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RESURRECTING AN AMERICAN ARCHIVE: A MID-20TH-CENTURY  
CASE STUDY OF LOUISE AMORY (1892-1979)

by

BOBBIE MARQUIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in English  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Louise Kane

## Abstract

In 1950, Roger and Louise Amory founded the Johann Fust Community Library in Boca Grande, Florida. After the death of Louise's son John Austin Amory III in 2018, John's son – and Roger Amory's namesake – donated a collection of Louise Amory's papers to the Library Foundation. The archive consists of 140 pages, mostly handwritten. Louise wrote most of the material between 1949 and 1954. As Executive Director of the Foundation, I solicited the help of one of our docent volunteers, and we took on the challenge of transcribing her writing.

I was excited to undertake the resurrection of this 20th-century archive, and I began to research women's life-writing to set a framework. My original expectation was that the work would be diaristic, but my preconceptions required adjustment. An analysis of Louise Amory's writing soon led me to conclude that she wrote to create a record of the library's founding and that her audience was public, not private.

While building the library, Louise and Roger purchased a boat, that they christened *Papyrus*, to provide library services to the islands around Boca Grande. Traveling aboard *Papyrus* introduced a maritime aspect to the Amorys' project and Louise's writing as she recorded these island-hopping journeys along with other yachting adventures. I came to see Louise's writing as a travel narrative that is also life-writing.

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## Introduction: Unwrapping an Archive

How do we record a life? How can we resurrect Louise Amory from her life-writing? Can we know her from her archive?

In 1949 a woman sat with pen in hand recording the events of her life. Seventy years later, and forty years after her death, another woman opens a brown envelope and begins to transcribe her handwritten journal. The resurrection of Louise Amory's archive provides the opportunity to bring her into the present. The cursive writing in blue fountain pen on faded yellow paper offers a window in time through which we see her move, hear her speak, and witness her thoughts. This thesis will explore what it means to unwrap an archive in the present.

In 2018, Louise Amory's papers came to the Johann Fust Library Foundation from her grandson. The collection consists of 140 pages written by Louise. She wrote one hundred thirty-seven pages from 1949 to 1954 and three pages in 1972. There are two composition notebooks that primarily take the form of a ship's log from Roger and Louise's journeys on *Papyrus*. The notebooks also contain a few pages of diary entries. In addition to the notebooks, there are pages of typed and handwritten narratives. These pages also include a handwritten table of contents. This table hints at the fact that Louise was planning to tell her story – beyond the travel experiences. She wrote a chapter about the people and the culture on the island of Boca Grande and another on the library's conception, design, and building. In addition to focusing on Louise Amory's life-writing, this thesis will also focus on the process of archiving Louise's papers, using materialist approaches and History of the Book studies as I read, analyzed, and archived this body of unpublished life-writing. (For a complete listing of materials, see the Appendix.)

These materials have never been transcribed or archived. This thesis will focus on the process of discovery that transcribing these archives catalyzes. This thesis will also explore how to read an unpublished archive. I will analyze Louise's life-writing in both a historical and a social context. Most significantly, the Louise Amory archive has unfolded as a true example of travel writing as life-writing.



Fig. 1. *Papyrus Log 1 (L)* and *Papyrus Log 2* from *Louise Amory Archive F3*

## Chapter 1: Louise Amory's Archive

"And what better way to open a dialogue between present and past than to find the past bundled together in a packet of old papers?" (Wineapple).

Louise Amory's journal begins in October of 1949. It was a heady time for life in the United States. World War II had ended in 1945, and the post-war period was a time of affluence for many. The role of women in society was primarily domestic. Roger and Louise Amory were born into prominent families; Louise was a Lionberger from St. Louis, and Roger was from the prominent Boston Amory family. Roger was a successful banker. He recorded in his own journal that he was committed to a life of philanthropy. Louise and Roger were both book lovers.

Louise's journal documents the time in her life when she and her husband Roger Amory conceived the plan to build a small library on the island of Boca Grande, Florida. In addition to building the library building, they also planned to launch a "book boat" to provide library

services to the surrounding islands. They accomplished both goals. They named the library boat *Papyrus* after the ancient Egyptian writing surface. They called the library "The Johann Fust Community Library," after the banker from Mainz, Germany, who financed Johannes

Gutenberg's invention – the first moveable type press. The library opened its doors in 1950 and continues to thrive today. *Papyrus*, the library boat, delivered books to the surrounding islands until 1968.



