

Nan's 1934 European Diary

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Introduction

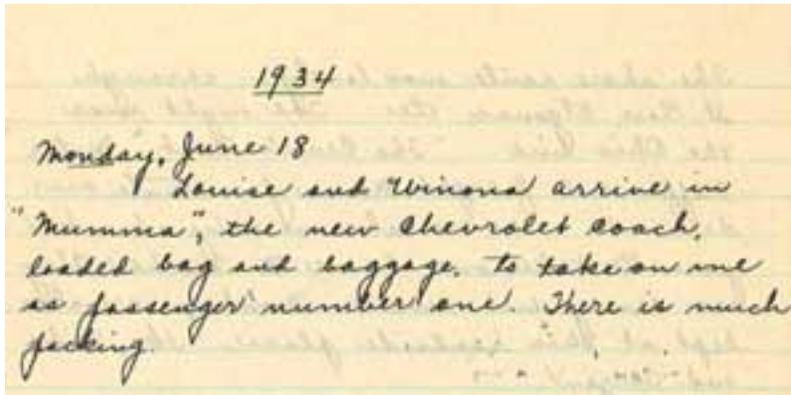
This is a slightly abridged and serialized version of Nan's 1934 European diary. If the school where she was teaching had been able to pay her on time every month, she probably wouldn't have made the trip -- but this was the year of the bank failures, and she got almost a whole year's salary in the late spring. Her mother (wise person that she was) said, "Don't fritter it away. Do something special with it!"

At the time of this trip, "Nan" was Nettie A. Riedel, teaching school somewhere in Michigan, and staying summers with her parents in Minden City.

Part 1: United States and Canada

In Part 1 Nan is driving (and camping) with some friends to meet her ship, the Laurentic, in Montreal.

June 18



Louise and Winona arrive in "Mumma", the new Chevrolet coach, loaded bag and baggage, to take on me as passenger number one. There is much packing.

June 19

The start. Mother -- bless her -- loads us up with cans of fruit, pickles, jam, and tomatoes, besides a couple of dozen eggs and a bag of potatoes. It doesn't look possible, but my things and me really go in the car. I get a \$10 boat gift from Mother and Dad. Always too generous, the darlings. I hope I can find something nice for them. They wave me off. There is a lump in my throat and my eyes sting a little. The last picture I have of home from the top of the hill is the little green valley with the thriving well-tended garden. Mother kissing Dad goodbye beside the garage . . . "There's no place . . ." And no people so sweet as they. At Port Huron, after the beautiful lake drive, we pick up Edward and Alton. A bit of shopping. On to Detroit. A couple of flat tires. Night near the Ohio line . . . "The Crow's Nest." Motor traffic and freight trains punctuate our dreams. We are shown baby skunks: Ike, Mike, and Tarzan.

June 20

Agricultural Ohio -- ripe cherries, green peas, wheat that is coloring. The country looks prosperous. Few signs of the much-advertised drought here! Lake Erie not so blue as our Huron until we reach pleasant Cleveland. On around to Niagara Falls -- a "forced march" to reach Niagara before sleeping. Midnight or later! A late pitching of camp at the edge of the city.

June 21

A rather late rising. Our hostess serves us coffee and toast, which we appreciate -- with gusto. We don't make a practice of buying our meals "out," so this is a treat. The Falls! The sight loses none of its grandeur for having been viewed (and heard . . . especially Heard!) the night before. We treat ourselves to the soaking at the foot of the American falls. A pleasant young Canadian who has been repeating the experience one time after another tells us what to see in Canada. Our first experience with the characteristic reddish hair, complexion that accompanies that hair, and English accent -- so throaty -- that we discover later to be rather typical of Canadians. We camp in a Canadian orchard, with a pleasant hostess who keeps up her whole establishment in a manner that reminds me of my mother. There are three kittens and their mother cat, who eats our meat scraps.

June 22

We cross the line into Quebec, and find at once road signs in two languages. Wondering whether the French on the signs is to impress the tourist, we discover that the English is a concession to him. We follow the St. Lawrence through lots of little villages. In one we pass a convent garden where five or six nuns are picking strawberries. Several girls in black sateen and wearing stiff black hair-ribbons walk up and down the street, reading books and conversing in French. The priest in an odd black hat sits on his porch. Like all the countryside from here to Montreal, it is French -- not Canadian -- and charmingly old-world. We camp on the bank of what we first suppose to be the St. Lawrence, but discover later to be the Ottawa, which meets the St. Lawrence farther on. Mosquitoes -- ants -- spiders. A strange sound -- Hogs? Cows? Geese? Bullfrogs!



June 23

A hot, sunny morning. The bullfrogs are still "lowing." A pleasant drive along the St. Lawrence brings us to Montreal at about noon. We drive along the shipyards on arrival, but don't see the Laurentic. I report at the Windsor to Miss Cull and then go to the shipping office where I claim my ticket and bid the campers farewell.

The coming-aboard later in the day was thrilling. Really walking over the gangplank! The band playing! Hustle and bustle of many people coming and going and saying goodbye. Boxes of flowers and candy. Packages of boat letters. Telegrams.

My blessed family remembered me every one. A telegram from Paul and Dorothy carrying also Mother and Dad's love. Letters from Ray's Al's, and Louie's. Flowers from Al's -- a dozen red peonies along with pink roses and sweet williams.

We sat on deck, where the captain, strolling by, stopped to talk with us (!). And then to bed, very fearful of oversleeping and missing our departure -- so fearful that we could hardly sleep at all!

