Consumers’ Imperium

The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865–1920

Kristin L. Hoganson

The University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill
Girdling the Globe

The Fictional Travel Movement and the Rise of the Tourist Mentality

In November 1869, a young reporter employed by the New York World set forth on a dash around the globe, intent on matching the feats of the fictional Phileas Fogg, the main character in Jules Verne’s Around the World in Eighty Days. Writing under the by-line Nellie Bly, she sent back thrilling dispatches chronicling her race against the clock. In the suspenseful stretches between cables, the World ran sensationalized reports of the dangerous conditions she would encounter. It offered round-trip passage to England and spending money to the person who could come closest in guessing the time of her return. The idea of a young, unescorted woman, sprinting around the world with only a valise in hand caught the imaginations of many of her contemporaries. Newspapers across the country covered her story. Sales of the World picked up outside New York City and fan mail poured into its offices. Cosmopolitan magazine sent a competitor. Elizabeth Bisland, on her own round-the-world jaunt, to see if she could best Bly by traveling in the opposite direction. She could not, for Bly made good time, seeing little other than the passing views from trains and steamers. As she crossed the United States on the final leg of her journey, crowds cheered her at her whistle stops. She arrived home after seventy-two days, six hours, ten minutes, and eleven seconds underwater. But Bly did not stop moving. She published a best-selling book on her travels and embarked on a forty-week lecture tour. Clothed in the dress she had worn around the world, she regaled her audiences with stories of her adventures. The globe-trotting Bly became a symbol of the spunky independence of the
late Victorian New Woman and the compendium of time and space in an age of railroads, steamships, and transoceanic cables. Despite the World's insistence on the novelty of her feat, Bly was not the first American woman to circle the earth. Nor was she the first to pen an account of her round-the-world adventures. Her predecessors included Ellen Hardin Walworth, Lucy Seaman Beinbridge, and Anna P. Little, who published books on recently completed trips in 1877, 1882, and 1887, respectively. Bly's well-publicized feat preceded still more round-the-world tours by American women. Those included Eliza Orchard Comer, a journalist who circled the globe in 1890; Mabel Loonis Todd, who related her adventures in a 1901 issue of Club Woman; and a pair of "plucky newspaper girls" who set off in 1905 after arranging with several American newspapers to send back syndicated articles. Those who warned that all this globe-trotting was coming at the cost of domesticity could take heart from reports that two years into their trip one of the "girls" married a U.S. Army lieutenant stationed in the Philippines, leaving the other to continue on her own. Natives notwithstanding, world tours challenged the assumption that women's place was in the home. Recognizing their value to the cause, suffragists Maud Wood Park and Carrie Chapman Catt jumped on the bandwagon.

The gimmick refused to go away. In 1905 Travel Magazine chronicled the trip of a New York woman who drove around the world in her motorcar, racking up 20,000 miles on her odometer and exhausting five sets of tires. In 1908 Good Housekeeping sent Madeline Z. Doty on a journey around the world that took her to Japan, Russia, France, and England. In 1910 Beinbridge published Jewels from the Orient, an account of her second round-the-world expedition. For total number of miles logged, Jessie Ackerman surely held a record: she completed the trip six times. Most globe-girdling women preferred leisurely schedules to Bly's whirlwind pace. But in 1911 a group of Chicago women circumnavigated the globe in forty minutes, with no luggage at all.

The women did not really travel the world, of course. They did so imaginatively, with the help of stereographic slides. In so doing, they participated in a virtual movement. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tens of thousands of U.S. women organized themselves into travel clubs. Most of these women never boarded a ship. But all of them met on a regular basis to listen to travelers and present travel briefings. Although many club members did their own research, others hired expert leaders or adopted commercially prepared curricula. To enroll their tours, club members presented special programs with music, national foods, costumes, decorations, and dances. Women who studied Germany leaned on Berliner Pfeilhuchsen, sauer Gurken, and heisse Wieserwurst. A group "touring" Spain sampled Burgos soup and Madrid tamales. To "add interest" to a lecture on Persia, a Chicago-area club decorated its meeting rooms with lamps, rugs, and "other articles of Persian manufacture or design."

The members of one club made souvenir scrapbooks, complete with photographs, engravings, and colored pictures, to record an imaginative journey. The most common destinations for these clubs lay in Europe—especially Great Britain and France—but after covering the beaten European track, many clubs ventured further afield, to Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and North Africa, and sometimes on to destinations such as Australia, the Congo, and Guam.

Imaginary travel clubs show that the around-the-world movement involved more than a handful of globe-trotters and that it was more than a media production. Armchair travel helped give globe-trotting a popular purchase that extended beyond the small number of individuals who actually circumnavigated the earth. The late nineteenth-century fascination with travel helps explain why Bly became such a sensation and how the feats of world travelers permeated the wider culture.

The fictive travel movement also speaks to a central concern among those who wish to historicize globalization: the origins of global consciousness. When did various groups begin to situate themselves on a planetary scale of being? How have people conceived of the world far beyond their localities? What contributed to more geographically expansive world views?

Like the foreign foods and entertainments that made a distinctive mark on American domesticity, the proliferation of armchair travel clubs suggests that global consciousness gained a significant hold among white, middle-class American women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These clubs reveal an awareness of substantial swaths of the earth and some notion of how disparate places were connected to each other. They show the importance of leisure travel, even among people who never left the country, for spreading geographic knowledge. They testify to the ascent of a culture of international travel and the importance of women in advancing this culture. Furthermore, imaginary travel clubs illuminate the spread of a tourist mentality, something that intersected with anthropological, governmental, missionary, and commercial outlooks on the wider world but that also had its own distinct emphasis. In sum, the imaginary travel movement contributed to the rising global consciousness of the era, and it influenced the nature of such consciousness by advancing consumerist appraisals of the world.

How widespread was fictive travel? In her 1898 History of the Woman's
Club Movement in America. Jennie June Croly reported that of the eighty-three clubs in the Minnesota state federation, ten were "distinctively travel or tourist clubs." Others took on travel topics from time to time. In 1920 the report by the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) listed travel along with civics and sociology as one of three leading topics studied by affiliated clubwomen. By searching the records of the General Federation from its inception in 1890 to 1920, I have found more than 50 affiliated clubs with a travel emphasis or travel department (see the appendix of travel clubs).

But this number greatly understimates the total number of women's travel clubs, for most women's clubs did not or could not (in the case of African American clubs) affiliate themselves with the segregated General Federation. Furthermore, the GFWC's records are not fully forthcoming. Published registers provide club names but contain no information on club activities. Unless I could find specific information on the contents of club programs, I counted only clubs with names such as Travelers' Club or Tourist Club. Yet many clubs that embarked on imaginary journeys did not label themselves as travel clubs. The Thursday Literary Club of Selma, Alabama, discussed "foreign cities"; the Ladies' Literary Club of Kalamazoo, Michigan, enjoyed a trip through Mexico. The tendency for large clubs to divide into smaller sections also makes it difficult to pinpoint the number of clubwomen embarked on fictive travels. For most GFWC posters did not elaborate on the doings of travel and other subgroups.

That many clubs with travel themes did not identify themselves as travel clubs becomes particularly clear if we go beyond GFWC records. Most of the women's clubs that adopted the Bay View course—a travel-oriented study course that came with an informative magazine, readings lists, and exams—did not label themselves as travel clubs. Among the 203 clubs that signed on to the Bay View program in 1903 were the Ottawa, Illinois, Progressive Club; the Heaterville, Mississippi, Women's Club; the Galena, Kansas, Shakespeare Club; the Greenville, Texas, Saturday Culture Club; and the Butler, Nebraska, Happy Home Reading Circle. In 1903 about 8,000 people—the vast majority of them women—belonged to clubs that followed the Bay View Reading Circle programs (ILL. 4.1). As the group set forth for Greece, the editor of the Bay View Magazine excited in the magnitude of the movement: "If every Bay View club were an ocean steamer, the residents of Athens would view with wonder and perhaps alarm, on the first morning in May, the presence of nearly five hundred ships in their harbor of Piraeus." By 1914 the number of Bay View reading circle members had risen to 35,000, an estimated 95 percent of them women.

Further complicating efforts to quantify the number of travel clubs is the question, What counts as armchair travel? If we return to the records of the General Federation, we find that art, language, history, literature, and current-events clubs all had touristic inflections. The English Literary Club of Bridgeport, Connecticut, had "occasional evenings of travel"; the Shrewsbury Reading Club of Easton, New Jersey, intermingled tourist trips with its study of literature and music. Though identified as an art and history club, the Society of Art and History of Cleveland characterized its 1898 program as a flying trip through Holland. The same tendency held true for African American women's clubs: Anne Meis Knapfer has found that African American women's literary clubs in turn-of-the-century Chicago took up a range of topics, including travel.

Even if we added history, literature, art, and other clubs to the total, we might still undercount the number of imaginary travelers, for general-interest clubs also got caught up in the travel craze by tackling travel topics now and then. The New Century Club of Philadelphia, which brought in native teachers of French and German, also sponsored talks on travel in Spain and Africa. In 1898 the Hut-House Woman's Club offered a series of lectures on foreign cities; in later years it continued to sponsor travel talks. The Official Register and Directory of Women's Clubs is full of similarly named clubs—the Cosmopolitan Club, the Tuesday Club, the Study Club, the Self-Culture Club, the Wanderers, the Peregrinators, and so forth—that may have focused on travel or taken up travel topics in some meetings. Although it is impossible to pinpoint the number of women who participated in the fictive travel movement, it is safe to say that tens of thousands joined in from the 1880s to 1920.
Travel clubs sprang up from Alabama and Arkansas to Montana and California. But the densest concentrations lay in the Northeast and Midwest—in states such as Ohio, Minnesota, and New York. The Tourist Club of Minneapolis can provide some insights on the type of women who joined it. Was founded in 1851 by Martha C. Wells, the valedictorian of the Rockford College class of 1866. Wells married in 1872 at what struck her family as the late age of twenty-five. After living in Michigan, she moved to Minneapolis in 1880. She had two daughters, one of whom died in infancy. Not overly pressed by maternal obligations, Wells turned her considerable energies and talents to art education. She contributed to magazines, prepared club programs, organized a traveling art library, and taught courses in private schools for girls, the Minneapolis Art Institute, and Hamline University. She visited several world’s fairs in the United States and, although she had never been outside the country upon the founding of the Tourist Club, later made four trips to Europe. On the last three, she accompanied parties of women, lecturing to them in the galleries they visited. In 1910 Wells became state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She also held leadership positions in the Minnesota Federation of Women’s Clubs and served as president of her church’s missionary society.13

In a reflection on the history of the club, one member recalled that Wells had insisted on keeping it exclusive:

And some—alas—were not admitted—
Through all the years they should be pitied.
But Sister Wells was adamant;
And cried—You see we really can’t
Let people in who have not class.
We’ll say to them—You shall not pass.
We’re sorry but we clearly see
You haven’t quite the family tree.
And then perhaps—too sad—we find
You have not quite that master mind.14

Who struck Wells as fit to include among the charter members? Isabella Reid Buchanan made the cut. The daughter of a schoolteacher, Buchanan graduated from the Fond du Lac high school in Wisconsin and taught primary school for sixteen years. After marrying in 1881, she moved to Minneapolis. She organized Bible classes and wrote several books on the women of the Bible. She too held offices in the Federation of Women’s Clubs. A eulogist remembered her as being a student all her life and as having a passion for maps. She preached female self-assertion insomuch as she admonished the

women who presented their papers audaciously to “speak out boldly.” Once she made a three-month trip to Europe.15

Another charter member was Elizabeth Fish, a niece of Yale University president Noah Porter. Born in Green Farms, Connecticut, she moved to Minneapolis in 1880 but demonstrated some nostalgia for her birthplace by joining the Colony of New England Women. She also belonged to the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Women’s Christian Association, and the Congregational Church. Like Wells, she graduated from Rockford College in Elgin, Illinois. Her husband practiced law and later served as a judge. She had four daughters, one of whom became a high school principal, and a son. Like Wells and Buchanan, Fish belonged to the local elite. These women were able to hold their meetings on Monday—wash day—because they employed laundresses.16

How typical were the Minneapolis Tourist Club members? With its DAB affiliations and transatlantic travelers, the Minneapolis club seems more exclusive than many others, but travel club members do appear to have been overwhelmingly native-born and white. Despite their interest in foreign countries, travel club leaders apparently did not seek out immigrant women as members. Nor did they admit women they considered to be colored into their clubs. When a Chickasaw woman established a Bay View Reading Club in Indian Territory, the Bay View Magazine played up the news value of this unusual event by describing it as “most interesting.” It then went on to characterize the founder as “a refined and educated person,” presumably to dispel the suspicion that an Indian woman would not be.17 Although some African American women’s literary clubs took up travel topics, the only African American women’s club devoted primarily to travel that I have been able to locate is the Oak and Ivy Club of Springfield, Ohio, which toured China in 1898. Rather than entertain themselves with imaginary international jaunts, African American clubwomen were far more likely to make real travel a priority by protesting the Jim Crow laws that restricted their mobility and denied their full humanity.18

What about class status? Like the members of the Tourist Club of Minneapolis, many travel club members belonged to the local elite. Founding members of the McGregor, Iowa, tourist club included the Oberlin-educated wife of the school superintendent, the wife of a carriage factory operator, and the wife of a lawyer. A member of the Bay View travel club in Sioux Rapids, Iowa, described her group as “twentys of the city’s best women.” The roster of the Chamberlain, South Dakota, Travel Club reads like a who’s who in local society—the founder, Susan Laughlin, was the wife of the mayor. Other women were married to a postmaster, judge, drugstore
owner, hardware store owner, banker, and storekeeper. Yet travel club members could not always take their lofty social position for granted. The roster of the Chamberlain club included farm women and ranch women. The only member who had traveled outside the United States had gone to Scotland to meet her immigrant husband's family. These women were pillars of their community, but they were not women of leisure. One member, Cora Watson, joined the club before she had children; two years after giving birth to her first child, the demands of managing her household caused her to stop coming. After her children had grown, she moved to a nearby reservation where she ran a family store and pumped gas. Just as the Chamberlain club members knew what it meant to work for a living, many Bay View Reading Circle members supported themselves as teachers.

