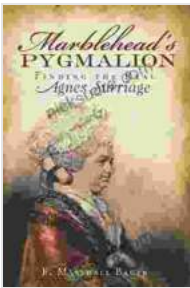


Marblehead's Pygmalion: Finding the Real Agnes Surriage

Nestled on the picturesque coast of Massachusetts, the historic town of Marblehead holds a wealth of captivating stories from its rich maritime past. Among its most intriguing tales is that of Marblehead's Pygmalion, a remarkable historical figure whose life became the inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, "The Marble Faun." At the heart of this literary masterpiece lies the enigmatic Agnes Surriage, a woman whose true identity has long been shrouded in mystery.



Marblehead's Pygmalion: Finding the Real Agnes

Surriage by F. Marshall Bauer

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2711 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 167 pages



The Legend of Marblehead's Pygmalion

The story of Marblehead's Pygmalion begins with a young sculptor named Cephas Thompson. Born in 1775, Thompson's extraordinary talent quickly drew attention. He traveled to Italy in the early 19th century, where he studied under renowned neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova. Inspired by the works of antiquity, Thompson returned to Marblehead with a vision to

create a masterpiece that would rival the sculptures of ancient Greece and Rome.

Thompson's subject was Agnes Surriage, a young woman of extraordinary beauty and grace. Legend has it that Thompson became so enamored with Agnes that he fell deeply in love with her. He spent countless hours sculpting her likeness, capturing her delicate features and ethereal presence in marble. The resulting sculpture, known as "The Marble Faun," became a testament to Thompson's skill and the allure of his muse.

The Mystery of Agnes Surriage

Despite the fame of Thompson's masterpiece, the true identity of Agnes Surriage remained a mystery for centuries. Some believed that she was a fictional character, a figment of Thompson's imagination. Others maintained that she was based on a real woman, but her name and history had been lost to time.

In the 1980s, a group of researchers embarked on a quest to uncover the truth about Agnes Surriage. Through meticulous research and collaboration with historians and genealogists, they pieced together a fascinating narrative. They discovered that Agnes was indeed a real person, born in Marblehead in 1765. Her father was a sea captain, and her mother was a descendant of one of the town's founding families.

Agnes Surriage: A Woman of Substance

Far from being a mere muse, Agnes Surriage was a woman of remarkable character and independence. She married a wealthy merchant named William Douglas in 1787. The couple moved to Boston, where Agnes

became a prominent figure in society. She was known for her intelligence, charm, and unwavering loyalty to her family and friends.

Agnes's life took a dramatic turn in 1809 when she met Thomas Staniford Raffles, a young British colonial official. Raffles was immediately smitten with Agnes's beauty and sophistication. They began a passionate affair, which eventually led to Raffles proposing marriage. However, their plans were thwarted by Agnes's husband, who refused to grant her a divorce.

Legacy of Marblehead's Pygmalion

The story of Marblehead's Pygmalion and Agnes Surriage has captivated imaginations for generations. It is a tale of love, loss, and the enduring power of human connection. Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, "The Marble Faun," immortalized Agnes's memory and cemented Marblehead's place in American literary history.

Today, the legacy of Marblehead's Pygmalion lives on in the town's vibrant arts scene and its commitment to preserving its rich cultural heritage. Visitors can explore the historic sites associated with Agnes Surriage, including her childhood home and the location where Thompson sculpted "The Marble Faun." The town also hosts annual events celebrating Agnes's life and the arts.

The tale of Marblehead's Pygmalion and Agnes Surriage is a reminder that even the most enigmatic figures in history can be brought to light through the relentless pursuit of truth. Through the dedication of researchers and the enduring power of art, we have gained a deeper understanding of the real woman who inspired one of the most beloved works of American literature. Agnes Surriage's legacy continues to inspire and intrigue,

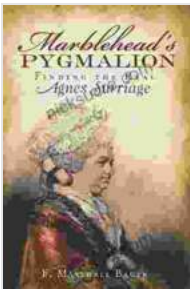
reminding us of the resilience and spirit that have always defined the people of Marblehead.



Further Reading

- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "The Marble Faun." New York: Modern Library, 2003.

- Withey, Lynne. "Agnes Surriage: The Real Marble Faun." Marblehead, MA: Marblehead Historical Society, 1989.
- Marblehead Historical Society. "Marblehead's Pygmalion: Cephas Thompson and Agnes Surriage."
<https://marbleheadmuseum.org/exhibits/marbleheads-pygmalion-cephas-thompson-agnes-surriage/> (Accessed on March 15, 2023).

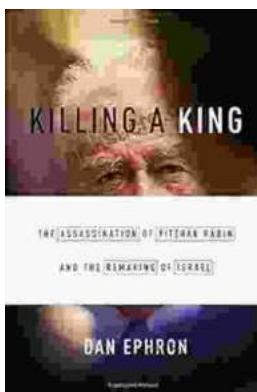


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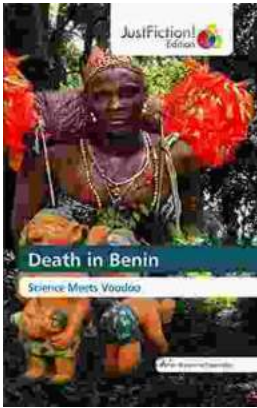
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