Part 2: At Sea (Eastbound on the *Laurentic*)

In Part 2 Nan experiences life aboard the *Laurentic*.

June 24

But 5:30 came at last and I hurried on deck to be sure to see everything. As we left the dock a black cat fled down the deck toward where the gangplank had been, meowing piteously. The poor creature was distracted, her heart pounding. A sailor told me she came from Liverpool with the *Laurentic* -- some time ago. At Montreal she left the ship to take up Canadian residence, visiting the ship when it was in port there. This time she had been put aboard because her Canadian sponsors were leaving and feared she wouldn't be cared for. But she was frantic over the deportation. Shanghaied! Poor kitty!

At 11:00 I attended church services in the first-class lounge. It was very impressive, the panoramic view of the Quebec side from the window bearing witness to our graceful, dignified progress down the river. The ship has a stately air that I like. It was an Anglican service. When we sang "God Save the King" I sang the words to "America." Purposely.

At 4:00 my letter-writing was interrupted by the deck steward bringing tea -- a nice little wicker tray containing a teapot full of black (of course!) tea, a bowl of loaf sugar, a pitcher of cream, and a cup and saucer and plate. Then bread and butter, sandwiches, and cakes. We get much service. Our beds are turned down for us, even! Won't we be spoiled!

June 25

I awakened refreshed after a grand night's sleep, early enough to anticipate the bath steward's 8:15 call. The luxury of that bath! A large tub nearly full of salt water, besides a small one on a board across the foot of it. The salt water feels lovely -- I hadn't expected to like it. Then the nice towelled foot-board to step out on, the towel-padded seat on which to sit, and the lovely big, rough towel with which to dry. Surely Solomon in all his glory . . . I was dressed just comfortably in time for breakfast.

Bouillon at eleven followed close on the heels of breakfast, and then quoits on deck. Mr. Danielson beat me -- and his score was no record!

There has been a rolling, very noticeable. Barbara didn't feel well before dinner, and Romaine was really ill. The motion made my head incline to ache, but I walked it off in the brisk air.

Frances and I, on the lounge steward's advice, slipped up to A cabin to see the moving picture, *Carolina*. Yesterday several of the girls were asked to leave there after slipping by the barriers. We didn't get ousted, and enjoyed *Carolina* very much.

June 26

The fog is thick enough to cut, and is blowing in wisps onto the deck. There is a wintry chill in the air. We progress very, very slowly, with our ship's whistle calling out mellowly at frequent intervals. The room steward tells me -- apropos my remark concerning the mellowness of the fog whistle -- that it is called the Canadian nightingale, because it is always heard around the Canadian coast.

After lunch Father Neptune obligingly lifted the fog for a time. We gained speed and had the pleasure of iceberg hunting. Our total at 5:00 was seven large ones and a baby one. In spite of the a long-sleeved sweater under my blouse, my "winter

underwear" and my vest, I was still frozen nearly stiff when we finally came in -- champion deck-sitters-in-the-fog. At 6:00 the steward knocked to tell me about the newest and largest iceberg yet. It was right on our route, so we had to go around. It looked more snowy than icy -- I had expected them to look transparent.

June 28

A short morning sit on the deck was rewarded by the coveted sight of two schools of porpoises. A long afternoon's sit produced nothing but a view of the shanghaied cat, who appears to be almost as unhappy as she did Sunday.

And now we furrow our brows over exchanging our money. For a \$10.00 American Express check, I receive \$7.00 in Canadian and American bills, 3-1/2 crowns, 1 florin, 1 shilling, and 2 sixpence. Roughly, I seem to be exchanging at about a 2% loss. And thus does foreign exchange cease to be a term and become a vital issue! It's very interesting but complicated to one of my unmathematical inclinations.

Yesterday afternoon I wouldn't have minded some definite and useful work to do. I can see how one might tire of idleness, tho it is the thing we yearn for in crowded hours. But this is good to realize, as I do, now (I knew, before, but now I realize) -- that wealth spoils the fun of scheming, planning, exertion. It would be tame after all to be able to live like this always with no necessity for planning ways around circumstances. Idle hands soon become weary ones.

Mr. Cocker, our delightful steward, who would be so perfect a butler, has learned how much we can eat and what we like. Two desserts are getting to be the order of the day. We all like him so much -- for his manner, you know, not just because of the food. We were as well fed, perhaps, with the steward who served us first, but there is something about Mr. Cocker's personal attention to individual likes that makes his service altogether delightful. He is an artist in his profession!

June 30

At 5:00 a very pleasant concert by the orchestra. It filled up a hole I hadn't even quite realized was there. Was it the concert or is it the voyage that has given me a perspective of all that is past? Both. One has the opportunity of seeing and summing all that has gone before it, and things loom distant, as they do not ashore and nearer them.

Concert followed by a dance, before which (at 11:00!) we saw the last of the sunset colors behind us. Over Ireland the moon is shining, covered by clouds. Tomorrow we pick up the pilot.

The voyage has seemed very short, looking at it in retrospect. And yet home and everything past is far away, long ago, and scarcely real. Which is more real: the "strange interludes" we're now experiencing, or general sober and less romantic living? We're so many people, and so many things happen to us. (By which you may judge that it is bedtime -- and past!)

Part 3: England

In Part 3 Nan disembarks in Liverpool and visits England.