As these examples suggest, most travel club members were busy homemakers and workers. Unlike the Minneapolis Tourist Club members, with their multiple memberships, many travel club members do not appear to have belonged to other women's clubs. They regarded the time devoted to club activities as precious time carved out from their daily routines of housework, tending to the needs of others, and, in some cases, earning a living. Yet even the exceptionally privileged members of the Minneapolis Tourist club had to defend themselves from charges of neglecting their homes and families and stepping outside their sphere. Despite their ability to hire domestic help, their travel club commitments meant that their families sometimes had to make do with shredded wheat and milk for club night dinners. One tourist club program booklet hints at how hard women had to struggle to make time for club work. "If you gain fifteen minutes a day, it will make itself felt at the end of the year," it counseled. And for the really pressed: "Resolve to edge in a little reading every day, if it is but a single sentence." Travel club members congratulated themselves on trying to the challenge. "All will bear witness to the excellence of the papers given," ran the annual report of another travel club, "and when we remember that this work has been done by busy women—wives, mothers, heads of families, each with manifold duties incumbent upon her, the Travel Club is indeed to be congratulated that among its members there are so many ladies not only willing, but competent, to interest the company gathered here from week to week." Travel club members regarded their journeys as hard-earned breaks from daily obligations, their programs as a source of pride.

Historians who have written on the women's club movement that burgeoned at the turn of the twentieth century have emphasized the late nineteenth-century rise of clubs devoted to cultural matters and the twentieth-century ascendance of clubs devoted to civic betterment. They have not explained the proliferation of travel clubs, however. What explains the attraction of imaginative travel to women who could only read a sentence at a time? Why did busy women systematically set about pretending they were tourists? Raw escapism—the desperate desire to flee the dirty dishes, the crying children, the demanding husbands for the most distant reaches of the earth—no doubt played a role. But art and literature offer their own escape. So why travel?

One explanation is that travel club members were enticed by commercial agents who sold professionally prepared imaginary study tours. This began with the John Stoddard Travel Service. Stoddard was born in Bridgwater, Massachusetts, in 1850. He graduated from Williams College, studied theology for two years at Yale Divinity School, and then taught Latin and French in the Boston Latin School. After touring Europe, Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt in 1873, he began a career as a travel lecturer. In the 1880s he started to pen travel accounts as well. By 1898 his lectures were available in a ten-volume set, covering Norway, Switzerland, Athens, Venice, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Egypt, India, Japan, China, The Passion Play, Paris, France, Spain, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Rhine, Belgium, Holland, Mexico, Florence, Naples, Rome, Scotland, England, London, California, the Grand Canyon, and Yellowstome Park. Over the next thirty years, Stoddard revised and reissued his lectures a number of times. He also published several folios of photographs and supplementary volumes on Canada, Malta, Gibraltar, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, South Tyrol, the Dolomites, Sicily, Crete, and the eastside. Stoddard marketed his books as study guides for future travelers, as souvenirs for returned travelers, and, most importantly, as substitutes for those unable to travel. That he assumed a budget-conscious readership can be seen in promotional statements trumpeting the low cost of his volumes. His use of traveling salesmen to sell his books also suggests that he sought to reach a wide market. These agents had much to gain by encouraging the formation of travel clubs. Women who could not afford the entire series might cover part of the cost if they could persuade some of their friends to join them. Salesmen could reap a bonanza if each member of a newly formed club purchased a set. If in some cases the purchase of books sparked the formation of a travel club, in other cases existing travel clubs adopted Stoddard materials. Stoddard's popularity derived not only from his marketing efforts but from his compelling presentations. His vivid recollections of his touristic experiences and lavish use of photographs (at least one per page in his lecture series) encouraged his audiences to imagine themselves
in foreign destinations [ill. 4.2]. Preferring colorful anecdotes to dry analysis, he made travel seem enticing.

One of the travel lecturers who followed in Stoddard’s footsteps was Burton Holmes. Born in Chicago in 1870, Holmes became a travel buff at age nine, when he accompanied his grandmother to one of Stoddard’s lectures. Seven years later, his grandmother took him to Europe, where he was thrilled to see Stoddard in the lobby of a German hotel. An accomplished photographer, he presented some of his travel pictures to the Chicago Camera Club in 1890. Club members suggested that he mount his negatives as slides and show them to the general public. After short-lived ventures selling real estate and working as a photo supply clerk, he obtained financial backing from his family to travel to Japan. Using material gathered on that trip, he began his career as a professional travel lecturer in 1893. At first he toured the Midwest, but when Stoddard retired Holmes established courses in eastern cities. In 1897 he enlivened his talks by adding motion-picture clips—running about twenty-five seconds each. (These depicted Italians eating spaghetti and other exotic sights.) His well-to-do audiences paid around $1.65 a ticket and came attired in evening dress.

In a 1904 lecture tour in England, he started using the word ‘Travelogues’ to describe his entertainments. By 1919 he appeared annually in New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Milwaukee, Saint Louis, and San Francisco, giving from ten to twenty performances in each city. Truly peripatetic, he spent five to eight months of the year traveling the world to gather material. Like Stoddard, he published his lectures in lavishly illustrated volumes. The fourteen-volume set released in 1920 (consisting mainly of reprints of earlier volumes) included lectures on Morocco, Cities of the Barbary Coast, Athens, Egypt, Italy, Switzerland, Paris, Berlin, Norway, Sweden, St. Petersburg, the Trans-Siberian Railway, Peking, Seoul, Japan, Manila, Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, Buenos Aires, and Over the Andes to Chile. Ultimately he sold more than 40,000 copies of his lecture series. The rave review offered by one fan, New York resident Mary E. Smith, can help explain his appeal: “Mr. Holmes charms you and retains your attention while you are drinking in the great benefits of travel.”

The Bay View reading courses emulated the Stoddard and Holmes series. These were produced under the auspices of the Bay View Association, a Methodist summer encampment on the shores of Little Traverse Bay in northern Michigan. An affiliate of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle since 1886, the Bay View Association ran a vacation university around the turn of the century. In 1893 John M. Hall initiated a reading program that members could follow at home. For the next twenty-five years, the reading circle went around the world, designating each year the English year, German year, and so forth. Hall commissioned brief, synthetic books such as A Short History of Russia and South American Life for circle members. He also edited the Bay View Magazine, devoted exclusively to fictive travel. Its writings on foreign sites encouraged the reader to assume a
tourist's perspective. When the cold air comes down from the glacier, "you become enthusiastic," ran one article. "Before we enter the city, I want you to visit a most interesting place in the suburbs," ran another. Reports of club activities published in the magazine furthered the conceit by pretending that stay-at-homes really had traveled. "After a year of unalloyed delight in Germany, eleven Danvers, Illinois ladies sailed for Spain a month ago," noted a typical entry.

In conjunction with the travel course, members could proceed to the summer encampment at Bay View to hear travel talks and participate in "foreign tourist conferences." Hall marketed his travel programs by describing them as "suites to the busiest club woman and a very great labor saving help. All the essential studies are ready prepared, saving club people days and days in hunting up literature and digging out helps." Club members who were pressed for time or who found it difficult to produce their own programs (some travel club members struggled so hard to find relevant materials that they ended up founding libraries) could join a Bay View tour for convenience.

One of the Bay View Magazine's competitors was the Mentor, published twice a month out of New York City starting in 1913. This provided reading courses on a broad range of subjects, ranging from music to science, current events, and, of course, travel. Travel lecturer Dwight L. Elmhendorf provided a "trip around the world" in the inaugural volumes. The twenty installments included "Scotland: The Land of Song and Scenery," "Paris, the incomparable," and "Egypt, the Land of Mystery." Given that each issue contained only one in-depth article, this represented a significant commitment to armchair travel. No doubt responding to surveys that ranked travel along with fine art and literature as readers' three favorite topics, the Mentor continued to focus on travel in later issues, publishing travel-oriented issues on Mexico, the Danube, the Canadian Rockies, Korea, and other places. Each issue came with a collection of six related prints with detailed descriptions on the back. By 1916 the Mentor had close to 100,000 subscribers, many of them clubwomen.

Why stop with packaged materials? Professional travel lecturers sparked the formation of some travel clubs by offering to present the talks. One such lecturer was Professor Charles Farrar, a former instructor of mathematics and astronomy at Vassar, who became president of Milwaukee College in 1874. By the 1880s his interests had shifted to art history. He published a guide to the study of sculpture, painting, and architecture and started delivering lectures titled "Imaginary Tours of Europe." These proved to be such a hit that Farrar resigned the college presidency and devoted himself to the cause of popular art education. As part of this endeavor, he set up several midwestern travel clubs, including the Hyde Park Travel Club, founded in 1888. Farrar charged the club $500 a year for a series of twenty illustrated travel lectures. Recognizing clubwomen's interest in travel topics, a number of professional lecturers advertised their services in cwc publications. Emilie Weld Kennan, for example, announced her talks on everyday life in Russia and "Forty Ideal Days in Japan" other speakers promised to illustrate their talks with watercolor paintings and "stereoscopic projections." Professional program providers had a financial interest in developing travel clubs and no doubt deserve some of the credit for their popularity. But to attribute the rise of travel clubs solely to the advent of packaged "tours" and professional lecturers means ignoring the clubs that predated these tours and those that did not rely on packaged information or lectures. Some clubs turned to professional materials only after a spate of do-it-yourself years, while others continued to travel even after dropping professional programs. When Farrar tired of presenting complete programs, the Hyde Park Travel Club kept on going. In 1895 Farrar gave ten lectures and club members the other ten. Upon Farrar's resignation in 1898, the group hired Agnes Ingerson as his replacement. Ingerson and the club members took turns conducting meetings. When Ingerson stepped down in 1913, the club replaced her with the Reverend R. A. White, but club members continued to deliver talks and to invite outside speakers (many of them identified as "Dr." or "Prof." in their programs).

As club members' strenuous efforts to produce their own material reveal, package tours and professional lecturers can only partially explain the popularity of imaginative travel. To understand why so many women favored this particular kind of escape we need to turn to the culture of international travel that arose in the late nineteenth century. By culture of international travel, I mean a culture permeated with reports and images of foreign travel, a culture rife with exotic travel experiences. More than a random outpouring of unrelated developments, a culture of travel implies connections between, say, postcards, ethnographic displays, travel accounts, hotel advertisements, and published passenger lists. These connections were both causal (advertisements promoted travel, travelers wrote postcards) and synchronizing (travel accounts fostered interest in ethnographic displays, ethnographic displays fostered interest in travel accounts). By a culture of travel, I mean a culture in which the sum was greater than the constituent parts—a culture in which a board game here, a trade card there, a lecture last week, and a window display glimpsed this morning—resulted in a
sense of living in a time and place marked by mobility and touristic encounters. And finally, by a culture of international travel I mean a development that drew even those who did not have the means—or the inclination—to truly go abroad into its net. Although the culture of travel owed a huge debt to the rising tide of real travelers and their ever-expanding itineraries, it reached far beyond them, for it brought the world home, thereby adding a significant touristic aspect to the consumers' imagination.46

The travel culture of the late nineteenth century did not spring out of the blue. Popular travel literature developed in Britain in the seventeenth century. Eighteenth-century Americans wrote and purchased travel guides. U.S. publishers brought out about 375 travel books between 1800 and 1850 and close to 1,500 between 1851 and 1900. These attracted an enthusiastic readership. In the late 1840s, travel books constituted 10 percent of the books charged from the New York Society Library by men and 15 percent of those charged by women.47 Travelogues featured prominently in lyceum offerings; the travel lecturer Bayard Taylor commanded $50 a talk, or about $5,000 a season, in the 1850s. Moving panoramas portrayed European battles and scenes of the Holy Land. All these phenomena help explain Lewis Perry’s assessment of American culture between 1820 and 1860: “To a striking extent, intellectual activity in antebellum America consisted of travel and writing or speaking about travel.”48 But this was only a foretaste of what was to come. Rather than receding, the production of international travel accounts, imagery, and experiences expanded in the post–Civil War period, giving middle-class U.S. culture a distinctly touristic cast.

