

# NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

# THE STAR

## NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019/2020

## Mary Hallock Foote

### The Path to Becoming a Renowned American Illustrator

by Joan Clappier

Mary Hallock was born in 1847 and grew up on a peaceful family farm in Milton, NY, up the Hudson River from New York City. Life in the Hallock home included literature, interesting guests and lively conversations, thus Mary was exposed to a much wider range of ideas and philosophies than was typical for a rural farm girl. She was taught early to open her eyes and her mind to what was around her. She did a lot of drawing and her artistic talent was recognized and encouraged by her family.

The Hallocks were strong proponents of education for both girls and boys. Educational opportunities beyond primary school for females were improving with the growth of female seminaries [academies] in the mid-19th century. Founders of these schools believed that “women needed to be educated adequately to impart virtue and right ways of thinking to their husbands and children”.

In 1863-64, Mary attended the Poughkeepsie Female Collegiate Institute. It was there that Mary received her first formal training in art. Mary’s talents blossomed. Mary’s aunt Sarah Hallock, a strong, respected member of the family, examined Mary’s drawings and declared that Mary should attend the Cooper Union

School of Design for Women in New York City – an excellent school.

Peter Cooper was a wealthy industrialist and philanthropist when he founded Cooper Union in 1859. He took the revolutionary step of opening the school to women as well as men. He also felt that access to higher education should not be limited to the wealthy. To that end, he rented out the lower two floors of the building as business and retail space, using that income to help support the school. Cooper demanded only a willingness to learn and a commitment to excellence. Cooper Union was a good match for Mary!

Mary left Milton for Cooper Union in 1864, shortly before her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. She stayed with relatives in the city. She found living in



*The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

NYC exhilarating and got her first taste of society. She enjoyed being free to study art for days on end and to discuss art with like-minded students. In 1867, W.J. Linton, a master engraver from England, joined the faculty and became her most important teacher and mentor.

Wood engraving was the primary and least expensive medium for producing book and periodical illustrations at the time. Drawing illustrations on wood blocks to be engraved was a good career choice because there was high demand and good pay in that field. However, the quality of the final printed illustration depended on the skill of both the illustrator and the engraver.

Linton taught Mary techniques of drawing on wood that would result in an appealing end product. Mary's work became good enough to attract the best engravers to work with her.

Mary went on to become a sought-after illustrator for authors such as Hawthorne, Longfellow, Tennyson, Alcott, and many others. There is much more to the Mary Hallock Foote story, but this is how she got started. She had some outstanding mentors and opportunities, but it was her talent that opened the doors.

#### References;

"A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West" by Mary Hallock Foote

"Mary Hallock Foote" by Darlis A. Miller

"Mary Hallock Foote: A Leading Illustrator of the 1870s and 1880s" by Sue Rainey

Cooper Union: <https://cooper.edu/about/history>

#### Engraving Steps

- The artist draws the design on a polished, whitened woodblock, such as end-grain boxwood.
- The engraver uses fine tools called gravers to cut away the areas that are to remain white, leaving the lines of the design to receive the ink.
- The block is inked and pressed onto the paper, transferring the picture to the page.

### NSHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## President's Message

### Betzi Hart, President

The North Star Conservancy is brimming with excitement over the accomplishments made in 2019 and the prospects for an even better 2020.



Last year was a banner year for progress. The Board of Directors added three new members: Paula Campbell, Richard McRay, and Lisa Robinson. The office is now staffed by an Administrative Assistant, Allyssa Skowrya. There are two new Contract Administrators: Sierra Giannoni and Nichole Robinson. We also have hired a Community Engagement Specialist, Joan Clappier. Our Volunteer Coordinator, Sherian Kutzera has done an outstanding job of finding volunteers to help with projects, big and small.

#### ***Have you visited the North Star House lately?***

This year with the assistance of our passionate volunteer force and the generosity of our donors, the North Star Historic Conservancy has achieved many ambitious goals. The Construction Crew has almost doubled in size. The Heritage Garden was officially opened. The exterior shingling is close to being finished. The Julia Morgan Room has been completed. The renovation of the Library has begun. Hidden from view are the new electrical lines, the demolition work on the second floor, the improved irrigation system, and numerous

maintenance issues that have been addressed. The Interiors Committee has been busy sprucing up the rooms with window coverings, upholstery, and new furnishings. Visitors continue to express amazement at the progress that has been made.

Inspired by last year's progress the Board of Directors has just concluded the planning session for the coming year.

The goals for 2020 include:

- installation of a new electrical panel to increase the load and add the capability to install a generator system;
- complete plans for a fire suppression system;
- install plumbing for the fire sprinkler system on the first floor;
- finish the Library;
- install window coverings in the living room;
- complete the drainage, irrigation system, and renew the east lawn;
- begin road improvements;
- seek funding for future long-term projects: fire suppression system, elevator, and generator system.

The 2020 goals and the more expensive long-term projects planned for the upcoming future for The North Star House cannot be accomplished without help from both public and private donations. Private donations from community members, like you, have enabled completion of almost all of the restoration and renovations up to this point. Continued support from you will be needed to bolster our ability to obtain grant funding from outside sources for the larger projects.

