

Washington and Lee University

From Lexington to the Luxembourg Gardens

An Artist Rediscovered

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Art History Senior Thesis 2011

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INTRODUCTION

"Modern," as it applies to art, is a convenient catch-all term but hardly descriptive of any one trend or style. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, innumerable painters, sculptors, and decorative artists emerged simultaneously with varied creative priorities. Indeed, art historians draw from a vast array of cultural trends and social conditions to derive what makes art from this period "modern." Often, this term generates ideas of the avant-garde, the cosmopolitan, and the forward thinking. In Paris, the veritable cutting edge of the modern art movement, these traits are certainly applicable. Virginia artist Ellen Graham Anderson (1885-1970) was one of many American expatriates working in Paris in the early twentieth century who sought out training and experiences different from what the United States had to offer. However, the schism between the rural traditions of America and the nexial avant-garde movement of Europe seems terribly immediate. Anderson was in Europe at the height of the modern art movement: she studied, worked, and lived in Paris from 1913 until the outbreak of World War I. Here, she had access to art movements such as Art Nouveau, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, as well as various Secessionist movements of Expressionism. Upon her return to Lexington, Ellen Anderson continued to paint, and her subsequent canvases and pen and ink drawings demonstrate her internalization of the artistic trends she saw in Europe. Most interestingly, she adapted these themes to the iconography she had access to in Lexington, Virginia. Her renderings of still life scenes, landscapes, and portraits show a strong understanding of the aesthetic principles of the French avant-garde, and while abroad Anderson was exposed to the work of many prominent French artists. Yet she was unwilling to divorce her oeuvre from a strong sense of Virginia so deeply instilled in her by her southern family and heritage. Her story parallels those of many other women artists at the turn of the century, and the rediscovery of her experiences and artwork helps to provide a voice for those other artists overlooked by history.

The Anderson clan was dispersed throughout Virginia, but the group was very closely-knit and immensely proud of its shared heritage. Most of the primary source information about Ellen Anderson and her family comes from *The Anderson Family Papers*, a collection of documents dating from 1755-1958 and comprised of around seven hundred items of Anderson family information. They include some three hundred letters, various receipts, brochures, and tables of genealogy and came into the possession of Washington and Lee on October 18, 1977. Ellen Anderson was born April 9, 1885 at her family home on 308 Letcher Avenue, the current site of Virginia Military Institute's Alumni Hall. This date is shared by the twentieth anniversary of the surrender of General Robert E. Lee, and Anderson frequently celebrated it not as her birthday, but as "Lee's Surrender Day."¹ Her parents, Mary Louisa "Maza" Blair and William Alexander Anderson (1842-1930), already had four other children, and most of the extended family lived in the area, including her cousin, the Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Ellen Glasgow who lived in Richmond. Records indicate that, along with many other Lexington children at this time, Anderson attended The Misses Pendletons' Pines School for primary education, and later went to Richmond for instruction at Miss Jennie Ellet's School, now the reputable St. Catherine's.² Founded in 1890, this institution aimed to prove that women could handle the rigors of higher education and was the first school in the area to send women on to study at the university level. The school's curriculum was described by its founder as "at once classical and revolutionary," reminiscent of the liberal arts approach to education championed by Lexington's own University.³

William Alexander Anderson served as a trustee of Washington and Lee from 1884 until his death in 1930 and was also rector of the Board of Trustees and Attorney General of the State of Virginia. The street names of Lexington derive from notable families within the community, and even today,

¹ Frances McNulty Lewis, "Turn-Of-The-Century Echoes," *The News Gazette*, October 26, 1988, page 6, section A.

² "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. Box 001, Washington & Lee University Library, Lexington, Virginia.

³ "St. Catherine's School—History and Traditions," accessed 14 June 2010, <http://www.st.catherines.org/historyandtraditions>.

Glasgow Street and Anderson Street, named for Anderson's uncle and father, still exist. A resident of Lexington has noted: "There was no movement in which he [William Anderson] was not conspicuous".⁴ Mr. Anderson's role within the community demonstrates his support of a revolutionary form of education and its practical applications in society. In terms of education, the Andersons were very forward-thinking and incorporated studies of literature, science, art, and history into family life

The family history of the Andersons is indeed noteworthy and garners them a prominent position in Virginia—and indeed southern—history. The roots of the Anderson clan are in Scotland and Ireland. Robert Anderson, Anderson's great-grandfather, immigrated to the United States in 1755, married, and relocated to Virginia in 1765. The family's presence was strengthened by the prominence of the three branches - the Andersons, the Shankses, and the Glasgows—in the iron industry in both Rockbridge and nearby counties.⁵ Many of the Anderson relatives served the Confederacy, including Anderson's own father, William Anderson. All children borne to the family were raised with an appreciation for both their Southern heritage and a strong appreciation for "the beautiful life of a mountain community."⁶ This deep-seated regional pride was very much a part of family life and fostered within Ellen Anderson fast ties to Virginia, especially the Lexington area. Cousin Ellen Glasgow once asserted: "My comprehension of Virginia life and manners was a knowledge of the blood, as well as the brain, and instinct warned me that here alone could I break through the surface of appearances and strike some vein of fundamental humanity."⁷ Something inherent to the landscape of the state stimulated Glasgow's prolific artistic output of more than twenty novels and collections of poetry describing her connection to her local surroundings.

⁴ Matt Paxton, interview at Kendal at Lexington, notes taken by author, October 2010.

⁵ Ellen Anderson, "The Four Anderson Brothers," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 62, no. 2 (April: 1954), 22. At the time, this land was considered Augusta County, but this was soon to change: in 1770 it became Botetourt County, and in 1778 it acquired its current name of Rockbridge County.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ellen Glasgow, *A Certain Measure: An Interpretation of Prose Fiction* (New York: 1943), 190.

Ellen Anderson's art, too, was influenced by her surroundings, leading her to produce more than forty pen and ink drawings and thirty works in watercolor and pastel of Virginia landscapes and people. Virginia held something conducive to the expression of Ellen Glasgow's literary art, and the regional nature of Ellen Anderson's visual art also suggests a close connection to the state. William M. S. Rasmussen, curator of the Virginia Historical Society, claims that "landscape art has been a testament to an enduring love of the land."⁸ The Virginia landscape had long been a source of inspiration for American painters, and Anderson's own take on regional-style painting showed her relationship to the land and its importance to her. Her family's history was deeply entwined with the Virginia landscape, and by capturing scenes of it, Anderson helped to capture her family's history and connections to their home.

Preserving history of this nature was immeasurably important to Anderson, herself a member of Lexington's Mary Custis Lee chapter of the Colonial Dames and the Rockbridge Historical Society. Anderson wrote many articles for the benefit of these organizations and indeed, the community of Lexington at large. Her paintings of both local personalities and landscapes serve to further reinforce the importance of this regional, social history.

Anderson did temporarily leave Virginia initially to pursue instruction at the Art Students' League in New York City. During her time in Richmond, Anderson also studied art with Anne C. Fletcher, an "instructress of Art and the Crafts," at the Richmond Art Club from 1906-1907, and this early instruction cultivated within Anderson an interest in furthering her artistic endeavors.⁹ Her lessons at The Pines and Miss Jennie's would have undoubtedly included the domestic arts in addition to more intellectual pursuits. As part of an upper class woman's education, her feminine accomplishments necessitated a proficiency of sorts in the visual arts. Women rarely enjoyed professional success, unless

⁸ William M. S. Rasmussen, *The Virginia Landscape* (Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press, 200), 195.

⁹ Lewis, page 6, section A.

their fathers or other family members were established artists themselves. However, cultural conceptions began to change after the War, and the bond between femininity and art was strengthened: in 1865, art historian and critic John Ruskin published *Sesame and Lilies*, in which he championed women as exercisers of morality, and through expressions of their creativity such as painting, they would purify society.¹⁰ In light of this argument, public resistance to women's art softened, and their creative endeavors were encouraged or at least supported when viewed in this new light. Art magazines and ladies' publications encouraged the professional aspirations of women in the arts, and by 1883, women populated fifty percent of the enrollment of the Art Students' League.¹¹

By 1910, Anderson herself had enrolled, and had relocated to the art students' housing at the Three Arts Club. The southern girl from Virginia found herself at odds with the harsh, urban climate of New York, but Anderson accepted this new situation as "good opportunity" and adapted to and thrived in her new setting.¹² Many women also wanted to seize hold of this good opportunity, and aspiring artists from all ranges of skill—from dabbling dilettante to ardent professional—sought enrollment in American art academies. From 1865 up until the turn of the century, a curricular restructuring took place at American art schools in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. Classes became more regulated and formal, paralleling the developments of Parisian art schools. Students at the National Academy admired this European model, so in 1875 when officials refused to reform their programs, many students left the Academy to establish the Art Students' League, a group that reflected the new artistic priorities: they were "anxious to get in this country, what until then could only be obtained in Europe."¹³ The European mode of schooling stressed highly developed draftsmanship, study of the nude model, and a rigorous training in paints to capture the human figure. Many of the teachers employed by the Art

¹⁰ John Ruskin in Kirsten Swinth, *Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern Art 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), vii.

¹¹ Swinth, 39.

¹² "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. Box 001.

¹³ Swinth, 17.

Students' League had obtained their own training from professors in Paris or Munich, and the more serious art students saw study in Europe as a true testament to their professional goals. For in addition to a more intensive artistic program, admission to art academies also struggled against those who wanted to further study the "feminine accomplishments." Many male students disapproved of their female peers and argued that women were incapable of taking their studies seriously. Schools were unable to blindly bar all novice women, however, because they received no government patronage – they needed the money of their female students. Within the circles of women who sought to prove their professional desires, Paris emerged as the definitive step to success. A previous generation of American ex-patriots had traveled to Paris, and their exploits were popularized and regarded as the proverbial golden standard for many aspiring artists. Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), an icon as both an American ex-patriot in Paris and successful female artist, urged other women to pursue similar goals through studying art in Europe: "Please don't let your ambition sleep!"¹⁴

In the second half of the nineteenth century, social conditions were changing and taking art in entirely new directions. Europe saw a huge influx of American artists, particularly women. The Grand Tour of the nineteenth century rekindled an interest in travelling to continental Europe, and this tradition continued well into the century. In 1879, Louisa May Nieriker published a volume geared towards the female art student interested in foreign study in which she asserts: "The feeling prevails that there is no art world like Paris, no painters like the French, and no incentive to good work equal to that found in a Parisian *atelier*. Many will continue to seek what, in their estimation, cannot be found in America."¹⁵ Similarly, the opportunities for personal growth were regarded as essential by many Americans. Civil War widow Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe traveled to Europe on several occasions, and expressed in letters her motivations for travel, lest her family "languish in a Southern, provincial

¹⁴ Mary Cassatt, in a letter to Eliza Haldeman, 1864 in Swinthe, 225.

¹⁵ Louisa May Nieriker, *Studying Art Abroad* (Boston: 1879), 6.

backwash.”¹⁶ Due to their regional pride and prominence within the community, it is doubtful that the Andersons viewed Lexington as a “Southern backwash,” but their commitment to educational and personal excellence is an obvious driving force in their willingness to allow Ellen to pursue art education abroad. Accompanied by her father and sister Judith, she embarked on her own “Grand Tour” in the summer of 1913, a trip that led to her prolonged stay and study of art in Paris, as well as a life devoted to travel as a source of artistic inspiration.