Fig. 2. Johann Fust Community Library, Boca Grande, Florida  
Founded 1950

Roger Amory's portrait hangs in the Stratton Room at the library, along with his collection of rare books and artifacts. There is no portrait of Louise, but a photo in the library's scrapbook shows Louise and Roger seated on the library's keystone coral staircase. Another shows them leaving the dock aboard *Papyrus*. Wrought iron grates on the library windows intertwine their initials, and an engraving in the entryway notes, "Roger and Louise Amory gave this library to the people of Boca Grande and Charlotte Harbor."

### What is an Archive?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines an archive as "A place in which public records or other important historical documents are kept" and "A historical record or document so preserved." Smith and Watson's study, *Alternative, Imaginary, and Affective Archives of the Self in Women's Life-writing*, penetrates the different ways women have engaged in creating their archive through "autobiographical discourse" (15). They observe that "In a sense, each of us is an archive unto ourselves, storing the remembered experiences of our past lives not only in memories but also in artifacts, documents, and memorabilia" (19). In the context of this thesis, the archive refers to the specific notebooks and papers given to the Johann Fust Library Foundation in 2018. In this case, Louise Amory's archive is a fragment that contains some of her writing and the physical materials that hold those writings.

The physical materials of her archive, on the first view, appear unremarkable—two cardboard-bound composition notebooks filled with handwritten entries and 41 handwritten and typed pages. On closer examination, some evidence of time and place emerges. On the inside cover of *Papyrus Log II*, a small handwritten note states, "Get Gertrude Stein" (Amory F2). We

cannot know Louise's exact meaning here, but some possibilities come to mind. As Louise and Roger were stocking the library's shelves with books, was Louise making a note to include some of Gertrude Stein's works? In 1950, Stein's short story, Q.E.D., was published posthumously, titled *Things as They Are*. Also, in 1950, Stein's play, "Yes Is for a Very Young Man," was running at the Brattle Theatre in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Perhaps the note was a reminder to pick up tickets. We can't know, and we can't assume.

Another point of interest from *Book II* is a three-cent U.S. postage stamp. It reads, "North American Treaty Organization" "Peace-Strength-Freedom" (F2). The stamp was issued in April of 1952 in honor of the third anniversary of the founding of NATO. With two hands clutching a torch over an image of the world, it is a reminder of how recent it was that World War II had



Fig. 3. NATO stamp from the back cover of *Papyrus Log II*

ended. NATO was a fledgling organization. The postage stamp is a bit of history that Louise had affixed to the back of *Papyrus Log II*.

Smith and Watson maintain, "records of a person's past, whether whole or fragmentary, are not transparent documents any more than the autobiographical acts that they produce. No evidence of the lived life is unmediated" (18). In this context, they caution the researcher that as archives are assembled and pieced together, they are not absolute. "Autobiographical narratives are a mode of subjective truth, and the experiential histories they disclose may be conflicting, partial, situated at different life moments, and always incomplete" (Smith and Watson 18). As we

read and attempt to analyze Louise Amory's unpublished writing, the lesson for us is to leave an opening for the many possibilities of historical and personal context.

### How to Read an Archive

When I first came to the library in 2017, as Executive Director of The Library Foundation, I noted the many references to Roger and Louise. Their names are often spoken as one word. I learned that Roger was a successful businessman – a banker – and that Louise was the first librarian of the Johann Fust Library after its founding. By transcribing Louise's journals, I would begin to see her move, hear her voice, and get to know the woman.

After the gift of Louise's papers in 2018, I began the process of reading and transcribing her writing. What soon became apparent was that I came to the task with preconceptions. Hermione Lee quotes Carolyn Stedman in *Past Tenses*. "A sense of that which is lost, never to be recovered completely, has been one of the most powerful rhetorical devices of modern women's history" (Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* 127). This sense of loss tempted me to reach for meaning based on an understanding of women and society at the time of Louise's writing.

Coming from a post-feminist perspective, I expected Louise Amory's writing to reveal the challenges and frustrations of a woman caught in a confining mid-century American role, but I soon came to see that was not the case. I was surprised as I made my way through the pages to discover that much of Louise Amory's journal is travel writing rather than being self-focused. She began writing in her first notebook with the maiden voyage of *Papyrus* and recorded her observations in light-hearted prose. In her article, "Narrating Travel, Narrating the Self," Zoë

Kinsley states, "for travel writing to offer objective information about the places and communities encountered, rather than the individual encountering them, are not always compatible with the conventions of life-writing, something that female authors were often acutely aware of" (Kinsley). Kinsley's study focused on eighteenth-century women travel writers, but her observations of the relationship between travel writing and life-writing provide meaningful insights for the analysis of Louise Amory's journals. Louise's writing is an example of travel writing as life-writing. As I ventured into transcribing, it became clear that to render a pure analysis; I would have to suspend my preconceptions – a challenge that faces biographers.