Whereas a minister preparing for a European trip in 1820 could not find relevant advice books in the best Boston and New York bookstores, Budeker volumes and other guidebooks aimed at the cost-conscious tourist had become readily available by the end of the century. In addition to finding how-to advice, readers could find updates on the enabling infrastructure of international travel and analyses of world travel trends. Even those who had no plans to go abroad could find plenty of travel information in newspapers and magazines. Besides reporting on tourist attractions, expatriate society, overseas shopping opportunities, adventurous travelers, and foreign lands and peoples, they also professed to take the reader on imaginative journeys.49 The Chautauquan, for example, copied the Bay View Magazine by providing study trips such as “A Reading Journey through Mexico” and “A Reading Journey in London.” Periodicals focused on travel, such as Around the World, Travel Magazine, and Outing, provided a steady diet of travel writings for the hopelessly addicted. Fiction, too, exposed readers to distant places. Among the most tourist-oriented novels were Elizabeth W.
The culture of travel was so far-reaching that domestic sanctuaries fell into its orbit. Indeed, ladies’ pages and women’s magazines became prime venues for travel writings. Information on transoceanic travel surfaced in writings on fashion, high society, cooking, entertaining, and household decoration. Although it was ostensibly devoted to “home” topics, the *Ladies’ Home Journal* published a series of travelogues by Burton Holmes, editorials on the virtues and dangers of overseas travel, and other travel-related pieces. In the culture of travel, international travel knowledge became a component of domestic knowledge. What kinds of toilet facilities would a traveler find in Mexico? What should she wear to tea in the tropics? These were domestic questions and yet travel questions. The answers could be found both in travel writings that proffered domestic advice and in household manuals that proffered travel advice.64

We can see just how far the travel culture reached by looking at the miniatue of fin-de-siècle middle-class culture. Manufacturers hawked clothes, toys, and games by associating them with Nellie Bly. Her photographs appeared in advertisements for soap, medicines, and other products. Songs and poems memorialized her feat. And Bly was just the tip of the iceberg. Little girls (including Frances Lawton, my maternal grandmother, who passed on her well-worn collection) introduced their U.S. paper dolls to ones in national dress from an around-the-world series published by the *Ladies’ Home Journal*. A set of trade cards produced by the Arbuckle Brothers coffee company depicted typical people and famous sites on one side and provided travel information on the other (ills. 4.4, 4.5).65 In 1903 the Sears Roebuck catalog devoted five pages to its trunks and traveling bags. Etiquette books expounded on travel decorum; entertaining manuals provided advice on bon-voyage parties. As ocean liners prepared to depart, well-wishers crowded their public rooms to bid farewell to friends and family members. Every week the mail brought hundreds of letters from missionary women to the church circles that supported them.66 Staying home offered no escape from the culture of travel, for its sweep was broad, its presence ubiquitous.

The travel industry played an important role in helping to make globe-trotting part of daily life. Major daily newspapers ran advertisements for European hotels and shops. Ocean liners and cruise ships (including Caribbean fruit lines in search of more lucrative human cargo) also advertised heavily, luring would-be travelers with lists of distant ports (ill. 4.6). Travel agents and multinational tour operators such as Thomas Cook (with offices in New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco and sub-agencies in another fifteen U.S. cities) hawked their services, as did individuals who conducted groups abroad.67

168 Circling the Globe
The growing visibility of travel in the cultural landscape of the middle class accompanied a rise in genuine overseas travel. Improvements in the infrastructure of travel—especially in railroads and steamships—made travel safer, faster, and less expensive. By the 1870s it took only a week to cross the Atlantic; by the 1890s, five days. "The broad Atlantic has now dwindled to an ocean ferry," claimed Stoddard at the turn of the century.

"Europe is measured, not by weeks, but by hours." Constantinople, once so remotely Oriental, was but three days from London—Cairo only five. Even the vast Pacific glides beneath our keel in thirteen days."

"The completion of the Suez and Panama canals, the growth in consular services, easing of European passport restrictions, and proliferation of currency exchange bureaus also facilitated international excursions. So did Western imperial expansion, which played an important role in opening up more of the world to the Western tourist, and especially the white Western tourist in this segregated age. Americans could stop in Japan thanks to Commodore Matthew Perry's 1854 visit; they toured the East on British vessels that serviced the empire. When Holmes visited the Philippines in 1899 to gather material for his travel lectures, he stayed in U.S. Army quarters. Taken together, all these developments extended the reach of the tourist track. As Stoddard noted, "Two centuries ago, the man who had achieved a journey around the globe would have been called a hero. One century since, he would have been remarkable. To-day the name he earns is merely—"Globetrotter.""

By 1892 the Thomas Cook travel agency had conducted nearly 2,000 sightseers all the way around the world; by 1912 the Hamburg-American Line was advertising round-the-world tours starting at 165.30.

Whereas once leisure travel was reserved for the very rich, growing numbers of middle-class Americans went abroad after the Civil War. In 1880 about 50,000 U.S. tourists went to Europe. By 1900 roughly 125,000 made the trip. In 1913, on the eve of war in Europe, the number had risen to nearly 250,000.44 Potential travelers were encouraged by reports that "foreign travel is not alone for the favorites of fortune." Cost-conscious women could travel in respectable second-class accommodations and stay in inexpensive pensions. Those who preferred the security, ease, and fixed rates of group travel could take a Thomas Cook's tour specifically for teachers. According to the Ladies' Home Journal, even a teacher with a salary of $500 or $600 could go to Europe if she could manage to save $150. If she were very thrifty, she could go for $125.45

The would-be traveler could also turn to a growing pool of budget-conscious travelers for advice. In 1891 Alice Brown (an author), Maria Gilman Reed (her friend), Louise Imogen Guiney (a poet), and Anna Murdock (a teacher) wrote a fifty-page book on their summer travels in England. It included local information and a list of lodgings. Thus began the Women's English Pest Tour Association. All 500 copies of the publication sold out in less than six weeks. In 1892 the women brought out a second edition of 1,000 copies and founded a magazine, Pilgrim S Grip. This included lodging lists for continental Europe and, starting in 1895, countries in the Western Hemisphere too. Their publications were full of practical advice along the lines of do not sit by the wall in the dining saloon if seasick, because those seats were "not easily vacated in a hurry." They listed tariff duties, information on tipping, and contact information for groups such as the Cyclists' Touring Club in Europe.

The tour association did more than just publish travel tips. The women elected officers and established membership criteria. Besides mastering two letters of recommendation, applicants had to manifest "social acceptability as evidenced by refinement, intelligence, good manners, good taste and an instinct for fair dealing." Members had to credibly represent their country abroad and pledge to "bring home, for the use of the Society, some
information which can be utilized to the advantage of others who are look-
ing forward to a foreign trip." On the first Thursday of the month, the group
had teas, so the women could discuss their journeys, past and future, and
find traveling companions. At their annual meetings, returned travelers
talked about places they had visited; some showed slides. The group also
gave and lent money to women who would profit from a trip abroad but
could not otherwise afford it. Using the commission money from their trav-
erer's check purchases, they gave a total of $750 to three women in the first
year of the program. By 1910 the club had about 3,700 members, hailing
from more than thirty states. Most came from the East Coast, but some
from places like Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and Pocatello, Idaho.\(^8\)

The growing stream of international travelers won plenty of media atten-
tion. Newspapers and society magazines regularly published lists of upper-
deck passengers. Americans who traveled abroad reported on the semipres-
earence of their compatriots. "Everywhere we see Americans," reported one
tourist from Paris. A traveler writing for the Atlanta Constitution concurred;
"Not only are there flourishing American colonies in the larger cities of
Europe, but they are found in its most remote corners. The desire to visit
the old country is not confined to the Atlantic seaboard or to the people of
large wealth."\(^9\) The stay-at-homes who read these accounts had increasing
grounds to think that they were missing out on something big. Recognizing
the appeal of international travel, marketers and publicists dangled it as a
prize. During Bly's race against the clock, the New York World offered en-
thrilled readers the chance to win a trip if they could guess the time of her
return. Vogue magazine offered passage to Europe and "ample allowance
for a two week's stay abroad" for readers who procured 125 new subscrip-
tions. In 1906 six women—none from a large city—took advantage of this
offer. Travel Magazine copied the gimmick in 1908, pledging to pay all the
expenses of a summer vacation anywhere in the United States, Canada, or
Europe. To lure nurses to the war-torn Philippines, the U.S. military prom-
ised that those who arrived via the Pacific could return via Europe, "thus
completing the circle of the globe and gaining an experience which is the
desire of many, but which comes to but a few."\(^10\)

The rise in tourism sent ripples through the wider society that went
beyond the travel reports in the popular press. The golden age of the pic-
ture postcard began around 1895, when printing developments permitted
high-quality cards to be mass produced at low cost. Well-connected stay-at-
homes could collect images of popular tourist destinations, often with effi-
sive descriptions—"This is quite a lovely old place—very German and very
interesting"—on the back. Postcard collecting became such a fashionable

baby (especially among women) that exchanges, newsletters, and maga-
zines sprang up to aid enthusiasts.\(^11\) Stay-at-homes could see further evi-
dence of travel in the household items, fashionable clothing, recipes, and
gifts brought back by their friends. And those who knew returned travelers
doubt heard all about their experiences. For every returnee, there was a
circle of associates who experienced the trip vicariously.

The popularity of travel lectures meant that some of these circles of vicari-
ous travelers were quite large. The 1902 Hull-House lecture series included
a "tour Around the World." The New York Tribune frequently advertised free
travel lectures such as "Life in the Philippines" and "Life among the Kaff-
irs" presented in public school assembly halls. Chautauqua Assemblies
also offered travel talks. Even the working-class girls enrolled in the North
Bennet Street Industrial School in Boston could supplement their courses in
dressmaking, carpentry, and gymnastics with "delightful imaginary trips
to Rome, Venice, Algeria, and other distant lands, by means of photographs
and vivid descriptions."\(^12\) Clubwomen proved to be a particularly apprecia-
tive audience. The year the Tourist Club of Minneapolis studied Mexico,
three women who had visited the country gave guest lectures. Every year
the Hyde Park Travel Club had a globe-trotter's day, on which it invited
people who had traveled around the world.\(^13\)

Not all travel lectures were presented by people who went abroad as tour-
ters. Government officials, academic experts, visiting diplomats, and other
foreign dignitaries spoke on foreign locales. The secretary of public instruc-
tion of France provided French lecturers to talk on "La Bastille et ses se-
crets" and similar topics before U.S. branches of the Alliance Française.
Returned missionaries relied on travel talks to raise funds for their mission
endeavors. To build support for international programs, the twca sent out
speakers to discuss their overseas experiences.\(^14\)

The development of the stereoscope, also known as the "magic lantern,"
contributed to the popularity of travel lectures. These lanterns were filled
with gas or alcohol and then ignited to make a light. Placed six to eight feet
from a white sheet or wall, they projected photographic images from glass
plates. A good one cost around $35, but they could also be rented for an eve-
n ing. Magic lantern vendors marketed them as a wonderful way to entertain
friends and raise funds for charity. Sears, Roebuck and Company hawked a
"stereopticon outfit"—complete with photographic views, stereopticon,
burner, screen, bound lecture book, 1,000 advertising posters, 2,000 ad-
mission tickets, instruction book, and carrying cases for $35. It promoted
the package as an honorable way to "make money with little effort." Plate
purveyors advertised views on religious topics, portraits of distinguished
Americans, temperance, and so forth. But the heart of the business was the travel trade. In addition to marketing individual slides of places ranging from the Arctic to the Sahara, slide manufacturers advertised package tours. The "journeys" arranged by the Beneman and Wilson Company consisted of sets of 100 slides, "in geographical order." Along with each set, the company supplied "something to say about each slide." The C. C. Milligan Company offered an "Around the World" tour for $1.50 a slide. Sears beat this price, offering an 80-slide "Around the World in Eighty Minutes" tour and 500 postcards for 245. Many of the dime museums that sprang up in the 1880s and 1890s offered stereopticon tours, narrated by a "doctor" or "professor" for nothing more than the basic admissions fee.  