¹⁶ Anne Sinkler Whaley LeClerq, ed. *Elizabeth Sinkler Cox's Tales from the Grand Tour* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 34.

CHAPTER I: PARIS

Artistic trends, developments, and even conflicts pushed Paris to the forefront of the art movement over the course of the nineteenth century. At this time, modernization occurred on many fronts: the city itself underwent a modernization spearheaded by Baron Haussmann between 1852 and 1870. This approach to urban planning emphasized the restructuring of the city's streetscape, widening boulevards and opening up the city with public facilities, monuments, and parks. The social repercussions of *Haussmannisation* worked both to the benefit and detriment of the city's inhabitants, and the stimulus for revolutionary changes reached nearly every aspect of life. In *Paris as a Revolution*, Priscilla Ferguson describes the city as "revolutionary because it is modern...with individuals crossing geographical and social boundaries and with the boundaries themselves shifting."¹⁷ As it pertains to the visual arts, the changes incited were especially noteworthy: the city itself looked different, so the manner in which French citizens, especially its artists, conceived of and subsequently depicted the "modern" city was different as well.

A concern for not only what is seen, but also how it is seen, the very optical process itself, grew to be a priority for many artists in Paris, and this concept led to the development of what we now refer to as "modern" art. In a published interview, Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) described the artist's approach to seeing in France: "I went to the Louvre every morning when I was in Paris, but I ended up by attaching myself to nature more than they did. One must make a vision for oneself...one must see nature as no one has seen it before."¹⁸ Beginning in the 1870s with Impressionism, the optical principles of seeing were reexamined with deconstructed brushwork in order to more accurately encapsulate the conceptions of color, light, and movement. As the twentieth century dawned, artists after the

¹⁷Priscilla Ferguson, *Paris as a Revolution* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 59.

¹⁸ Emile Bernard, "Une conversation avec Cézanne" in *Mercure France*, 1921 in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art, a Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 344.

Impressionists continued to explore and experiment with the formal properties of art by delving into the basic lines and geometric shapes that give form and meaning to the world around us. A number of new art groups and movements were created as a result, and this multilateral influx of artistic energy yielded an incredibly diverse and prolific period of creative output.

For American art students seeking instruction, Paris offered a great range of possibilities. During the day at *académies* or in *ateliers*, art students cultivated skills in draftsmanship and understandings of anatomy and perspective. However, when their formal lessons were over, the learning did not subside. Nieriker asserts that “all Paris . . . is apt to strike the new-comer as being but one vast studio . . . pictures literally darken the air.”¹⁹ Anderson’s apartment, along the Rue Notre Dame des Champs in the sixth *arrondissement*, was located in the center of the Montparnasse *quartier*, a neighborhood burgeoning with the innovative ideas of renowned painters and sculptors: John Singer Sargent lived down the road at no. 73. In a letter to her mother, Anderson describes her neighborhood and the personages it attracts: “. . . [I] find that boulevard Montparnasse is really the center of it. The proverbial longhaired and slouch-hatted species of Artist frequents all the boulevards and street cafés in the quarter—I suppose last summer this species was out of town, for we saw none . . . nevertheless, I feel really at home now.”²⁰ Anderson’s great-nephew Andy Stone also has an assortment of sketchbooks Anderson kept while she lived in Paris, and they record likenesses of the various personages and sights Anderson observed around her in daily life (Figure 1). Here, Anderson rendered a small-scale version of the Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris.

The residents of Montparnasse were a far cry from the denizens of Lexington. Anderson clearly (and somewhat condescendingly) observed this discrepancy between herself and her peers, and this

¹⁹ Nieriker, 43.

²⁰ “Papers of the Anderson Family,” Mss. Box 001, 9 October, 1913.

may have contributed to her ongoing nostalgia for home: "I think tho I had rather study here or come for inspiration, but be identified with America."²¹ Anderson did make the most of her studies, however, and began to tap the artistic influences that surrounded her.

Anderson found herself in easy walking distance from the Luxembourg Gardens and the Louvre, and she took full advantage of her position by visiting this hallowed institution on a regular basis. In a letter to her father, Anderson described a visit for artistic study:

I have been making preparations today to copy the Infanta Marguerita in the Louvre, by Velasquez. I want especially to do it, partly because it looks a little like Anna [Anderson's cousin], and also because I am specially attached to it. It is unfortunately for me placed very near "La Giocanda," and as there is such a crowd always to see that, it will be very difficult to achieve I fear. "La Joconde" as written in French is so much more beautiful than I had imagined. The photographs give no idea of it.²²

Anderson's writing suggests that she and other members of her family were familiar with these famous works of art; she undoubtedly studied them in her American art training, and now, in Europe, she had the opportunity to study them from life in keeping with the ideals of the French Academic traditions.

Outside the *Académie*, however, there were new avant-garde groups of artists, with their own ideas about art. A show from the Munich Secessionists inspired Anderson and compelled her to prolong her stay in Europe in order to pursue her art education:

...but as it seems like the opportunity of a lifetime I decided to stay and do the much needed studying. Munich was wonderful, and we saw there the most stunning exhibition of the Munich Secession and other German, Russian, Austrian, and Italian painters that I have seen anywhere. But I am sure there is more to be gotten out of Paris, and then I could already slightly understand criticisms in French, and not in German, so altogether Paris seems best and nearer home.²³

²¹ Ibid, 5 January, 1914.

²² Ibid, Undated.

²³ Ibid.

Anderson's connections to her home and family continue to be a concern for her throughout the duration of her stay in Europe, and even as she describes the exciting sites she sees or people she meets, her letters always contain questions after the wellbeing and activities of her family members and neighbors. Her ties to the Lexington community were not diminished by her distance; in fact, they were strengthened, for when she returned home after her stint in Paris, it was the local that became her primary subject matter. But they were filtered through her understanding of the artistic techniques she learned in Europe.

The Munich Secession show that prompted Anderson to stay on and study abroad was an important exhibit in the history of avant-garde art. In October of 1892, the "Munich Secession" was formed with nearly two hundred artists declaring their commitment to a new way of representing the "genuine, vital" soul of the artistic subject.²⁴ Wilhelm Trübner (1851-1917), a leader among the secessionists, advocated the ability of art to reveal the essence of the portrayed objects through a broader, painterly brushstroke rather than the finely-detailed, Realist mode of representation. This technique of expressive, calligraphic line is seen in *Kassensturz* from 1873 (Figure 2). Representation in this manner was crucial to the dominant idea of the movement: "All beauty must lie not in the natural beauty of the depicted object, but in the . . . manner of representation [itself]."²⁵ Subject matter varied and ranged from group portraits to landscapes. Regardless of specific iconography, however, these works were characterized by their strong formal rhythms and a composition balanced by structured and decorative elements. Artists drew from their observations of city life, the daily sources of inspiration within their surroundings, and their modes of representation distilled the object down to its essential being.

²⁴ Maria Maleka, *The Munich Secession: Art and Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Munich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1990), 60.

²⁵ "Das Kunstverständnis von Heute," in Wilhelm Trübner, *Personalien und Prinzipien* (Berlin: Bruno Cassierer, 1907), 130.

After a number of successful Secessionist exhibitions, art in this style could be seen in both France and Italy, where they would have been seen by a greater number of American art students studying abroad. Paintings such as Eugene Spiro's *Tänzerin Balladine Klossowska* (Figure 3) from 1901 exemplifies the aesthetic priorities of the Munich Secession, and though it cannot be verified that Anderson saw this painting specifically, it was shown in Germany during her time there and surely represents the type of art she observed. Spiro's painting shows a woman outdoors seated on a sofa. The composition is anchored by the structure of the chaise, the visual interest of which is heightened by the contrast of the dark wooden frame with the light upholstery. Against this strong, horizontal center, the fabric of her voluminous dress spread decoratively over the sofa. Spiro uses this same broad, decorative handling for the background foliage, and these two areas of darker blues and greens seem to be naturally patterned by the sunlight. In addition to the use of light and color, the mastery of line is noteworthy in Spiro's canvas. Despite the loose brushwork, strong areas of dark outline are used to delineate the sofa and the space occupied by her body and the throw pillows. The outlines of the pillows, as well as that of her hair, shoulders, and languid left arm all echo the underlying structure of the top of the chaise. The rhythmic arrangement of plastic elements enhances the richness of representation of Spiro's subject and brings to life a simpler, truer existence. Her posture on the chaise, inclination of the head, and penetrating facial expression suggest grace and self-assured elegance, qualities which befit her identity as a *tänzerin*, a dancer. Interestingly, the woman here is actually Spiro's own sister: the artist's preference of familial subjects may have been of special importance to artists away from home such as Anderson, who will consistently use family members as subject matter in her later paintings and drawings.²⁶

²⁶ Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "The Munich Secession Demystified," interview with the Frye Art Museum, January 22, 2009, http://fryemuseum.org/munich_interview/.

The style of art Anderson saw in Munich undoubtedly continued to be present upon her relocation to Paris. A number of artists who formally subscribed to the ideas and principles of the Secession lived in other countries across Europe. According to the official membership roster of 1892, sixty-seven artists were considered as "corresponding members," and of those, twenty lived and worked in Paris, producing art in this style.²⁷ When Anderson arrived in Paris from Munich, she undoubtedly recognized work similar to the styles that had so inspired her.

Though his name does not officially appear on the 1892 register, Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) was loosely associated with the ideals of the Secession and journeyed to Paris in 1887 to pursue further artistic study. Mucha made his living as a commercial illustrator in order to fund his study at the Académie Julian where he worked to develop his academic skills and controlled draftsmanship, characteristics that would provide the underlying structure for the images that made him famous. Despite the decorative quality of his work, the strength of Mucha's line is the reason for his artistic success: the linear modulation present in works such as this cover for the Parisian magazine "*Cocorico*" from 1899 imbues these two-dimensional images with an undeniable sense of arrested motion (Figure 4). One critic explains this dynamism as a "peculiar charm...[Mucha's] figures and their groupings are more akin to the modern film shots than to the rigid *tableaux vivants* of the time."²⁸

In Paris, he worked and lived alongside a bevy of international art students, never straying far from the sixth *arrondissement*, the area in which Anderson would soon reside. After making a name for himself through these theatrical posters, Mucha enjoyed great professional success there, and his works were popularized in print, in advertisements, flyers, and pamphlets. Native French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) also worked with graphic media in addition to paints, and the popularized nature of his work helped promote his expressive, linear drawing style. Somewhat of a social pariah,

²⁷ Makela, 152.

²⁸ Jiri Mucha, *Alphonse Mucha: His Life and Art* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 59.

Toulouse-Lautrec did not live to witness the success of his work, but the magnitude of his aesthetic soon came to symbolize the spirit of Paris in the early twentieth century. The iconic nature of his paintings, drawings, and prints inspired many art students in Paris at this time starting with the first “important” organized exhibition of his work in 1902 at the Durand-Ruel Gallery, which featured two hundred pieces.²⁹ The Louvre, a frequent haunt of students of the Académie and other Parisian art schools, acquired its first Toulouse-Lautrec painting in 1914, and several other prominent galleries followed suit.

