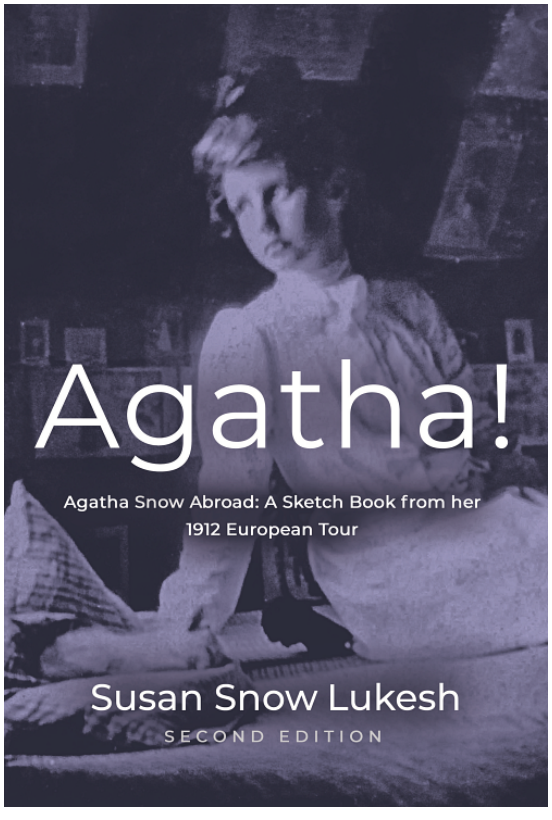

Agatha! presents a sketch book developed during Agatha's tour of Europe with three companions in 1912. It includes her original images and cryptic comments, discussions of the comments, as well as traveling in the early 20th c.

Agatha! Agatha Snow Abroad:

A Sketch Book from her 1912 European Tour - Second Edition

By Susan Snow Lukesh

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This Second Edition, in addition to correcting small mistakes, updates/adds two stories: 1) who was Delano Whistler (Illustration 42) and 2) the last tragic deaths which can be said to be caused by the Titanic with the implosion of the submersible Titan in 2023 (p. 98).

Cover Image
Agatha, captioned "An Artist." From an early 20th century Snow family album of Kodak photos.

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Foreword

Wonderment. Delight. Stimulation. All here, compliments of Agatha Snow and Susan Snow Lukesh. I will call this the most recent archaeological dig by Lukesh whose doctorate from Brown University is in Classical Art & Archeology. She knows how to dig, whether it be literally for broken pottery from ancient Italian sites or, as here, figuratively into the adventures of her Great Aunt Agatha, whom she knew late in Agatha's life. Prediction: you will find Agatha utterly absorbing—and funny; and you'll be grateful to Lukesh for giving her to us.

In truth, we experience here only one episode from Agatha's life early in the 20th century, aboard a ship to—and then on a grand tour of—continental Europe and England and then on the homeward bound ship. We know of it partly through Agatha's words, more of it through the background discovered and set forth by Lukesh . . . and wondrously by way of the cartoon studies created by Agatha Snow. I promise you astonishment as you peruse the drawings: their detail, their humor, and perhaps mostly their intimate size. One after the other, you may find yourself saying some version of: "How in the world...?"

It's exactly right that Lukesh should entitle this work *Agatha!* Bon voyage!

Richard P. Flanagan
Professor of Creative Writing, Babson College, retired

Preface

Travel has been around for millennia—for necessity during times of strife, for migration in times of famine, for work, and finally for pleasure. Long before writing was established, travelers left records, two of which stand out. The first record is of the world's oldest human tracks, a set of footprints pressed into volcanic ash that have lain perfectly preserved for more than three-and-a-half million years and that provided—when found in 1978—the oldest known evidence of hominin bipedalism.[1] The second record is that of Ötzi the Iceman, who lived about 3300 BCE; his remains were found in 1991 on the Ötzal Alps Austrian-Italian border and inform us of diet, clothing, and equipment. His death seems to have been recorded on an ancient stone stela. The decorated stone, of roughly the same age as the Iceman, had been used to build the altar of a church in Latsch, a town close to the area where Ötzi was discovered. One of the carvings shows an archer poised to fire an arrow towards the back of an unarmed man who is running away. We know, after years of study and modern technology, that Ötzi died succumbing to the wounds of an arrowhead embedded in him.[2] In short, man has always been on the move, although what we know of the travels has changed. Over three thousand years after Otzi's excursions in the Alps, Pausanias traveled throughout the ancient world and recorded what he saw, describing the remains of his time—the 2nd century CE—as well as natural formations and events. His work can be considered to mark the beginning of travel journals.[3]