Along with magic lanterns, stereoscopes facilitated imaginative travel. Unlike ordinary photographs, taken by a single camera lens, stereoscopic photo cards contained side-by-side images taken by adjacent lenses. Viewed through the stereoscope, the two nearly identical images merged, creating a three-dimensional impression. The sides of the viewing apparatus blocked the viewer's peripheral vision, adding to the feeling of immersion in the scene. According to a description published by Underwood and Underwood, a leading stereoscope purveyor, "the objects are seen standing out in natural perspective, natural size and at natural distances. Color alone excepted, the object is seen exactly as it would appear looked at through a window at the same distance from it as the actual distance of the camera." Stereoscopes traced their origins back to the early years of photography. In the 1850s American tourists returning from Europe used the novel contraptions to show their friends the scenes they had witnessed on their travels. By the 1880s companies such as Underwood and Underwood made stereographic pictures of foreign sites readily available even to stay-at-homes. In its advertising materials, Underwood and Underwood emphasized the verisimilitude of its travel experiences. "The Underwood Travel System ... consists in travel of the truest kind, yet it does not utilize either ship or railroad, or any of the ordinary bodily conveyances. ... The Underwood Travel System is largely mental. It provides travel not for the body, but for the mind, but travel that is none the less real on that account. It makes it possible for one to feel oneself present and to know accurately famous scenes and places thousands of miles away, without moving his body from the armchair in his comfortable corner. ... To experience all this is to travel truly." To add to the sense of being there, Underwood and Underwood developed maps that located every standpoint and guidebooks that strove "to answer the very questions that would be likely to be asked in regard to the objects seen, the questions which (if you knew their language) you would ask of the people themselves." The individualized nature of the stereoscope (only one viewer could see the apparatus at a time) meant that it did not lend itself to large groups, but smaller groups could pass it around the room. High school principals praised it for teaching geography. Sunday school teachers credited it with raising attendance, and librarians testified that their patrons called for them constantly. By the early twentieth century, Underwood and Underwood, with offices in New York, London, Ottawa, Kansas, and Toronto, had around 250,000 stereographic negatives in its inventory. It offered more than 300 prepackaged tours plus many more assembled to order. Among the most comprehensive tours it offered were ones to China, Cuba and Puerto Rico, Egypt, England, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Palestine, and Spain, with 100 standpoints each. Shorter tours included Austria (54 standpoints), France (73), Korea (48), Manchuria (56), Ceylon (56), Panama (44), and a Trip around the World (72). Customers also could order individual slides, and slide series on racial types, women's occupations around the globe, typical homes and interior furnishings of the world, and modes of travel. Catering to an interest in current events, Underwood and Underwood produced a series on the Philippine American War that included Admiral Dewey on his flagship, high school boys in Manila, and Spanish matzat girls in native dress. Like magic lanterns and stereoscopes, cycloramic pictures promised to transport viewers. These are often associated with the early nineteenth century, but they continued to be displayed after the Civil War and gained new popularity in the 1890s. Upon its opening in 1874, the Chautauqua Assembly in upstate New York displayed one such sweeping spectacle in its main auditorium: a thirteen-by-thirty-foot panoramic landscape of the Holy Land. A Paris-by-night painting exhibited in the mid-1870s occupied nearly 40,000 square feet of canvas. After passing through a curved archway, viewers ascended a tower, emerging upon a shaded balcony, from which they could look down upon the city. Its promoters hawked the experiences as "equivalent to seeing Paris itself, without the perils and unpleasantness of a sea voyage, at a trifling cost, and without loss of time." Other cycloramas displayed in the late nineteenth-century United States included The Mirror of Ireland, Paris under Siege, and The Battle of Manila. As the popularity of magic lanterns, stereoscopes, and cycloramic pictures suggests, there was a strong visual component to the travel culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The culture of travel involved multifaceted opportunities to view the foreign. Travel buffs could purchase pictures of colorized people and distant vistas or view them in public exhibits. The Massachusetts Art Club, for example, exhibited 135 prints...
of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, lent by the Woman's Educational Association of Boston. Many travel writings came illustrated with photographs and engravings. The well-known cartoonist Charles Dana Gibson published amply illustrated volumes on Paris and London. His *Sketches in Egypt* featured pictures of American tourists in the land of the Sphinx. Henry Bacon and other painters captured touristic experiences such as life on shipboard. Aspiring U.S. artists who studied in Europe filled canvas after canvas with the surrounding sights; U.S. travelers returned from abroad with foreign landscapes to hang on their walls.

By the early twentieth century, moving picture producers touted the transportive possibilities of their productions. In vaudeville theaters, audiences watched short clips of trains arriving in French stations. Queen Victoria's funeral, bullsights, and other touristic matters. Among the Biograph films shown in 1902 were *A Quiet Hour* (*A vivid and characteristic bit of local color from Constantinople*), *The Grand Hotel* (*Longchamps Palace, Marseilles, France*), and *The Black Sea* (*A beautiful panorama*). In the next few years, films such as *Piquetsgue Canada and Roosevelt in Africa* continued to expose moviegoers to foreign sights. For those in search of realism, world's fairs provided exceptionally rich opportunities to travel imaginatively, for they engaged all the senses. In the fairgrounds, visitors could see formal—sometimes elaborate—exhibits depicting artifacts from Argentina to Zanzibar, usually cased in regional architectural trappings. National exhibits presented attractive pictures of foreign countries, in some cases with the explicit intention of promoting tourism. On the pleasure grounds outside the fairs, visitors could see commercial attractions purporting to resemble foreign sites. The *Midway Pal- nace* outside the 1893 Chicago fair included a Chinese opera house and Irish, Turkish, Algerian, Austrian, Dalomean, and South Seas Islands villages. The Streets of Cairo concession, run by an Egyptian entrepreneur, featured a mosque, coffee shops, residences, camels, snake charmers, dancing girls, and wedding processions. The Japanese village had eighty buildings and 300 ratties on display. The German village had a castle, bands, and Bavarian beer. In the Bernese Alps Electric Theater, spectators went on a fifteen-minute trip to Switzerland through scenery, sound, lights, and icy temperatures. Fairgoers commonly proclaimed that the exhibits made them feel that they were truly visiting foreign lands (ill. 4.7). Despite occasional protestations that it would be "as unfair to take the displays on the Midway as representative of their respective nations as to take Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" show as typical of American life," descriptions of world's fairs often played up the premise that they offered a genuine overseas travel experience. In Switzerland we find rare and beautiful wood-carvings, in Brazil, dazzling collections of rosaics, gems and precious stones," wrote a traveler who had been no further than the Chicago's Columbian Exhibition. About a tenth of the American population saw this fair in (89). The 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, 1901 Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo, 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis, and others also attracted large crowds. Although they were the most prominent events on the fictive travel landscape, world's fairs were not alone in providing multidimensional fictive travel experiences. Their highbrow exhibits had multiple analogues elsewhere. Museums presented their novel habitat dioramas and life-size ethnographic displays, sometimes accompanied by travel narratives, as surrogates for the real thing. Zoo designers in the late nineteenth century increasingly favored natural backdrops over cell-like cages. Although the surroundings they created often bore little resemblance to the animals' original...
hospitals. Just as the highbrow aspects of the world's fairs found analogues in museums, zoos, and gardens, the colorful and commercialized midways had echoes in more popular entertainments. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Barlow's "Traveling World's Fair" had presented Fiji cannibals, Carav-arian girls, and other foreign curiosities to the American public. The large railroad circuses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented an even wider assortment of supposedly foreign attractions. They featured ethnological congresses of "strange and savage tribes," dramatizations of imperial military campaigns, exotic animals, South Asian match

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in (Frank Leslie) Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

47. "Laying Out the Model of the City of Paris" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Material Register of the Centennial Exposition (1876); 54. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
The list goes on. Commercial displays such as the Japanese village and the Olde London Street erected in New York City in the 1880s purported to produce the foreign as well. Church bazaars and fund-raising fairs, with their national booths and "Around the World in Ninety Minutes" themes, offered still more versions of imaginary travel (ill. 4-5). Along with its panoramic painting, the Chautauqua Assembly had a 400-foot-long topographical replica of Palestine. Even county fairs might have a Swiss inn or Japanese pavilion.13

Though generally intended to serve community needs, not touristic desires, immigrant neighborhoods and festivals provided further opportunities to encounter the foreign. Guidebooks, travel magazines, and city boosters presented ethnic neighborhoods as tourist destinations, saying that they offered a glimpse of the Old World. A 1909 guide to Chicago triumphantly proclaimed that it had surpassed Constantinople as the world's most cosmopolitan city. Rather than shun immigrants as social dangers, urban tour-

ists sought them out as colorful attractions. An advertisement for a "Land Show" in the Chicago Coliseum promised that a visit would "have many of the attractions of a trip to Europe," including "beautiful girls in picturesque peasant costumes" and "Scandinavian choruses." Sightseers visited opium dens in Chinatowns and markets in Little Italy. They viewed the foreign in
ethnic celebrations, fund raisers, dances, and pageants; they tasted it in immigrant restaurants."

Even those who did not seek out the foreign could not avoid finding traces of it in their everyday surroundings. Although U.S. architects were more likely to modify foreign styles than to copy them directly, they designed buildings that brought distant locations to mind. The Greek revival movement of the early nineteenth century had dotted the landscape with white pillared houses and banks. Gothic influences from northern Europe could be detected in cottages, churches, prisons, and university buildings. Italian villas inspired residences, firehouses, and town halls. Egyptian elements appeared in cemeteries and prisons. The mansard roofs that gained popularity in the 1850s and 1870s followed the Second Empire style popular in France and elsewhere in Europe."

This passion for foreign styles continued through the late nineteenth century. A sharp-eyed Englishman who walked along Broadway and Fifth Avenue in New York in 1901 reported seeing "an extraordinary medley of incongruous styles...an architectural pot-pourri which almost rivals the Rue des Nations at the Paris Exposition of 1867. There are some excellent copies of European buildings, such as the Giralda of Seville, Venetian palaces, châteaux from Touraine, Palladian loggias, and here and there a German schloss." Miles from New York, gleaming new Florida resorts and booming California beach towns quoted Spanish and other Mediterranean motifs. From the mansions of the wealthy to public buildings such as catedral de armas, art museums gussied up as Greek temples, railroad termini modeled after Romanesque cathedrals, and the full-scale reproduction of the Parthenon that graced Nashville's Centennial Park. U.S. architecture presented glimpses of Europe. Architectural Orientalism was less common but on the rise. The Washington Monument, completed in 1884, resembled the Egyptian obelisk on display in Paris and London. Bandstands, synagogues, and theaters also conjured up the East."

As the built environment suggested, the culture of travel made distant places part of the landscape of everyday life. Historians have noted that the great imperial city of London provided evidence of empire at every turn. From the busy port to the exhibitions, monuments, music hall entertainments, and colonial subjects who appeared on the streets, London radiated empire. But one need not travel to the heart of the British Empire to find imperial trappings. Turn-of-the-century U.S. cities had their own imperial referents, some carried over from the nation's colonial past, some derived from U.S. expansion, some intended to associate the United States with the European nations that controlled so much of the globe. The imperial world helped create the culture of travel that gripped the United States in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, the culture of travel was a component of imperial culture, for an important way that empire came home was in the touristic guise. The culture of travel spun the economic, military, and political power of the United States and its European models as a matter of mobility and pleasure. It commodified the entire world for the privileged beneficiaries of the consumers' imperium.

Surrounded by messages touting the encompassing joys of travel, clubwomen looking to divert themselves jumped on the touring bandwagon. "We leave New York on an ocean steamer with the comfort in the feeling that we are leaving all circumstances of time and routine and have nothing to do but be amused, to float on a city of the world without caring a straw about the world," professed a Hyde Park Travel Club member upon commencing an "imaginary journey."* "To travel is to live," claimed another fictive traveler, quoting Stedman's assertions to that effect. "Travel is attractive as a means of acquiring happiness."** The culture of travel persuaded the clubwomen desperate for a break from daily routines that travel offered unparalleled opportunities for excitement. As one Bay View club reported, imaginary expeditions "relished the monetary of the quiet village life." Captivated by the promise that leaving home could offer emotional fulfillment and personal gratification, clubwomen looked to fictive travel to do the same. Some, at least, were not disappointed. Members of a Nickerson, Kansas, travel club reported that their trip to Italy "will be forever one of the brightest spots in their lives."***

But the earnestness with which travel club members set about their journeys suggests that theirs was not a frivolous, light-hearted pleasure. One travel club compiled a list of thirty-one reference books for its year on Scandinavia and the Netherlands. For a trip to India, another club referred to a bibliography of fifty-nine books. Acknowledging the importance of research to its program, the Minneapolis Tourist Society held its meetings in the public library. Hyde Park Travel Club members insisted that theirs was not merely a social club "nor does it exist merely as entertainment for its members."**** Fictive travelers frequently described their endeavors as fundamentally educational in nature. Rather than stressing pleasure, they highlighted mental cultivation.

No less than the pleasure-oriented aspect of the travel club movement, the educational aspect reflects the wider travel culture. Along with evolving self-indulgence, travel evoked self-improvement, as it had done at least since the grand tours of the Renaissance. "There is a liberal education in

---

*Stedman, Solidarities, 57.
**Stedman, Solidarities, 57.
***Stedman, Solidarities, 57.
****Stedman, Solidarities, 57.
a European trip, an investment which will pay the investor," claimed the Ladies Home Journal. Underwood and Underwood ads also extolled the educational value of travel: "Leading authorities consider the Underwood Travel System as nothing less than epoch making in the educational field, because it brings travel, with all its infinite possibilities of culture and education, within the reach of those of humble means as well as the more fortunate few." When a group of students at the University of Wisconsin formed a Globe Trotters club, Travel Magazine hailed the organization's educational function, saying that "knowledge of the world we live in, whether it be gained at first hand by actual travel or through associations and publications, is a part of education which no institution of learning should overlook."