Hermione Lee tells us that Virginia Woolf was critical of biography because she sensed that the genre would never adequately reflect the inner life. She quotes Woolf's articulation of this failure.

Here is the past and all its inhabitants miraculously sealed as in a magic tank; all we have to do is to look and to listen and to listen and to look and soon the little figures – for they are rather under life size – will begin to move and to speak, and as they move we shall arrange them in all sorts of patterns of which they were ignorant, for they thought when they were alive that they could go where they liked; and as they speak we shall read into their sayings all kinds of meanings which never struck them, for they believed when they were alive that they said straight off whatever came into their heads. But once you are in a biography, all is different. (Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* 81)

In a roundtable discussion about biography at Oxford Centre for Life-Writing at Wolfson College, Hermione Lee spoke about the biographies of well-known people becoming

mythologized. She tells the story about the walking stick that Virginia Woolf was carrying the day she drowned herself. It can be seen at the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library.

The fact that [it] has become a celebrity object, tells you a lot about the way, as we all know, that Virginia Woolf, particularly has been mythologized. ... There is a very interesting way in which biographies around very famous people about whom a mythology has built up – they keep being done ... and the way which they are written about keeps pace with movements of the time, political movements, psychoanalytical movements, social movements (Wolfson College).

To avoid tainting our interpretation of Louise Amory's writing with assumptions based on the mythology surrounding her, we must read her journal as an example of life-writing against the backdrop of the culture and the time in which she wrote it.

### How to Transcribe an Archive

Reading Louise Amory's writing was a challenge. Her cursive penmanship was challenging to decipher, and she did not follow grammatical rules. As I undertook the task of transcribing her writing, I faced decisions about what to do with cross-outs and re-wording. Louise edited herself, often massaging the meaning of a sentence. Just like a study of an artist's sketches or an author's revisions, some of Louise's edits reveal her process and give insight into her thinking. She never revised her writing to the point of being ready for publication, and one can imagine that she would have corrected the errors, and the original versions would have been lost. But as I sit with her handwritten work, the responsibility of being true to the letter feels

important. I am not revising or editing her work in this exercise, just creating a readable, accurate record.

In 1927, 1939, and 1954, John Middleton Murry transcribed Katherine Mansfield's *Journal*. Murry based each of these versions on the same original material written by Mansfield. In some ways, the condition of Mansfield's journal can be compared to the state of Louise Amory's writings, in that it consisted of many different pieces. Philip Waldron's analysis of Murry's interpretations provides a cautionary tale. Upon release of his 1954 edition, Murry describes the raw material of Mansfield's archive, "comments, confessions, and unposted letters, which she had the habit of writing in the same exercise books as those in which she wrote her stories; fragmentary diaries... brief and often difficult notes for the stories; marginal comments in the books she read" (Waldron 11).

Waldron describes Murry's approach to transcription of these materials for his 1954 edition. Murry omitted certain passages and modified punctuation in others. Waldron notes that Mansfield's approach to punctuation in the original, "reliance on the dash and the occasional full stop to save the writing from incoherence" (Waldron 13), which would have the effect of eliminating "immediacy and idiosyncrasy" (13). Waldron notes this type of "mild deception" (13) throughout Murry's work. Waldron notes the "toning down" (14) and "watering down" (15) of Mansfield's writing. In some cases, it was a conscious effort to avoid references to her sexuality, and in others, it was because he could not decipher her handwriting. Waldron asserts that the liberties taken by Murry "distorted the personality of the writer herself as we know it and is to some extent responsible even now for the myth still current in France of a temperamentally ethereal figure" (Waldron 18).

As the first transcriber of Louise's notebooks, handwritten pages, and typed pages, I recognize the responsibility to refrain from inserting edits, whether for correction or clarification purposes. Access to her original, unpublished material brings with it a responsibility to Louise Amory, first and foremost. Her writing becomes her voice in a world she left more than forty years ago. The reader can glimpse her through her own words. The relationship is between Louise and those who read her writing. The transcriber should be as invisible as possible in that relationship. Errors and marginalia play a part in bringing Louise to life. Arlette Farge acknowledges this in her study of the Archives of Paris when she writes,

In their handwriting, their occasional doodles and asides, and their registers, I have in my hands a link to persons long dead: it strengthens my historian's commitment to try to tell of the past with as much discernment, insight and honesty as I can. (Farge xv)

Additional instruction and insight on the transcription process come from Rochester University, where the archives of Amy and Isaac Post are the subject of a digital archive project. Amy Post was a strong voice for abolition and women's rights. In 1859, she wrote a testimonial for Harriet Jacobs published in Jacobs' slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Jacobs lived with the Posts for a year. The historical value of the Post archive is significant. In addition to correspondence with Harriet Jacobs, the collection contains letters from Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Harriet Tubman (University of Rochester Libraries). Transcription Guidelines outline the protocols for dealing with transcription nuances. The project team is committed to rendering the words of each writer

authentically. The approach to spelling and punctuation provides a good guideline as I approach Louise's writing.

