

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2020

The Roar of the Stamp Mill

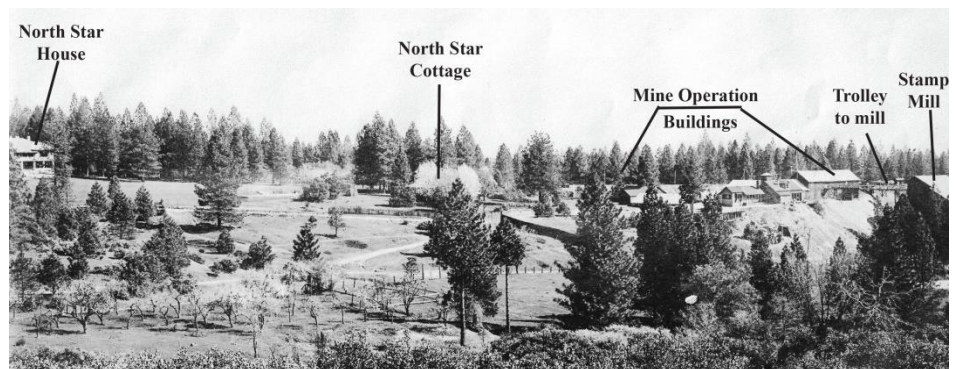
The North Star Mine on Auburn Road

by Joan Clappier

Many visitors to the North Star House ask where the mine was. The answer: The North Star Mine was right on the property where the North Star House is!

View from the west side of Auburn Road:

- North Star House, upper left
- North Star Cottage down lawn from House
- Further down and to right of Cottage, the mine operations buildings stretched above Auburn Road, including:



assay office, general offices, cyanide plant, headframe and stamp mill (with trolley for ore carts)

The mine entrance was behind the rightmost buildings. This was the “Incline Shaft”, so-named because the tunnel extended north-easterly down at an incline angle. In 1896, the decision was made to sink a vertical shaft, called the Central Shaft, to intersect the Incline closer to Allison Ranch Road (southwest of the then-new Power House). New mining operation buildings were built at the Central Shaft and later the Incline Shaft operation ceased.



LEFT: The North Star Cottage was home to the mine Superintendent, thus was home to AD and MH Foote and their children when they moved to North Star in 1895-6. After the Footes moved into the North Star House (built 1905), the Cottage then housed young engineers who were mentored by AD Foote.

The stamp mill actually straddled Auburn Rd! The road ran through a tunnel. Since the stamps were running continuously, it was very noisy going through the tunnel. It was known to frighten horses (and annoy people).

As you exit NSH, you can turn left onto the road, drive a short distance, and see a wall on each side, remaining from the tunnel.



Auburn Rd, looking south. Mine buildings on hill



LEFT: Trolley pulls ore cars on tramway to mill

Fun Fact: While the North Star House was being built, they ran a track from the tailings pile to the construction site and used an ore cart on the rails to haul rock that was used for the walls and columns.

RIGHT: Some of the mine operation buildings, left to right: headframe, mine office, assay office. Auburn Rd is to the right down the hill.

The only operation building left is the assay office, which has been converted to a caretaker's cottage for the property manager. The rest of the mine operation was cleared from the property.



The Roar of the Stamp Mill. When the stamp mill was running 24/7, life at the House was far from the quiet, restful experience we now enjoy. Yet, in a letter to her friend, Mary Hallock Foote described how happy they were at North Star. She wrote “...wood-paths and pine shaded roads and a snug little horse and cart to travel over them with ...and the roar of the stamp-mill distanced to the murmur of a cataract, mingling with the songs of meadow-larks in the falling valley at our feet.” It takes an artist to combine a roaring stamp mill and songs of meadow-larks into such a lovely sentiment.

As you leave the back of the House and follow the driveway down the hill,

- The building on your left is the former Gardener's Cottage, now the Bear Yuba Land Trust office.
- Continuing down, as the driveway bends to the left, you can see on your right the remains of the foundation and chimney where the North Star Cottage stood.
- Continuing ahead, you are looking at the former Assay Office, now caretaker's cottage. The rest of the mine operation buildings were beyond that, sitting above (or straddling) Auburn Road.

President's Message

Betzi Hart, President



This quarter has been a lesson in adaptability for the NSHC volunteers. As “stay-at-home” and masks became normal during the pandemic, we found new ways to continue working on a variety of projects.

The events committee and wedding planners have been busy scheduling and rescheduling, watching the ever-changing guidelines. We have had to put on hold some exciting new programs which we had planned to launch by now:

- Friday Nite Locals outdoor concerts
- A new private group tour program, with a more formal tour for a fee

We'll do these as soon as we can. We expect them to be fun and bring more visitors and visibility to The North Star House.

The construction crew has also been creative. Some work has been done in home workshops. Following guidelines from the County Health Department, they put in place a modified work schedule to resume some restoration and repair work while ensuring safety and social distancing.

