

Around the World: The Grand Tour in Photo Albums

By Barbara Levine, Kirsten Jensen

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Snapshots, passenger lists, itineraries, and postcards from San Francisco flapper Vera Talbot's Far East adventure. Chicagoan Clara E. Whitcomb's travel diary containing pages filled with souvenir photos, maps, and a list of titles for a future book about her travels in Egypt. These are only two of the narratives that unfold in the beautifully designed pages of *Around the World*. From Cairo to Burma and back again, authors Barbara Levine and Kirsten Jensen transport readers back to the dawn of world travel when, Brownie cameras in tow, the middle class toured the world for the first time and painstakingly documented their discoveries within scrapbooks, diary entries, and pasted-on souvenir postcards.

Around the World traces the development of the travel photo album, from primarily narrative forms ships' logs and diaries into rich multimedia objects of sublime beauty. The book features a wealth of turn-of-the- twentieth-century photographs and ephemera such as passports, ship menus, calling cards, and newspaper clippings. *Around the World* evokes the pleasures of a time when the surroundings were taken in slowly and travel was an art in and of itself.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
This painstakingly assembled collection gathers excerpts from the personal journals and photo albums of turn-of-the-century, middle-class American travelers to Europe, East Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. These tourists created their albums during an era when photographic visual information from foreign cultures was precious because it was rare. Many photos are intriguing as historical documents—they capture the experience of travelers who lived a century ago, and, in a few cases, they vividly illustrate daily life in exotic locales—Siam, Cambodia and Trinidad. Levine (Snapshot Chronicles) and Jensen (Picturing Arizona) assert that the experience of travel and how it is documented has been transformed with the quantum technological leaps in transportation and photography. But photo after photo resemble the holiday snapshots of a shutterbug relative: lineups of tourists posed in front of some exotic monument (e.g., the Sphinx or the Leaning Tower of Pisa). Even as the authors make an effective argument that the qualitative experience of travel has been altered, their book provides compelling visual evidence that tourist photography hasn't changed much at all. Nonetheless, avid travelers who might enjoy placing their own photo albums in historical context will be charmed by this compilation.
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Review
Page after page of vintage photography and lettering, this is an astounding book like no other, drawing us back in time to a world before digital cameras and photography, when each journey and voyage was recorded by hand...I'm having so much fun looking at each page--this is armchair traveling at its best. -- *Fiveandahalf.net, November 7, 2007*

fascinating for all the obvious reasons -- *Flint Journal, February 2008*

About the Author
Barbara Levine runs Project b, a curatorial services and project management company. She was formerly Director of Exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and is the co-author of Snapshot Chronicles: Inventing the American Photo Album.

Kirsten M. Jensen has a PhD in art history from the City University of New York. Her most recent book is Picturing Arizona: The Photographic Record of the 1930s.

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