As Jane Robinson tells us in her two books on women travelers that serve as an excellent introduction, there have been sixteen centuries of women's travel journals, beginning with the abbess Etheria's account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Robinson also suggests that women travel writers were and are "a nonconformist race."[4] Limited to travelers on the Nile, Deborah Manley's book informs us of women travelers in Egypt in the nineteenth century, travelers who saw aspects of the country unseen by their male counterparts. Some of the travelers her book showcases spoke Arabic; others wrote of their experiences observing what they perceived as exotic culture.

While many of the women traveling alone before the twentieth century generally were "doing good"—missionary work or nursing—as Karen Jessup indicates, a privileged few "embarked on predictably designed European Grand Tours essentially as a 'finishing' experience, the culmination of their formal educations." Jessup continues,

> From about 1830, with the advent of steam-powered cruising, newly emancipated American women in increasing numbers sallied forth across the North Atlantic, enthusiastic about the possibilities of exploration through recreational travel.[5]

The Preface of Lillias Campbell Davidson's book, *Hints to Lady Travellers at Home and Abroad,* originally published in 1889, tells of a new era for women travelers in which "A thousand conveniences and comforts have sprung into existence to meet the needs of their existence. A thousand new conditions of life have arisen, forced into being by the demand."[6]

Jan Morris, in the Foreword to *Off the Beaten Track, Three Centuries of Women Travellers*, a book accompanying a 2004 exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery, London, wrote:

> Most of all, perhaps, even into the twentieth century, terrific resolution was required of women who wanted to travel – not just on the Grand Tour, or the holiday visit to

> Cannes, but in the more distant, dangerous and mysteriously compelling corners of the world. … In any case, for duchess as for lady's maid, women's travel in the pre-modern world was beset with barriers.[7]

A very recent exhibition at the New York Historical Society, *Artist in Exile: The Visual Diary of Baroness Hyde de Neuville,* with a book of the same name by Roberta Olson, showcases de Neuville's watercolors and drawings made while traveling through seven countries and on the high seas, supplementing the images with documents and letters. These provide a visual record of the early years of the American Republic and its racially and economically diverse population.

Presumably, there are many other travel diaries, most unpublished and languishing in private hands or, at best, in research libraries or archives. The topic, especially travel by women, remains a critical one for understanding both past worlds and the lives of women. Duke University has created a digital repository[8] for over 150 such journals "selected from several archival collections at the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library." Furthermore, "the diaries in this digital collection were written by British and American women who documented their travels to places around the globe, including India, the West Indies, countries in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as around the United States." The Reinier Beeuwkes III Family Collection in R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS has a number of items, three of which are briefly reviewed by Gaia Cloutier—trips from the early 19th c., early 20th c and then one from the 1930s, the latter including images from the author's sketch book.[9]

It should not be surprising then, as I note later, that 1900 saw the publication of Mary Cadwalader Jones's *European Travel for Women: Notes and Suggestions*.[10] It includes chapters on preparation for the journey, on useful guidebooks and other reading material, on crossing the ocean, on the countries of England, France, Germany, and Italy, and concludes with useful phrases and foreign pronunciation. With this book, even the less intrepid could see how they too could experience foreign travel. The publications of *The Scientific American Handbook of Travel*[11] in 1912 and the earlier book by Cadwalader Jones help us see how Agatha Snow and her companions could have planned the trip, how they selected luggage and clothing, and how they traveled to Hoboken to board their outbound ship.

Agatha Snow kept the small, annotated sketch book—the subject of this book—during her three-and-a-half-month trip to Europe in 1912. As an artistically gifted person, she was clearly interested in sketching the people around her and often times adding some text with quotes of these people or her own comments. Occasionally, she drew a piece of the landscape, the window in their Dresden Hotel, some of the boat they were on when touring Lake Geneva, a gondola in Venice, Rotten Row in London. These images bring the journey alive. We are fortunate that the journal includes dates and places when she drew, and so, although there are many occasions of silence, we can recreate most of her journey. She never sought to publish it, and it is slight by comparison with other travel journals; nonetheless, it does belong in the category of travel journals and its sub-category of women's travel journals.