Toulouse-Lautrec frequented the Moulin Rouge and other such bars and dance establishments and explored this vein of iconography with his 1893 series of lithographs entitled *The Café Concert*. Jan Poláček writes that his images “are witnesses of the place and often of the atmosphere of Paris at the turn of the century, of the world of entertainment and dance halls, bars, cabarets and circuses.”³⁰ In this series, Toulouse-Lautrec’s attention to line is responsible for the inherent vitality of the scenes, and the artist made a conscious effort to capture an arrested motion that was also to be prioritized by other artists, including Ellen Anderson:

Lautrec loved movement and action, which are concentrated...with an inimitable sureness and at the same time with the maximum of economy of one single pencil touch...The lines drawn with pencil or pen are as sure as before, and the elements which preceded and influenced Art Nouveau can already be discerned here. A large lady’s hat with feathers, an arabesque of the theater stage and the division of space are sufficient evidence.³¹

Concomitant with this exploration of the café concert, we see another thematic development in the oeuvre of Toulouse-Lautrec. Though not as well-known as these dance hall posters, a significant portion of his artistic output consists of the portraits of close friends and family members. The same attention to a dynamic composition and strong linearity is paid to these images, and one critic even claimed that

²⁹ Jan Poláček, *Toulouse-Lautrec: Drawings*. With an introduction and commentary by Jan Poláček, (New Haven: St. Martin’s Press, 1976), 6. Lautrec’s first self-organized exhibition occurred in 1882, but the public did not fully warm to his bluntly expressionistic style of painting and drawing until later in the twentieth century.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

Toulouse-Lautrec's painting of his own cousin from 1894 was "one of the greatest successes in French portrait painting."³²

The sensational nature of these reviews continued to escalate after the death of Lautrec and guided the next generation of art students in Paris to arrive at the same formal explorations. While the aforementioned artists, the veritable front-runners of modern expressionist art, were active most active a good ten years before Anderson's arrival in Europe, their influence is undeniable. Despite the tremendous output of new art in Paris from the 1890s onward, aspiring artists continued to return to these early precedents. What artists such as Mucha and Toulouse-Lautrec achieved through their innovations in line, composition, and form remained as the hallmark of "modern" art despite the passage of time. By emulating their artistic style, Anderson uses her art to point to something truly great from her position on the periphery: she identifies the importance of their artistic goals and adapts these priorities (her aforementioned "inspiration") to suit her personal motivations for creating her art.

Other American artists at this time were applying this new interest in line to the illustrations for periodicals and storybooks. The period from 1880 to 1914 is said to be the Golden Age of American illustration because of the dramatic increase in its popularity. Previously regarded as the "stepchild" of the arts because of its practical and commercial nature, many aficionados of fine art felt no true genius was necessary.³³ However, after seeing the respect afforded the art form in Paris, illustration began to acquire a similar regard in the United States. Art historian Walt Reed describes Parisian illustrations as "influencing a new look in American publications."³⁴ A newly literate public and advances in print technology created new opportunities for aspiring artists and illustrators. Women were especially apt to

³² Ibid.

³³ Helen Goodman, "Women Illustrators of the Golden Age of American Illustration," in *The Women's Art Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring-Summer, 1987): 14.

³⁴ Walt Reed, *The Illustrator in America, 1880-1980: A Century of Illustration* (New York: Madison Square Press, 1984), 27.

choose illustrative work, as it was easier for them to be regarded as professionals in one of the “lesser” arts, where images of romance and domestic scenes may have been more widely accepted.³⁵

Despite this preconception, many female illustrators sold their work to publications such as *Harper's Monthly*, *The Bookman*, *McClures*, and *Good Housekeeping*, often for very good prices: in 1903, single magazine illustrations sold to *Harper's* for \$135 each.³⁶ The Drexel Institute of Art in Philadelphia provided men and women with instruction in the practical arts, including illustration. However, illustrators who wished to demonstrate their seriousness of purpose and strengthen their technical skills often opted to travel to Paris to study at the heart of the art movement. Elizabeth Shippen Green (1871-1954) studied draftsmanship first under Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and then in Paris in 1897. Green sketched from museum pieces and the works she saw in smaller, more contemporary galleries and studios. When she returned to the states, she obtained a twenty-three year contract working for *Harper's Monthly*, where she produced images such as *Jehane – The Constant Lover* (Figure 5) from 1906. Green's sense of design and contour demonstrate an understanding of the Art Nouveau and aesthetics of Japanese woodblock prints, trends she would have been exposed to in Paris.³⁷ Alice Barber Stephens (1858-1932) was a painter, engraver, and illustrator who studied at both the Pennsylvania Academy and the Drexel Institute. In 1886, she traveled to Paris to further her technical abilities at the Académie Julian and the Académie Colarossi. She exhibited her work in the Salon of 1887 before returning to Pennsylvania where she sold her work to *Harper's*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*. Stephens was also instrumental in founding the Plastic Club of Philadelphia in 1897, the first art club of its kind for women. The Club aimed to “to promote a wider knowledge of art and to advance its interest by means

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Goodman, 16.

³⁷ Goodman, 17.

of exhibitions and social intercourse among artists.”³⁸ The first exhibition of the Plastic Club was a collection of Japanese woodblock prints. In the early 1900s, the group also sponsored a lecture on Art Nouveau illustration by Alphonse Mucha himself.³⁹ By hosting such events, the Plastic Club helped to bring European art trends to an American (and female) audience, and perpetuate the desire to see art in Europe firsthand.

In *The Studio*, published in 1903, art critic Clive Holland expounded on the lifestyle of young lady art students in Europe:

The Lady Art Students of the present day are going to Paris in increasing numbers. That the life they lead there differs from that led by their male companions as regards to its freedom and strenuous [sic] goes without saying...she lives a solitary existence, varied only by the daily visit to the school or atelier; the incursions of the artists friends, the occasional visit to a place of amusement, when an escort is available; or the equally occasional visit at a restaurant.⁴⁰

Holland’s description paints a bleak picture for American women hoping to go to Paris; to study art there, according to him, was a self-imposed bout of solitary confinement. However, records from the various expatriate art clubs indicate a different story. A number of these groups formed in Paris, many geared especially towards women. In 1886, Mrs. William Newell, the wife of a Reverend William W. Newell, both Massachusetts natives, began holding a “Sunday Social Hour” at her house on Rue de Rennes, once again in the sixth *arrondissement*.⁴¹ From these gatherings, formalized art groups for women formed and included entertainment such as afternoon tea, dancing, and group outings. Soon, live-in establishments formed which enabled young American women to pay an all-inclusive fee for room, board, and meals. Living together, women were never at a loss for companionship and had plenty of opportunities to go out and explore the city and its rich artistic possibilities.

³⁸ Heather Willever-Farr, “The Plastic Club Records,” *The Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, coll. 3106, (Philadelphia: 2009), 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Clive Holland, *The Studio* (December 1903) in Delia Graze, *Dictionary of Women Artists*, vol. 1, (New York City: Taylor and Francis, 1997), 92.

⁴¹ Maria Caudill Dennison, “The American Girls’ Club in Paris,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2005): 32.

Holland may have been deliberately trying to dissuade young ladies from undertaking art studies, or he could have been warning them of the self-sacrifice of hard work that faced a serious artist. But there was also the concern about young women living without parental or spousal control. Living away from home gave women the luxury to design their own lives: aside from their studio lessons, they could set their own hours and maintain their own appointments. Some high spirited girls saw this as an opportunity to rebel against the social orders they found restricting and gloried in the bohemian freedom. M.E.W. Sherwood, an American traveler in Paris at the turn of the century, noted that "the American Girl was the most talked-of creature in the world" and her European observers saw her as "beautiful, rich, vulgar, strange, loud, and fast . . . [exhibiting] a love of show, love of publicity, and a disdain for privacy. [She] is a totally illiterate composition of good looks and bad manners."⁴² Indeed, Mrs. Newell confided her motivations for initiating her Sunday Social Hour stemmed from such concerns after an encounter with an "unfortunate girl."⁴³

The New York Tribune published an article in 1899 assessing the two styles of women's art education. While some women pursued serious study, there were those who "waste their time, injure their health, grow lax in moral views and get into slatternly habits through the bohemianism that has such a false glow about it."⁴⁴ Anderson was not a bohemian and instead directed her energies towards her studies. She sought out an appropriate institution within a week of her arrival. In a letter to her father dated 12 September, 1913, Anderson wrote that she had settled on the Académie Moderne, "being in Whistler's old Studio on Notre Dame des Champs."⁴⁵ Her teacher, Charles Guérin (1875-1939) had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under the French Symbolist painter Gustave Moureau. Andy Stone has two framed anatomical studies in charcoal that Anderson created while she was in Paris.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *New York Tribune*, 1899 in Maria Caudill Dennison, "The American Girls' Club in Paris," *Woman's Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2005): 36.

⁴⁵ "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. 001, 12 September, 1913.

These drawings demonstrate the academic emphasis on the human form that institutions such as the École des Beaux-Arts prioritized (Figures 6 and 7). While an interest in classical mythology and literature dominated his own canvases, Guérin also exhibited a strong interest in radical color theory, and his works in this style were shown across Europe as well as the 1903 Salon d'Automne and the 1906 Salon des Indépendents.⁴⁶ Spearheading the founding of the Académie was the Alabaman expatriate Anne Wilson Goldthwaite (1869-1944), whose own interest in color attracted other artists also interested in Cézanne and the Fauves.

A fellow daughter of the Confederacy who painted southern subject matter in an early modern, expressive style, Goldthwaite's life runs concurrent to Anderson's, and the two even intersect at one point: in a letter to her parents and sister from January of 1914, Anderson mentions a meeting at the Académie Moderne with Goldthwaite, whom she describes as an "*arrivée*," the model female art student who has made it in the art world.⁴⁷ Upon her arrival in Paris in 1906, Goldthwaite joined one of the female art clubs and used the ample networking opportunities that granted her access to the inner circle of the artistic elite of Paris. She befriended Gertrude Stein, and by dint of this relationship, Goldthwaite soon met modern artists such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. In 1910, she became the president of the American Women's Art Association of Paris, where she oversaw the exhibition of work by female art students. At the outbreak of World War I, she also returned to the United States where she took up residence in New York City and continued her painting and printmaking. From Goldthwaite's story, one can see the possibilities of Paris for female art student from the rural American South.

Anderson seemed to surround herself with girls from "the club" who were like-minded in their desires to follow in Goldthwaite's footsteps. In lieu of frequenting boutiques or shops, Anderson took

⁴⁶ Martin Wolpert and Jeffrey Winter, *Modern Figurative Paintings: The Paris Connection* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2004), 109.