The garden crew has been busy, as always, keeping the Heritage Garden looking beautiful. The Soroptimist Garden Tour was cancelled this year but we are scheduled to be on it next year. We will also be tackling some major grounds

cleanup, so contact Larry Dulmage if you'd like to help.

And there is always plenty of behind-the-scenes work that is done primarily from homes ... upgrading our computer systems to run the organization more efficiently, working on marketing plans and materials (we have a new brochure!), planning activities for the second floor including the art gallery, developing a new membership program, and much more.

And we're all learning about teleconference meetings!

It takes more than a pandemic to curb the enthusiasm and stop the hard work of North Star volunteers. We're all looking forward to a gradual re-opening of the House, and we look forward to seeing you here again.

Stay safe and healthy.

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NEWSLETTER

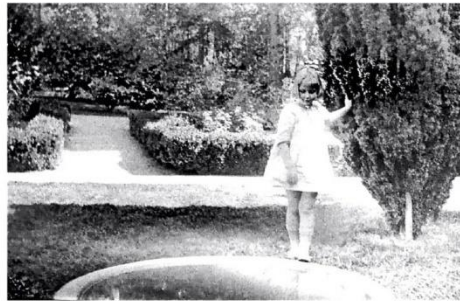
Joan Clappier & Susan Kane

Happy Anniversary to the Heritage Garden

On the first anniversary of the June, 2019, ribbon cutting, it is nice to look back at the inspiration behind the design of the Heritage Garden and to enjoy the beauty of the maturing plants.

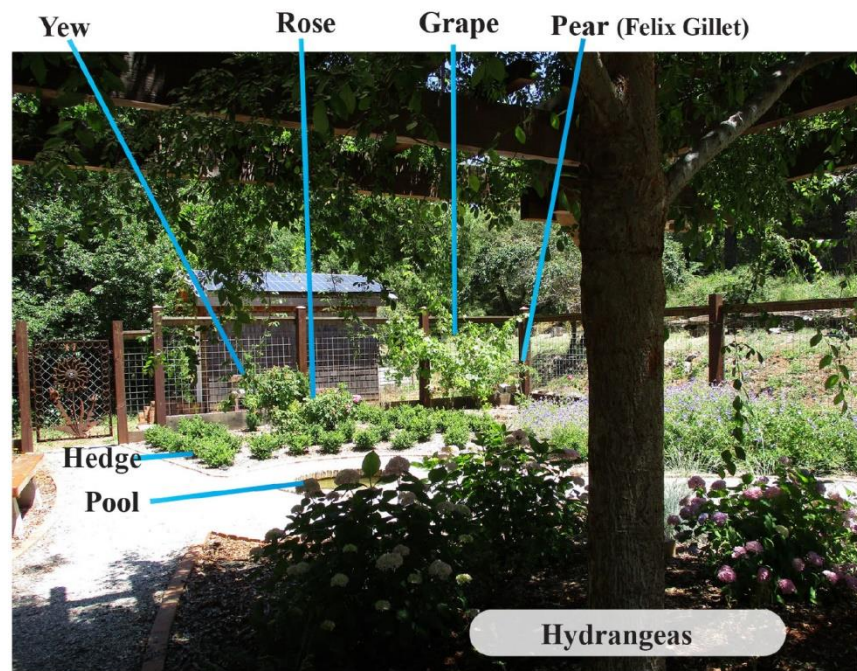
The Heritage Garden captures many of the plants and features of the North Star landscaping.

The reflecting pool & yews were in the courtyard, with box hedges and rose gardens behind. (Grand-daughter Evelyn Foote stands in the picture.)



Felix Gillet Pear Tree

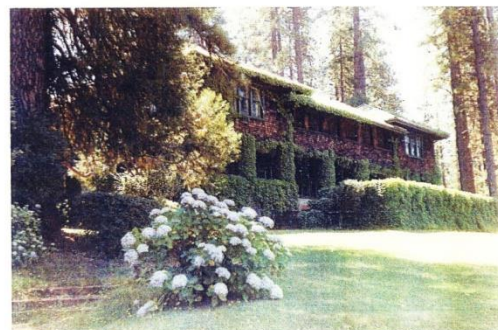
Arthur D. Foote was noted for his horticultural skills. The North Star House was surrounded by acres of gentle hills and surrounding woods. The setting and style of the Arts & Crafts home lent itself beautifully to Edwardian woodland landscaping. Arthur's design moved comfortably from the house through the nearby garden areas and out into open areas and woods. The house and landscaping complimented each other and invited you to relax and stay a while.



Peaceful Heritage Garden in June, 2020



Rear view, 1920's



Hydrangeas flanked the path to the House

The Margaret Warner Swan Levine Art Gallery

By Tom Milam

As the work to restore the first floor of the North Star House has progressed, the planning for the second-floor reconstruction is continuing. A key feature of the second floor will be the Art Gallery, dedicated to Peggy Swan Levine. The general plan for the Art Gallery has been formulated and we continue refining details and preparing the space.