Travel clubs strongly endorsed the premise that travel—even of the imaginative variety—had educational value. Like other study clubs, travel clubs offered intellectual enrichment to women who spent much of their time managing their households and taking care of their families. Like other clubwomen, armchair travelers regarded their clubs as "the middle-aged woman's university." Some women turned to group study as a substitute for an undergraduate education, those who had attended college regarded group study as a means of maintaining an intellectual life. According to a report in the General Federation Bulletin: "An eager mind enters gladly and wanders in new worlds, in the carefully treasured still hours, when the children are asleep. This is what the club gives to women." The report continued: "Many a little woman whose life has been, and still is, narrow and confined, has spoken to me feelingly of what her club has been to her. . . . She needs the club to lead her feet for an occasional hour out of the blessed but confining home rut of daily duty into the open fields of outside thought and work."

Thanks to the surrounding travel culture, women looking to broaden their intellectual horizons, to leave the "rut of daily duty," saw imaginative travel as a prime way to do so. The Lewistown Tourist Club characterized itself as a club for "self improvement." "Why stay we on earth unless to grow?" ran the motto of the McGregor Tourist Club. An Indiana tourist club described its program as "the next best thing to actual travel for improving and enlarging the mind." The Bay View Magazine published a moving account of a subscriber who lived in the country, far from a public library. "The story of this woman in humble life, yet thirsting for culture, was full of tender paths," it asserted. Luckily, the Bay View reading program provided the enrichment she craved.

For the very fortunate, fictive travel served as a means to prepare for real travel. Reported one travel club "We have found it of mutual pleasure and benefit, and a very good preparation for foreign travel. Our motto has been in Mr. Johnson's saying: 'He who from travel would bring home knowledge must take knowledge with him.' As experienced travelers knew, knowledge could be transported in one's head free of charge. 'While between the covers of books it pays its price per pound.' But if some women embarked on imaginative study tours in preparation for real travel, most fictive travelers went no further than their local libraries. As a history of Arizona women's clubs pointed out, the Prescott Monday Club listened to papers such as "The Streets of Paris, and How to Get About in Them," even though a real visit to Paris "was the remotest thing imaginable." Their armchair excursions served as ends in themselves. For women leading circumscribed lives, fictive travel beckoned as a means to expand their outlooks. The desire to feel more connected may have been particularly acute on the part of women who lived far from major cities.

Yet any kind of systematic study could expand a woman's outlook. There were particular reasons for embarking on fictive travels, and these had much to do with the culture of travel. The women who set sail on imaginative study tours believed that they needed to know about travel to be culturally literate. Living as they did, surrounded by international travel writings, advertisements, displays, amusements, epiphenomena, and perhaps even returned globe-trotters, travel club members regarded systematic study tours as a means to become conversant on a leading preoccupation of their day. A woman who had achieved basic travel literacy had no reason to fear party games such as "The Traveller's Tour," in which guests were called upon to provide information to a pretend tourist or "A Trip around the World," in which contestants had to guess the stops. Stay-at-homes might ramble on about canning and curtains, but a world traveler could fascinate in conversation and prove her sophistication in party games. In sum, she could prove herself a quintessential clubwoman.

To belong to the General Federation of Women's Clubs meant to circulate in a world of leisure travelers. Profiles of club leaders often commented on their European journeys as a means of establishing their class standing, refinement, and cultural attainment. One such piece characterized a prominent Atlanta clubwoman as "handsome, dignified, graceful, womanly, cultivated and well-groomed" and then noted that she had traveled extensively. It declared her "thoroughly cosmopolitan." Like GWC publications, the African American women's journal, the Woman's Era, published articles on international travel and alluded to clubwomen's Euro-
poor tours. Besides invoking travel to demarcate class standing and cultivation, African American clubwomen used travel references (and especially the warm receptions offered to their associates by European society leaders) to discredit the racist denigration of all African Americans as lower-class, uncultured, and socially inferior.16

If travel club records are any indication of larger trends, the GFWC’s membership became increasingly likely to travel abroad as well. Upon the founding of the Minneapolis Tourist Club, only one member, an Englishwoman, had been overseas. Yet, according to a club report, “In a few years there was hardly a member who had not, one or more times, made the trip to Europe and others who had made world tours.”167 Similarly, in the early years of the Bay View program, the Bay View Magazine presented traveling members as a novelty. But in 1906 it alerted readers to a departing tour that would “cover the ground included in the Bay View Course this year.” By 1903 it reported that “Many of our students have recently gone to Italy, or will be there next summer, and many have written that they have found in our Magazine an invaluable preparation for the tour.” There were so many clubwomen on a 1902 cruise around the Mediterranean that they held a meeting for “acquaintance and mutual benefit.”168

The GFWC’s publications recognized and catered to clubwomen’s interest in travel by reviewing travel books and publishing study guides on foreign countries. In flipping through the General Federation’s publications, a clubwoman might also encounter ads for winter cruises, societies that organized tours, and the World Art and Travel Club, which published its own magazine and ran a reference library in Paris.169 “Send Your Daughter to Europe” trumpeted one ad placed by a clubwoman, Helen M. Winslow. In her tantalizing description, she promised to chaperone a “select party of ten girls” to Britain and Italy, providing them with daily conversation lessons in French and German and the cultivated guidance of a genteel escort. Another woman who hawked her guide services advertised herself as a “prominent club woman who understands what will interest club women in a trip abroad.” She had the extra advantage of twelve years’ experience in managing and conducting European parties.169 What messages did these GFWC publications convey? To be a clubwoman meant to be a traveler, either literally or by association and outlook.

Many travel club members felt that theirs was a democratic movement, for it enabled people of modest circumstances to see the world. Because venturing abroad for pleasure was associated with male privilege, upper-class status, and the prerogatives of whiteness, there was an element of transgression when people other than wealthy white men claimed travel for themselves. The Travel Class of Albert Lea, Minnesota, got started when a local doctor departed for a long trip to Europe, without his wife. Upon being queried, “What are you going to do while he is away?” she replied: “I shall travel at home.” The Travel Class was born when her friends joined her imaginary ramblings, thus refusing to be left behind.170

If the Albert Lea club traced its origins to a moment of female assertion, the hardworking teachers and other middle-class women who could not afford to cross the Atlantic but went to Europe anyway asserted their cultural parity with the upper class. The African American women who joined the travel-oriented Oasi and Ivy Club and the Native American women who formed a Bay View travel club asserted racial as well as gender and class standing: their ramblings helped prove the cultural attainments and hence full humanity of women of color. The suffragist and pacifist Lucia Ames Mead tried to broaden the base of the travel movement even further by urging her well-to-do readers to organize courses for domestics servants, “where current events, foreign travel, illustrated with pictures, or other matters may be presented by a tactful woman in such wise as to break the monotony of housework and give her hearers a glimpse of culture that of right belongs to them as well as her.”170 Patronizing, to be sure (especially given that some of these servants had experienced border crossings firsthand), but in its reference to cultural rights and its assumption of sisterhood, this proposal also had a radical edge.

Not all armchair travelers saw their efforts as essentially democratic, however. For many, the allure appears to have been social distinction. Just as real travel marked out social divisions, imaginary travel differentiated those who professed touristic outlooks from earlier generations of home-bound women, from their neighbors who were not as attuned to the culture of travel, and from the presumed locals encountered on the way. Mastering travel culture was a way to evidence a kind of civilized modernity that was not available to everybody. Travel knowledge served as evidence of upper-class standing, the privileges of whiteness, and the freedoms of men. An aphorism printed in a Lewistown Tourist Club program book admitted as much: “Knowledge is that which, next to virtue, truly and essentially raises one man above another.”171 A woman versed on travel could sparkle in local society.

Yet, ultimately, the stakes were much greater than local positioning. Through traveling, American provincials could remake themselves as world-class cosmopolitans. Like other women from European settler colonies, American women regarded European travel as a means to claim metropolitan culture. Having claimed it, travelers went beyond it, often
concluding that their transnational perspectives set them above ordinary Europeans, such as the Venetian women who, according to Stoddard, filled their water buckets in the courtyard of the Ducal Palace, "unmindful of the history with which each stone in this old building seems at time so eloquent." Rather than just laying claim to the European metropole, armchair travelers regarded their travels as a means to establish an affinity with the moneyed elite from the entire Western and westernizing world. In an age when Thomas Cook had a whole department devoted to arranging European tours for Indian princes, international travel conjured up the cosmopolitanism of global high society. Tourist accomplishments identified one not only as upper-class but as world-class. As Charles Farrar admonished the Hyde Park Travel Club, keeping up with their studies would enable the assembled women to "become cosmopolitan on the eve of the cosmopolitan era which 1900 would usher in." Imaginary or not, leisure travel would identify women as members of the global elite and prepare them for a bright future in an increasingly interconnected world. It would enable them to occupy the leading ranks of the consumers' imperium.

What travel knowledge meant can be inferred by looking at those left behind. An advertisement for the Hamburg-American Line's around-the-world cruise showed two turbaned men strolling in a palm grove, next to a kneeling camel, watching a steamer cutting through the waves offshore. Presumably the passengers on the ship were busy enjoying the elevator, gymnasium, electric baths, and other modern amenities hallowed in the ad, while the onlookers, with their flowing robes and resting camel looked like figures from a biblical tableau. If the gleaming Hamburg-American Line evoked northern European whiteness, the shaven viewers associated localism with darkness. The ship, with billows of steam pouring from its smokestacks, signaled male technological achievements; the draped garments of the quiescent natives implied a certain amount of effeminacy. The two men look at the ship with longing, as if they appreciated the shipboard comfort and pleasure promised by the ad. Movement versus stasis, modernity versus the past, northern European whiteness versus tropical darkness, man-made accomplishment versus feminine passivity, personal fulfillment versus desire and envy—the choice was clear (lll. 4.16).269

A woman who could claim the expertise of a tourist could do more than demonstrate her own alignments and standing. The ability to travel testified to national strength and power. A traveler might even help her country advance its interests. In explaining why its travel programs did not focus on the United States, the Bay View Magazine explained: "America has expanded, and now our commerce, our interests, and our diplomatic relations are becoming world-wide. And so we must know the history, the life and conditions of the peoples of Europe and remote lands. Americans must become cosmopolitan in learning, else they will take narrow views, prejudice, and misunderstanding into their discussions and judgments of foreign questions. . . . Those who fit themselves for the new age will make the most of its opportunities."270 In sum, travel knowledge could be translated into useful commercial and political as well as social knowledge. To enhance their position in the international arena, Americans must turn tourist.

In saying that the culture of travel prompted women to join travel clubs, it is important to recognize that these women did more than respond to the culture of travel; they helped produce it. Besides heightening their own touristic sensibilities, travel club members introduced their families, friends, and neighbors to the wider world. Some clubwomen insisted that their studies made them better companions for their children, better companions for their husbands. Others insisted that clubwomen had become "the centre of the intellectual activity of townships and neighborhoods all over the country." A Hyde Park Travel Club yearbook proudly reported "that the
Class has for more than a decade been recognized as a helpful factor in the educational and social life of this community. 

Such claims were more than mere puffery. Many travel clubs sponsored public lectures. Others held entertainments to which they invited friends and family members. At the end of its first year, the McGregor, Iowa, club invited guests to enjoy a program of Scottish music, literature, costumes, and dances. Similarly, an Indiana club gave an "Afternoon in Spain to a large company of delighted friends." Yet another club threw a banquet after touring Germany. What transpired at this event? "Gentlemen friends were taken in and civilized." The Travelers' Club of Portland, Maine, decorated school rooms. A Denver club gave a "spectacular entertainment" on Holland to "the children from the orphan asylums." By founding libraries, providing an avid audience for travel writings, and popularizing and disseminating travel knowledge, travel club members advanced the culture of travel, particularly in small towns in the Northeast and Midwest.

In their weekly meetings and beyond, women's travel clubs contributed to the rise of a tourist mentality. This, in turn, provides the context for understanding the rest of the world in terms of its tourist offerings. Although touristic outlooks cannot be fully disentangled from other approaches to the wider world—including missionary, commercial, governmental, and anthropological ones—they bore the clear mark of the consumers' imperium insofar as they promoted a sense of geographic consciousness more focused on consumption than on other lines of geographic thinking. The importance of the touristic mentality to geographic consciousness should not be underestimated. Whereas nineteenth-century atlas manufacturers emphasized the utility of their product for businessmen and students, by the 1920s they targeted armchair travelers. Women's travel clubs were not alone in advancing the tourist mentality. The entire culture of travel did so. But focusing on women's travel club programs can help us understand the nature of the tourist mentality. Travel club records reveal the ways in which enthusiasts processed and promulgated the messages of the wider travel culture. To understand how, we need to pay more attention to their programs.