As accurately as possible, we have faithfully rendered and transcribed all letters.

We have retained original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph division, indentations and abbreviations. Interlineations are indicated by carets (^and^). Underlining has been maintained. Double or triple underlines are rendered as a single underline. Dashes are transcribed as faithfully as possible, with one keystroke (-), or a dash representative of the length of the original.

Unless the meaning of a word is unclear, apostrophes have not been added when omitted by the author, nor is the word marked as misspelled (for example, Amys is not followed by a [sic], or Amy[']s) (University of Rochester Libraries).

Here is a brief example of how the University of Rochester guidelines apply in the transcription of Louise's archive. This excerpt is from *Papyrus Log I*.

Capt. Went below and we were left on the bridge thoroughly confused by buoys.

Finally we laid to and anchored while the Capt. fixed the trouble and we slept.

After lunch we did some sight seeing around greater Boston Harbor A more varied and fascinating place I've never seen. Navy yard ocean liners – coast guard boats – fire boats – excursion boats – fishing parties – ship yards – forts – hospitals – and lighthouses.

[illegible] at 6 P.M. dinner at anchorage off Wollaston Beach. Rain next a.m. but lovely by lunch time. More sight seeing and [illegible] by 5. (Amory F1)

## Chapter 2: Louise Amory's Writing

In the handwritten and typed pages of her archive, Louise Amory distills her travel log and blends it with a description of Boca Grande and the infancy of the library that she and her husband were building. These pages take on the tone of life-writing, but not as a diary. Although there is the feeling of memoir, the descriptions and detail appear to have been the beginnings of a book about the library's founding. She is writing for a reader – perhaps for the community or the library patrons. It is an example of the varied nature of life-writing that in her narrative, Louise's memories find a place amid ships logs, travel itineraries, and weather reports.

Louise Lionberger Amory was born in 1892 to a prominent St. Louis attorney, Isaac Lionberger, and Mary Louise Shepley Lionberger. Her mother died in 1910, and in November of 1911, the St. Louis Star announced Louise Lionberger as "one of the debutantes of the season." In 1914, at the age of 22, she married John Austen Amory, of a prominent Boston family. They had four children: three daughters and a son. After Louise's husband John died in 1938, she became ill, and John's younger brother, Roger, stepped in to take care of her. Roger and Louise were soon married.

Roger was a trustee whose clients included the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Boston Brahmins. One of his clients was Louise Crowninshield, daughter of Henry A. du Pont. Crowninshield introduced Roger and Louise to Boca Grande. At the time, the island was a fishing village with a year-round population of about 500. It was becoming a winter haven for the rich.

Louise wrote several pages describing life on Boca Grande during those days and the origins of the plan to build a library. She indicates with a hand-written table of contents that this excerpt described an experience in 1949.

I have just switched off the radio which says, 'Life can be beautiful – even after thirty-five,' because I am thinking happily how lovely it can be at sixty- and even, I trust after sixty-five. And it isn't that I am looking forward to my old-age pension either. It's because of something very exciting —We are going to buy a boat! (Amory F3)

In her handwritten draft, Louise changes the sentence structure. Her first draft states, "Roger is going to buy us a boat. He told me so this morning, and I have been twittering ever since. Even the thought of it gives me an almost childish trill" (Amory F3). This version reveals the memoir aspect of Louise's journal. As she continues to tell of the planned library boat, she reflects on a prior boating experience,

It's funny to think I never used to like boats at all even though I was brought up in them so to speak. The trouble was I was just no good at sailing. I seemed to be always tripping over things or pulling the wrong ropes. Maybe it was because my father used to shout so at us. "Luff her up, you idiot." and I would pull her off and have the tiller snatched from my hands. And I always knew that when I was asked to be crew in a race, it was because I was fat and needed for Ballast. (Amory F3)

The reference to her father is the first of several mentions of Isaac Lionberger in Louise's writing. She continues the thread, writing about boating with her father. She writes about a funny yet sad story that took place when she was ten years old that influenced her trepidation about

boats. She and her father were sailing to a tennis match. "I was all dressed up even to the extent of a hat with flowers on it." She was trying to be a good crewmate, but they passed their landing place, "Pops was furious. 'Confound you, you goose,' he bellowed, 'DO something!' and obediently I jumped overboard!" (Amory F3).

