

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2020-2021

Julia Morgan: Attention to Detail

by Joan Clappier



Background: Julia Morgan, who designed the North Star House in 1904-05, was an extremely talented and prolific architect. After receiving a degree in civil engineering at UC Berkeley in 1894, she went to

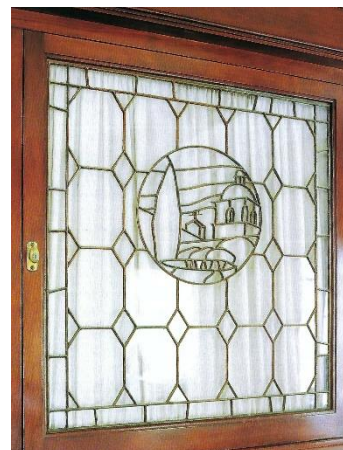
Paris and became the first woman to be admitted to, and graduate from, L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the top architectural school in the world. She became the first licensed female architect in California in 1904.

During Morgan's career, she designed and built over 700 buildings, including private homes, schools, churches, YWCAs, and more -- plus major building complexes such as Hearst Castle and Asilomar Conference Grounds. That is an astounding output, especially considering each project was unique and she gave personal attention to the design and construction of each one. She taught her staff to work to her high standards.

Miss Morgan's work was built on a solid base of engineering and structural expertise. Beyond the engineering, she brought a strong sense of

balance and aesthetics to her buildings. She studied and designed in a wide range of styles. The variety and beauty of her work is remarkable.

The Client's Architect: When a potential residential client came to Morgan's office, she would have them look at lots of pictures and tell her what they did and did not like. She might go to their home to learn more about what was important to them. If they had children, she would spend time with the children. She liked to add special touches for children so that they would have happy memories of growing up in the home. The clients were part of the design process. However, Morgan had the final say in structural and aesthetic integrity.



The scene depicted in this custom window probably had special significance to the client for whom the house was designed.

Ornamentation: While Morgan is known for her beautiful buildings, some people do not realize that her interests extended to detailed interior and exterior ornamentation and accent pieces. She worked with skilled craftsmen who produced woodwork, metalwork, pottery, ornamental plaster work, stained glass windows, sculptures, and more. She would provide full-size details of her designs to the artisans. She even designed textiles and china patterns. The extent to which Morgan included these added touches to projects depended on the interest (and budget) of the client.



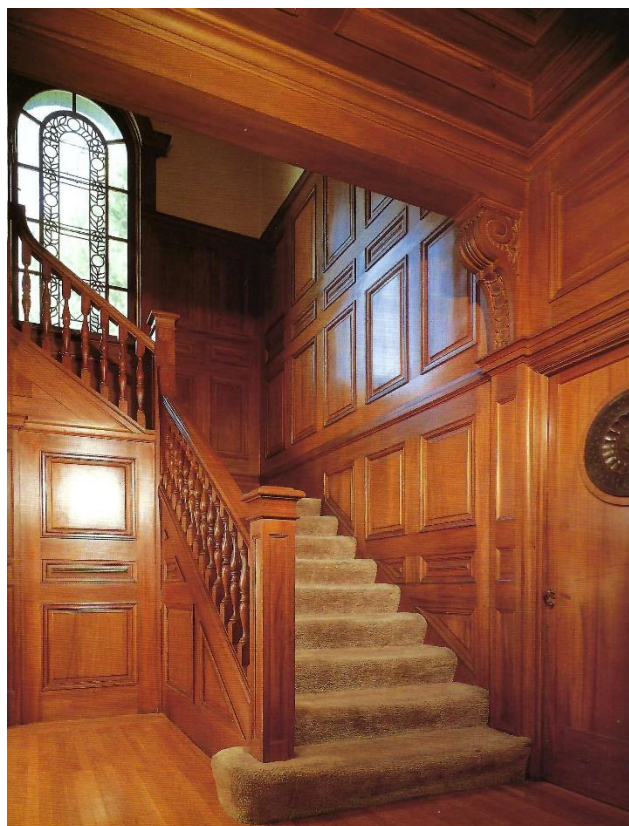
Tile and ironwork, main house at San Simeon



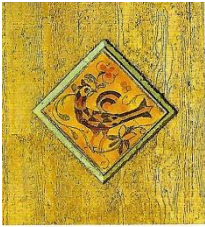
Chapel of the Chimes, Oakland, CA

Morgan loved the effect of light in a room from the placement of windows. She also enjoyed designing ornamental windows ... either stained glass or clear glass with elegant patterning.