Please consider a donation at this time, to ensure the ongoing revitalization of this historic community treasure.



# Heritage Garden Update

## by Paula Campbell

The perennial garden in the Heritage Garden has been planted! Many thanks to our hard-working Garden Crew as well as to our dedicated NSHC president Betzi Hart for making this possible.

The Conservancy's intention was to create a heritage garden that honors North Star Mine manager AD Foote's horticultural skills and his relationship with plan propagators Luther Burbank and Felix Gillet.

The new perennial area draws on recollections of family members as well as reference to Luther Burbank's work. Shasta daisies, several types of sunflowers, gladiolas and canna are all included.

Arts and Crafts/Edwardian gardens emphasize blending the house with the garden - with particular garden areas as welcoming as rooms in the house; creating a sense of enclosure and structure with hedging or walls to contain exuberant herbaceous borders; and using natural materials and design to merge the garden with more wild areas of the landscape.

We hope that the landscape at NSH, including our new garden will be an extension of the

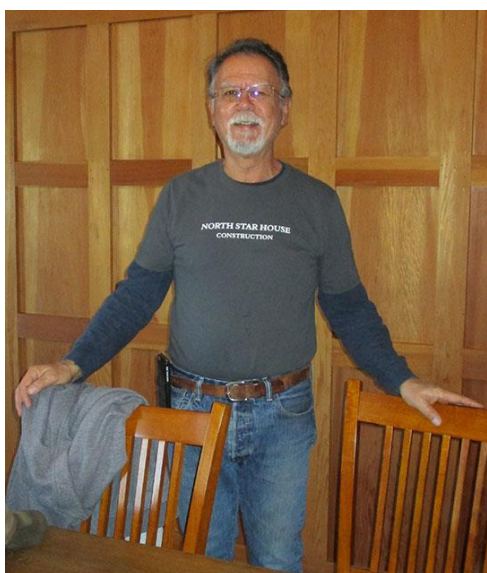
house and a lovely meander for visitors. Jim Pyle's design is the perfect combination of structure and soft lines which support a different experience in each section: heading right from the entrance, visitors stroll through the heritage rose garden with hardy geranium edging and hydrangeas as a backdrop on the left; evergreens behind the bench; naked ladies (oh my!) along the fence; and a small path leading off to a fruit tree and grape vine near the back fence and a beautiful, small reflecting pond.

Circling back toward the entrance, visitors will find our new flower garden on the right followed by a more intimate area around the tree enclosed by hydrangeas and white azaleas. Two benches, a small camellia, a peony garden and finally a large snowball viburnum bring visitors back to the one-of-a-kind entrance gate, and some other lovely plants and flowers as well. Each section feels a bit different and has different historical references but all are lovely spaces to walk through.

This garden will be a work in progress but hopefully will always be a lovely and restful expression of the principles guiding the design of the North Star House.



## NSH Volunteers



**Jim Borelli**

A chance meeting with Howard Levine at a business mixer led Jim Borelli to the North Star House. Howard needed a ride to someplace after the event and Jim offered to drive him. As they chatted in the car, Jim mentioned that he was “running out of things to do”. Howard responded that after this errand they

should go to the North Star House, which they did. Jim had never heard of the House, but after talking to Larry and Rich he joined the construction crew.

Jim has an electrical background, having worked designing and manufacturing products for the television broadcast industry. He also likes building things. In his work at the House he has performed a variety of tasks including electrical, construction, and demolition work on the second floor -- plus clearing out the debris and damage to get the second floor ready for reconstruction. To help get the debris down from the second floor, he assisted with building a chute from the second floor to the work area on the north side of the house.

Jim enjoys working with a group of people who get things done in a friendly, laid-back environment. Jim also finds history fascinating, and there is a lot of that associated with the North Star House. He describes his involvement with the North Star House as a “good fit” for him.

Jim: “I enjoy learning new things and there are experts here to learn from.”

Dennis Westcot was showing his restored Model A Ford car at an event in Nevada City when North Star volunteer Sherian Kutzero talked to him about the car. She found out that he not only restores cars but that he also builds and restores wood furniture. She decided he should come to the North Star House and learn about the restoration work going on.

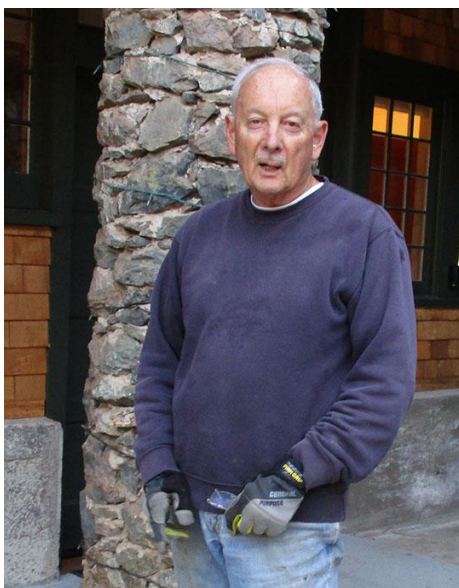
In addition to building and restoring furniture, Dennis has also done a lot of work on his house. Prior to moving to Nevada City he took a woodworking class at Sierra College. He was impressed by both the amount of equipment in the college workshop and the quality of the

instructors. He continued taking classes and learning more.