It is tempting and almost reflexive to judge and draw conclusions about Louise's father and their relationship, but there is reason to avoid concluding what we think this writing tells us. Arlette Farge studied the archives of the Bastille, which contains Paris' two-hundred-year-old judicial records. She notes,

Documents can be very talkative. Sometimes, on a particular theme, they can offer up to the reader an endless supply of new information that is both judicious and detailed. When a document is this dynamic, it can give the impression that it is sufficient in and of itself. In these cases, it can be tempting to skip taking a step back from the document and go straight to commenting upon it, as if its presentation of the evidence did not need to be reinterrogated. (Farge 73)

To access this personal writing brings with it responsibility. When Louise tells the story of jumping off the boat, is she laughing or wincing. We can theorize, but we cannot know. When she states, "We are buying a boat" and edits out the sentence, "Roger is buying us a boat," is it because Roger encourages her to hold herself as his equal, or is she striving to be his equal. We cannot know. Thus, the responsibility of resurrecting the archive brings with it an obligation. Once again, we are faced with the question, how can we resurrect Louise Amory from her life-writing? Farge's insight advises us against drawing conclusions.

As co-founder of a library, Louise's thoughts about books are meaningful and relevant. Between them, Louse and Roger owned several thousand books. Louise explains that these were both inherited and acquired. She describes Roger's collections of classics and his treasured Gutenberg Bible leaf. She then talks about her collection, "there is hardly a classic among them, but they mean a great deal to me just the same" (Amory F3). She then writes about her father and his frustrated efforts to coerce her to read the classics.

I remember his snatching some romantic novel out of my hands and replacing it with Morley's Life of Gladstone. I used to loathe Mr. Gladstone, Milton, and the Greeks. Pops also had a passion for English lyric poetry, particularly Beaumont and Fletcher; 'Whenas in silk my Julia goes, then methinks how sweetly flows, the liquefaction of her clothes.' How often I heard about Julia and Wordsworth's Lucy, the 'violet by a mossy stone.' Now I am quite proud that I can quote them after a fashion but then all poetry was a headache especially the kind that was full of mythology and the Gods. (Amory F3)

There was a counter influence in Louise's life. "Alice, the waitress, who fed me on books by The Duchess which I fear launched me onto my lifelong enjoyment of fiction" (Amory F3). The Duchess was the pen name of Margaret Wolfe Hungerford, née Hamilton, 1855-1897, an Irish novelist best known for *Molly Bawn*, in which the expression, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," was coined. As she once again reflects on her father's influence, Louise writes, "I am tremendously grateful for all that Pops rammed down our throats. Some of it stuck and at least I am familiar enough with most of the 'great books' so that I know what they are. But when my

daughters look at me reproachfully and complain that they have had no 'cultural influences,' I have to admit it's true. The pendulum swings" (Amory F3).

In her journals, Louise provides anecdotal biographical glimpses of her father, Isaac Lionberger. He had died in September of 1948, and her first entry into *Papyrus Log I* was just one year later. Hermione Lee refers to Thomas Carlyle's observation that "a chain of human sympathy can link the reader, not only to the central figure of the biography, but, through 'many a little Reality,' to the lesser-known people who are brought back to life" (Lee, Body Parts 1). Lee refers to "Carlyle's belief in the power of small anecdotes and little details – what he calls 'light-gleams' – to bring a whole life home to us" (Lee, Body Parts 1).

### Louise Amory's Life-writing

As I read Louise's journal, I found my pulse quickening when Louise revealed herself in the narration. As Lee says,

When we are reading other forms of life-writing – autobiography, memoir, journal, letter, autobiographical fiction or poem – or when we are trying ourselves to tell the story of a life, whether in an obituary, in a conversation, or in a confession or in a book – we are always drawn to moments of intimacy, revelation, or particular inwardness. (Lee, Body Parts 3)

Louise's writing is not strictly a diary, nor is it an autobiography. It has qualities of memoir but is focused more on telling the story of events rather than describing her inner experience. After she and Roger launch the library boat, her writing is in the form of a ship's log. She writes for a public reader about the library's founding – we draw this conclusion from her

hand-written table of contents that outlines events. Her narrative provides a glimpse into her history, Boca Grande's history, and Boston Harbor's history. The reading and transcription of her archive – of any life-writing – requires a careful approach. "Every autobiographical narrator is composed of at least two entities: the narrating 'I,' who tells her own experiential history; and an earlier version of herself, referred to as the narrated 'I'" (Baisnée-Keay 23). We hear Louise's voice, and we hear Louise speak about herself.