A lesser-known but equally relevant category of travel writing is represented by *Seafarers' Sketchbooks*, in which historian Huw Lewis-Jones collects diaries, letters, and drawings made at sea. Although, as we would expect, most of these materials are the work

of men, there are a small number of compelling stories by women, almost all of whom had disguised themselves as men. A discussion of these women is available online.[12]

Although not a travel journal per se, Regina Shober Grey's diary—cited in Garcey[13] —offers passages when she and her husband were traveling in Europe in 1878. Marjorie Van Wickle's year-long tour of Europe and Egypt, 1903-04, has been reconstructed by Margaret Whitehead almost as if it were a diary—she sent letters home describing what she was seeing and doing, sending postcards that she requested be retained. Whitehead explores this first of what would become many foreign adventures that Marjorie undertook, supplementing text and discussion not only with mementos (menus and postcards, for example) that Van Wickle sent home as well as with paintings that she created on subsequent trips.[14] Finally, I add a publication of the letters sent by a mother and daughter (*Clara and Helen*)[15] describing their months-long tour of Europe in 1906-07 offer, among other interesting accounts, detailed descriptions of the place where Agatha and her companions stayed five years later. The travels of Grey, Van Wickle, and Clara and Helen cover some of the same places that Agatha visited and so supplement Agatha's sparse accounts with some near contemporary reports.

Agatha! was born from a desire to understand more completely the trip that Agatha took in 1912—to fill in the blank spaces around the images of the people she chose to draw and the brief comments that accompany the images. The desire was also to reconstruct as far as possible the trip she and her companions took—where they went, how they traveled, and what they saw and whom they met. To do so with facts, such as train schedules and ocean crossings and knowledge of the families, woven together with supposition and conjecture, is a job much easier than singing the lives of prehistoric people out of the potsherds and stone foundations left behind. Finally, and importantly, this book was born from a desire to celebrate Agatha's artistic skills.

Cheryl J. Fish in her Introduction to *Black and White Women's Travel Narratives,* writes that "as many scholars have observed, at the heart of the Western journey is the encounter with the other who becomes a mirror through which the speaking subject assesses or compares his or her experience of known with unknown." [16]

Certainly, in Agatha's small sketch book we see her representation of some of the people encountered, many clearly different from those whom Agatha may have seen or met before. The brief annotations to her drawings of people make this clear. In July, for example, at a side show at Earl's Court in London she saw and then sketched portraits of a very tall male and a very short female, writing, "This little lady and her elder brother are children of perfectly normal parents. What's the matter?" She enhances the image of the two by presenting the dynamic levels of the young girl's crying out, presumably for her brother—*pp* for pianissimo, *mf* for molto forte, *cr* for crescendo. In short, she presents an image and adds "sound" in the form of musical notations. See in Illustration 80.

Although Agatha was well educated—as references in the journal attest—and could clearly write, her preferred mode of expression is the image accompanied by a comment, often humorous, sometimes even biting. Unfortunately, all we have left, in addition to her sketch book, are two letters she wrote to her niece's young son in the late 1940s—they included small drawings to accompany what she had to say (see Illustration 86, p. 89 in *Agatha*!) When I consider her use of images for communication or remembrance or story-

telling, I am reminded of a time when I was visiting good friends and early one morning found their two- to three-year-old son intent on creating and filling in a piece of paper on which he had drawn grid lines, cartoon-fashion. I asked him what he was up to, and he responded, "Drawing my dreams." Without written language at that point, he resorted to a natural talent. It's not surprising that almost three decades later, pursuing a career in graphic arts, he was delighted to comment briefly on Agatha's sketches.

> In an economy whose functioning depends heavily on words, anyone with the ability to depict life through imagery, especially by means of handcrafted techniques, could be considered a mogul of sorts. The commonly known valuation of a picture at about one thousand words seems accurate, at least for Agatha's time, which make her drawings less like ornamentation and more like nuggets of descriptive gold, capable of portraying vastly more information than anything less than a lengthy verbal account. Her written notes can often seem coded by the rapidly shifting labyrinth of cultural trends and linguistic references of the recent past, but her drawings return us to the more vivid perception that a detailed image can endow and greatly aid in capturing moments which were, at one point in time, the cutting edge of the present day.[17]

Prologue

On the appointed day in early November 1911, Robert Snow Jr. and Oliver Prescott Jr. hid behind the black horsehair sofa in the parlor of Sarah Hunt Snow's house on Orchard Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts. The sofa was formal and uncomfortable to sit on but provided an excellent hiding place for two thirteen-year-old boys. Soon Arthur Willis Blackman was escorted into the parlor where he waited for the arrival of Constance Snow, oldest child of Sarah Hunt Snow. Having secured her mother's approval, Arthur was there to propose marriage to Constance.