⁴⁷ "Papers of the Anderson Family". Mss. 001, 5 January 1914.

on classes in French and Italian grammar, as well as an afternoon drawing class with a Mr. Taylor to supplement her work with Guérin. Here with Taylor, she first encountered woodblock prints, “a very popular form now somewhat resembling colored etchings” that would have an undeniable influence on her later illustrative work in pen and ink. Anderson viewed the French classes as “a good opportunity for learning,” as her hosts, the Goudrons, spoke only French.⁴⁸ As for the Italian, that was useful for her frequent trips to Florence and Rome where she tried to “make the most of the opportunity,” since she wanted to “see as much of Europe as I can.”⁴⁹ Anderson’s desires to learn are apparent in her letters home and establish her as a serious art student, far removed from the dilettantish dabbling of others.

Anderson wrote to her mother: “I am busy all day with my studies except at tea time when I usually go to the American Club.”⁵⁰ Neither the aforementioned “slouch-hatted species” of American art students nor the local aspiring French artists were part of this group, and Anderson seems to have only gone to the club to surround herself with the types of young women she knew from home. She was not averse to the French, but clearly found their ways puzzling and perhaps even inferior: “To our precise American minds this life seems very unusual, but I suppose it is nothing to a European.”⁵¹ Anderson opted to avoid associations with these types of people, but that is not to say she ostracized herself. While the street cafés were not local haunts for Anderson, she did explore the performing arts of Paris and maximized her exposure to dancers, opera singers, and actors. Her interest in the performing arts was apparent, and she repeatedly cited the names of various operas and composers in a familiar fashion. Earlier, when she was in Edinburgh still with her father and sister, she had written to her mother of her eagerness to see the Ballet Russe: “I am anxious to get to London before Pavlova and all the many wonderful Russian dancers and the ballet leave. I expect to go there on Tuesday, to the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 18 January 1914.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 12 September 1913.

⁵¹ Ibid, 6 July 1913.

London 3 Arts Club. J. and Father want to go to Wales but I'd rather go to London and I know people there."⁵² In addition to the numerous art exhibitions she viewed in Munich, Anderson also saw a Wagner opera and Schumann, Beethoven, and Mozart symphonies. In Paris, she was visited by family friends David Berlasco, an American playwright and producer; Ruth St. Denis, a pioneer in modern dance; and the drama critic Harrison Grey Fiske, the husband of Minnie Maddern Fiske, a theatrical performer.⁵³

When Anderson frequented the theater herself, her observations, again, quite shrewd and vividly descriptive, illuminate her keen desire to capture her surroundings. In February of 1914, she wrote of an outing with her host brother to see "*Le Vieux Colombier*." Anderson told her oldest sister Ruth that while this "brother" was not her ideal companion and "has the face of a Le Page [sic] peasant...he had the French instinct for seeing the allegorical beauty of the play."⁵⁴ Anderson demonstrated this same verbal dexterity in a letter from Munich. She described the "Bavarian costume" as "soft felt hats for men and little boys, socks only on the centre of the leg, bright flowers on black or blue grounds. Plaid colored aprons for all little girls," and the women in gingham dresses with Edelweiss embroidery and "ridiculous Tyrolean hats."⁵⁵ Sketches originally accompanied this letter, though they are now lost. Anderson frequently included small illustrations with her letters to strengthen her observations.

Additionally, she kept several sketchbooks in which she captured the scenes of daily life that played out in the city around her (Figure 8). Each drawing or watercolor bears a penciled in label, identifying the scene and where it was executed. In a watercolor from September 21, Anderson depicted the Luxembourg gardens. A nursemaid is seated with a perambulator while several children in

⁵² Ibid., 26 February 1914.

⁵³ In her letters, Anderson writes of these people very familiarly, sometimes only providing a first name. It is unclear in her writing as to how they came to know the Anderson family.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 3 September 1913.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 6 July 1913.

brightly colored outfits play around her. The brushwork is thick, and she handles her paint with bright daubs of pure color. It is clear Anderson was experimenting with the various artistic trends to which she was exposed. The subject matter in this painting, as well as in other sketches and studies from these books, is something more familiar to Anderson. While the settings were vastly different, Anderson chose to capture children and families together (Figures 9 and 10). While the subject matter during her time in the studio would have been very controlled, when Anderson was on her own, she could draw what was most important to her. Her nostalgia for home may have inspired the domestic, intimate nature of these sketchbooks. Her descriptions in her letters and her art here show how she adapted Paris into a more meaningful format which she used to vividly recreate these new places for her family back in Lexington.

Anderson derived great pleasure from her experiences in Europe. While still with her father and Judith in Edinburgh, she catalogued their activities in a letter to her mother. Unable to recall the name of the Loch where they stopped for lunch, Anderson wrote how "the names mean less to [her] than the experiences."⁵⁶ Regardless of the specific names of the sites she saw, Anderson filled her pages with evocative descriptions of the countryside:

Then another boat, across a lake or firth whose name I forget, whose banks were far off, the Oban...after Oban, the mountains become much higher, still with uneven rocky tops. They are all full of rocks and very green (at this season) heather and bracken, or firs and tiny trees. The locks and mountains [appeared] with heavy clouds lifting and falling, and queer flashes of sunlight through them...Certainly this part of the Highlands...are up to anyone's expectations and were far more beautiful and expressive to me than I had dreamed.⁵⁷

So taken by her surroundings, Anderson "decided to pull the alarm chain, a thrilling thing to do" in order to take in more of the Scottish highlands, the land of her ancestors. For despite her keen interest in her new life, Anderson continually sought to make connections to what she knew in Lexington: she drew parallels between the mountainous landscape of Scotland and the familiar backdrop of House Mountain

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

of her home. In her description of the land near Loch Katrine, Anderson wrote, "The mountains around this lake are much lower than our real Highlands."⁵⁸

The constant inquiries as to the health and activities of her family evident in Anderson's letters home also betray a homesickness. She loved her art class and her evening excursions in Paris, but she missed her family and friends. Various friends and relatives mailed letters, photographs, and care packages, but these acts of thoughtfulness seem to make her miss Lexington even more. She took to displaying these "Lexington cards" on her dresser and had "a row of p.c.s [sic] of House M. and the V.M.I. all on my wall."⁵⁹ Anderson's "country news" filled a void in her life: while she loved the charm and opportunities of Paris, she still "dreamed of people I have known at home."⁶⁰ Towards the end of her time in Paris, Anderson began to spend more time with Patrick Henry Bruce (1881-1936), a relative who became famous for his Cubist paintings.

Bruce was born in Halifax County, Virginia to James Cole Bruce III and Susan Seddon Brooks. James's sister, Rosa Bruce, married Anderson's uncle Francis T. Anderson on June 19, 1872. As cousins by marriage, they may not have been close growing up, but Anderson was surely aware of Bruce's interest in art and travels in Europe. In 1898, Bruce began taking classes at the Richmond Art Club where he studied under the neoclassical sculptor Edward Valentine (1838-1930). He moved to New York in 1902 and studied under William Merritt Chase and Robert Henri before traveling to Paris in 1904. His sister Mary recalled: "All he lived for was to study art and go to Paris."⁶¹

Undoubtedly having this precedent in the family helped legitimize Anderson's own artistic aspirations both in America and abroad. Once in Paris, Bruce befriended Gertrude and Leo Stein, who

⁵⁸ Ibid, 5 January 1914

⁵⁹ Ibid, 26 February 1914.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 6 March 1914.

⁶¹ William Agee and Barbara Rose, *Patrick Henry Bruce, American Modernist: Catalogue Raisonne* (New York City: Museum of Modern Art, 1979), 13.

probably exposed him to modernism through the work of Impressionists such as Pissarro and Renoir. He began to exhibit at the Salon d'Automne, and by dint of this exposure, he befriended many other members of the French avant-garde. He apparently loaned Pablo Picasso a large sum of money, and he was especially close with Robert and Sonia Delaunay and admired their work with Orphic Cubism.⁶² He lived above Henri Matisse, and the two became close colleagues: Bruce assisted with the opening of the Matisse School in 1908. His early paintings from France exemplify the color theory of Matisse and the Fauves, but by the time Anderson arrived in Paris, Bruce's work displayed a different and very significant influence. Above all, Bruce was interested in the work of Cézanne, and a similar flatness and geometricized forms permeate his paintings in the early 1910s (Figure 11).

At his school, Matisse promoted the study of nature, works at the Louvre, and especially Cézanne, "the father of us all."⁶³ Bruce took these lessons to heart, and his studies of Cézanne's methods are most apparent in his still life paintings of flowers and fruit bowls. While his bold use of color references Matisse, the planar modulation, open composition, and tilted perspective strongly derive from the work of Cézanne (Figure 12). Agee points to the "pictorial relationship between separate but interrelated forms" and his "implicit recognition of the flatness of the canvas" as key links between the two painters, and as Anderson began to explore both still life and landscape painting, she also experimented with formal geometries.⁶⁴ Near the end of his life, Bruce destroyed most of his artwork, but the Museum of Modern Art asserts: "Had Bruce left anything more than a fragment of an oeuvre (barely one hundred paintings remain) he would long before now have been considered one of the masters of twentieth-century art."⁶⁵

⁶² "Patrick Henry Bruce," *MoMA*, no. 11 (Summer, 1979): 2.

⁶³ Agee, 16.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ "Patrick Henry Bruce," *MoMA*.

Bruce and his wife Helen often visited Anderson while she was in Paris, and this familial connection was undoubtedly important to her. Bruce's connections to the avant-garde world also helped further Anderson's artistic aspirations. She wrote of one excursion with the Bruces to "one of the little cafés Boulevard des Italiens," one of the four *grands boulevards* and a hub of Parisian nightlife.⁶⁶ This street was also important to the French avant-garde, and several artists featured the open-air cafés in their city-scapes (Figure 13). This example from Camille Pissarro captures the dynamism and energy of the city streets, an atmosphere very different from that in Anderson's hometown. The Bruces also invited Anderson to the Bal Bullier, a popular Parisian dancehall. Anderson wrote that it "was in great demand among the very new French artists," and it is indeed rendered by artists such as William Glackens, whose work Anderson may have known from the Art Students' League, and Sonia Delaunay, who was a close friend of Patrick Bruce. Anderson did not end up attending the Bal Bullier, as that evening "Mr. Burce was so far from well with this ubiquitous cold...that we did not go."⁶⁷ Anderson did not seem to be distressed by this missed opportunity, however, and spent the rest of her letter describing the Mr. and Mrs. Bruce's "most attractively arranged appartement...perfectly plain, with almost no furnishing beyond several large handsome and ancient tables and enough chairs."⁶⁸ She found it to be "very nice" and was sure her mother and sister would enjoy it.⁶⁹

In her last letter from March of 1914 Anderson seemed torn between returning home to her family in Lexington and remaining in Paris until April. She wrote, "I want to stay here till April 6th for the reason that on April 4th and 5th the things have to go in for the spring Salon. I want to submit some, even if they are rejected. That would give me still a few weeks more before leaving."⁷⁰ Despite her desire to submit her paintings, she also wrote to her family, "Of course I think of you constantly...I have

⁶⁶ "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. 001, 6 March 1914.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 6 March 1914.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 6 March 1914.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 6 March 1914.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 6 March 1914.

gotten as attached to Paris as you [Judith] were to Dresden...but I wouldn't like to live here as so many Americans do. It has been a unique experience."⁷¹ Throughout her time in Paris, Anderson made the most of her educational opportunities and took on as much artistic instruction as possible. However, she was careful to keep her distance from the stereotypical art scene and the bohemian lifestyle of Paris. As her letters indicate, she viewed Paris as an opportunity to augment her artistic skills, but not a place of permanent residence. She clearly planned to return home and apply what she learned abroad to a more local iconography more recognizable and meaningful to her. Anderson valued her time in Europe, but identified herself as an American (and above all, Virginian) painter. Her writing, frank as always, indicates that she is ready to leave Paris and return home: she closed her final letter by saying, "I trust I have learned enough French. With much love and hoping all the influenza's departed, Ellen."⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid, 26 Feb 1914.