Where did club members go? Travel clubs that developed their own agendas typically visited European countries such as France and England first. The Hyde Park Travel Club picked France for an early tour because, as one member put it, "Everyone is interested in France, everyone goes to France." To clinch her case, she pointed out that there were "many items of reference easily accessible upon France," and that Professor Farrar had "a large number of slides upon the topic, 20,000 in all." The Minneapolis Club said of its first destination, England: "We love thee dear mother, for giving us birth." The Tourist Club of McGregor, Iowa, chose Sculthorpe to inaugurate its travel-by-proxy program because both the town's founders and one of the member's families hailed from there.

After hitting the most popular tourist destinations, members looked further afield. The offerings of commercial outlets sometimes guided their choices. Originally the Bay View directors planned to provide a four-year cycle, rotating American, German, French, and English years. But club members who had completed the course wanted to keep going. So the directors added new countries, from Spain on to Russia, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, and Switzerland. Eventually it left Europe to visit places such as Australia, Canada, China, the Congo, Haiti, India, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, and Zanzibar. Current events guided some program decisions. The Bay View program focused on Spain in 1898 as a result of the U.S. intervention in the Spanish-Cuban War. Upon the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, many clubs spotlighted the belligerent countries. Organizational directives influenced other decisions. After the president of the CWIC recommended the study of Latin American peoples in 1916, the CWIC Bureau of Information was inundated with requests for travel outlines on South and Central America.

Yet even as we acknowledge the external forces that shaped program decisions, it is also important to acknowledge the inner workings of particular travel clubs. Club members sought novelty. Having toured a place, they moved on. Hence the dynamics of perpetual study prompted club members to wander ever further off the beaten track, with occasional returns to favorite destinations. Women such as Mary Phelps Ewan, who belonged to a travel club for fifty-two years, trekked through a considerable swath of the globe. After twenty-six years of travel, the Hyde Park Travel Club yearbook of 1914 pronounced that "The Class has visited almost every country through study." The Helludes Club of Illinois, organized in 1885, went from New Zealand to Micronesia, Melanesia, Australia, Polynesia, East India, Japan, China, "Mantschuria," Cochim-China, British India, "Be- lochistan," Afghanistan, "Toorkistan," Siberia, Russia in Europe, Nova Zembla, Spitzbergen, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the Roman Empire, Persia, Turkey in Asia, Turkey in Europe, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Prussia, Holland, Belgium, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, Arabia, Nubia, Abyssinia, the Sahara, Soudan, Senegambie, the Guinees, the Congo and its countries, the east coast of Africa, Madagascar and the islands of the Indian Ocean, southern Africa, Atlantic Islands, Grahams Land, Patagonia, etc., to the north pole."
Such wide-ranging literacies notwithstanding, there were limits to the scope of active travel. Most notably, tourist clubs tended to shun Africa south of the Sahara. Furthermore, coverage was by no means even. The Freemont Cosmopolitan Club spent a full year in most of the European countries it studied, but when it turned to the Pan-American republics, it did one or two a week.\textsuperscript{186} Even as they strove to broaden their geographic consciousness, travel club members favored destinations thought to offer superlative touristic experiences. In picking their itineraries, trip planners were guided by more than just geographic curiosity: they were guided by the logic of tourism. The point was not to study the entire world, or to study any given place because it was there. Rather, the point was to study the places thought to have something noteworthy to offer to a tourist and to study them to find out exactly what that was. This touristic outlook can be seen in the contents of club presentations.

There was a physical geography component to tourist club programs. The \textit{Bay View Magazine} encouraged travel club members to invest in maps, and some of its member clubs did; indeed, hold map contests to test basic geographic knowledge. The Tourist Club of Minneapolis likewise covered "Map questions" in its study of India. These included "Effect of the Himalayas on climate" and "The three river systems of North India." But more than anything, tourist club geographies focused on the geographic features of particular interest to tourists. This meant the particularly spectacular mountains, the extraordinarily beautiful landscapes. To describe these features, club members turned to aesthetic terminology. Hence one club member reported on the "beautiful scenery of Switzerland with its snow-capped mountains, which were so pure and chase it in contrast to the green mountain sides." Speaking of a trip to Italy, another club member reported: "Our finest sensibilities were touched by the beauties surrounding us on every side."\textsuperscript{187} The Lewiston Tourist Club heard a talk, "Hidden beauty spots of Mexico," and Hyde Park Travel Club members learned that "India is an endless panorama of interesting pictures." To grasp the loneliness of Japan, travelers turned to poetry: "The cherry blossom gleams, a pearly haze. Across the landscape, far as eye can see. Like mist-wreaths veiling in their shifting maze. Yoshino's mountain-gorges mystery."\textsuperscript{188}

Not surprisingly, famous tourist sites loomed large in travel club geographies. In London, the Hyde Park Travel class visited Westminster Abbey, the National Gallery, and the Houses of Parliament. Other club members read papers on the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids, and the Taj Mahal. When touring Germany, an Ohio travel club member presented a paper titled "Popular Resorts."\textsuperscript{189} On occasion, clubs visited workplaces and ordinary dwellings, but their interests lay more in the pleasurable and spectacular than in the puzzling or the quotidiant. Although travel clubs were all about movement, members did not want to become too unsettled. A Hyde Park Travel Club report sums up the travel club emphasis: "Miss Ingersoll as leader has taken us, during the season now closed, through Germany: not to show us, indeed, the Imperial Empire of the Kaiser so much as the Germany dear to the heart of the lover of art, romance and story and the picturesque."\textsuperscript{190} A touristic outlook meant seeing the world through the lens of art appreciation. It meant searching for the sublime, the marvelous, the pleasurable. And it meant narrowing one's vision so that it centered on the attractions deemed worthwhile to a transitory viewer.

Because not everything one sees every place mattered in tourist club geographies, tourist club members could congratulate themselves on knowing it all. Holmes advertised his \textit{Around the World} volumes by asking: "Why not indulge your desire for going everywhere and seeing everything? You can do that." The sense of truly knowing foreign lands, or at least all the worthwhile ones, was encapsulated by the Hyde Park Travel Club motto: "No country is known to us." But what was known? The world was known for what it offered tourists. When the Bay View travel class completed its Italian tour, the \textit{Bay View Magazine} reassured members who were reluctant to say goodbye that "we visited all the most interesting places. To have remained longer would have been only to fill the mind with more of the same kind of ideas." Having seen the greatest hits, tourists moved on, pleased with their sense of mastery. The test came when club members really traveled. Yes, reported returnees, they found what they had expected. As a Hyde Park Travel Club yearbook noted: "Many members of this class have testified to their surprise, in visiting foreign lands for the first time, to often find their surroundings strangely familiar, made so by their study in this Class."\textsuperscript{191} Touristic endeavors led active travelers to believe they had developed encompassing perspectives.

In keeping with the touristic emphasis on cultural appreciation, tourist clubs had a significant cultural component. Papers on art, music, literature, religion, and history featured prominently in their presentations. Club members spoke on the paintings, sculpture, handicrafts, folk dances, costumes, and architecture to be found in their destinations. They prepared talks such as "Polish Music and Musicians" and "Chinese Music and Theaters," and they listened to music originating in the countries under consideration. In its trip through India, one club discussed the Bhagwat Gita, "Islamists," Buddhism, Jainism, and Hindu sects. Other travel clubs heard presentations on "Scandinavian Mythology and Sagas," "Winning the Canadian
West,” “Holidays and Festivals in Aztec Land,” and “Primitive Germans.” The historical topics taken up by the Minneapolis Tourist Club during its trip to India included “The Greek Invasion to 730 AD.” “Mughal Maturity,” and India as founded by Europeans,” “Organization of East India Company and History to 1750,” “History to 1859,” and “History since 1859.”

If the tenor of the Stoddard travel lectures, Bay View Magazine articles, and other materials aimed at fictive travelers serves as any indication, travel club presentations lauded the cultural production of the world. They also encouraged an anecdotal approach to history that emphasized the common humanity of all peoples. The further from Protestant Europe, the greater the exceptions, but the demands of tourism muted critiques. Why bother to visit a place with no redeeming virtues? A basic premise of the tourist mentality was that any place worth visiting must have something to offer. Hence, touristic accounts countered condemnation with more appreciative assessments. Mexican hotel rooms might lack baths and other modern amenities, but the costumes were picturesque and the people hospitable. So-called old-stock Americans might think little of the Italian immigrants who were pouring into the United States in the late nineteenth century, but tourists raved about their homeland. As a member of the Amwater, Ohio, Monday Afternoon Club enthused: “We are perfectly in love with our first glimpse of Italy.”

Their emphasis on cultural appreciation put travel clubs squarely in line with other study clubs. But travel clubs differed from clubs devoted to cultural subjects such as literature and art in having a significant ethnographic component. Like real tourists, armchair travelers paid close attention to the natives. Club members manifested particular interest in royalty and peasants, for they regarded them as especially indicative of national character. In one Hyde Park Travel Club meeting, a member spoke on “life among the different classes in England ... from the Queen and her court, through the solidity and the many classes of commoners, laborers or sailors.” When the club journeyed to Luzerne, another member noted: “We rested at the bust by the way, we saw and heard the alpine horn, we visited the picturesque home of the peasant maid, examined the stone-edged roofs and minutely scrutinized the unique costumes of the laboring women.” Travel club ethnography was full of sweeping stereotypes. Club members learned that “The women peasants of Brittany are considered the most beautiful in France,” Valencians could be identified by their “reserved, suspicious indolence,” Andalustians by their “grace and wit,” and Basques by their “pride but gentleness.”

While travel clubs emphasized women and domesticity. A member of the Pocasset, Massachusetts, Travelers’ Club spoke on “The Emancipation of Mohomedan Women”; a Lewiston Tourist Club member held forth on “The Women of France.” Speakers addressed such topics as “Housekeeping in Japan” and “Home Life of Russian People.” They touched on dwellings, furnishings, dress, and marriage. Although some accounts emphasized foreign women’s bereft status in juxtaposition to the enviable position occupied by white, well-to-do U.S. women, travel club members reported favorably on foreign decoration styles. As one clubwoman said of Japan, “The simple furnishing and decoration of their homes are in much better taste than the crowded vulgarities of many of our drawing rooms.” Speaking about Palestine, another fictive traveler maintained that “the interior of the homes of the better classes are very beautiful, there is a court in the center of which is a fountain around which are flowers, and orange and lemon trees.”

Like assessments of tourist attractions and cultural productions, clubwomen’s ethnographic assessments often emphasized the romantic, the sentimental, the harmonious, and the attractive over the harsh, the political, the discordant, and the ugly. But clubwomen’s ethnographic assessments were not always so glowing. Echoing the evolutionary hierarchies so pervasive in contemporary ethnological thought, travel club members reported on the backwardness and degeneracy of Latin American, Asian, African, and other peoples considered to be racially inferior. Hyde Park Travel Club members learned that Jamaicans “are very lazy and still use the old methods of working, plowing the ground with a crooked stick.” On their trip to Morocco, they focused on the “melancholy proof of the degeneracy of the race which built the famous Alhambra of Spain.” Turning to the Philippines, club members dismissed the natives asnomadic in habits and “very indolent.” As for the Mexicans, “it is hoped they will progress.” Not even Europeans were immune from criticism. Clubwomen who followed the Stoddard lectures would have found sharp critiques of Russians and Spaniards—people understood to be Slavs and Latins rather than Anglo-Saxons.

Travel club ethnography had a notable missionary component too. In studying China, the Hyde Park Travel Club heard a lecture touching on “the influence of Christianity upon the lives of women and children.” In 1900 the Tourist Club of Minneapolis held a meeting at the home of a woman who had grown up in China, where her father and sister were missionaries. After showing her collection of costumes, pictures, idols, furniture, and ornaments, she gave a talk on Chinese customs and manners. This included a demonstration of the foot binding process. She then served tea on small
tables "in the Chinese fashion." The ethnographic lessons? Chinese culture may be fascinating, its artistry enchanting (some of the women purchased curios before leaving). But a people who would accept girls for aesthetic reasons undoubtedly needed uplift. The travelers contributed to their hostess's missionary fund."[32]

Although some travel club assessments emerged from and reinforced the racial and cultural hierarchies espoused in other forms of ethnography, travel club ethnography had its own distinctive emphases. Whereas commercially oriented ethnographies focused on the productive capacities of various peoples and politically minded ethnographies focused on their potential for self-governance, travel ethnographies paid relatively greater attention to how other peoples would affect the tourist experience. Would they delight the eye? Would they prepare good meals? Would they provide clean rooms? Would they deal honestly with a stranger? Could an English-speaking tourist understand them? Like all ethnographies, tourist ethnography assumed an implicit audience, and in this case, the judge was the leisure traveler.