July 1

At 4:00 this morning there was the glorious rose color of sunrise just beside a cloud bank.

At 10:00 we came up from breakfast to gasp with delight at sight of the green hills of the Mull of Kintyre at the entrance to the Clyde.

At 6:00 pm the tender and ship separated at Greenock. It was rather touching -- we sang Auld Lang Syne and felt quite lumpy in the throat.

An Irish newspaper announces a revolution in Germany. I wonder what that means.

11 pm: The light is out and I'm writing on the port sill by the daylight that still remains. The sky is still blue, and behind the clouds you can still see the sunset colors. There is at least two hours more of daylight here than at home. Just think! Writing indoors at eleven o'clock at night without any artificial light!

July 2

At 5:00 I awakened -- probably because we arrived at Liverpool and the motors stopped. From the porthole I could see docks, ships, towers, and sunshine!

Smell of horses -- odd, high horse-drawn cabs. Auto cabs with hard tires, enormously high bodies, brass lamps, and soprano horns (bulb ones!!!) quite like our old Maxwell. Customs -- all very easy. Opened one bag, but it was undisturbed. Train to London. Square brick houses -- hundreds of chimneys. Neatly bricked streets, colored curtains -- all colors. Gardens instead of grass in front of the houses. Red roofs. Chimney pots. Hedges. Cloudy now. Is all this happening to me?!!

Coal mining. Smoky. Poppies in wheat fields. Rugby! Gas street lights. Flower boxes on hotels. Spacious rooms. Beds turned down. Quilted down comforter. Late supper. Bed -- welcome!

July 3

I think I heard the sounds of London through my sleep, awakening for good at 8:00 -- about time!

Our salt at breakfast was not in shakers but in a small dish with a tiny spoon for serving. The sugar was in a shaker. Fruit is placed last on the menu, so I suppose is regularly served so, and "buttered toast" brings me toast with the butter separate. Butter is not served at meals except for an extra charge.

July 4

Bought a pig for Wishy [a niece], socks for Dad, lavender perfume, and wool rugs -- 2. One a gorgeous wine-red lined with gold, the other blue-purple with plaid lining. [Note from Anna: One of these existed until only a few years ago -- what quality!]

It seems dreadful that so many of the memorials we see -- grand and beautiful -- commemorate war -- slaughter. God help us to grow civilized! So may beautiful and noble deeds we might commemorate -- and many we do, of course -- but so may more we might do, too if the time, money, energy, and man-power we squander killing each other were turned to finding beauty -- love -- God.

Evening at His Majesty's Theatre in Haymarket St. to see Noel Coward and Yvonne Printemps in *Conversation Piece* -- a flawless performance. She was unbelievable light and airy -- he excellent. The costumes were beautiful. The whole evening was delightful. Coming out we almost ran squarely into Leslie Howard and Charles Farrell. I looked up into Leslie H.'s face and was so thunderstruck to see a familiar face that I didn't see Farrell at all.

July 7

Tired from so much walking. Rest the blistered heel and pack. Spend what spare time there is changing my money into Belgian coin.

At 2:00 we left the hotel for the depot, en route to Dover and Ostend. On the train we met our first discourteous Englishwoman. We were put out -- literally bag and baggage! -- out of our compartments by a lady with much bust and breath. A very kind gentleman found us in his compartment, where we had taken refuge, and most politely permitted us to remain.

On the steamer to Ostend! Up on deck the wind blows a gale. It felt delightful after the heat and the soot of the train. I went up to get my head cleared and to enjoy the view of the chalk cliffs -- a sheer rise from the peacock-blue of the sea of white cliff topped by green sward on which perch a little village, spilling down a green slope to the sea.

Many sailboats around Ostend. We disembark amid a great deal of fuss and splutter and running of porters. Jackie wonders how the Germans ever got into Belgium past the customs!

We bought post cards and the nice proprietor of the store helped us straighten out our change. Belgian stamps are immense!

Part 4: Belgium, the Netherlands (Holland), Germany

In Part 4 Nan travels through Belgium, the Netherlands (Holland), Germany, Austria, and into Switzerland.

July 8

Awakened at 6:00 from a nasty dream that Paul [Nan's brother] was hurt, and that all the school kids were calling "Miss Riedel, Miss Riedel"!

I dressed and hurried out to see Ostend. Narrow streets, brick pavement -- uneven and hard to walk on -- a floral clock -- an old bell tower with souls in purgatory depicted in stone statuary behind grating -- flames in evidence!

Followed church bells to cathedral. Went in. Service in progress. Chairs all turned away from altar with worshippers kneeling on seats of chairs, facing the chair backs and the altar. Why?

Continental breakfast -- rolls (with butter) and coffee so strong I shuddered after each swallow.

Eight o'clock. We leave for Middleburg, Holland. A dog cart. The first windmill. Cement houses with few windows -- often blank sides. Grain drying against fences evidently built for the purpose. Country almost perfectly level -- no large trees. Cycling path. Even priests ride bicycles. Country not prosperous-looking.

Dutch border at 9:30. Flags at half-mast. Funeral today for Queen Wilhelmina's prince consort. Princess Juliana was being entertained at the Duke of York's following a visit at Buckingham Palace when we were in London.

We set our watches back 20 minutes, Dutch time being that much slower than Belgian and English time.

Trees all trimmed very high -- lower branches used as firewood. Branches bound and piled in stacks in yards. Thatched barns. Poppy fields under cultivation. Opium.