The picture to the right is of the Wells House in Oakland. The woodwork is exquisite. Note the support piece under the beam to the right above the stairs. There is a decorative accent in the door, lower right. And, of course, a beautiful window lending light to the stairway.



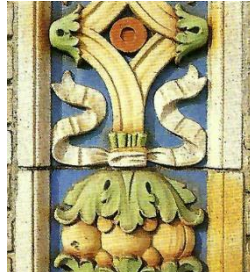
Morgan designed in a wide variety of styles and media



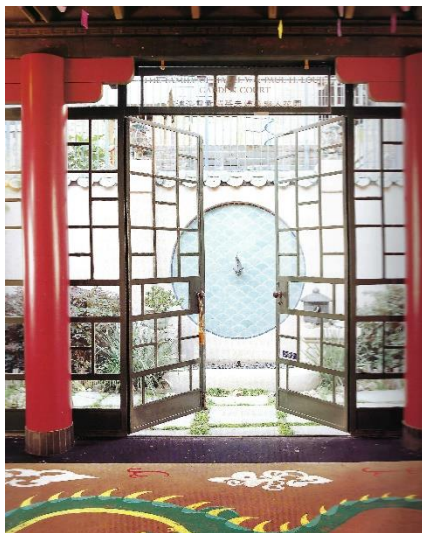
Left: Stenciled ceiling panels at Berkeley Women's City Club



Terra-cotta exterior decoration
Oakland YWCA



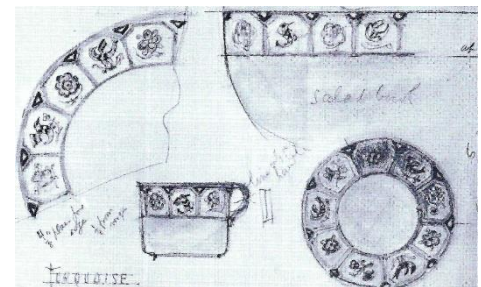
Right: Rainspout
Delta Zeta
Sorority House
Berkeley



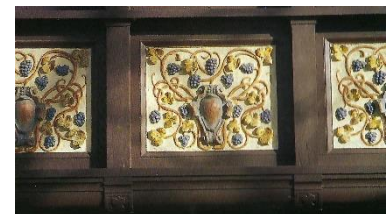
Looking into courtyard at
Chinatown YWCA, San Francisco



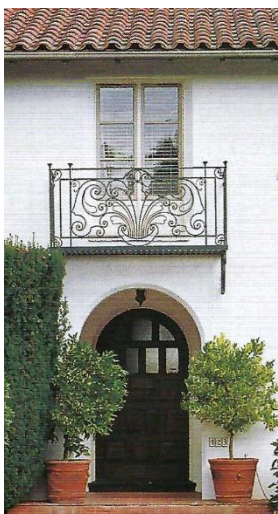
Hollywood Studio Club
YWCA



Sketch of china pattern for
Berkeley Women's City Club
(don't know if it was produced)