⁷² Ibid, 6 March 1914.

CHAPTER II: Virginia

Nieriker concluded her travel guide by saying, "It may have a somewhat homeless sound, yet the French live so entirely in the theatres, the faces, and on the boulevards that a stranger looks in vain for anything corresponding to an English or American home."⁷³ Anderson did seem to miss the familiarity of Lexington and the people she knew there, and when she returned from Paris upon the outbreak of war, she also returned to a more American subject matter. Frances McNulty Lewis recalled in an article for the *News-Gazette*: "Then came August 1914. The "Great War" loomed, and those American students had to sail home . . . during the 1920s and 1930s she did Rockbridge landscapes and many portraits, selling some of them."⁷⁴ Though she had just come from exciting locales such as the Bal Bullier, she was glad to be back in Lexington, and her choice of subject matter at this point in her life reflected her relief.

Her painting of House Mountain (Figure 14) from 1926 demonstrates an awareness of an interest in what other Virginian artists of this era prioritized. According to art historian William Rasmussen, "nostalgia has a long history in Virginia," first in response to the Civil War and later as a reaction to "rampant urban expansion."⁷⁵ Western Virginia, especially, was seen as the source of a new direction for art: the dawning of the twentieth-century marked a new era, one in which the country was reunified, and this unexploited landscape was a symbol of this rejuvenation.⁷⁶ This new period of landscape painting was marked by tame and tranquil, but still awe-inspiring, scenery. John Ross Key (1837-1920) captured a scene of the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1908 (Figure 15). In *Afternoon, Hawksbill River*, Key avoided referencing any trace of settlement and rather focused on the pure, ordered promise of the land itself. The composition of the painting helps to establish this sense of order: it is very structured, and clearly divided into three grounds. The foreground is clearer and darker, and then

⁷³ Nieriker, 62.

⁷⁴ Lewis, page 6, section A.

⁷⁵ Rasmussen, *The Virginia Landscape*, 141.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

slowly gives way to the middle-ground of trees. The background of the canvas is consumed by the vastness of the mountain, carefully shaded and blurred through atmospheric perspective. Key used this bucolic scene to hearken back to a simpler time, before the concerns of the day's modern, more urban society.

The First World War brought still greater concerns to the fore, and American artists reacted by "rejecting the spirit of internationalism that had drawn the nation into World War I."⁷⁷ This desire to depict the American landscape in a decidedly American way marked the beginning of Regionalism, a style that prioritized "national self-investigation...through attention back to rural life and values."⁷⁸ Anderson's subject matter from this time period reflect the preeminence of regionalism, but her technique and aesthetic handling demonstrate an internalization of what she learned in France. Whether it was a conscious decision or not, the stylistic influence of the French avant-garde figured heavily into the paintings Anderson created upon her return to the United States.

Domestic subject matter and foreign aesthetic merged together in *In the Virginia Mountain* to yield a style unique to Anderson's hand. She finished this painting of House Mountain some time before 1925. The expressive brushwork is immediately apparent in this image and references the German Expressionist paintings Anderson saw first in Munich. She synthesized this style with what she saw in France and drew especially from the work of Cézanne. Her cousin Patrick Henry Bruce studied Cézanne's still life paintings extensively. During the time Anderson was in Paris, it seems likely they could have discussed this modern master, and Bruce may have exposed her to his work. *In the Virginia Mountain* shows a strong Cézanne influence, especially his series of Mont Sainte-Victoire from 1902-1904 (Figure 16). Anderson's forms are created through her faceted brushwork wherein the geometries of applied color blend together to create the landscape. Rather than the clearly divided

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

grounds and deep space of other American landscape painters, Anderson's rendering of House Mountain lacks any illusionistic depth. Overall, there is a sense of flat depth, and the scene is presented in an up-close perspective. She used color to suggest formal volumes. Art history professor Susanna Leval's description of Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire series also applies to *In the Virginia Mountain*: "As our eye delights in the color harmonies, our mind provides the missing forms. We perceive the truth of the image rather than its representational accuracy."⁷⁹ Anderson could not divorce herself completely from line; it delineates the mountains, hills and shrubbery, but they seem to push forward and are pressed more immediately into the viewer's space. That this occurs simultaneously in the various grounds further undermines the viewer's conceptions of spatial recession and reinforce the flatness of the picture plane. What makes Anderson's rural landscape modern is her awareness of the two-dimensionality of the canvas, an aesthetic principle championed by Cézanne and other members of the French avant-garde.

The subject matter of *In the Virginia Mountain* diverges drastically from the cosmopolitan dynamism of Paris. But Anderson sought out an iconography more familiar to her and chose to depict what she missed most about her hometown. Cézanne's renderings of Mont Sainte-Victoire do in fact parallel a similar nostalgia for him: the scenes come from his home in Aix-en-Provence and serve as a "parenthetical memory" of where he started and ultimately ended his life.⁸⁰ Nature was important to Cézanne both personally and professionally, and he emphasized contact with nature for his students: "The Louvre is a good book to consult but it must only be an intermediary. The real and immense study that must be taken up is the manifold picture of nature."⁸¹ Anderson had consulted the Louvre, but as Cézanne suggested, then returned to nature as a source of inspiration.

⁷⁹ Susana Leval, "Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire*," *MoMA*, no. 2, (Winter 1974-1975): 2.

⁸⁰ Robert Morris, "Cézanne's Mountains," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 817.

⁸¹ Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art, a Source Book by Artists and Critics*, 356.

A label attached to the back of the painting indicates it was entered in New York City's "Great Southern Exposition" at the Grand Central Palace in May of 1925. This painting is owned by University Collections and now hangs in the Treasurer's Office of Washington and Lee. The University Collections of Washington and Lee has original entry forms that suggest Anderson displayed other landscapes in art exhibitions: there are labels from the 121st Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Rockbridge County Art Festival for *In the Valley of Virginia* (1926) and *Liberty Hall Ruins* (date unknown). Previously thought to be unlocated, great-niece Aylett Suhr has two landscape paintings that seem to match these titles (Figures 17 and 18). Anderson's entrance in these exhibitions demonstrated that her painting was a serious, professional endeavor rather than a passing hobby. These records show she only entered landscape paintings, and this could derive from the strong examples of landscape painting found even in Lexington.

The popularity of landscape painting grew during the nineteenth century, and W.D. Washington (1833-1870) could be considered the forerunner for this style of painting in Lexington. His artistic reputation was known throughout the community by dint of his position as the first Chair of Fine Arts at the Virginia Military Institute in the late 1860s, and his paintings would have been both familiar and accessible to Anderson, as they were so close to her familial home. Washington was not a native of Lexington (he was born in Snickersville, Virginia), but his time at the Virginia Military Institute established his position within the Lexington community, and he is buried at Stonewall Jackson Cemetery. In 1951, a graveside tablet was dedicated by the Rockbridge Historical Society, due mostly to the "faithful efforts, correspondence, and inquiries" of Anderson herself.⁸² The Virginia Military Institute possesses twenty-four of Washington's paintings, including *House Mountain and the Commandant's House* (Figure 19) from 1869. While the subject matter is practically identical to that of Anderson's *In*

⁸² Mary King, "Tablet at Painter's Grave will be Dedicated," *Roanoke Times*, 17 November, 1951, clipping in "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. 001.

the Virginia Mountain, the handling between the two is remarkably different. Each painter sought to capture a house, trees, and House Mountain, the definitive feature of the Lexington landscape. While Washington clearly delineated three grounds and a vast sense of spatial recession through devices of perspective, Anderson made use of the flat depth, expressive colors, and painterly brushwork that typified the Parisian avant-garde. While still interested in familiar iconography, Anderson opted to depict these local subjects in a modern way despite the conservatism of her background.

Anderson painted a portrait of Louise Blair (later Daura) (Figure 20) in 1910 before her time in Paris. Martha Daura, Louise's daughter, suggested that Anderson's "radical action of going to Paris to pursue her art studies may have put that idea in my mother's mind."⁸³ Louise Blair studied at St. Catherine's in Richmond (Anderson studied here while it was still called Miss Jennie Ellet's) and then at Bryn Mawr College. Upon her graduation in 1927, she traveled to London, Brussels, and finally Paris, where she met Pierre Daura (1896-1972), a Spanish painter. Daura went to Paris to study painting under Émile Bernard in 1914, the same year as Anderson's own arrival. Blair and Daura wed and were at the forefront of the modern art world in Paris. Blair exhibited her paintings at the Salon d'Automne, while Daura was active in the Constructivist group "*Cercle et Carré*." Jean Arp, Piet Mondrian, and Antoine Pevsner were also members.⁸⁴ Due to political strife in Europe in 1939, the Dauras and their daughter Martha relocated to Rockbridge Baths, Virginia, ten miles west of Lexington. Rasmussen writes that Daura "sought the friendship of his neighbors in the country" and this included Anderson.⁸⁵ Martha Daura recalls: "She was always referred to as 'Cousin Ellen.'"⁸⁶

A mutual fascination with modern art as well as a great love of the Virginia landscape could have bolstered the familiarity between Anderson and Pierre Daura. Louise would tell her friends: "Pierre is

⁸³ Martha Daura, letter to the author, 3 March 2011.

⁸⁴ William M.S. Rasmussen, "The Life of Pierre Daura," *Pierre Daura's Vision of Virginia*, exhibition catalogue, (Virginia Historical Society, January 2007), 8.

⁸⁵ Rasmussen, "The Life of Pierre Daura," 5.

⁸⁶ Daura, letter to the author.

painting landscapes everyday in our wonderful warm sunshine, landscapes very different from those he used to paint of St. Cirq. He . . . whistles while he works and throws on color with abandon, happily painting just as he wants to."⁸⁷ The landscape of Rockbridge County brought Daura a great deal of joy, and though he was not native to the region as was Anderson, their shared love of the Southern land is evident in their landscape paintings. Like Anderson, Daura arrived at this new, vibrant painting style because of his time spent in Paris. Both use their versions of modernism to express their feelings for Rockbridge Country.