Oliver, who would later serve as lawyer for Sarah until her death, picks up the story, when he wrote in 1980 to Robert Snow's widow, shortly after Robert's death.[18]

> Together we hid behind the huge sofa in the West portion of Mrs. Snow's sunny parlor upon which Arthur Blackman arrived with a bouquet of violets and was proposing to Constance Snow, all dressed up, pretty as a picture and flushed with excitement and then [we] popped out at what we considered a psychological moment and shouted "Boo!"

Constance's daughter, my mother, would often tell the story of Agatha, younger sister of Constance, who took to her bedroom for a week after the proposal. Was she sulking because she wasn't getting the attention? Or was it because she imagined the attention that her older sister would get during the engagement and wedding? We have no way to know, although my mother came down firmly on the side of Agatha's no longer having what she thought was suitable attention. Oliver attests to Agatha's personality in his letter when he describes the family over a half century earlier:

> I remember Agatha with artistic gifts, capabilities and a difficult personality; Edith – warm and with rather horrendous homeliness; and little black-clad Mrs. Snow – alive, wiry and high-strung – who used to call me at my office: "Oliver! This is your old trouble Mrs. Snow. I must see you!" Long ago and far away!

Ultimately the difficulties of living with Agatha forced Sarah to ask her to leave the family home and find her own place to live in New Bedford, from which she continued her work as an interior designer and decorator. Agatha was an artistic and bright yet difficult young woman; thinking of her today evokes *The Sound of Music*: "How to solve a problem like Maria?"

Indeed, how to solve this problem of Agatha after her sister's engagement? Focus Agatha on something that is hers and will consume her energy and time, leaving Constance to the world of engagement parties and plans for the wedding and her future married life with lawyer Blackman. And so, we surmise, a plan was hatched to send Agatha and companions to Europe for three months. From this problem and Agatha's artistic gifts, the small travel sketch book[19] remains to provide one picture of 1912 Europe and to assist in tracing the trip from mid-April to early August 1912. It continues to show us her creativity, providing enjoyment and amusement, and education, well over a century later.

60 Postcard: Bois de Boulogne

A postcard available to Agatha at the time offers an image of a scene reminiscent of what she sketched, and Addison described.

61 Café Riche Ladies
Sketch Book: Lower Page 35 (130%) Paris

Café Riche
–
6/7 '12

Café Riche,[73] founded in 1785 by Madame Riche, was a Parisian restaurant located at the corner of Boulevard des Italiens.[74] Around 1847, Louis Bignon bought the restaurant, which had had become run down, for the sum of one million francs. He enlarged it in 1865 and made it a luxury restaurant, with elaborate dishes, great wines, and high prices. Café Riche closed in 1916 to make room for a bank. Our travelers visited it with only a few years of its life to spare. In fact, the block of Boulevard des Italiens from house numbers 2 to 18 (Café Riche was number 16) was demolished due to the extension of Boulevard Haussmann in 1924.

The women in Agatha's sketch are wearing elaborate hats and the one smoking seems bored. Please note, as visible in the enlargement of the Café Riche sketch, that Agatha provides some interesting detail, not readily seen in the image until enlarged—that is, in front of the woman on our left, is a small box labelled powder, its cover on the table. In her right hand is a powder puff with which she dusts her right cheek. Is she holding a mirror in her left hand or reading a note from an admirer? This attention to detail, even in the exceedingly small detail, recalls her detail on the champagne bottle on (Agatha Illustration 15). This leaves us with the question, how did she see these ladies to capture the image? Perhaps in a ladies' lounge, on break.

