difference between Zoller's Florida and the Florida represented by La Gorce is that the latter spends some time focusing on agriculture and industry. Still, the Florida represented by both is primarily a Florida of entertainment and leisure paired with progress and growth, even at a tumultuous time in Florida's economic history.

---

40. John Oliver La Gorce, "Florida—The Fountain of Youth," *The National Geographic Magazine* 57, no. 1 (January 1930): 3.

41. *Ibid.*, 22.

## CONCLUSION

*Charles C. Zoller, noted color photographer, returned last night from Florida. He reported excellent success in obtaining pictures of jungles, palms and orange groves.*

- Unknown Author, *Democrat and Chronicle*<sup>42</sup>



Figure 27: Charles Zoller, *Sunset at Palm Beach*, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2098:0018.



Figure 28: Charles Zoller, *At Orange Grove*, autochrome, ca. 1918-1932, 1982:2063:0055.

In this essay I have examined various means by which images of the Sunshine State have been disseminated in color and have compared these common tropes to Zoller's vision of Florida as exemplified by his autochromes. As Anne E. Rowe notes in the introduction to *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*, "Still the idea of Florida persists. In spite of the state's assimilation into the mainstream of American life, the idea of Florida—the subtropical land, the idyllic, exotic paradise—continues to be a powerful seductive force."<sup>43</sup> Even in the days of hand-coloring photographs, color played an important role in promulgating that "seductive force."

---

42. *Democrat and Chronicle*, "Obtains Pictures," (Rochester, NY) Wednesday, March 11, 1925.

43. Anne E. Rowe, introduction to *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 6.

As author and journalist, Mark Derr once wrote, “In human terms, Florida is as much a state of mind as of being, a land of imagination where fantasies come true, although the nature of the dreams, like the land itself, has changed with shifting social fashions.”<sup>44</sup> Yet at least since the introduction of color photography, the visual representation of the Sunshine State has been fairly consistent in subject matter and in promotional allure. Zoller’s autochromes of the Sunshine State were made with a specific purpose in mind, to provide material for his illustrated lectures, most of which were given in his hometown of Rochester, New York. As one of the many snowbirds who flocked to Florida from the north during winter, Zoller played the role of consumer, producer, and perpetuator of Florida’s idealized sense of place. In the words of Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, “Through photographs, we see, we remember, we imagine: we ‘picture place.’”<sup>45</sup> Whether the place we imagine is real or mythical, whether the Eden we imagine is of natural beauty or man-made conveniences, the lure of Florida seems closely tied to its perceived malleability.

Zoller’s Florida lives on in his autochromes—a paradox of untamed wilderness and progress, leisure and business. His “idea” of Florida, utterly unoriginal, was created and perpetuated both before and after his time; Charles Zoller, consumer and producer was just one of the many disseminators of this idealized “sense of place.” As a result, his autochromes of Florida can be seen as simultaneously prosaic in their imagery, and, yet, unique in their rarity as objects.

---

44. Mark Derr, “Prologue,” *Some Kind of Paradise: A Chronicle of Man and Land in Florida* (New York: Williams Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989), 13.

45. Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, introduction to *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003), 1.



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### ***Autochromes***

Bailey, Adrian, and Adrian Holloway. *The Book of Color Photography*. New York: Knopf, 1979.

Coote, Jack H. *The Illustrated History of Colour Photography*. Surrey, England: Fountain Press Limited, 1993.

Lavédrine, Bertrand. *Photographs of the Past: Process and Preservation*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2009.

Okuefuna, David. *The Dawn of the Color Photograph: Albert Kahn's Archive of the Planet*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Roberts, Pamela. *A Century of Color Photography: From the Autochrome to the Digital Age*. London: Andre Deutsch, 2007.

Wood, John. *The Art of the Autochrome: The Birth of Color Photography*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993.

### ***Florida***

Arsenault, Raymond. *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.

Coburn, David R., and Lance deHaven-Smith. *Florida's Megatrends: Critical Issues in Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002.

Hollis, Tim. *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008.

- La Gorce, John Oliver. "Florida—the Fountain of Youth." *National Geographic Magazine* 57, no. 1 (January 1930): 1-93.
- Lanier, Sidney. *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History, With an Account of Charleston, Savannah, Augusta, and Aiken, and a Chapter for Consumptives; Being a Complete Hand-book and Guide*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875.
- Libby, Gary R. *Reflections: Paintings of Florida 1865-1965, From the Collection of Cici and Hyatt Brown*. Daytona Beach: The Museum of Arts and Sciences, 2009.
- Mechling, Jay, Elizabeth Walker Mechling, and Alison Nordström. *Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida*. Daytona Beach, FL: Daytona Beach Community College, 2001. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Embellishing Eden: Hand Painted Photographs of Florida" shown at the Southeast Museum of Photography in Daytona Beach, Florida.
- Mormino, Gary R. *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.
- Roberts, Larry. *Florida's Golden Age of Souvenirs, 1890-1930*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001.
- Rowe, Anne E. *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992.
- Sitler, Nevin D. "Selling St. Petersburg: John Lodwick and the Promotion of a Florida Paradise." Master's thesis, University of South Florida, 2006. <http://purl.fcla.edu> (accessed February 15, 2010).
- Stronge, William B. *The Sunshine Economy: An Economic History of Florida Since the*



- Civil War*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008.
- Thompson, Tommy R. "Florida in American Popular Magazines, 1870-1970," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2003): 1-15.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149273> (accessed March 5, 2010).
- White, J.W. *White's Guide to Florida and Her Famous Resorts*. Jacksonville: Dacosta Printing and Publishing House, 1890.  
<http://www.archive.org/stream/whitesguidetoflo00whit#page/n3/mode/2up>  
 (accessed March 2, 2010).
- Whitfield, Stephen J. "Florida's Fudged Identity." *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (1993): 413-435. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30150390>, (accessed March 5, 2010).
- Tourism and Photography***
- Crouch, David and Nina Lubben. *Visual Culture and Tourism*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003.
- Desmond, Jane C. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. California: University of California Press, 1999.
- Osborne, Peter D. *Traveling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Schwartz, Joan M., and James R. Ryan. *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*. London and New York: I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., 2003.
- Thompson, Krista A. *An Eye For The Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the*

*Caribbean Picturesque*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

***Charles C. Zoller***

“A Business Where Every Prospect Pleases: An Interview with Charles C. Zoller, Color Photographer,” *Rochester Commerce*. Rochester: Rochester Chamber of Commerce (October 24, 1932).

*Democrat and Chronicle*. “Obtains Pictures.” (Rochester, NY) March 11, 1925.

Hager, Michael, Rick McKee Hock, and Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck. “A Portrait of Rochester Through the Lens of Charles Zoller.” *Rochester History* 50, no. 1, 1988.

*Rochester in Color: The Autochromes of Charles C. Zoller, 1909-1930*. Rochester: International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1988.

*Times Union*. “Plan Exhibit of Photos of Florida Scenes: Art Club Sponsor for Showing By Charles C. Zoller, Who Recovers Lost Glasses by Novel Method.” (Rochester, NY, July 9, 1924).

Zoller, Charles C. Letter to the editor. *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL) February 12, 1921.

[http://news.google.com/newspapers/p/st\\_petersburg?id=AakLAAAIBAJ&sjid=sVQDAAAIBAJ&pg=1784,4178921&dq=charles+zoller&hl=en](http://news.google.com/newspapers/p/st_petersburg?id=AakLAAAIBAJ&sjid=sVQDAAAIBAJ&pg=1784,4178921&dq=charles+zoller&hl=en) (accessed April 10, 2010).