Anderson's cousin Ellen Glasgow noted that "the aspect we call regional is only the universal surveyed from a shifted angle of vision."⁸⁸ In Anderson's case, she obtained her ability to shift her angle of vision because of her experiences in Paris. In this earlier portrait of Louise Blair, the style of portraiture reflects conventions of American portraiture Anderson learned from her studies of art in the United States. She presented her subject in a frontal manner set against an ambiguous, dark space, similar again to the work of Washington, whose portrait of Mrs. Francis H. Smith (Figure 21), wife of the Virginia Military Institute's superintendent, also exemplifies these features. Anderson's focus was on capturing the effects of light and the three-dimensionality of Louise Daura's dress. Anderson employed tonal modeling to give volume to her forearms, neck, and face, and seemed to pay special attention to the fall of her sitter's hair. By contrast, this portrait of Anderson's father entitled *Man in Grey* (Figure 22) was painted around 1926 after her initial trip to Paris. Though this portrait still bears the frontal presentation and dark background of her earlier portraiture, it is evident that Anderson internalized the aesthetic ideas of the French avant-garde and adapted them for use in her own portraiture.

Once again, the art of Cézanne served as an important precedent for her. His *Portrait of Victor Chocquet* (Figure 23) from 1877 demonstrates the principles Anderson most prioritized in modern

⁸⁷ Rasmussen, "The Life of Pierre Daura," 6.

⁸⁸ Ellen Glasgow, *A Certain Measure: An Interpretation of Prose Fiction* (New York: 1943), 190.

portraiture. Cézanne worked to develop a new way of painting, one that embraced the flatness of the canvas. He used dark outlining and directional brushwork to render a three-dimensional subject in two dimensions. Anderson's own sketchy brushwork is reminiscent of *passage*, a brushwork technique that merges different forms and shapes together, and she used a similar outline to flatten her subject's form. This outlining technique also meshed with her exposure to Japanese woodblock prints during her study in France, and the cropped composition of her painting also echo this aesthetic preference. Many modernist painters in Europe drew stylistic influence from these prints. Anderson's exposure to such an important and dynamic medium helps to situate her within the inner circles of the Parisian avant-garde.

Her subject matter, however, was far more personal than what was often depicted by French painters of the early twentieth century. The usual iconography was either an anonymous figure at an outdoor café or a prominent person within the movement. Anderson imbued her images with a starkness of personal feeling that permeates the canvas to almost overcome the viewer with nostalgia: though the landscape or subject of the portrait maybe unknown, it feels familiar. In the case of *Man in Grey*, Anderson's rendering is not of the august Civil War hero or the Attorney General of Virginia, but rather an intimate portrait of a father. William Anderson was very supportive of his daughter and interested in her studies. In 1913, when Anderson described her motivations for staying in Europe to study, she wrote about her father's financial contribution: "Father of course has insisted on leaving too much, but as it seems the opportunity of a lifetime I decided to...do the much needed studying."⁸⁹ Once Anderson was established in Paris, her father corresponded not only with her, but also the girls with whom she studied: in a letter from 1914, Anderson wrote, "I have delivered your messages to Katherine McIntire [a traveling companion], and she says thank you very much for them."⁹⁰ Anderson was

⁸⁹ "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. Box 001, 13 October 1913.

⁹⁰ Ibid. McIntire (1880-?) was a painter and etcher from Richmond, Virginia. She studied at the Art Students' League in New York (presumably where she met Anderson) and studied in Paris at the Académie Julian.

grateful to her father for his support, and her relationship with him and the rest of her family was very close.

While there is no portraiture by Anderson of her mother known to exist, Stonewall Jackson Hospital has a still-life that Anderson painted for her mother (Figure 24). Bruce MacDonald, a resident of Lexington, donated the painting to the hospital in 2003. MacDonald and his wife decided to take on the responsibility of finding artwork for the new hospital and hosted a fundraiser in order to buy paintings. A partner in their efforts suggested they look at the "old paintings in the 'mud room,' a storage area [at the hospital] full of old furniture, junk . . . One was the Ellen Anderson painting."⁹¹ Bruce recalled that the painting was "very dark" and covered with "the dirt of the decades," so he cleaned and restored it: "the lovely, glowing colors from the original painting began to emerge."⁹² Anderson's used of color, as well as simplification of form and passage, once again reflect the understanding of modern approaches to painting which she studied in Paris.

The lower left corner of the painting reads "Paris, 1926" which specifies the context in which Anderson executed this still-life. After World War I, Anderson continued to travel throughout Europe: brochures and other preserved travel documents from 1925-1937 place her in Naples, Genoa, Rome, Florence, Switzerland, Monte Carlo, the Riviera, and repeatedly in Paris.⁹³ A collection of cards written in Anderson's hand was originally attached to the back of the canvas. On them, she dedicated the painting to her mother, Mary Louisa, to brighten her declining years. Anderson's mother did not accompany her to Europe as her father had, so perhaps this painting is Anderson's attempt to share a little of Parisian excitement and vitality with her mother.

⁹¹ Bruce MacDonald, letter to the author, 7 March 2011.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ "Papers of the Anderson Family," Mss. Box 001.

Anderson's treatment of her subject reflects an internalization of the art she saw in Paris, particularly that of Cézanne. His *Still Life: Flowers in a Vase* (Figure 25) from 1900 demonstrates the same distorted perspective and faceted handling of color that are present in Anderson's still life. In both images, space is suggested by planes of color, but the overall effect is very flattened, which reminds the viewer of the two-dimensionality of the canvas. Anderson painted her tulips in such a way that the viewer can simultaneously look down into as well as directly at blooms from the same angle. She used color to create depth and volume to the forms, and each tulip is comprised of sketchy daubs of color (including a yellow similar to that used by Cézanne) set off by areas of pure white highlight and black lowlights. Anderson's handling of the vase is especially skillful. She broke up the vase into facets of light and captured the interplay between reflection and shadow from the flowers above. The bottom of the vase picks up the reflection of the lowest bloom, and this repetition of red draws the eye from the flowers, to the vase, and finally to the patterned table runner. Anderson used this runner in the same way Cézanne used the counter top as a spatial complication. Both extend off the picture plane and this once again references the cropped composition of Japanese woodblock prints. The runner also allowed Anderson to further explore geometric patterning. The patterning offers a new, more decorative element to Anderson's still life, and in the pen and ink drawings she explored later in her career, this same decorative quality came through more strongly.

Anderson's interest in illustration was apparent from her travels through Europe. Her descriptions of costume and other physical details (for example, the aforementioned "Bavarian costume") lent themselves to caricatured drawings, and in many of letters home, she indicated that drawings were originally included as well. Illustration for publications and for the arts, such as theatre posters, blossomed in the early twentieth century, and Anderson would have been familiar with this vein of artwork even from the local newspapers of Lexington. Her own pen and ink drawings appeared in a wide range of newspapers and magazines both in Virginia and New York. In 1963, Anderson

donated a collection of her private papers to the University of Virginia Library. These three hundred items consist primarily of drawings for newspapers and date from 1912-1959. Additionally, there are several sketches of actors, dancers, circus performers, and other entertainers that were never published. Anderson kept careful records of all her drawings and often penciled her name and address on the backs of them. A pen and ink drawing of modern dancer Isadora Duncan from the 1920s bears Anderson's own instructions for the reproduction of the image: "Return to Miss Ellen G. Anderson 308 Letcher Ave, Lexington, Virginia. Please do not cut or lose this sketch."⁹⁴ Other subjects from this time period include actors Margaret Hamilton and O.P. Heggie, acrobats Ira and Edward Millette, musical performer Ethel Merman, and *bonne vivante* Tallulah Bankhead.

The liveliest of these drawings are undoubtedly ones in which the subjects move. Through her careful modulation of line and dramatic posturing of her figures, Anderson adeptly captures a sense of arrested motion in these drawings. The handling of line is vital to the success of these pieces, and once again, we see the influences of modern art that Anderson gleaned in Paris. Decoration and line were both highly prized in illustrative work in early twentieth century French drawing, and as we have seen, art of this nature was highly visible and publicized. Anderson was aware of the stylistic trends associated with illustration, and her skill in these drawings demonstrates a true mastery of the medium. Her ability to bring the dynamism of three dimensions to the flat picture plane derives from her manipulation of the plastic elements, and this jars the viewer's conceptions of space and movement therein.

Anderson captured twentieth-century film star Lillian Gish in her role in *Within the Gates* (Figure 26) and identified the production in the upper right corner of the drawing. The play premiered in America on October 22, 1934 in New York City. It is unclear if it was performed in Virginia, but

⁹⁴Papers of Ellen Graham Anderson, Accession #38-96-f, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA.

archival playbills indicate it was staged in Washington, D.C. at the National Theater. Playwright Sean O'Casey, an Irish Expressionist, called the play "'geometrical and emotional, the emotions of the living characters to be shown against their own patterns and the patterns of [Hyde Park]."⁹⁵ Anderson's mastery of the fine arts enabled her to parallel O'Casey's priorities within the literary arts. Her linear handling of Gish's form yields a geometric interplay of positive and negative space. The bends and angles of her posturing give the figure an undulating outline. This feature, combined with the juxtaposed diagonals of her hat, arms, and left hand versus her outstretched leg, creates a strong sensation of arrested motion, as though the viewer were a member of the audience at *Within the Gates* and saw Gish saunter across the stage in person.

Anderson recreates this same life-like quality with *L'Argentina*, an undated pen and ink drawing of a female dancer with castanets (Figure 27). Here, Anderson presents an even more dynamic composition, making use of the steps and gestures of the Argentine tango. This dancer leans back dramatically and twists behind herself, as indicated by the ruching of the costume at her waist. Her skirt fans out in an explosion of volume, and Anderson's broader applications of ink provide a greater sense of texture and movement. The contrast between the fullness of the skirt and the angles of her body create compositional tension, and viewer feels suspended in the moment, as though witness to a precise moment in the dance performance. The tango itself was popularized in the early twentieth century: it was first brought to Paris in 1909, where European bandleaders and composers refined it for the ballroom.⁹⁶ While practiced in America before World War I, the Argentine tango's popularity rose exponentially in the 1920s, and it grew to be among the top-tier social dances in America.⁹⁷ Anderson

⁹⁵ Sean O'Casey in Eileen O'Casey, *Sean* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 67.

⁹⁶ Ralph G. Giordano, *Social Dancing in America: A History and Reference*, vol. 2, *Lindy Hop to Hip Hop, 1901-2000*, (Greenwood: Santa Barbara, CA, 2006), online summary of chapter one, accessed 5 April 2011, <http://swingjazzblues.blogspot.com/2007/01/social-dancing-america-list-dances.html>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

mentions Parisian dancehalls in her letters, so perhaps this drawing reflects nostalgia for Paris, where she may have seen this dance for the first time.

Another drawing of dance performance was repurposed from a sketchbook into a watercolor painting (Figure 28). Anderson painted *Petrouchka Ballet* in 1916-1917 and entered the painting in an exhibition for the American Watercolor Society. This formal showing suggests her earnestness and commitment to her painting. On the label, she gave her address as 39 Charles Street in Chelsea, her residence in New York at that time (Figure 29). The work itself features two dancers, a man clad in green and a woman in pink. Here, Anderson's use of color is relatively flat, while she used line to give life to her figures. As with the drawing of Lillian Gish, Anderson's manipulation of positive and negative space complicates the geometry of the image and suggests a greater tension between the two dancers. Her rendering of their costumes is marked by her linear modulation, which creates volume and movement. The dynamism of the composition is furthered once again by the angles of the couple's poses: the ballerina balances *en pointe* while the male dancer prances jauntily at her side. Here, as well as in the drawings, Anderson implied little background, except for a few areas of shading. Even without a background context, however, her figures are not static, and the viewer understands this image as a particular step within the dance.