Right: Plaster decoration
above a porch

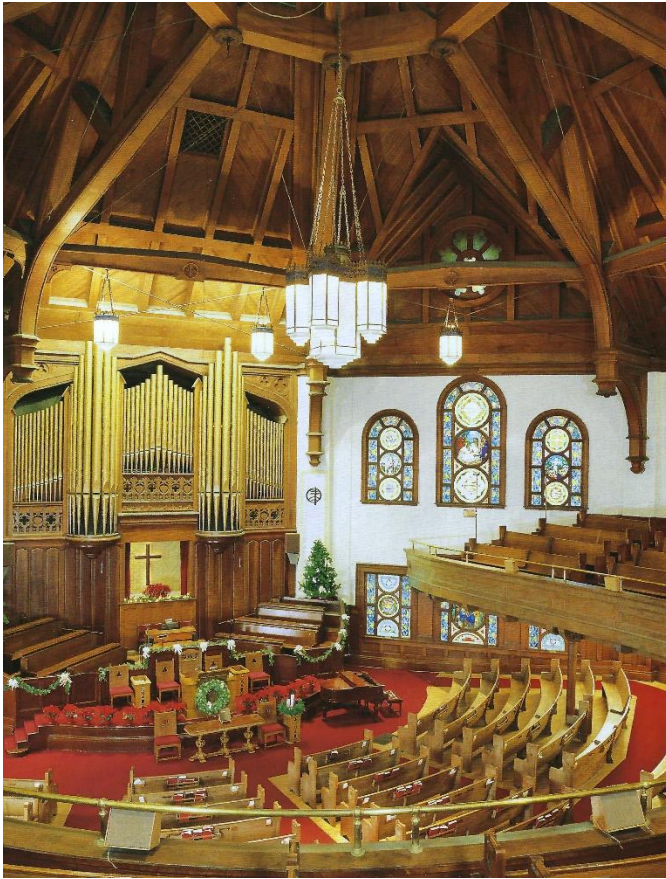


Detail of the metalwork on balcony
above entryway of house
on the left (Palo Alto)

Below: Detail of tile work at
school in San Francisco



Above: Detail of fresco
around doorway



First Baptist Church of Oakland.

Built in 1906.

This magnificent Julia Morgan design brings together her structural skill, sense of balance, and exquisite artistic taste. I just had to finish with this picture!

References:

1. *Julia Morgan, Architect* by Sara Holmes Boutelle
2. *Julia Morgan, Architect of Beauty* by Mark A. Wilson
3. *Julia Morgan, Architect of Dreams* by Ginger Wadsworth

To learn more about Julia Morgan, please enjoy a wonderful, professionally-made video. It was created to promote her acceptance by the American Institute of Architects as an annual Gold Medal recipient (awarded posthumously). We have a link to it on our website.

www.TheNorthStarHouse.org

Go to the “**Julia Morgan**” page under **HISTORY**. The link is highlighted below the article, above the bullet points.



Artwork of Mary Hallock Foote

New Slideshow on Our Website

www.TheNorthStarHouse.org - under the HISTORY menu

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The North Star House.



Earn!

President's Message

My Last Message

It has been a whirlwind two years since I was elected President of the NSHC Board. We have made remarkable progress both in building a more professional organization and continuing



renovation of the Julia Morgan Historic North Star House. Our 2021 Board will consist of 13 members. We now have a part time staff of three, assisting us in administrative tasks, and booking and planning of events. The new property manager is dedicated to making our grounds glorious again.

The Heritage Garden, opened in 2019, is astonishingly beautiful and has been chosen to be on the Soroptimist Garden Tour in 2021. The Gardening Angels have become a new volunteer group. Other property improvements include upgrading the well, new sprinklers, and renovation of the Assay Office (the property manager's residence). Next year we plan to add lighting to the parking lot.

The Construction Crew has grown in membership. They are almost finished with shingling the North side, and then this project will be complete. The interior of the North Star House has been improved with: refurbished paneling of the entire first floor; new dining room windows; library bookshelves and seating;

rebuilding of the dining room buffet; and installation of a second set of stairs. Then there is all the work that you cannot see, like the new electrical wiring and the demolition work on the second floor.

