

The exhibit of the Sisters of Notre Dame was highly commended and at the close of the Fair, which lasted six months, a diploma and medal were awarded to fifteen of our houses in Massachusetts, Lowell's parish and day schools being among the favored ones. See also the exhibition of the Sisters of the Holy Family, Columbus, Queen Isabella, and Leo XIII.

Annals from the Archives

Sr. Agnes Marguerite McGee's (1901-1992) Travel Journal



January 2018

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—In 1957, Sr. Agnes Marguerite McGee set sail for Rome to participate in the 1957 General Chapter of the Sisters of Notre Dame, which was scheduled to open in Namur on April 23rd, 1957. She and the other sisters with her left March 27th from New York City on the S.S. *Queen Mary*. Once on board, Sr. Agnes bought a small journal to record her experiences, a journal she continued to use until 1973.

Sr. Agnes Marguerite McGee was born Sarah L. McGee in East Boston on October 23, 1901, the daughter of James and Agnes (St. John) McGee. She was the second of eight children in their family. She first met the Sisters of Notre Dame at the Fitton School in East Boston. During the summer following her June 1920 graduation, she worked as a stenographer until her entry into the Sisters of Notre Dame on Sept. 15, 1920. For her religious name, she chose her mother's and youngest sister's names, Sr. Agnes Marguerite. She made her first vows in 1923 and her perpetual vows in 1929. As many sisters did during those years, she took summer classes at Emmanuel College, eventually completing her Bachelor's Degree. Her education continued until she received her Master's in Education from Boston College. During her many missions, Sr. Agnes taught elementary and high school students in Woburn, Springfield, Lynn, Cambridge, Roxbury, Tyngsboro, Notre Dame Academy in Boston, Brighton, Salem, and Lawrence. In 1941, she was asked to open the Julie Country Day School in Leominster. A few years later, she was named the Superior in Springfield, where she stayed for six years. After that, she was sent to Waltham to serve as the supervisor of the Waltham Notre Dame schools.

In 1957, ocean travel was the norm as the first commercial transatlantic flight didn't occur until the following year. She bought a travel journal on the S.S. *Queen Mary* to record the weather, conditions on the ship, her experiences and what sights she saw. She began her journal with a description of the sisters' travel to New York City where the "*Boat left promptly at 12 [noon] amid waving of hands, shakers and throwing of colored streamers. Stayed on deck till Statue of Liberty was passed. Dinner at 1:00.*" For the next several days she reported on rough seas and the onset of a cold that kept her confined to bed. She was so miserable on her third day into the voyage that she recorded she was, "*Almost ready to say never again to a sea voyage—still very rough, waves tremendous, but the sun is glorious and the ocean is an expanse of silver. . . . Altar nearly fell over during Mass. . .*"

Finally on Sunday March 31st, she wrote that it was "*the first calm day at sea. . . Sun lured us to the outer deck. Sighted the Azores! . . . Had tour of kitchen and first class dining room at 11 A.M.*" Two days later, they neared the Rock of Gibraltar. "*On the left was Tarifa, Spain on the right Tangier, Africa. The former, even from the ship seemed a real Moorish city. At three o'clock we passed the Rock of Gibraltar which looks just the picture in the Prudential Life insurance ads! . . . Many interesting characters on board—one man going to Italy to wed his girl for whom he has waited 40 years until her mother died.*" The ship passed by Cannes, Nice and Monaco. On April 4th, they landed in the city of Genoa which they were able to tour before

returning to the ship for the night. The next morning they sailed for Naples where they disembarked and took a six hour bus trip to Rome, arriving at the convent to enjoy supper and a good night's sleep.

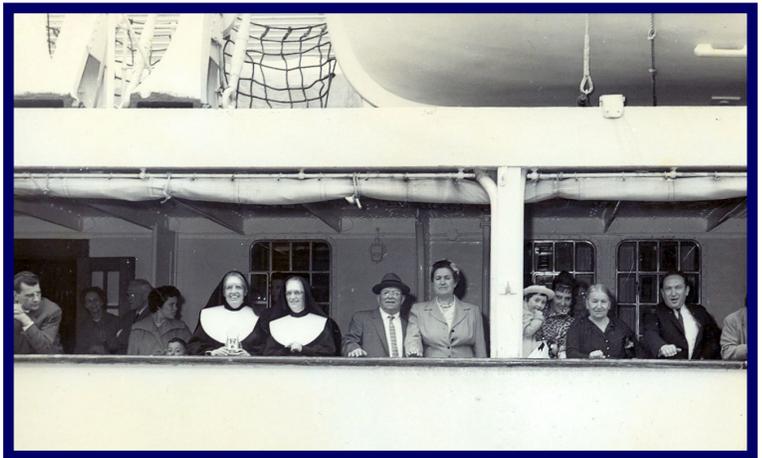
The sisters remained in Rome until April 14th, when they took the train to Namur. The route brought them through Switzerland and Luxembourg before they entered Belgium and arrived at the Mother House in Namur. After celebrating Easter on April 21st, they enjoyed a quiet day before the General Chapter opened on Tuesday, April 23rd. Once their meetings and business at the Chapter had finished, they concluded their journey with tours through Scotland and England before boarding the S. S. *United States* in London for their return journey.

Despite rough seas from the U.S. to Naples and rain on their return voyage from London to New York, Sr. Agnes once again boarded another ship in Boston on April 18, 1963 for the General Chapter, this time to be held in Rome. On May 20th, after many meetings, they elected Sr. Loretto Julia Carroll as the first American Mother General. The sisters had gone to Rome with the expectation that Julie Billiart would be canonized. When that didn't happen, all those who had been at the Chapter were promised they would be able to return to Rome when the canonization finally would happen. For the next month or so, they enjoyed leisurely tours of Vicarello, Assisi and Lourdes before going onto London for the return voyage. Again, there were rough seas for some of the journey.

And so, when Sr. Agnes once again traveled to Rome for the 1969 General Chapter and the canonization of St. Julie, she must have delighted to head to Logan Airport instead of Commonwealth Pier to board an airplane for what was certainly a quicker and hopefully more enjoyable trip.

To see more of Sr. Agnes' Travel Journal, click [here](#).

Leaving from Boston,
April 18, 1963
Sister Alice Gertrude Keating on left
Sister Agnes Marguerite McGee on
right.
Click on photo to expand it.



Visiting the Bridge, 1963
Sister Agnes Marguerite McGee to left
of man speaking
Sister Loretto Julia Carroll in center.
Click on photo to expand it.

Sources consulted for this article

- ◆ Sister Agnes Marguerite McGee Travel Journal, 2012.30 SND New England Archives.
- ◆ Ancestry.com
- ◆ Sr. Agnes Marguerite McGee Oral History, 1989. 2016.04 SND New England Archives.