Stravinsky's ballet *Petrushka* premiered in New York City at the Century Theater on January 25, 1916.⁹⁸ In this performance, Leonid Massine danced the part of Petrushka, Lydia Lopoukhova danced the part of the Ballerina, and Adolph Bolm danced the part of the Moor.⁹⁹ These were all dancers with the Ballet Russe, whom Anderson had been excited to see in London during her initial trip to Europe. Anderson added notes on the back in 1944, indicating that this was "Le Nègre et la Ballerine, danced by Adolph Bolm at this performance." It is important to note that she uses the French spellings of the

⁹⁸ American Ballet Theater, "Petrouchka," accessed 5 April 2011, <http://www.abt.org/education/archive/ballets/petrouchka.html>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

individual dance, as well as the ballet's title. Her experiences in France clearly had a lasting impact on both her art and her life, and New York afforded her the opportunity to revisit and immortalize through drawing some of the dances and theatrical performances popular in Europe.

Many of these drawings also indicate whether they were reproduced or sold. The majority appeared in a periodical entitled *Post Magazine*, while other drawings were featured in *The International*, *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and *The New York Times Book Review and Magazine*. In a few cases, private publishing houses even owned the rights to her drawings, as was the case with an image of sports columnist and short story writer Ring Lardner which reads in the right hand corner: "Ring Lardner from life. This sketch the property of Charles Scribners Sons."¹⁰⁰ A number of these drawings were done from life, as indicated on the reverse sides, including authors James Branch Cabell, DuBose Heyward, and Margaret Bell Houston, violinist Maud Powell, and artist Marietta Minnegerode Andrews, wife of the director of the Corcoran School of Art. This assortment suggests that even though she was no longer in Paris at the heart of the avant-garde, Anderson established connections with prominent figures in both the fine and performing arts after her return to the United States.

The other implication of these drawings is that Anderson was a seasoned domestic traveler in addition to her time in Europe. She seems to have drawn whenever she traveled, however, and her papers contain sketches from Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; St. Augustine, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; San Antonio, Texas and Bermuda. Her keen eye was always at work, and she even noted on a drawing of awnings in New Orleans "See Charleston. Different."¹⁰¹ Many of these images from her domestic travels feature architectural subject matter, including the Rectory of St. Peter's in Bermuda, Old Salem College in North Carolina, and various missions in Texas. Interestingly, however, images of homes occur frequently. In Charleston, she drew the old homes of King Street, and

¹⁰⁰ Papers of Ellen Graham Anderson, Accession #38-96-f.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

in San Antonio, she drew a street with four houses and two children playing on the street corner. Her drawing of a door from New Orleans reveals on the reverse that it is the back door of a Mrs. Cork's house, which Anderson noted had "three panels in each outer side."¹⁰² She seemed to be interested in what comprised neighborhoods in other cities, perhaps as a comparison to her own feelings about her hometown and the sense of community she felt in Lexington.

The people she drew, however, were still predominantly actors, performers, or those who ran in the more cultured social circles. While some of these performers such as Isadora Duncan and John Powell did appear in Virginia, many were featured only in New York City. She must have continued to travel between New York and Lexington fairly regularly, and the addresses on later drawings bolster this assertion. Two addresses in New York recur in the records: the one at "39 Charles Street—Chelsea" and the Windsor Hotel, at 58th Street in New York City. Aylett Suhr has a painting entitled "New York" from 1915 and shows the city skyline from Anderson's apartment window (Figure 30). The three addresses in Lexington are for Anderson's childhood home on Letcher Avenue, a post office box (number 773), and finally 207 Barclay Lane, where Anderson lived later in her life with her sister.¹⁰³

The drawing of *L'Argentina* first used her address at 39 Charles Street, the same address used on the label of *Petrouchka Ballet* for its entrance in the American Watercolor society. This address is crossed out on *L'Argentina* and underneath reads her address at Letcher Avenue in Lexington. The address does not change on *Petrouchka*, which suggests that her residence in New York was permanent at least until 1917, and based on other dates, probably until the early 1920s. The drawing of *L'Argentine* may have still been in use by a publisher until Anderson's relocation to Lexington was permanent. "The Praline Woman—New Orleans" has three different addresses on the back, two of which are crossed out. The first reads as "Park Chambers, 68-w58" (the only time this appears), the second cites the Windsor

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Hotel and the third is 207 Barclay Lane. The later drawings only bear this address, and it becomes clear that by the mid-1920s, Anderson had returned to Lexington full time. Frances McNulty Lewis explained in her article: "Then a knee injury and operation, keeping her for weeks in nearby St. Vincent's Hospital and for months on crutch and cane, put an end to climbing editors' stairs in order to deliver her work."¹⁰⁴

The Lexington Regional Library exhibited another collection of Anderson's pen and ink drawings, watercolor paintings, and scrapbook pages in 1988. The library acquired a glass case as a memorial to the late Louise Blair Daura who had suggested before her death that the city have a retrospective exhibition of Anderson's work. Paintings and original drawings were lent by Anderson's nieces and nephews, and many newspaper illustrations were reproduced for display as well. Forty pen and ink sketches for newspapers and magazines appeared, three of which were in color. Two of these drawings, "Types at the Metropolitaine Stations" are from 1913, when Anderson was in Paris. Other images include actresses, musicians, opera singers, authors, and even President Calvin Coolidge. Frances McNulty Lewis called this show a "crossroads" in the art world because of the wide range of art in this show: each drawing or painting reflects a different stage in Anderson's artistic career. The earliest pieces began with her time at the Art Students' League in New York. Drawings from her trip to London, Scotland, and Paris were paired with scenes from later travels to Mexico and Bermuda. The drawings of entertainers from her illustrative career were juxtaposed with portraits of family members and residents of Lexington. Anderson's diverse oeuvre encompasses many different influences, media, and subjects, but her underlying motivations for creation, her love of art and her interest in the world around her, remained constant.

¹⁰⁴ Lewis, page 6, section A.

CONCLUSION

The three paintings I looked at initially, the landscape with House Mountain, the portrait of Anderson's father, and the still life of tulips helped me create this thesis. These were the only extant paintings by Anderson that I knew of, but even with such a small body of work, the importance of her hometown and family comes through in her paintings. Anderson was clearly a skilled painter, adept at expressing her feelings for her subjects on the canvas. It seemed her talent and love of art should have yielded more than three works of art. I found records of the show at the Lexington Regional Library in our own Leyburn Library's Special Collections, and with the variety and sheer volume of these pen and ink drawings, I was sure there was more to discover. Earlier in the term, I submitted a letter the local newspaper requesting information about Anderson. The feedback from this article was incredible and led to the rediscovery of twenty more paintings scattered from Georgia to New Jersey, which I have now begun to study closely.

Many remember Anderson more for her later-in-life sharp tongue and peculiar mannerisms more than her art. Martha Daura, originally of Rockbridge Baths, describes a wedding to which Anderson was invited: "There was ice cream in the shape of various pastel colored flowers. Cousin Ellen's eyesight was by then poor, and of course she wore gloves . . . so she took several flowers [and put them in her purse.] and did not realize they were ice cream instead of cakes. The next day, she telephoned the hostess and angrily demanded that she replace the handbag which had been ruined by the melting ice cream."¹⁰⁵ Katie Letcher Lyle, a resident of Lexington, remembers two similar incidents of food hoarding at weddings. She also relates her childhood observations of Anderson: "she was fat, entitled, and mean. She hit me with an umbrella once, when I didn't get out of her way soon enough."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Daura, letter to the author.

¹⁰⁶ Katie Letcher Lyle, letter to the author, 22 October, 2010.

Andy Stone never referred to his great-aunt as mean, but he does attest to her sense of entitlement. He shared this "typical family story," also recounted by David Coffey and James A. Hight, both natives of Lexington.¹⁰⁷ Stone tells of the dedication of the George C. Marshall Museum at the Virginia Military Institute in 1964. Given the importance of the dedication ceremony, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Lady Bird Johnson, and an entourage of Secret Servicemen were in attendance. However, Anderson technically was not supposed to be: she never received an invitation to the ceremony, but because she grew up on the campus of the Virginia Military Institute and she was "*always* invited to everything in Lexington," she decided her invitation must have been lost in the mail." Hight remembers it was a hot day in May, and Anderson wore a bright blue dress with a matching parasol. A neighbor, Dorothy Osburg commented on "how beautiful Miss Ellen looked . . . like a Renoir painting, and the blue she was wearing was exactly the bright blue of a woman's dress in Renoir's *Boating Party*."¹⁰⁸ Perhaps if Anderson had heard this compliment (and reference to her esteemed French painting), the day would have concluded differently. After the ceremony, Anderson announced that she was going to the Superintendent's House to speak to President Johnson. Coffey suggests that her late father's role in state politics may have given her this "presumed entrée into 'state occasions.'"¹⁰⁹ Naturally, Anderson was stopped by a Secret Serviceman before she could enter the house. She apparently waved her cane and threatened the officer, and was subsequently denied entrance. Not to be outdone, Anderson stood outside on the steps and thanked passersby for their attendance, even the President as he walked out. Hight concludes: "That would have been just like her."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ F. Anderson Stone, letter to the author, 11 March, 2011.

¹⁰⁸ James A. Hight, letter to the author, 24 November, 2010.

¹⁰⁹ David Coffey, letter to the author, 24 November, 2010.

¹¹⁰ Hight, letter to the author.

The stories surrounding Anderson's cult of personality extend even to rumors about her personal life. As Daura notes, "in Lexington, stories about Cousin Ellen abound."¹¹¹ Some family members have speculated that it was a love affair (not the knee injury) that forced Anderson home. Great-nephew Joe Logan explained that Anderson may have been involved with a man in New York. Her father was in poor health at this time, and Logan proposes that William Anderson feared his daughter would stay in New York with her beau. He wanted her closer to home and asked her to return to care for him. Aylett Suhr also suggests a potential love affair, this time with a man from Europe. In her collection of Anderson's paintings, Suhr owns "a large oil of a very handsome man known by the title on the back of the painting as 'Sculptor from Scotland (Figure 31).'"¹¹² She explains that her mother and aunts always thought that Anderson had "fallen in love during her Paris time and later he was killed in World War I. Many of her poems read as if she had loved and lost."¹¹³ Several of her poems include ideas about love, death, and her own conceptions of heaven:

Dear Lord, I do not think that those
 Who died these later years
 Could stand a heaven of quietness
 And watch our futile tears.
 They want the sort of Paradise
 Where they can run downtown
 To look for silver sandals
 Or try a gauzy gown.
 And, coming back, to meet their friends
 Along Celestial Lanes,
 Where all the bright throng congregates
 As earthly sunset wanes.¹¹⁴

Others have suggested that this lost love caused Anderson to abandon art, her other love. However, as great-nephew Jim Hoge has pointed out, this leads to chronological inconsistencies. He remembers stories of Anderson falling in love with a European soldier who died in World War I. The

¹¹¹ Daura, letter to the author.