To our relief we drive on right side of road again. Red, white, and blue flag, tho no stars!

Real Dutch costumes. Real gold ornaments around women's faces, and real coral beads.

Dinner in the hotel. No salt or pepper shakers. Immense forks and spoons, as usual. Food in large dishes, served family style. Tasty beans, the first since home. An excellent dinner, tho many left the "cream of wheat" dessert.

July 9

To the lace shops. Bought 1 handkerchief -- 17 francs 50 centimes (about 87 cents). Saw some rose point lace in progress of hand-manufacture -- beautiful, delicate needlework. Takes 14 days to make very small piece about 4 x 8 inches. Rosaline even more delicate -- handkerchief with rosaline corners \$45.00 -- and worth it. Counted over 200 bobbins used in hand making.

Around 3:30 we leave for Cologne. I'm excited about getting back to the *Vaterland*. It's thrilling to be coming back to the land of one's forebears. I love it already! Now I wish I could go to see the Schreiters and Kneschkes and the places where my mother and dad's people came from. Lovely, lovely scenery!

5:55: Herbesthal. The German border! *Wir sind nun in Deutschland*. The fields are marked off by hedges, as in England, but everything is delightfully green. Evidently less drought here. Gorgeous red-berried bushes all along -- red elderberry?

Lots of excitement. Customs officers come through. Everybody buys oranges, drinks and chocolate out the window. Two friendly-sounding German officers come thru to ask whether we have any foreign newspapers. One of the officials gives us a radiant smile as we all hang out the windows over the platform.

Coming to the hotel is somewhat like coming home. Everything looks and smells clean even from the door. Our beds are supplied with 2 featherbeds -- both to cover with.

Excellent dinner -- 3 vegetables (besides potatoes) and salad -- and second helpings! And the vegetables tasted different from each other and like what they were!

And -- best of all -- the glorious *Dom* with the European blue (almost Maxfield Parrish) sky behind it -- and a star pinned in one peak!

July 11

Miles of vineyards climb straight up the mountainside along the Rhine bank. Hitler *Jugend* on the road. All German boys wear shorts, it seems. They look brown and healthy, and both boys and girls walk with swinging stride. They are well behaved on the street in their groups.

July 12

Groups of children of all ages with adult guide -- some Hitler *Jugend*. *Wie freundlich* everyone is: all answer our waves with smiles.

July 15

Pouring rain. Passion Play at Oberammergau. How tall and straight the choir members! How excellent the orchestra and voices! How do they do it?

We collect autographs. I, too, tho I think it an imposition. But for the close view of the actors I'm glad. Both Christs looked the part -- Anton Lang especially -- gentle, kindly -- the perfect Christ.

July 16

Still raining! The bus is steam heated and provided with robes.

The other bus is struck by a swerving truck. We meet the bus driver walking toward us all excited and bring him back to his bus where we find people throwing broken glass out. One girl's arm is cut. The truck has disappeared.

The reverse gear refuses to work and since we have gone slightly by our corner, here we are! (The delay was about an hour and a quarter.)

2:30. The Austrian border, marked by a pole across the road (with a line of red lights in the middle of the pole). A few minutes ago we passed a man with a pailful of the immense snails we observed back where we stopped.

We stay the night in Lucerne at the Carlton Tivoli. The bus draws up under a wisteria-covered arch. Such delightful fragrance.

Part 5: Switzerland and Venice, Italy

In Part 5 Nan tours Switzerland and arrives in Venice, Italy.

July 17

Breakfast on the terrace facing Lake Lucerne and Mt. Pilatus behind it. There is mist over all, but it is a pleasant morning. Some birds with little encouragement share my breakfast, even boldly lighting on my table.

Went shopping. Priced carved wood, ivory, and music boxes. Sun out -- lake a glorious peacock blue. Mountains still in mist.

To the *Hofkirche* to the organ recital. Two or three numbers good, but too much noise to please me for the rest. And such uncomfortable seats that I didn't really find the hole music fills at all satisfied by the experience. I'm sorry I didn't let Lake Lucerne and Mt. Pilatus be my inspiration.

Dinner, and then a walk at the lake. I sat and watched it -- lovely view, with lights on the mountains opposite, and the extravagant addition of a new moon and a star.

Much late packing, and finally in the comfortable, springy bed about midnight, ready for an early start. Through the open window we smell wisteria.

July 18

Breakfast on the terrace, shared with the birds, as yesterday.

St. Gotthard Pass first. The mountains rising sheer above us into the blue, blue sky sends a real thrill down my spine. Early in the day we saw a monument to Schiller -- a stone shaft rising just out of the water. Small stream rushes down to meet a larger one. We nearly squash a good-looking man in a roadster. We go around a curve that looks as tho the bus must break in the middle to make it. Teddy and I pay a little boy 25 cents apiece for 5 Edelweiss flowers. More switchbacks ahead and behind. Climbing a 20% grade. We'll be at 9000 feet at the top. Bluebells growing out of clefts in rocks. New flowers in magenta clusters. My admiration for our careful driver grows and grows.

Stop for lunch. We pick alpine flowers -- a dozen varieties of them. The cowbells are musical in the clear air. An alpine horn -- feet long -- adds to the atmosphere.

We drop about 4000 feet before beginning the Grimsel Pass. Lovely waterfall next to the glacier. At every turn it seems the bus must break in the middle to get around. We feel as tho we're "hanging over the edge" while cars pass. How can the driver drive? He must have nerves of steel -- people even yelling at him. I left my nerves at the mouth of the St. Laurence and even farther back.