I am personally grateful to all of the volunteers, staff, and board members that have worked together in the past two years to make the North Star House shine again. I look forward to continuing to support all the efforts of the Conservancy to make the North Star House a significant asset to our community. Thank you for the honor of allowing me to serve as President of the Board of Directors of the NSHC.

- Betzi Hart, President

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Carole Miller Retires



Carole Miller became involved with the North Star House shortly after the Nevada County Land Trust (now Bear Yuba Land Trust) acquired it in 2003. She helped with cleanup of

the massive amounts of debris inside and around the house. She has been on the Board of Directors and has helped with events, the docent program, selecting interior decorations, and countless other things for 15+ years.

What stands out the most in Carole's work for the Conservancy are two things:

- Researching and documenting the plants and trees on the property
- Researching and documenting the history of the house and important people associated with it

These two things were very instrumental in helping us to progress as much as we have.

LANDSCAPING: When the property was first acquired, Carole Miller began documenting the roses, shrubs and trees on the 14 acres. She gathered information from Foote family members. She also walked the property with horticultural experts in the field (Amigo Bob Cantisano, Felix Gillet expert; Carolyn Singer, Nevada County horticulturalist; Mr. Figueroa, Empire Mine Ranger; Curators of Luther Burbank Experimental Farm in Sebastopol, CA; Lee Dempsey, rose expert).

Carole started The Rose Team, who nurtured and propagated the roses for years until they could claim their place in the Heritage Garden. She was instrumental in designing the layout of the Heritage Garden to honor the landscape design of Arthur de Wint Foote. Carole left us with knowledge and understanding of the flora on the property and its place in the history of the North Star House.

HISTORY: Carole started the Historical Research Committee along with Carol Stuart and Laurie Harrison (and later Joan Clappier). Carole made connections with Foote family descendants to obtain information and pictures. The committee did research about the house, mine, Footes, Hagues, and others. As with the horticulture, Carole provided a lot of detailed documentation. She used some of it to augment the training in the docent program when she took charge of that. Her files are a valuable foundation for our outreach to the public.

Carole located old photographs taken both inside and outside of the house. These photographs have been invaluable to the reconstruction efforts. Some rooms were altered to the extent that none of the original walls, bookcases, etc. were left. The photographs were the only way we were able to recreate the original design of those rooms.

RETIREMENT: Carole has decided to retire from the Board of Directors and step back from active involvement. We thank her very much for the legacy of information she has given us. We will continue using it to educate the public and to enhance the "experience" of The North Star House. And we will continue asking her questions!

Thank You, Carole, from all of us at the North Star Historic Conservancy

Introducing Zach Walsh



We are pleased to introduce our new Property Manager, Zach (Zachary) Walsh. Zach brings knowledge, experience, and a great deal of enthusiasm to the job of maintaining the grounds and equipment.

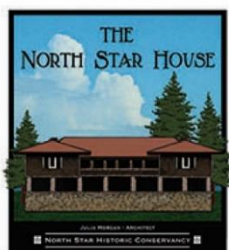
Zach has an AS degree in Horticulture. That interest came naturally to him because his father ran a landscape maintenance business. Zach was pushing a lawn mower when he could barely reach the handle and he enjoyed spending Saturdays helping his father when his young friends were out playing.

He was the Kmart Garden Shop manager from 1993-2005. He has done construction and land maintenance his entire life. He knows how to use *and maintain* all the equipment he uses, including tractors.

Zach first saw The North Star House when he stopped by the house with Board member Lee Dempsey. He looked around and fell in love with the place. All of those acres to work with!!!

Later, when Larry Dulmage needed some help on a construction Tuesday, Lee suggested that Zach stop by to help. Zach did so ... and kept coming on Tuesdays and Thursdays to volunteer.

Welcome to The House, Zach.



NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 1538, Grass Valley, CA 95945

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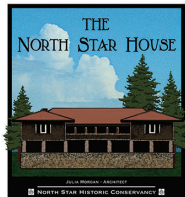
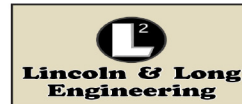
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