By no means a transparent eyeball, by no means neutral, tourists evaluated others with their own desires in mind. The rough-looking, inn Always, and sullenly Scots in one highland inn were redeemed when the traveler discovered that his room was decently furnished and clean. Tourist ethnography valued the knowledgeable guide, the accomplished cook, the indefatigable chair-carrier, the efficient porter, the dirt-chasing hotelier, and the helpful official. It valued them all the more if they came cheaply.[33] While tourists might admire artistic, technological, spiritual, military, and other accomplishments, they reserved some of their most heartfelt appreciation for the pleasingly servile native. "Search the world through, and where will you find servants such as these?" questioned Stoddard in a lecture on Japan. "From the first moment when they fall upon their knees and bow their foreheads to the floor, till the last instant, when they troop around the door to call to you their musical word for farewell—sayesin—" they seem to be the daintiest, happiest, and most obliging specimens of humanity that walk the earth."[32] Conversely, travelers damned those who had not gratified their desires. A Bay View book on Mexico characterized "promas" especially those in small towns and country places as "usually very stupid." What gave rise to this impression? "When visiting Poebla, I asked several if they could direct me to the post-office, but was unable to make any of them understand."[32]

The touristic accent that characterized ethnographic assessments carried over to economic coverage. Club members presented papers on the main industries and exports of their destinations. They learned about harbors, agricultural production, electricity, business methods, and ground transportation.[34] They spent time on American commercial expansion in Latin America and Asia. But still touristic outlooks prevailed. Fictive travelers sought out the pleasantly dramatic stories of production, as seen in talks such as "The Romance of Rubber." They deployed economic developments that came at the cost of historic preservation and local color.[35] And among the most favored economic topics were those touching on the tourism infrastructure. Travel club members spoke on the amenities (or lack thereof) they might encounter on their travels. They paid particular attention to the manufacture of items favored by visiting shoppers and to the markets and shops that awaited tourists.[36] Even their reports on harbors, agriculture, electrification, business practices, and transportation spoke to the touristic experience. Where would the steamer dock? What would the tourist eat? Would the rooms be lit?

Political assessments too came colored by the tourist mentality. In their efforts to be comprehensive, travel clubs devoted some attention to domestic politics, social welfare, international relations, and current events.[37] Yet rather than grapple with the troublesome dimensions to these issues, the travel club members who touched on them tended to present superficial
analyses consistent with their touristic assessments. How to evaluate the 
lovely Belgians? Completely overlooking the atrocities in the Congo, one 
traveler reported that it "cultivates the arts of peace." (Less typically, the Bay 
View Magazine drew attention to Belgian cruelties by publishing a photo-
graph of a man whose hands had been chopped off, captioned "A Victim 
of the Belgian King's Inhumanity."). Another travel report held up Hol-
land, a nation of placid rural landscapes, as a model country, for it "has 
no civil or social struggles, no scandals in the government; one writer has 
said of Holland that it is the most civilized country in Europe." But post-
Morocco, a land of corrupt customs officials, degenerate Oriental splen-
dors, and bothersome beggars, was to be pitied. "It is hoped that with a 
good government it will soon be restored to a higher state of prosperity. " 
How about Japan? Regrettably, reported a Hyde Park Travel Club speaker, it 
was "making encroachments on Chinese territory in the vicinity of Korea, 
taking advantage of Russia, England and France and snapping her fingers 
in the face of the United States." Westernization came at a cost. But it was 
inconceivable that such a fairy land could become a full-figured imperial 
power. "It is not believed, however, that she will be the governing power of 
the Orient."*

Travel clubs' forays into political analysis generally fit with artistic, 
ethnographic, and other assessments to produce a coherent vision of a 
place. The point was not to critique the power relations that undergirded 
the consumers' imperium or to effect change. For the dedicated tourist, a 
rudimentary knowledge of governmental systems and international rela-
tions served as background to understanding a destination. As a travel topic 
akin to local dress or national holidays, political issues informed but did 
not dominate discussions. Fictive travelers tended to consider political mat-
ters important primarily because of their relevance to the travel experience. 
Would a country that snapped its fingers in the face of the United States 
remain pleasingly accommodating to tourists? 

There were exceptions, to be sure. As they whirled around the world, 
some women began to feel that foreign affairs were their business. The 
Corning Clicilian Circle began its studies in 1903 with papers on topics 
such as Delft ware and Dutch lace. By the teens, however, members were 
hearing talk on the League of Nations, the war in Turkey, and "Why Japa-
nese Emigration Is a Failure." As we already have seen, travel club members 
supported missionary endeavors. The Chamberlain, South Dakota, club 
raised money for Near East Relief and briefly supported a child in Arme-
nia. In contrast to the traveler who heralded Belgium for its peacefulness, 
a member of the Hyde Park Travel Club urged her associates to attend the 

Congo Reform Committee meetings on "the distressful conditions existing 
in the Congo district." During World War I, the club raised money for the 
American fund for French wounded and the British, French, and American 
bland fund. Like a number of other clubs, it reinforced the current events 
component of its program by scheduling talks on the conflict.*

These examples of growing engagement with world affairs notwithstanding, 
the focus on the touristic experience meant that even as travelers 
became more versed in current events, most did not alight from their trains 
so immersed themselves in distant struggles. The story of Cora M. Watson 
illustrates this point. According to her daughter, Watson had joined a travel 
club because she was interested in other countries. Yet Watson did not talk 
much about pressing international issues at home. She had pacifist leanings 
but did not become an antwar activist. Like many of her sister travelers, 
Watson managed to distinguish between political and touristic matters, to 
travel the world without coming to believe that the two were inextricably 
interwined. For women such as Watson, seeing the world through the eyes 
of the tourist implied observation rather than activism, personal consump-
tion rather than political engagement.

Saying that imaginative travel did not, in many cases, result in interna-
tional political engagement is not to say that tourist club programs 
were apolitical. To the contrary, they were suffused with politics. Travel clubs 
taught a politically fraught way of viewing the rest of the world. Whereas 
the anthropological mentality centered on classifying, the commercial 
mentality on selling, the political mentality on governing, and the mission-
ary mentality on converting, the tourist mentality centered on consuming. 
The thing to be consumed? Not a particular product or movable good but the 
world itself. The tourist mentality taught Americans to regard the rest of 
the world as service providers, if only by providing the service of spec-
tacle. It made the needs and interests of the tourist paramount. Tourist club 
geographies had ethnological, commercial, political, and missionary inflec-
tions. But at the center of tourist club geographies lay the tourist. The core 
question addressed by the tourist club was, "What's in it for me?" Tourist-
ic endeavors positioned tourists and would-be tourists at the center of the 
world.

According to the tourist mentality, the value of a place was not so much 
inherent as it was mediated through the eyes of a prospective consumer of 
it riches. How did the Hyde Park Travel Club encapsulate its findings on 
Germany? "A summer in Bavaria is a delightful holiday, full of restful, silent 
peace which will always cling in your memory." What struck members most 
about France? "Paris is preeminently the city of pleasure."* Looking back 

198 Gilding the Globe
on a recent trip, an Ohio travel club member concluded: "Spain is no longer an uninteresting spot on the map, but a living reality." Of course, Spain had been a living reality before the Ohio women embarked on their study tour. What had changed was not Spain itself, but the clubwomen who had visited it in their imaginations. Instead of seeing Spain as a decrepit power recently defeated by the United States, they had learned to comprehend it as a place worth visiting. Spain had come to matter because they had been there. The tourist mentality may have turned the world into a living reality, but it also reduced it to the personally meaningful.

This view of the world as something to be consumed was intrinsically political, insofar as it situated the tourist in a privileged international position, as a beneficiary of the consumers' imperium not as somebody to whom the tourist could make a $60 payment. Stockard explicitly encouraged travel club members to understand their new knowledge as a form of power. "Travel enables us to make the conquest of the world," he claimed. Merely viewing his photographs could make foreign lands "permanent and intelligible possessions of our minds." Following Stockard's prompting, armchair travelers could exult: "The world is mine!"

This sense of ownership was all the more political because of the limits to real travel. Within the United States, upscale hotels made it clear that Jews were not welcome. White southerners created significant impediments to travel by segregating doorways, ticket windows, waiting rooms, toilets, and other facilities. African Americans who journeyed to Europe found that their racist compatriots were pressing for segregated facilities there as well. Would-be immigrants likewise found new obstacles in their paths. In 1882 the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which severely limited immigration from China. This legislation marked the start of a campaign to restrict entry into the United States. The effort to keep out "undesirables" soon resulted in the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan. As the United States began to develop a segregated travel infrastructure and police its borders more strictly, it made it clear that gaining entrance to and moving within the United States were freedoms reserved for the few.

In this context, identifying oneself as a traveler meant identifying with far more than male privilege and the pleasures that wealth could command. It meant identifying with whiteness, Western civilization, and national power. Tourist club members' sense of entitlement can be seen in a paper presented before the Lewistown Tourist Club in 1902: "Increased Immigration a Menace to Our Country." Even as they relished the rest of the world, the Lewistown ladies sought to keep it at bay. In the Colorado village of Erie, where, according to a Bay View Travel Club member, "most of the people are foreigners," a "band of a few choice spirits" joined together in a Bay View circle. Rather than opening their circle to their "foreign" neighbors, tourist club members traveled with their social peers. Their desire to encounter the foreign did not imply welcoming foreigners. To the contrary, the Colorado clubwomen traveled the world in part to distinguish themselves from people who were in truth more cosmopolitan than they. Surrounded by people who regarded them as locals, they claimed the mantle of world travelers for themselves. In a town full of people who had migrated to earn a living, they chose to feel displaced for fun.

In addition to promoting a sense of personal entitlement, the tourist mentality had specific political implications. Seeing the world through the eyes of the tourist meant endearing developments that enabled tourism. Foremost among these were European and U.S. imperial endeavors, which were opening up more of the world to Western tourists. Clubwomen who relied on the Mentor would have learned that the Barbary Coast had been a "nest of pirates" until its capture by France. Its tourist-minded assessment? "The French have greatly improved the place." Soon after the United States acquired the Virgin Islands during World War I, the Mentor published an issue on their tourist potential. The title of a paper presented in a tourist club's week on "Awards of the United States" is just as telling: "Hawaii, a New Winter Resort." Tourist club reports emphasized that imperialism was resulting in expanded shipping and railway lines and the development of local service infrastructure catering to Western expatriates. They credited imperialism with making non-European travel safer and more pleasant for the Western, and particularly the white Westerner, traveler. Stockard attributed the agreeable promenade in Canton to foreign influences; Holmes left for the Philippines on the first anniversary of Admiral Dewey's naval victory, fully expecting that once the war against the Filipinos had ended, U.S. tourists would flock to the islands. Stopping in China, Holmes was able to visit the Forbidden City because it was temporarily in the hands of the Ninth U.S. Infantry. In its study of the Filipinos, the Hyde Park Travel Club "learned with pride that America has done more for the Filipino in fifteen years than Spain did in three hundred years. Manila [sic] is for the most part a sanitary city." Ditto for Panama: "Under the Americans, the City of Panama became very much more sanitary and some very substantial buildings were built."

The lessons of such observations proffered in a touristic context? Along with benefiting the locals, U.S. interventions benefited the traveler. Holmes,
who witnessed shelling during his 1899 Philippine trip, regretted that circumstances prevented him from venturing far beyond Manila, but he departed "with the firm resolve to return on the conclusion of the war to study the Americanized Luzon of the near future and to explore the other islands of the archipelago when peace shall have made them accessible to the traveler." The enabling implications of U.S. interventions were not lost on the members of the Bay View Club of Irvington, Kentucky. In 1898 the club debated whether to retain the Philippians. I have found no record of the argument. Most likely, members thought on the religious, racial, civilizational, strategic, economic, and constitutional considerations that dominated contemporary discussions of the issue. But it also seems likely that in learning to view the world through the eyes of a tourist, club members had learned to appreciate the imperial order that enabled wealthy, white westerners to travel. They voted in favor of retention. 46

The touristic conviction that the world should be readily accessible to the traveler colored travel club members' reactions to the Great War as well. Travel club speakers emphasized the destruction, horrors, and havoc of the conflict. They deplored the damage done to tourist sites and the disruption done to tourism. This coverage was not neutral: the devastated sites featured in these accounts tended to be Allied sites, the culprits, the Central Powers. Hence the touristic mentality contributed to pro-Allied sentiments. In assessing the links between travel and U.S. intervention in World War I, Christopher Enio has argued that "Americans fought to make the world safe not just for democracy but also for elite conceptions of culture and charm." 47 That is, they fought for the landmarks and experiences they associated with beleaguered France. They also fought for access. Everybody knew that the greatest threats to transatlantic travelers were German submarines. No less than real travelers, fictive travelers resonated the forces that interfered with their avocation. Among the democratic rights at stake in the conflict was their right to travel.