We're at the top of the Grimsel. It doesn't seem high! I'm disappointed. It would be fun to keep on going up and up forever.

About 6 o'clock at Interlaken. Letters from Mother, Glad, Evelyn Miller, and Gertrude Scott, and a card from Edith Fitch. In our room we find that by sticking our heads out the window we can see the Jungfrau.

July 19

Left Interlaken by train. Between tunnels lovely views of the Jungfrau.

11:00. Italy. Customs. Handsome uniforms -- Italian green with feathered hat and also a navy blue one with red epaulettes, trouser stripes, and a sword at side.

At Stresa, the heat hit me squarely in the stomach. And after lunch -- a good one -- I felt limper. I wanted to at least sit on our delightful balcony, but the bed claimed me for 2-1/2 hours. Wakened feeling fresher.

I had my first taste of fresh fig at lunch. Tasted like cucumber to me. Miss Rowe said it wasn't ripe enough. The fruit here is delicious -- temptingly served in beds of leaves.

After dinner, feeling fresh and comfortable in the cool of the evening, we started for a walk in the garden on the lake front. Then Ann, Jackie, and I, who hadn't seen the town, left the other three to do so, stopping just out of the garden to yield to the temptations of a buggy ride. A half hour ride showed us "the village." It was fun.

July 20

Yesterday as we came into Italy we saw olive and fig trees. Last evening in the hotel gardens Miss Rowe pointed out coconuts growing on a monkey tree.

We were awakened by thunder and rain at 5:45 a.m. Got up to prepare to catch a 7-something train.

Milan. Cathedral. Brown- and black-clad monks. Soldiers with Napoleonic hats. Ladies with black lace for head coverings in church and on street.

Everywhere an air of careless disrepair -- cement flaking from houses. Tho there is much municipal work going on -- building, paving, etc. Washings hung in windows everywhere.

Lunch at the depot. Red wine -- sour, like all the other we've had. Spaghetti. Train to Venice.

The countryside looks totally deserted -- almost no one out, wooden (Venetian) blinds drawn -- and the houses all look as tho nobody had lived in them for 10 years, anyhow.

Beautiful Lago di Garda comes as a surprise in the middle of this hot afternoon. It looks like the pictures in folders: blue lake, tile roofs, misty mountains ("not high at all," says Mr. Staal).

We note that only one side of a house is painted, usually. Few of them are painted at all, many looking old and dingy -- remains of what once was white. (If not old, they look it.)

We have passed thru Verona (Miss Cull told us about the sad state of Juliet's tomb) and Padua.

Beginning with the elevator boy last night and continuing all day today we have been stared at in what to us seems a rude and rather insolent way. I don't mind ordinary curiosity at foreigners, but this is such a head to toe, toe to head, unabashed and unanswerable a gaze that is does make me bristle a trifle.

Sometime around 4:00 shutters began to show signs of opening -- a few. Italy is certainly dead thru the middle of the day. It is now nearly five, and growing a bit cooler.

I don't think I ever was dirtier. Something ought to be done about using all this waste coal instead of decorating the passengers -- lung and limb -- with it!

We "disembark" from the train and have a hot walk with heavy baggage, coming out . . . oh, fun! on a canal, where a row of gondolas awaits us. We "taxi" to the Bauer Gruenwald in three gondolas -- under the Rialto Bridge, through canal after canal.

We find that our room is not facing the Grand Canal, but we have a bathroom, which in our gritty state is almost to be preferred. We soak and dress for seven o'clock dinner only to receive the sad news that we don't dine until eight. I spent the intervening hour writing cards on a balcony over the Grand Canal.

After dinner we went to St. Mark's Square to hear a symphony concert. It was very pleasant out in the open in the cool of the evening, listening to the music and hearing the clock in the bell tower strike, as well, eating ice, and watching the throngs of people in the square.

To bed -- under a canopy! In Interlaken we still slept under down covers or feather beds. Now it's a canopy -- rather hot and (I imagine, maybe) dusty-smelling affair, but another experience.

July 21

We have breakfast on the terrace over the Grand Canal. Some birds -- sparrows and pigeons -- come around for crumbs.

At 9:00 we go sightseeing, beginning with St. Mark's Square, where first of all we see the Moors atop the bell tower strike the hour -- 10:00. First one Moor strikes all the strokes, then a minute later the other strikes them. The clock has twenty-four hours on the face as well as the signs of the zodiac. Above the clock, the Virgin and child in gold, above them, the golden lion of Venice -- on top, the Moors and their bell.

Next the Church of St. Mark's and then the Doges' Palace.

After lunch we bought Florentine change purses and Dodo's [Nan's sister-in-law Dorothy] mosaic bracelet.

Then we went a-sightseeing in a gondola.

To sleep to the tune of the bells of St. Mark's campanile and the chiming of the clock in the tower, under the canopy!

July 22

Was awakened by the bells of St. Mark's at six. Left the hotel before seven and heard what sounded like dozens of canaries singing from windows all down the street. Yesterday I heard several Carusos singing lustily -- one a boy of 15 perhaps. The Italian does sing -- it's pleasant to hear -- and isn't bashful about it either. In fact, he isn't bashful about anything. He's so self-assured that he's arrogant.

