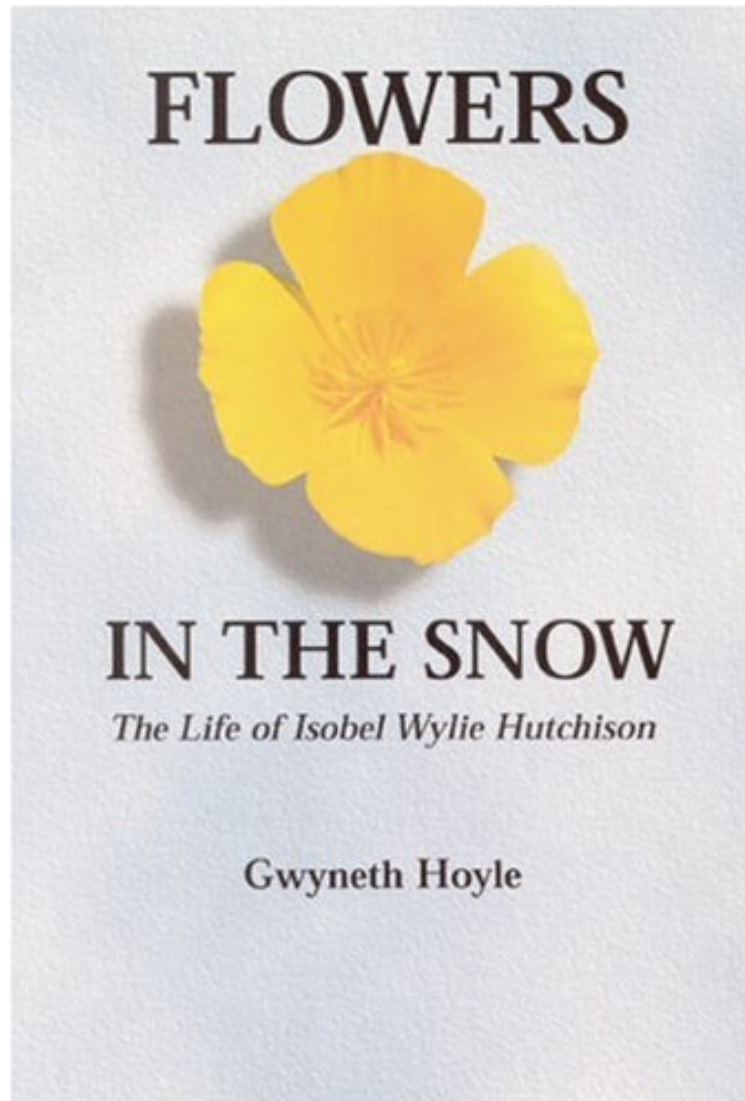


(Online library) Flowers in the Snow: The Life of Isobel Wylie Hutchison (Women in the West)

Flowers in the Snow: The Life of Isobel Wylie Hutchison (Women in the West)

Gwyneth Hoyle

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Gwyneth Hoyle : Flowers in the Snow: The Life of Isobel Wylie Hutchison (Women in the West) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Flowers in the Snow: The Life of Isobel Wylie Hutchison (Women in the West):

Over the course of a dozen years, Scottish plant collector Isobel Wylie Hutchison (1889-1982) explored northern latitudes from the Lofoten Islands of Norway to the far reaches of the American Aleutians. To achieve her goals, she traveled by any means available, from rowboats in Greenland to trading schooners and coast-guard vessels in Alaska. When necessary, she journeyed by snowshoe or sled in pursuit of her botanical specimens, accompanied only by strangers who served as guides. In *Flowers in the Snow*, Gwyneth Hoyle paints a vivid portrait of a woman gloriously out of the step with the conventions of her time.

From Publishers Weekly: Before the modern era, a young woman of means who was disinclined to marry and bear children had few options. She could care for aging relatives, join a devotional community or had she a taste for adventures simply pack her bag and go. Seeking to escape her staid, Scottish, upper-class existence, Hutchison considered religion, but decided to travel the northern latitudes instead, exploring the Arctic Circle from Norway to the Aleutian Islands between 1927 and 1936. Calling herself an amateur, she was in fact an innovator, helping convert exploration, previously a colonial enterprise, into a social science. She didn't sleep on mud floors in subzero weather to conquer new territory or just for the thrill of the exotic. Instead, starting with a botanical focus, she became interested in the social life of Arctic peoples, whom she believed all shared common heritage. Hoyle's account of Hutchison's upbringing and voyages is careful and readable, though her subject's later years remain somewhat sketchy. Pondering Hutchison's intimate life, Hoyle (coauthor of *Canoeing North into the Unknown*) suggests she was asexual, although her discussion raises more questions than it answers: is a woman who lives as "one of the boys" entirely uninterested? But Hutchison's verifiable passion for the wide, Arctic horizons lingers with the reader. The appendix essay on modern women travelers is excellent, as are the handful of maps and 20 photos. While Hutchison isn't a household name, the eye-catching jacket and inclusion in Nebraska's *Women in the West* series should help sales for this welcome tribute to a female pioneer. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. Biographer Gwyneth Hoyle presents an appealing portrait of Hutchinson. . . . This inspiring tale details with pleasure the extreme distances to which a woman's passion may take her not only through the wilds of the Arctic, but beyond cultural limitations. Bernadette Murphy, Los Angeles Times