62 ca. 1905 Postcard: Entrance to Café Riche

Epilogue

Now that we have followed Agatha and her companions through more than three months in Europe and attempted to answer the questions her images and comments provoke, it may have become clear to some readers that I have followed Thornton Wilder in his desire "to pile up a million details of daily living … it is the business of writing to restore that sense of the whole."[106] As an archaeologist myself, I concur in his opinion—drawn from his formative experience studying archaeology in Rome—of the archaeologist's eyes:

> An archaeologist's eyes combine the view of the telescope with the view of the microscope. He [or she] reconstructs the very distant with the help of the very small.[107]

As an archaeologist, I attempted to imagine past lives through what remains, taking seemingly mundane items—broken pieces of pottery—and proposed reconstructions of the lives of people thousands of years dead. And I suggest that this attempted reconstruction of Agatha's 1912 European tour has taken seemingly small mundane items and events and worked to restore a sense of the whole. As indicated earlier, to restore a sense of the whole with facts such as train schedules and ocean crossings and knowledge of the families woven together with supposition and conjecture is a much easier job than singing the lives of prehistoric people (with no written records) out of the potsherds and stone foundations left behind. I suggest that these activities and my archaeological work imagines and assembles and reconstructs histories or past lives from the fragments we have been left. And this reconstruction of stories allows us to honor the dead and their lives.

As a teen-ager I was struck by a quote by Evgeny Evtushenko with which, even at that age, I profoundly disagreed, yet had no idea what course my own interests would take. I used Evtushenko's words as an epigraph to a poem I composed from a story my grandmother had told me—a poem that was in direct contradiction to Evtushenko, who wrote "They perish. They cannot be brought back. The secret worlds are not regenerated." I share that school-girl poem here, honoring my grandmother, Constance, who, after all, is the older sister of Agatha and whose engagement apparently caused the plan to send Agatha to Europe, without which we wouldn't have this sketch book of parts of Europe 1912. I suggest that both a reconstruction of Agatha's trip and, after Constance read a previous poem of mine now lost, her sharing the story of her father waking her in the middle of the night and describes

an Olympian,
autumnal moon. Below, across, above,
untamed geese, arrow-strict, divide the night

prove that, in some fashion, parts of previous lives can be brought back and parts of their worlds regenerated. So today, as a genealogist, I continue to work to regenerate parts of the worlds of the four centuries of my ancestors in this country.

My Mother's Mother

"We who knew our fathers
in everything, in nothing.

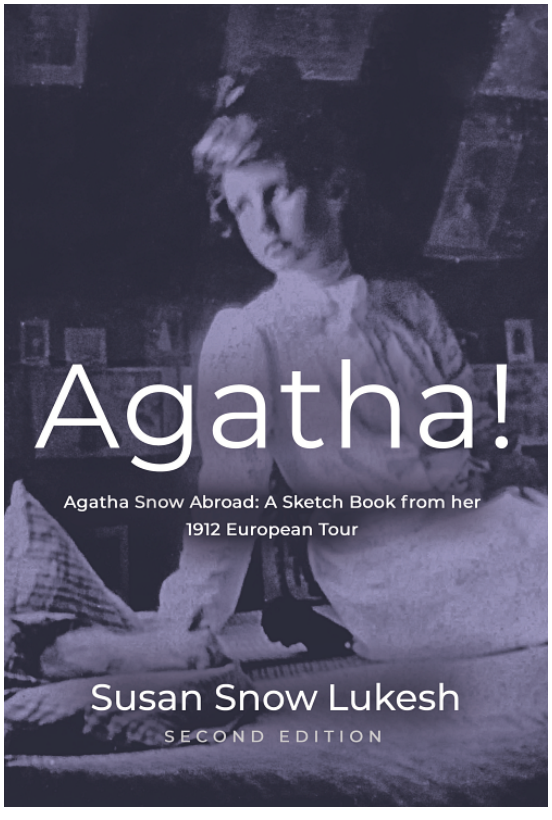
They perish. They cannot be brought back.
The secret worlds are not regenerated."
Evtushenko

Braced by an arm against the cherry desk,
Invincible, though old and stooped and deaf, she speaks.
She's young again with memories and thoughts:

Asleep, my father gently bids me wake,
(Words and year are blackened spaces in my mind,
This moment though brought back by your poem.)
Now at the stair window I press my face
and see through wispy topaz clouds – chased
by windy phantoms – an Olympian,
autumnal moon. Below, across, above,
untamed geese, arrow-strict, divide the night.

Her voice drops off, there's nothing left to show …
The young girl ages swiftly and disappears.
The picture, though, inspired by my school-girl's poem,
is no longer hers alone,
and transmits a corner of her world to me,
an ungenetic immortality.

1963



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