We were -- and still are in many places -- more annoyed than amused at the way we were stared at. On the train men would stand in the door of our compartment and stare without their gaze flickering. One watched me with that unwavering gaze while I pulled my bag down from the carrier, opened it, put some things in, closed it, put it away, and bounced down on the seat with a look that would have scorched a gentleman of any other nationality -- but it didn't disturb him in the least.

The elevator boy in Venice not only stared but also escorted us to or from the dining room with arm on elbow or around shoulders. It got so we decided not to use the elevator, but when Elizabeth and I started up the stairs we got totally lost in the rambling old hotel and had to inquire of a maid, who led us to the elevator and rang for it!

Part 6: A Visit to the Pope in Rome

In Part 6 Nan visits the Vatican and kisses the ring of Pope Pius XI.

July 23

[From July 23 through 25, Nan and her group toured Rome. The tour included Chapel of the Medici, various art galleries, the Coliseum, and the Vatican. At the Pantheon, Nan says, "I was a little disappointed to find another Christian church instead of a pagan temple, which it formerly was." She also mentions that she was disappointed to have to leave Rome without doing more rambling among ruins: "I was especially sorry not to see inside the Coliseum by daylight." Another of her comments was the following: "Italian horses are the boniest creatures I ever saw, and I can't bear to hear the whips cracked even when the horses aren't being whipped, as they often are. Italians surely don't love their beasts."]

July 26

Apparently left my suit skirt and white silk blouse -- and I'm pretty sure two pairs of stockings as well -- in either Interlaken or Stresa. Spent half the morning before 11:00 writing back about them. During the rest I made a dash thru the tunnel to what I hoped was shopping ground seeking a doll & bracelets, but found neither.

At 11:30 we were all in the lobby dressed in white or black -- I wore Miss Rowe's black satin with the white bow taken off! -- ready to start for the Vatican. A mad scramble at the little shop where we rented veils and bought religious goods -- then in. Walked thru the long colonnade to the entrance where our cards were presented. The Swiss guards at the entry were gorgeous in costumes of vari-colored stripes. Up many flights of stairs, stopping at the top of one to be examined by two women. Heads and arms must be covered in all churches in Italy, and for papal audience this is enlarged upon. The veil instead of a hat. Dark clothes -- Miss Cull said either all black or all white must be worn, but there were many there in other dark colors.

More flights of stairs, until finally we reach a room lined with waiters-for-the-papal-blessing. We are led by a lackey dressed in crimson with ribbons hanging from his tight hose (at the calf) through several of these rooms until we are seated in one where the closed shutters and drawn curtains make the room dark -- but cool and quiet -- a relief. We sit for a long time -- from 12:30 until about 1:00. Then we are led into the next room by a very rotund lackey and lined up standing around the wall.

There is a crimson throne here covered with crimson canopy. The walls are covered with crimson damask fastened down with gold braid. Another long wait. While we sat, people kept sweeping through the room: a man with a crimson cape floating behind -- a man in gray with cape floating behind -- soldiers with gleaming brass helmets like Caesar's own, with sword clanking at side. Finally we find seats -- if we can -- behind us to wait some more. More walking back and forth.

The lights were turned on. At last came the signal, and accompanied by a crimson-clad cardinal the Pope [Pope Pius XI] entered. He was dressed in white -- I believe with a touch of gold embroidery. His sandals or slippers or shoes -- or whatever -- were crimson. His face was good, but I thought him bored with the audience. He passed quickly around the room presenting his hand. Each took it and kissed his ring. He stopped here and there to say a word to someone who had been called to his attention by the cardinal, and one or two spoke to him asking special blessing on rosaries or other articles. He said little -- making some motion. I couldn't tell whether he gave the desired favor or not. When he had made the circuit he spoke and then went out. That constituted the papal blessing, which then rested on everyone and everything present. I had bought a rosary, and I wore some pins.

While we were awaiting the Pope, Frances Calvert spoke with a Mrs. Mahoney next to her whose husband had been one of 3 representatives at some conference in Paris. She knew from a press representative that Dolfuss [Engelbert

Dolfuss was dictator of Austria from 1933 until he was killed by Nazi agents in 1934] hadn't been immediately killed, but was injured.

July 27

We rise at 6:30 to catch an early train. At breakfast we hear that Italian troops have been ordered to the Austrian border by way of precaution. Mrs. Dolfuss is said to have been in Italy visiting the Mussolinis, and the Chancellor was to have come today. I don't see quite how Italy is concerned by it, Dolfuss being Austrian and having been shot, so I hear, by German Nazis, but Mrs. Calvert says that the lady in the shop yesterday (Italian) said, "Oh, everything is all mixed up here." The nations lie too near one another in Europe.

Lovely blue Mediterranean at our left all day. We struggled several hours with Raffaele Da Rosa's Italian, French, and German. A fine-looking young fellow of not-yet-22 (born December 5, 1912), who looked American rather than Italian. Conversated about the Austrian situation. He explained in pantomime why Italians stare (heart on fire!).

Arrive Rapallo about five, or so.

After dinner saw a whole procession of singing children marching -- Mussolini's little charges arriving for their seashore excursions, I expect. They remind one of the young singing, marching Germans.

Had to ring for extra blankets tonight! On the Italian Riviera in July!

Part 7: France

In Part 7 Nan visits Monaco (Monte Carlo) and France.

July 28

Cross over into France without doing more than holding up our passports. No baggage examinations. Wave to the "blue devils" (soldiers).