Fig.4. Louise and Roger Amory seated on front steps of Johann Fust Community Library. 1950. Library Collection.

How do we define the genre of Louise's writing – is it a memoir, diary, or travel log. "What is this text?" can morph into another, more ideological question: 'Is this text important?' The latter is an evaluative question regarding the significance or merit of the text and one that has implications for both archival preservation and the writing of literary history" (Henderson 5)

When I first began to read Louise's archive, I brought a mental trunk of expectations to the task. I had viewed the photograph of her sitting on the library's keystone coral front steps (see fig. 1). She is in a white dress, white bobby socks, and brown shoes. She wears a double string of pearls, and her hair is in a neat, short bob. She holds her reading glasses in her hands. Her husband Roger sits next to her in a tweed suit and wire-rim glasses, his arms wrapped around drawn-up knees. The photo was taken on the opening day of the library. I studied the image and, perhaps it is human nature – in my imagination, I created a story.

As I read Louise's writing, my construct began to crumble. I'm embarrassed now to realize the fiction I had conjured. Subconsciously, I expected Louise to reflect the feminist reality that is part of the 2021 norm. When I read her description of planned outfits and decor for the cruise on *Papyrus*, I felt a bit disappointed. When she described the color scheme, the dishes, glasses, and wines that had been placed in the galley, I found myself judging. I thought this archive would be substantial—a woman's journey, a drama that led to the creation of our beloved library. As I continued to read, I began to hear Louise's voice. Within the simple description of her experiences and her surroundings, I started to see her. She wasn't who I expected, but I couldn't meet her until I suspended my expectations. After watching myself blunder into Louise's archive, Farge's advice on approaching an archive helped me understand the mote in my eye. "There is only a narrow space in which to develop a story that will neither cancel out nor dissolve these lives, but leave them available so that another day, and elsewhere, another narrative can be built from their enigmatic presence" (Farge 121).

### Louise Amory's Travel Writing

In his book, *Abroad*, Paul Fussell describes the three levels of travel: the explorer, the traveler, and the tourist.

All three make journeys, but the explorer seeks the undiscovered, the traveler that which has been discovered by the mind working in history, the tourist that which has been discovered by entrepreneurship and prepared for him by the arts of mass publicity. (39)

He further describes these various journey methods – on one side of the spectrum, the explorer ventures into the unknown, taking risks. On the other side, the tourist follows a route designed to entertain, partakes in culture and attractions as a consumer. In the middle is the traveler. The traveler is engaged in work. The word *travel* has its origins in the 1300s from *travaillen*: to make a journey, to toil, to labor. "travel was conceived to be like study" (Fussell 39). Fussell describes the fruit of real travel: "the travel book as a record of inquiry and a report of the effect of inquiry on the mind and imagination of the traveler" (39). He further notes that tourism is causing this form of journeying, and its accompanying documentation, to disappear.

Louise Amory's archives contain two notebooks of ship's logs and 41 pages of narrative that incorporate material from the logs and personal reflection. As founders of an institution that still thrives in Boca Grande, Roger and Louise Amory have been mythologized. Louise's writing lifts the veil of myth and shows the reader her humanity. On the morning of June 4, 1950, as they embarked from Quincy Adams Boat Yard into Boston Harbor, Louise Amory carried a black composition journal with her – its burgundy leather spine and corners are embossed with narrow gold tooling. It was purchased from Thomas Groom & Company, Inc. at 105 State Street in Boston. On page one, the first line reads, "Our maiden voyage!" As we hold this journal in our hands, we transcend myth and begin to see the woman she was.



Fig. 5. *Papyrus*—The Book Boat 1950. Library Collection

This composition book is the beginning of her archived writing. She and Roger are aboard the newly renovated 55-foot cabin cruiser, *Papyrus*, with the ship's Captain Adelbert "Del" Johnson. On the 90-day cruise, they travel from Boston Harbor along the East Coast, north to St. Andrews in New Brunswick, Canada, and then back to Boston. Along the way, they stopped at islands and small harbors and encountered the challenges of engine trouble, fog, and a hurricane.

As I read Louise's writing, I found myself searching its pages for the type of self-analysis and exploration characteristic of memoir. Her descriptions are vivid, as she is a painter and has an eye for the nature and shape of things around her. She described Boston Harbor, and at this point in my reading, I reached a milestone – I realized that she *was* writing on a deeper level. It is a story about her in the same way that a photograph contains its photographer.

As they navigate through the islands of the harbor, she first takes in the panorama. Louise, in handwritten notes, shows us the Boston Harbor of 1950.