Dennis knew about the North Star House from his many visits to the Growers Market. However, he saw the house in a different light after getting a more in-depth look at the reconstruction work being done and remaining to be done.

Per Dennis, “It looked like an interesting project so I stuck around.”

And he has stuck around ... bringing his enthusiasm and skills to the amazing construction crew that converges on the house every Tuesday and Thursday to work their magic.



**Dennis Westcot**

## Meet Our Administrative Assistant

The North Star Historic Conservancy has hired **Allyssa Skowyra** as a part-time administrative assistant.

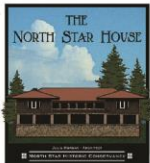
When she was planning her wedding 2 years ago, a friend recommended Allyssa take a look at the North Star House. Not only did Allyssa hold her wedding at the house, she became a volunteer not long after her honeymoon!

With Allyssa's enthusiasm for promoting the house, she was soon hired to assist with wedding rental inquiries, tours, and contracts. And now she is taking on the task of being the communication hub, ensuring that volunteers, including a working board, are in sync.

"The North Star House is such a special place. I'm so happy for the opportunity to help pave the road for the future."

With various construction projects in process at any given time, committee meetings, visitors, and managing the office, Allyssa is there to keep it all flowing.

Allyssa is also a Chiropractor and has an office on Springhill Drive in Grass Valley.



### NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

12075 AUBURN ROAD, GRASS VALLEY, CA 95949

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We need your help with the Ongoing Restoration and Revitalization  
of the **Historic North Star House**

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#### Membership Levels

☐ Rising Star \$35+

☐ Supporter \$100+

☐ Preservationist \$500+

☐ Benefactor \$1000+

☐ Life Member \$2000+



## Wood Donated for Renovation Work

Several months ago, Construction Crew co-chair Rich McRay mentioned to an acquaintance the need for wood in order to renovate the Library ceiling and walls. That acquaintance happened to be Rich Gordon, president of the California Forestry Association (Calforests).

Gordon put McRay in touch with Dan Kruger, president of Soper-Wheeler, a sustainable forestry company, based in Strawberry, just outside Yuba City. Soper-Wheeler harvested several Incense cedar trees, donating the wood and labor. The wood was brought to Unity Forest Products in Yuba City to be rough cut and milled – for labor costs only.

Hills Flat Lumber generously offered to transport the wood to the North Star House, and then to Fred's Custom Milling and Lumber for storage and drying. And back again.

The end result was more than 5100 board feet of Incense cedar to be used for restoration work.



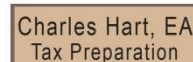
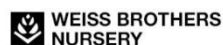
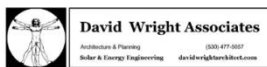
The wood is now being sorted by the construction crew, with different grades of wood to be used based on project needs. The clear cedar planks will be used in the Library to refurbish the ceiling; bench seats, based on original architectural drawings, are being built and installed by Construction Crew volunteers.

The planks will also be used to finish the dining room window wall and trim boards by the fireplace.

The Conservancy is thankful for the outpouring of generosity by local and regional businesses, and the many volunteers that made it possible for this work to be done

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

CHARLIE & MARY BROCK



## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Mark Your Calendars!*

### House Party

at

**The North Star House**

**Saturday, June 27**

Local Breweries and Wine,  
a Dance Band & lots of fun

### 2020 Historical Presentations

- Feb 23 No Place for a Woman: The Fight for  
Woman Suffrage in the Wild West  
By Chris Enss, Historical author
- May 3 The North Star Mine Powerhouse:  
A Legacy of Arthur De Wint Foote  
By Jeffrey Boylan, North Star Mining Museum
- July 12 Nisenan Homelands: Then and Now  
By Shelly Covert, Nisenan Tribal Spokesperson
- Oct 4 James Hague – Visionary North Star  
Mine Owner  
By Gage McKinney, Historian & author

### No Place for a Woman

#### *The Fight for Woman Suffrage in the Wild West*

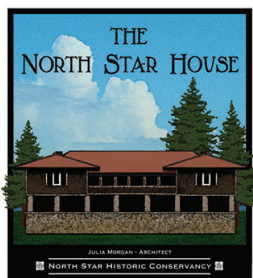
Decades before the 19th Amendment was passed giving women the right to vote in the United States, many Western states and territories granted women that right -- beginning with Wyoming in 1869.

Chris Enss, local author, comedienne, and performer, will give an entertaining presentation about the fight for women's rights in the West.

Sunday, February 23 2pm



Lisa Robinson & Roger Bloom shingling the north wall



North Star Historic Conservancy  
12075 Auburn Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
[www.TheNorthStarHouse.org](http://www.TheNorthStarHouse.org)

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