We go to Monte Carlo in the evening. Inside, it was hot. It cost 10 francs entrance to gaming rooms. People were there in everything from beach pajamas to evening clothes (only one or two of the latter). There seemed to be only two games in progress -- roulette and a card game. It was all very quiet -- tho I'm told there is never any excitement in the playing. Left at an early hour to watch the moon on the water.

There was mail today -- Sal, Phyl, and others.

July 29

Breakfast at 9:00. The worst coffee I've had. Walked to the market -- yes, on Sunday. The sight of asters made me homesick.

After lunch -- spaghetti again! I thought we had left Italy behind! -- we started for Avignon. A very long, very hot train trip, almost as dirty as going to Rome. Along the way we saw a forest fire on the mountain side. It looked quite fierce with flames leaping thru black smoke.

The men don't stare any more. They stopped as soon as we had crossed the French border.

After dinner we walked a block or so, but soon returned to the hotel and got to bed. *Private Life of Henry VIII* was on at the movie, and I'd have liked to see it, but it was after 10:00 when we got away from table (where the Siamese cat ate our too-rare meat for us) and I was tired. So I washed my face twice and soaked it in cold cream, had a bath, and retired -- gratefully.

We have learned that Marie Dressler is dead. Oh, so too bad! [Marie Dressler was an Academy-Award winning Canadian actress, who died on July 28, 1934.]

July 30

Somebody had the amusing notion of wakening us at 7:00 for an 8:15 breakfast -- and we didn't even have our big bags with us last night! I expressed my gratitude by going right back to sleep, under the illusion that I really was awake, thus giving Elizabeth a chance to wake me -- a totally unprecedented occurrence. I can see I'm flagging.

We are all getting tired. This morning some of us were short, some impatient, some stubborn -- it's well we're nearly to the ship.

The soot is dreadful. I shall write a book entitled *Europe Thru a Smoke Screen*.

When a few of the girls left for the dining car, some of the boys standing outside the compartment came to beg prettily to be allowed to use the vacated spaces until the girls should return. We consented and soon thawed a great deal under the English which they spoke. Soon after we were having the jolliest train ride of the summer. There were altogether 50 boys -- 25 French and 25 German, in France under a sort of exchange system. All 50 would go to Berlin in two days.

The boys were very nice young fellows. It was interesting to observe that altho we had sputtered about their trying to come in previously where there "obviously was room for only 8" we found room for 11 inside quite easily and even eagerly, and didn't find it any hotter with another half dozen filling up floor, doorway, and even perching on the bar across the window in the aisle opposite our door!

They sang so very well -- enthusiastically -- German, French, and American songs for us, we joining in when we could, and once or twice singing for them. Our singing sounded rather feeble compared to theirs, partly in contrast to the number and strength of their male voices as compared to our fewer female ones, but largely because we in America certainly do not sing so much or so well as Europeans -- especially Germans, I think -- and perhaps Italians -- do.

Gert Friedrich was the 6-1/2 or 7-foot blonde, blue-eyed, friendly-looking young fellow who sat next to me. His height reminded me of Stanley Gebhardt, and something about him made Jackie very homesick for her Bill. The enthusiastic song-leader Wilhelm Koehler developed a very sudden and obvious "crush" on dear little Bobbie. It was showing interest under difficulty, but he got her address and the promise of an answer and exchange of photographs from her, and reprimanded Gert's attempt to usurp his (W's) "right" to help her put her coat on. I can't help admiring his taste. Bobbie is the sweetest member of the party -- pure gold all through -- the kind of youngster you'd like for your daughter. I admire her immensely. I'm sure her people need never worry about her, for she's the type who has so much the right sort of principle by inheritance that she would always rise above every undesirable thing. She's a darling and we all love her.

Elizabeth tells me that her (Bobbie's) mother (and Miss Cull says her father) are the same type. Mrs. Kirschmaier was the daughter of a wealthy family and ran away with Mr. K. -- a real love match which has lasted. And money won't spoil Bobbie, I'm sure. I know they must all be fine, that family.

With singing and talking the long day of riding -- from morning at Avignon till dinner time (or about 7:00 . . . excuse me! 19:00) at Paris -- the day was gone too soon. I didn't see any of the French country, really. We left the boys promising to see them the next evening at the opera. But we didn't!

In the evening we went to an Arabian coffee house where we had Arabian coffee at little tables with copper, brightly-polished tops. The coffee, served *demi-tasse*, looked black. It was very sweet and tasted much as the ground coffee smells. I liked it, until I got too near the powdery sediment at the bottom, which was too strong. We drank to the tune of Arabian music, which sounded rather awful to my Occidental ears. It was made on an instrument that looked like a large vase with skin stretched over the bottom in place of porcelain. A large pipe with long tube leading into a porcelain vase was being passed to someone as we went into the shop. There were lovely Morocco leather things there, as well as jewelry and perfume.

The next place was an "Apache den." It was crowded and smoky. There was a two-piece orchestra, one instrument being an accordion. The oddest sight was two men dancing together, one of the men with a plain mongrel dog on his arm. We had wine -- not so sour as that we had in Germany and Italy, and so more to my taste. It was of course not a very high-class place. The walls were decorated with cartoons. One man, apparently drunk or foolish, bothered some of the girls asking for dances. There was a red light on the street, and the neighborhood seemed rather in keeping. Miss Cull was grabbed on our way back to the bus.