Soon we skirted the shore of a peninsula, jammed with small cottages and then we were at the harbor – the water unexpectedly sparkling in the sun like sequins. Sea gulls screamed, a plane roared overhead and spray from the bow flew past below

the open door. I had no idea that Boston harbor was like that. I was enchanted. I'd pictured it a dirty smoky place, full of coal barges and rusty freighters and there it was – a sort of fairyland - a great

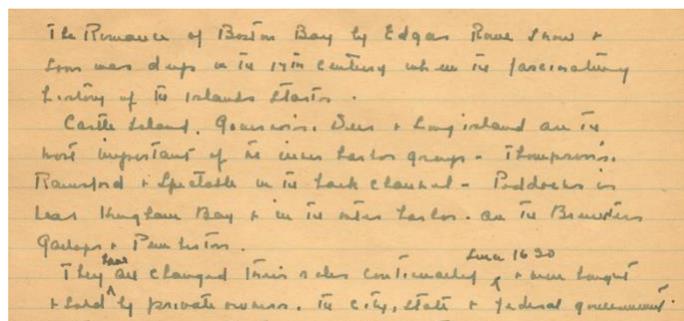


Fig. 6. Excerpt from Louise Amory Archive F3

blue bay dotted with islands - gay with white sails and buoys, crossed by plodding steamers, tugs, excursion boats, ocean liners and warships. We watched the planes land at the East Boston Airport. You could see the masts of the navy yard in the distance. Leyward [sic] the Charles River. To the south, the blue hulls made a sort of back drop for the waterfront and the roofs behind it. (Amory F1)

Louise carried onboard a book titled *The Romance of Boston Bay*, written in 1944 by Edward Rowe Snow. As *Papyrus* cruises by the islands of the harbor, she describes each – often quoting from Snow.

I got out *The Romance of Boston Bay* by Edgar [sic] Rowe Snow and was deep in the 17th century when the fascinating history of the islands started. Castle Island, Governors, Deer and Long Island are the most important of the inner harbor group. Thompsons, Rainsford, and Spectacle in the back channel. Paddocks is near Hingham Bay and in the outer harbor are the Brewsters, Gallops, and Pemberton.

They have all changed their roles continuously since 1630 and were bought and sold by private owners, the city, state, and federal government as time went on. Forts were built, torn down, blown up and rebuilt. Barracks from the revolutionary days mouldered until new ones were put up during the civil war and again in World War I. At present they all seem deserted. Their windows broken, their roofs caved in, but still they stand there gaunt and gloomy. (Amory F3)

Louise segues briefly from describing the islands to describe the engine problems consuming the attention of her husband and the captain, but her focus is on what she is seeing.

"Usually one feels a kind of nostalgia - over passing scenes one never really expects to see again but this I hoped was just an introduction to it all" (Amory F3).

Not only does she describe the harbor and the islands as they existed at that moment in time, but Louise also elaborates on the history and the archeological remains on each. She also gives the reader her own reactions. In *Abroad*, Fussell describes "travel books as literary phenomena" (202).

Travel books are a sub-species of memoir in which the autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker's encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative—unlike that in a novel or a romance—claims literal validity by constant reference to actuality. The speaker in any travel book exhibits himself as physically more free than the reader, and thus every such book, even when it depicts its speaker trapped in Boa Vista, is an implicit celebration of freedom. It resembles a poetic ode, an Ode to Freedom. (Fussell 203)

As I first approached Louise Amory's archives, I expected to explore who she was – through a view of an inner landscape. Her writing focuses first on the external world, but she consistently brings those observations back to her responses. On August 14, 1950, *Papyrus* entered L'Etang Harbor, New Brunswick. After a day of recreation in the town of St. Andrews, she writes a short entry in her log – it ends with, "Painted this A.M. Incidentally am sick over war news" (Amory F2). The front page of the Boston Globe that day reports, "Fresh Americans Join 25th Infantry at Front" (Tremaine 1). Once again, Louise, the travel writer, has blended with Louise, the life writer.

Fussell makes an interesting comparison of the traveler's journal to the "archetypal monomyth of heroic adventure defined by Joseph Campbell" (208). The hero leaves the familiar and sets out. She encounters obstacles and adventures and then returns home. Louise describes many challenges during the 3-month long maiden voyage, with the most significant being weather – fog, high seas, and hurricane warnings. It is interesting that although she describes a range of reactions, at no point does she overtly or subtly express fear. She does express discomfort and a desire for relief – for the rain to stop or for the fog to lift.