¹¹² Aylett Suhr, letter to the author, 4 March 2011.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ellen Graham Anderson, poem, c. 1925, from Aylett Suhr, letter to the author, 8 April, 2011.

War ended in 1918, however, and records indicate that Anderson continued to draw until at least 1934, as indicated by the drawing of Lillian Gish, as well as one of Ethel Merman in the musical *Anything Goes* (Figure 32). Hoge also recalls a rumor of involvement with a married man in New York City. Her father “ordered” her to return home in the early 1920s to care for him, and then in 1927, upon the death of her sister Anna, Anderson’s father made her come back to help care for the entire family.¹¹⁵ Yet again, this date is still too early to be the real reason she stopped painting and drawing.

Hoge and another great-niece Betty Kuyk have both related accounts that point to a new theory as to why Anderson abandoned her artistic career. Shortly after the death of William Alexander Anderson in 1930, Anderson’s nephew (and the namesake of her late father) married in 1933. Anderson did not approve of this girl (Kuyk writes, “She hated his wife. And since she was from Georgia, that backed up her belief that my mother was not good enough for William Anderson McN[ulty]”).¹¹⁶ She even threatened to revoke a niece’s financial support for college when the girl was asked to be a bridesmaid in the wedding. Finally, her brother William died in 1934. All the men of significance were now gone from her life.¹¹⁷

Yet, Aylett Suhr recalls a different side of Anderson:

I loved Aunt Ellen for her eccentricities and her devoted love of all of us. There is not a room in my house where there isn't something Aunt Ellen wanted me to have, to love and to use. I could go on and on. She was the grandmother figure for us. We would have tea on her side porch while she taught us how ladies act and all about our ‘illustrious forbearers.’ We walked to the Robert E. Lee Church and the Stonewall Jackson Cemetery and did rubbings of the gravestones and talked about the history of our family, Lexington, and Virginia.¹¹⁸

Despite a brusque exterior, Anderson was devoted to helping her family and improving the Lexington community. Dedicated to preserving the history of the community, she was active in Lexington’s Mary Custis Lee chapter of the Colonial Dames, a national society devoted to historic preservation, patriotic

¹¹⁵ Jim Hoge, letter to the author, 28 March 2011.

¹¹⁶ Betty Kuyk, letter to the author, 28 March 2011.

¹¹⁷ Hoge, letter to the author.

¹¹⁸ Suhr, letter to the author.

service, and education. She served as president during the 1950s, and even modeled an elaborate lace dress for a charitable living tableaux exhibition at the local high school in 1955 (Figure 33). She was also a board member for the Stonewall Jackson Hospital and was involved in the Episcopal Church in town. A subscriber to *The News Gazette*, Anderson saved many articles in her scrapbook, and even wrote articles for the paper a number of times. Hight recalls one "indignant" letter pertaining to the "proposed use of fluoride in the town water. What, she wanted to know, would happen to her fine linens? She was not interested in children's teeth."¹¹⁹ Still, as a charter member of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Anderson wrote many articles for the benefit of local families and the community of Lexington at large.

But as more of her paintings, drawings, and letters describing her studies and love of art have come to the fore, it is clear that Anderson was also a noteworthy artist. Though lost in art history up to this point, her work clearly deserves this rediscovery. Pierre Daura once noted that local people "have a true and naïve joy of recognizing their fields and barns on my canvases."¹²⁰ Ellen Anderson's love of art and of her native Virginia were also brought together in her work. Her drawings always served to record observations, and her landscape paintings and portraits are records of the area's local history. Though she had traveled extensively both within the United States and abroad, there was something beautiful about Lexington that Anderson was compelled to capture.

There is still much more research to be done on Anderson, but the important thing to realize from her story is that she was not the only one. For every one Mary Cassatt, there are myriad Ellen Andersons who studied and loved to paint, but for whatever reason have been lost in history. There are still many unanswered questions about Anderson's life and work, but one thing is clear: Anderson was devoted to her family and the Lexington community. Hopefully this research will help afford her a more permanent place within the community, as both an engaged citizen and as an accomplished painter.

¹¹⁹ Hight, letter to the author.

¹²⁰ In Rasmussen, "The Life of Pierre Daura," 8.

ILLUSTRATIONSFigure 1

Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

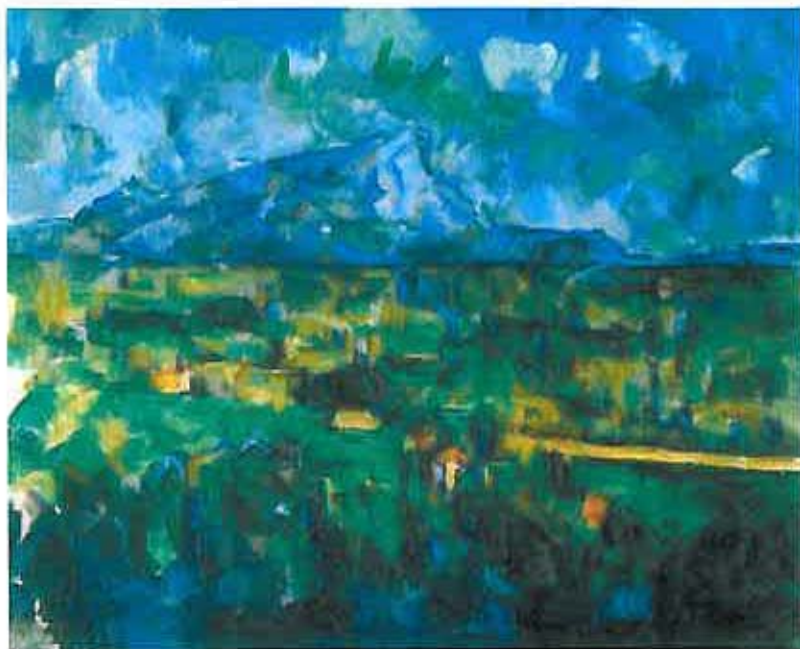


Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

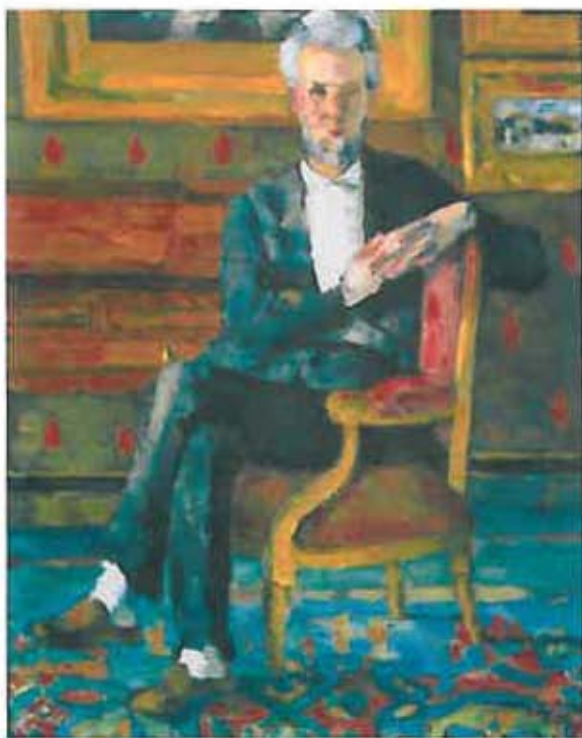


Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29

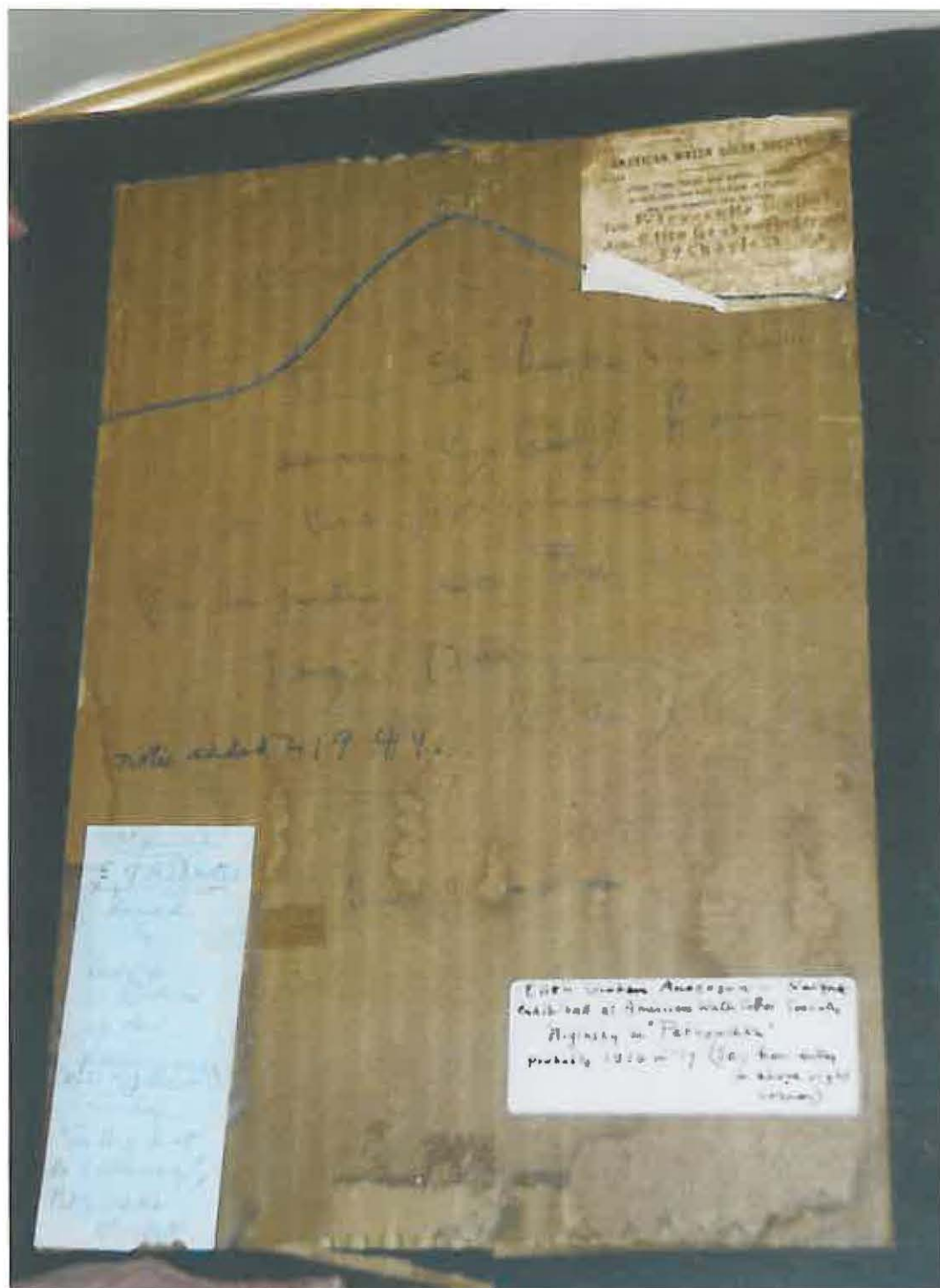


Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 33



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