The next stop was a night club, Bal Taborin, which was said to be one of the best in the district. Nothing was said of the district! We arrived just as the floor show was beginning. There was dancing and performing by girls who might have been beautiful once, but who no longer were, in my opinion. Their faces were hard, and they looked somewhat bored. They had very hard, muscular bodies and wore costumes ranging from articles that covered portions of their bodies to nothing at all. The dancing was a little startling in spots, and quite suggestive in many, but less disgusting than some I have seen -- the county fair last summer, for instance.

Around one o'clock we went to the market. It was most interesting to see all those tons of food brought in to feed Paris. There were basketfuls of mushrooms, piles -- neatly and mathematically arranged and pyramided -- of lettuce heads, cabbages, cauliflowers, baskets of lovely-looking tomatoes, cunning tiny baskets covered with leaves -- probably full of berries (I was shouted at when I tried to see for sure!). There were leeks, the inevitable beans, fish, meat, and then the flowers -- long avenues of them.

At two o'clock we went back to the hotel. I shampooed, had a shower, and retired at 3:00. Really quite a full day.

July 31

I spent the morning alone, shopping. I developed an acquaintance with the Rue de Rivoli, the Rue St. Honore, and the streets between those and the Rue Lafayette, finally buying the two dolls and two bracelets I've hunted Europe over for.

In the afternoon we visited Versailles.

In the evening, in spite of good resolutions to stay home and launder, I joined the group going to the Folies Bergeres. Lulu got us a box directly in front of the stage, and we had a fine view of everything. The curtain rose on a Christmas tree decorated with women garbed only in a silver star or a bit of tinsel placed in the orthodox place. They didn't display any enthusiasm for their jobs! It was a long bill, lasting until about midnight. The veil dance was the most suggestive, the lady being wound up in and unwound from half a dozen veils, ending finally with the "king" in a most compromising position on a bed. On the whole, I enjoyed it. In any case, it was another experience.

Part 8: At Sea (Westbound on the *Olympic*) and Home

In Part 8 Nan sails westward across the Atlantic on the *Olympic*, and greets her parents who have driven from Michigan to meet her.

August 2

Slept as late as I dared and spent the morning packing, finishing just in time for lunch and afterward the train for Cherbourg.

When we got to Cherbourg, we saw no *Olympic* [the trans-Atlantic ship]. Discover we're to be taken out by tender.

On tender. Very windy. Someone's hat overboard. A very kind German man lends us his glasses with which to spot our ship sailing majestically up to outside the harbor. A very thrilling sight to see her four stacks appearing mysteriously out of the mist. How graceful she is! How quietly she slips along!

The high winds make coming along rather difficult. The gangplank slips in and out of the opening. But -- we're aboard!

She's a noble ship. Luxurious lounge and drawing room. Elevators from deck to deck. Good library -- much better than *Laurentic*. Our stateroom much larger than our other was. Two clothes closets. Indoor swimming pool. The youngers claim it's very small, but it's large enough, I think. Lots of space to walk round and round the deck.

The baggage is unloaded, finally. A screech from the tender. A long, low, mellow whistle in answer from the *Olympic*, and the tender goes ashore. We start up -- slowly at first. We watch the French shore for a brief while, but the dinner bugle sounds and we must go below. A most excellent dinner. By the time we come up -- about 9:00 -- only the lights of two lighthouses can be seen. We're well out at sea and making good time. I unpack dresses and retire.

August 3

Awakened about 8:40. The dead dark of an inside room makes for long hours of sleep. The long-awaited treat -- oatmeal! And with cold milk. Toast and jam and coffee. My, how good!

Gala dinner in the evening. Balloons -- noisemakers -- decorations. Dance after. Danced in mixed affairs. Asked a man with burned face for lady's choice. Danced another one with nice Dr. Stevens of Cranbrook, our table neighbor. Pleasant evening. Still windy, but the ship is certainly steady.

August 6

Did I mention the Stevens couple from Cranbrook who are our table neighbors? He's a gentleman and she's a lady. A lovely pair, who win my heart chiefly, I think, because they look as tho they care for each other.

This noon Romaine received the news that her father couldn't meet her. It upset her awfully. Mary Shick telephoned her father ashore and learned that a new Buick awaits her and her father will come aboard at quarantine tomorrow. Must be nice -- trip to Europe -- \$500 spending money -- a new Buick on return -- all at age 18! But I wouldn't trade with her. I'd rather be I with what I have at 27!

August 16

[Nothing in the diary about the landing, but apparently Nan's parents either picked her up or met her somewhere along the way. Another possibility is that she returned home, and then they started out again for a trip to New England via Niagara Falls. The following was written in Niagara Falls.]

Such hoards of people we could hardly see the falls. Didn't like it. Late supper, not good. Long walk to illumination, which we couldn't see from the American side. I was irritable -- I am ashamed to admit it.

August 17

Weather cool and pleasant. Beautiful driving all day. Prosperous, well-kept farms for the most part, well-painted, well-planted, clean towns, beautiful mountains. Better start, better day, but Mother is very tired tonight. She's homesick, too. I hope she sleeps better tonight. Dad, too, did not rest well, but did cat-nap during the day. Did over 250 miles today. From now on we shall cover less and see if they can get more rest. What we don't see we can live without. I'd like above all to take them back rested and remembering pleasantly, not frazzled, weary, and wanting never to go again.

[This was the last entry in the diary. Nan didn't go to Europe again until 1955 -- 21 years later. On that trip she was accompanied by her husband John, sister-in-law Bets, and daughter Anna.]

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