In the handwritten pages of Folder 3, Louise described Boca Grande as she observed it in 1949. Before the bridge connected the island with the mainland, ferries took people across Gasparilla Pass. Louise's descriptions of the ferry boat captains are vivid. She documents her surroundings – people, plants, and birds – with an occasional reference to herself. Primarily she provides a narrative to the external world. Glimpses of her inner life are rare yet delightful. She writes for an audience. Margo Culley, in her essay about diary literature, describes the eighteenth and nineteenth-century diaries written by women, "semi-public documents intended to be read by an audience" (Culley). She describes the evolution of the diarist from "family and social historian to the modern diarist whose principal subject is the self" (Culley). Louise Amory's life-writing is a hybrid of travel writing, social history, and natural history with minimal focus on herself.

## Conclusion: Louise Amory's Archive, Life-writing as Travel Writing

Much of Louise Amory's writing documents the founding of the Johann Fust Community Library and the boat travel that she and her husband Roger undertook between 1949 and 1954. Her father had died in 1948, and World War II had recently ended. Her four children were grown, and she and Roger were embarking on an adventure. Louise often sounds exhilarated. On a few occasions, she edits out her references to feeling a child-like giddiness. She was 57 years old when she began her journal and made her last entry in 1971 when she was 79. There are gaps of years in between. The library became a centerpiece on the island, the book boat delivered to the islands until 1968, Roger died in 1960, and Louise remarried in 1971. She died eight years later in 1979.

In this thesis, I explored the transcription of a previously unpublished body of writing by a mid-century woman. In handling a newly discovered archive, special care must be taken to ensure that acid from our fingers does not corrupt the ink and paper. Just as necessary is the care that must be taken in reading, transcribing, and analyzing the author's writing. Louise's perceptions fluctuate between the objective and the personal. Hers is a hybrid of life-writing, travel writing, social commentary, and memoir. Regardless of what terms we use, the value of her original writing can best be appreciated by reading her words without the baggage that accompanies our 21st-century ethos.

To further this research, one could focus on the intended audience(s) for her writing – was her writing for the patrons of the library, her peers, or both? Louise documented the journeys that she and Roger took to the islands surrounding Boca Grande. In Papyrus Log II, she wrote of their interactions with the book boat library patrons. Her notes on these experiences will provide

a clearer picture of Louise working as a librarian. These reports will also illuminate her interactions with and impressions of the people and community that the library served. As Louise recorded these island visits, she documented a social history, a natural history, and a glimpse into how she responded to her world.

## Appendix

## Box 1

- **Folder 1:** *Papyrus Log I* – June 1950
  - **Item 1:** Sixty-six handwritten pages in American Blank Book #57. Book purchased from Thomas Groom & Company, Inc. 105 State Street, Boston. Describes the maiden voyage of Papyrus (the book boat) for the Johann Fust Community Library. June 1950 – June 26, 1954.
  - **Item 2:** Entry of Roger Amory's death. November 23, 1961 (p 61)
  - **Item 3:** Entries (pages 63 through 66) (June 22, 1971 – August 6, 1971) of Louise Amory's marriage to I. Sheldon Tilney and their cruise through Nantucket, Edgartown, and Marblehead.
  - **Item 4:** Inserted at page 79 – A letter dated August 1, 1973, to "Aunt Louise" from Pam
  
- **Folder 2:** *Papyrus Log II* - November 17, 1950, through April 17, 1952.
  - **Item 1:** Royal Composition Book – 101 pages of handwritten entries.
  - **Item 2:** Inside front cover. Notes include ports of call and dates. Handwritten note underlined reads, "Get Gertrude Stein."
  - **Item 3:** Unsigned sketch of cottages and pier on the last page in the book.
  - **Item 4:** NATO 3-cent US Postage Stamp. Reads, "North American Treaty Organization *and* Peace Strength Freedom."

- **Folder 3:** Brown paper envelope (9.5” x 12.25”) Containing handwritten and typewritten pages. The return address on the envelope reads “Consolidated Investment Trust, Boston 9, Mass., 19 Congress Street.” In Louise Amory's handwriting, on the front of the envelope is written, “Mrs. Roger Amory Writings about Papyrus I. Keep”
  - **Item 1:** List of “chapters,” handwritten on yellow-lined paper. The chapter names are numbered 1 through 11 and dated from Oct. 1949 to 1955.
  - **Item 2:** Three sections of typewritten writing labeled I, II, and III. I consists of seven pages, clipped together. II is three pages. The first page is labeled, “Nov. Dedham.” III is four pages. The first page is labeled “December Dedham.”
  - **Item 3:** Handwritten pages on yellow-lined paper. Three packets clipped together labeled. The first is labeled “Boca Grande IV” and is ten pages. The second is labeled “Summer V” and is four pages. The third clipped package is also labeled “V,” and there are five pages. There are also six loose handwritten pages and one loose typed page.

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