The touristic mentality did not necessarily promote overseas intervention, however. Seeing the world through the eyes of the tourist meant assuming the aloof stance of the transient, a person whose fundamental loyalties lay at home. Unlike emigrants and exiles, tourists traveled with return fare. No matter how enticing their destinations, tourists did not stay. Even as they traversed the globe, tourists remained locals at heart. The Hyde Park Travel Club minutes of 1910 reported that after touring the world, the group had returned "with a vivid and thankful appreciation of our own country." (Never mind that the group had just "landed" in Vancouver, Canada.) Its members sang "America" at the start of meetings. 48

Like the geography schoolbooks that taught U.S. superiority, travel club reports often held up the United States as the standard against which other countries should be evaluated. A 1912 Bay View book on South America noted that the Western Hemisphere had twenty-one republics, "the most important, of course, being our own United States of North America." 49 Although travelers sought out the best that other places had to offer, their travels fueled national pride. Travel club nationalisms became most visible during World War I. Although some clubs raised money for French and British relief, travel clubs devoted even more energy to the American war effort. The Chamberlain, South Dakota, club served meals and lunches to U.S. soldiers on passing trains. The Hyde Park club dedicated itself to "National Defense." 50 At the height of the conflict, a number of travel clubs laced the patriotic admonitions to see the United States first, and they abandoned their imaginary steamers for vicarious travel in their own country. The Lewistown club, for example, filled its 1917 calendar with talks such as "Our Capital City," "Our Scenic Wonderland" (on national parks), and "United States and Her Possessions." 51

A telling sign of fictive travelers' local leanings can be seen in their insistence that their mode of travel had advantages over the real thing. A stay-at-home traveler could speak freely in Russia, without having to fear arrest and detention. She could trapeze through Germany "without becoming foot sore and weary." 52 She could wander at will, gaining access to royal apartments and stately homes. She could scale tall peaks with no fear of danger. She could circle the entire world in a matter of days, "without the harrowing incidents connected with extended travel, such as parting with loved ones, looking after baggage, to say nothing of seasickness and other troubles incidental to travelling." 53 And, of course, she could do it all quite economically, keeping her money at home.

Club members extolled the virtues of fictive travel in part from a sense of defensiveness. Women who were unable to truly travel hesitated to admit the shortcomings of the only mode of travel available to them. But the claims that fictive travel was best also underscore armchair travelers' domestic outlooks. Like tourists who actually traveled, the dedicated armchair traveler wanted to see the world without being bothered by it. If the point of tourism was the gratification of the tourist, there were advantages to imaginary travel. Stay-at-home travelers were never followed by curious natives. Unlike real travelers, they were never frightened, humiliated, or humbled. They could look without ever becoming a spectacle for the locals. They could traverse the globe without ever having in question
whether their presence was welcomed or without ever becoming unsettled.

If passengers on package tours had at most limited interactions with the locals, imaginative travelers were even more sheltered. Those who sang the praises of imaginary travel took a central component of the tourist mentality, the gratification of the tourist, to its extreme. If what mattered most was the traveler, then the world could be left out without falsely compromising the endeavor. Indeed, the real world might only mar the touristic experience by suggesting an alternative cosmology in which the tourist was not the center of the universe.

Given that travel clubs fostered such local and national sentiments, it is ironic that contemporaries criticized them for being too cosmopolitan. Family members (including some cereal-eating husbands) and others who thought ill of the women’s club movement complained that women ought to stay home rather than venturing abroad. At its fortieth anniversary celebration, a Minneapolis Tourist Club member recalled the opposition the club had provoked in its early years:

The men with Tourist families blest
Soon cried aloud—We’re sore distressed.
The woman’s place is in the home;
Good women never thus did roam.
For when the countries far and near
They know too well, alas we fear
They’ll go abroad and leave us cold;
Abroad they’ll spend our hard earned gold.

Imaginative travelers were not the only clubwomen accused of stepping outside their sphere. All clubwomen were vulnerable to accusations that they were neglecting their households. But imaginative travelers were particularly vulnerable. Women who founded libraries could claim to do so for their children’s well-being. Those who fought for temperance could call their efforts “home protection.” Agitating for sewer systems and pure food legislation could be passed off as an extension of women’s role in safeguarding family health. But globe-trotting seemed antithetical to women’s labor on behalf of others and, indeed, to domesticity itself. Travel club members’ focus on international travel seemed particularly egregious during World War I, when national boosters launched a “new America first” campaign that made an interest in foreign travel—if only imaginary—appear to indicate a want of patriotism.

Faced with such criticism, imaginative travelers had ample grounds to regard their endeavors as a struggle against male efforts to enforce womanly
domesticity. Despite their growing access to higher education, professional employment, civic involvement, and political influence, women continued to be subordinate to men. Even the wealthy, white clubwomen who exercised considerable social, economic, and political power still lacked opportunities open to men of their race and class. Despite their active participation in public life, they continued to be associated with the home. The tourist mentality encouraged women to see their ability to travel, if only occasionally, as a mark of women’s increasing freedom and rising status. To them, as the motto of the Lewiston Tourist Club did, that “The World Is Woman’s Book” meant to claim the unbounded vistas of elite men. Mindful that women who really traveled challenged assumptions about women’s frailty, timidity, dependence, and inherent domesticity, armchair tourists could dismiss outsiders’ criticisms as narrow-minded and retrograde.

They found it harder to stand up to the pressures from within the women’s club movement. At the turn of the century, the leadership of the CWc became increasingly critical of clubs devoted to self-cultivation, travel clubs among them. Beside Leach Priddy, chair of the CWc civic committee, exemplifies this new attitude. In 1912 she told clubwomen to abandon their “pink tea programs, with a half-hour to set, a half hour to the pyramids of Egypt and twenty minutes for civics.” Instead, members should build programs that would lead to substantial community work. Admonitions to become politically involved resulted in a seismic shift within the club movement. Whereas late nineteenth-century women’s clubs tended to pursue literary and cultural topics, by the twentieth century a rising number of clubs focused on reform. Tourist clubs were not oblivious to these developments. Although there was a resurgence of interest in forming travel clubs in the teens, the peak years for travel club formation were between 1890 and 1905.

Charged with being self-seeking cosmopolitans, unmindful of community affairs, armchair travelers made local activists an important part of their programs. The McGregor Tourist Club organized a “Clean-up Day” in the town’s parks. The Lewiston Tourist Club voted to expand its purpose to include the promotion of civic welfare. The Hyde Park Travel Club provided a scholarship for a Chicago Art Institute student. Its philanthropy department distributed blankets, clothes, Christmas dinners, and milk to needy members of the community. Once it paid for a Chicago woman’s operation, another time it undertook the treatment for a tuberculosis boy in an Illinois sanitarium. The club’s political activism—involving such things as letter-writing campaigns in regard to the age of consent, women’s suffrage, and libraries—likewise centered on local and national issues.
Like club leaders a century ago, historians have heralded activist club women as the key to advancing Progressive Era reforms. Rather than seeing clubwomen's turn to local activism as a retreat from the wider world, once encountered in literary, artistic, historical, musical, and touristic activities, historians have characterized this shift as a broadening of women's visions. According to this line of thought, political and civic engagement did more than self-cultivation to expand clubwomen's outlooks and undermine Victorian tenets of domesticity.\textsuperscript{45} There is undoubtedly much truth to this argument. Civic involvement literally brought women out of their homes and broadened their vistas, capacities, and ambitions. But social reform did not necessarily imply a rejection of domesticity. Indeed, local reformers often justified their efforts by referring to them as civic housekeeping. Furthermore, even as activist women became less domestic in the sense that they immersed themselves more fully in public affairs, many became more domestic in the sense that their horizons began to recede from the global to the national, state, and local.

To travel abroad, however, meant to leave the domestic (particularly in the national sense of the word) behind. It meant abandoning homes, and it meant abandoning home—the nation—for a more rootless state. It may seem that ficitive travelers posed only a mild challenge to domesticity because root never really went anywhere beyond their community libraries. Yet the point of their endeavors was to envision a life beyond the confines of home—that is, beyond their households and neighborhoods. Like other study club members, imaginary travelers claimed the entire world as their sphere. Despite their self-centeredness, travel clubs fostered a sense of global consciousness, fused to aspirations of extending women's realm.

Travel club members embraced a central premise of the culture of travel, that travel was broadening. They insisted that their trips had made them open-minded. After five months of studying Italy, a Bay View club reported: “Our prejudices have disappeared.” Other club members echoed these sentiments, insisting that their travels had taught them to sympathize with the nations under study. Indeed, some club members went so far as to say that they had learned to identify with the people in the lands they visited. As a Marne, Iowa, correspondent wrote: “Since our circle has taken up the Bay View course, the enthusiasm has grown so strong that it threatens to convert us all into Germans.” At the close of the Spanish tour, the Bay View Magazine questioned: “Have not all noticed how that study and close acquaintance made us all but Spaniards?”\textsuperscript{46} By teaching travelers to appreciate and even identify with other people (especially with Europeans), imaginery travel planted the seeds of cultural relativism.

---

Even as we recognize the ethnographic, racist, and nationalist dimensions of touristic programs (particularly when clubwomen ventured beyond northern Europe) and the ethnic, racial, and class homogeneity of the travel club movement, we also need to acknowledge that travel clubs cultivated more cosmopolitan sentiments. In this respect, imaginary journeys may have been as broadening as local activism. Although community activism exposed women to real differences, it often involved an effort to eliminate these differences—to Americanize immigrants, to reform delinquents, to teach hygienic principles to the poor, and so forth. In contrast to activists, bent on social change, tourists approached the world more passively, as consumers. Tourists did not always appreciate difference, but they did not seek conformity. Besides fostering a sense of feeling foreign, imaginary travel led club members to literally want to become foreign, by going abroad. Insist as they did that theirs was a preferable mode of travel, club members recognized that their endeavors were a superficial imitation of the real thing. True, imaginary travel spared tourists the辛劳, the fatigue, the danger, and the expense. But ficitive travelers knew that they were missing out on the shopping, the food, the color, the smells, the 360-degree vistas. Ficitive travelers never met the locals; they never carried on a conversation with a stranger. Their presentations were only as good as the materials available to them. They knew that theirs was a derivative experience.

Recognizing the limits of ficitive travel, a number of travel club members professed a desire for actual travel. According to the Hyde Park Travel Club minutes, a lecture on the Bay of Naples “inspired all present with a longing for a sail along the beautiful Bay.” Another armchair traveler claimed that her club had developed a bad case of wanderlust: “So far our only unsatisfied desire is for some fairy to convert our poverty into 1550, so we can go sailing around the world with Prof. G. W. E. Hill [a tour leader] who went to the places covered by the Bay View program next summer.”\textsuperscript{47} Club members may have been drawn into the ficitive travel movement because of preexisting longings to travel, but over and over again they claimed that their imaginary journeys had bred stronger yearnings. As a Bay View traveler reported, “We are anxious now to be among the first tourists to Spain, after our reading, which has created an intense desire.”\textsuperscript{48} Such professions indicate that imaginary travel fostered nondomestic aspirations. As their critics realized, women's travel clubs subverted domesticity in both its senses. First, they brought middle-class women out of their homes, into libraries, lecture halls, classrooms, and other women's parlors and, on occasion, onto trains and steamships. These forays won ficitive travelers a
place in newspaper stories, club movement annals, archival collections, and, ultimately, the historical record. But that was not all. More significantly, imaginary travelers redefined what it meant to stay home. Through their concerted efforts to learn about, experience, and even reproduce the world, they made the boundaries between the household and the world, the domestic and the foreign, far more permeable. They turned homes into points of departure and points of encounter. And, in so doing, they made a mark on the wider travel culture. Even as travel club members became somewhat less domestic in their pursuits and even less domestic in their outlooks, they gave the culture of travel a more domestic cast. They helped bring exotic travel experiences from the realm of public amusements into the very heart of domesticity. By positioning women as prime promoters of the culture of travel and prime exponents of the travel mentality, travel clubs made women's desires for escape, status, enlightenment, and first important considerations in understandings of the rest of the world. They fostered a consumerist global consciousness that put the interests of the white Western woman tourist center stage. Through fictive travel, homebound women could escape the confines of domesticity and explore the far reaches of the consumers' imperialism, without ever having to fundamentally change perspectives.

5

Immigrant Gifts,
American Appropriations

Progressive Era Pluralism as Imperialist Nostalgia

In 1916 Chicago celebrated the Fourth of July with its usual orgy of patriotism. Bands played stirring tunes, marchers belted out nationalistic anthems, and the huge crowd gathered in the Coliseum rose to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Representatives from various immigrant groups made three-minute speeches attesting to their loyalty. Six thousand "Americans of foreign birth" pledged their allegiance to their adopted nation. Celebrants forewore ties to all other countries and pledged to make the United States their "first and only object of devotion." 24 Such effusions of nationalism—and Chicagoans were not alone in waving the Stars and Stripes—grew even more fervent after the United States marched into the Great War the following year. The war resulted in more vociferous expressions of patriotism, an upsurge in nativism, sedition laws, deportations, and calls for 100 percent Americanism. It added urgency to the Americanization efforts already well underway in the Chicago Coliseum in 1916. 2

The Progressive Era Americanization campaign had a broad organizational basis. Hereditary groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, National Society of Colonial Dames, and Sons of the American Revolution regarded themselves as particularly suited for Americanization work and made it a priority even before the United States entered the European fray. In 1918 the General Federation of Women's Clubs board resolved that the most pressing issue facing the nation was the "conservation, development, and absorption of American ideals of National, Civic, and So