With each step of the demolition and clean-up of ceilings, walls and flooring on the second floor, the beauty of Julia Morgan's design becomes more apparent. It seems ironic that we need to tear the house down to its bare bones to appreciate the elegance of her design. But after stripping away years of decay, neglect, and ill-advised modifications, we have begun to see the elegant simplicity of the design and construction.

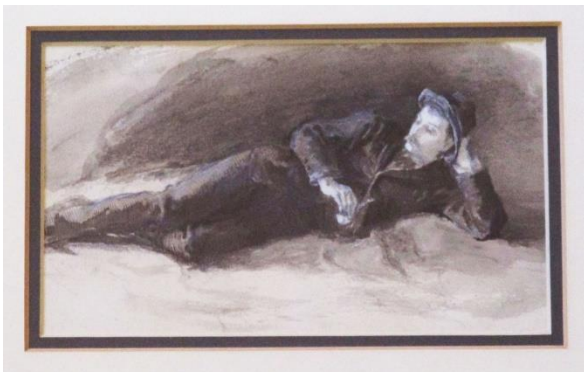
In contemplating the details of the construction, with a clear view of the attention given to all aspects of the design and the craftsmanship of the original builders, it is easy to imagine bringing these elements into the design for the Art Gallery.

I have been working on renovating existing wiring, installing lighting fixtures and switches,

running conduit and wire for new circuits, and other tasks associated with upgrading a 1905 building to 2020 standards. This work has given me the opportunity to look at a much wider range of considerations in the planning and execution of the reconstruction project. To be most effective in one area – the electrical system – I need to understand all aspects of the work being planned and executed.

With this in mind, I started looking at the proposals for the Art Gallery, talking with all the people that have been dedicated to the overall house reconstruction and the Art Gallery specifically, and learning what is being planned for this space to honor the memory of Peggy. I have taken on the task of coordinating the effort of making the vision for the Art Gallery become a reality.

We are excited about the way the gallery project is progressing and ask our supporters to help us find and secure the artwork of renowned Nevada County artists (alive or deceased). We are striving to develop a distinctive collection at The North Star House.



We plan to have revolving exhibits, including special presentations such as the work of Mary Hallock Foote, who lived and worked at the North Star from 1895 – 1932. Mary was a famous author, artist and illustrator of the West. As a book illustrator, she was in-demand by authors such as Hawthorne, Tennyson, Longfellow, Alcott, and many others.

Sketch by Mary Hallock Foote of Mining Engineer (Willie).
Donated by the Foote family

Volunteer Spotlight: Lori Nilsen

Lorie Nilsen joined the construction team a couple of years ago. She is semi-retired from her two professions: bookkeeping and painting. Lorie and Marrilee Shannon have known each other for about 10 years. They took tennis lessons and attended tennis camp together. Lorie has competed at an amateur level in USTA (US Tennis Association) tournaments, taking 1st place in her class at a USTA national competition and earning other honors.

To stay competitive, Lorie started working with a personal trainer. That led her to power lifting and ultimately to competition in AAU competition. At a national competition last year she set 5 world records in her class. She plans to return this October and hopes to set more records.

Lorie's friendship with Marrilee plus her experience as a painter led her to the North Star House. There is plenty of painting and sanding to be done. And when she is not doing power lifting, she enjoys doing demo work on the second floor – knocking out walls with a crowbar and scraping up old flooring. Lorie's talents and enthusiasm fit right in!



“The best part of working at the North Star House is the people. They are friendly, nice to work with, and everyone is here because they like working on the House.”

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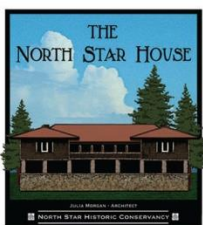
Volunteer Spotlight: Roger Bloom

Roger Bloom came to Nevada County from the Bay Area, where his career as a firefighter took him all the way to fire chief. His aunt and cousin already lived here, so Roger and his wife knew this was where they wanted to retire. The proximity to the mountains for skiing and hiking were a perfect fit for their lifestyle.

As luck would have it, they moved across the street from Marilee Shannon and Sherian Kutzera, avid NSH volunteers. They decided Roger had too much time on his hands so they invited him to the House to meet the construction crew. The next thing he knew, he was up on scaffolding replacing shingles.



"I like being involved with something that is meaningful to the community. Working on this historic house is worthwhile and rewarding, and I enjoy the people I work with."



NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

12075 Auburn Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949

www.TheNorthStarHouse.org 530-477-7126

Our Vision is to restore the unique rural roots of Julia Morgan's North Star House as a center for exchanging ideas, nurturing the arts and fostering learning. Your support makes this possible.

We invite you to join us: Become a Member ❖ Make a Donation

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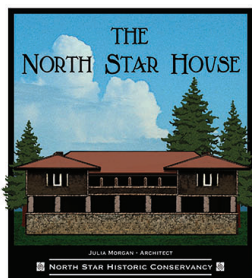
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