

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

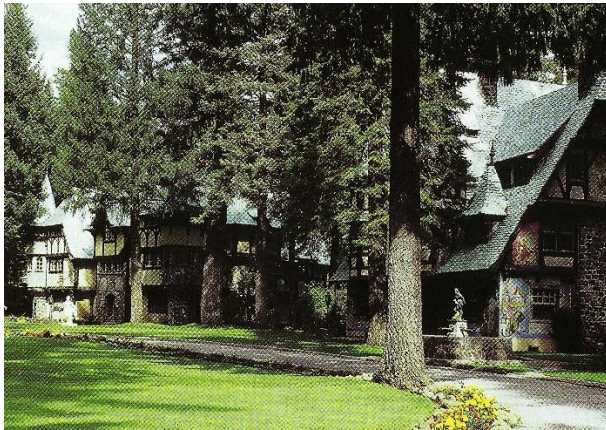
Spring 2021

Julia Morgan and the Hearst Estates: A Contrast in Styles

by Joan Clappier

Julia Morgan collaborated with Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Phoebe's son William Randolph Hearst on many, varied projects. The two most elaborate -- and dramatically different from each other -- were the well-known Hearst Castle and little-known Wyntoon.

Phoebe Hearst selected Julia Morgan for many projects, including her "Hacienda" home in Pleasanton and the Asilomar Conference Grounds. William Randolph Hearst was impressed by Miss Morgan's work and he started hiring her for building projects.



WYNTOON: Nestled in the forest in northern California

William shared his mother's passion for collecting international artworks and building very elaborate homes in which to entertain large gatherings and display their collections. Once he owned San Simeon and Wyntoon, William took it to a new level! The team of Hearst and Morgan transformed both properties.

WYNTOON continues on next page.

SAN SIMEON starts on page 5.

William had built his own fortune with his growing media empire. He was an only child, thus when his widowed mother died in 1919 he inherited significant additional wealth: property, mining stocks, valuable artworks, and more. He was a very wealthy man, and he became the owner of the two large properties which he dearly loved: San Simeon and Wyntoon.



CASA GRANDE: Sitting in grandeur on a mountaintop

NOTE: There is slight disagreement between different sources about some dates and acreage.

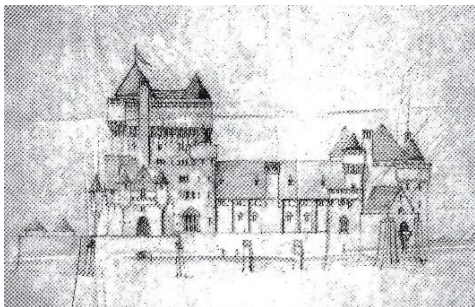
WYNTOON Nestled in the forest of northeastern California, near Mount Shasta and with the McCloud River running through it, lies 50,000 acres named Wyntoon. The name comes from the Wintun tribe that had lived in the area.

In 1924, Hearst hired Morgan to develop a master plan for Wyntoon. There were already three main buildings on the property:

- The River House, at the upstream end of the planned building complex.
- The Bend, a stone building at a major river bend downstream.
Both of these pre-dated Phoebe's purchase of the property.
- Wyntoon Castle, midway between the other two buildings. Phoebe hired architect Bernard Maybeck to build this as her home: a seven-story castle, similar in style to a castle along the Rhine river. It was completed in 1904. Maybeck had been a UC Berkeley teacher of Morgan, they became good friends, and she assisted him with the project.

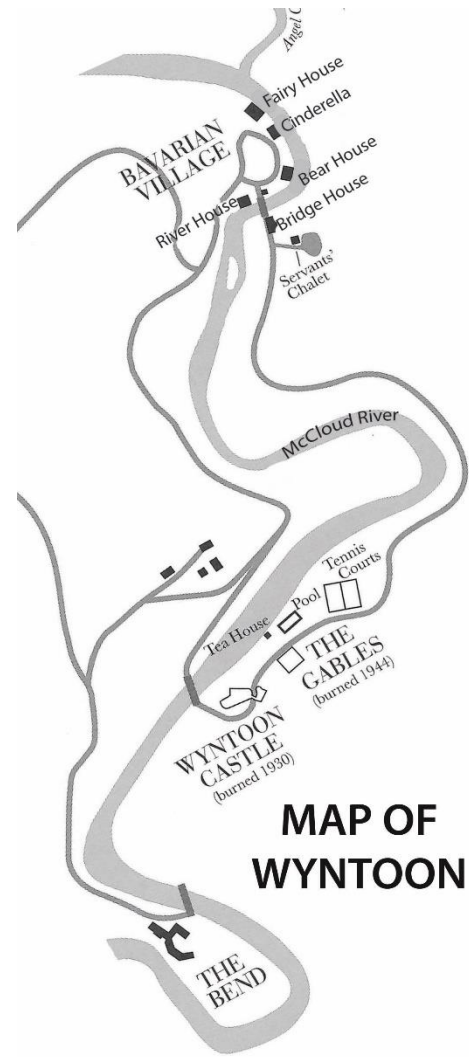
Since there was already good living space available, the first new construction by Morgan was support buildings: servants' quarters (1924), stables with a caretaker's house (1925), and "The Chalet" – upscale servants' quarters resembling a Swiss Chalet (1925).

Work on the master plan proceeded, but a major disaster upended the plans. The Castle burned down in 1930. The building and a lot of valuable artworks were lost. There was still plenty of living space in the Bend and the River House, so Hearst asked Morgan and Maybeck to work together designing a new Castle to be built on the site of the previous one. They presented a plan to Hearst of a huge Bavarian-Gothic style, eight-story castle.



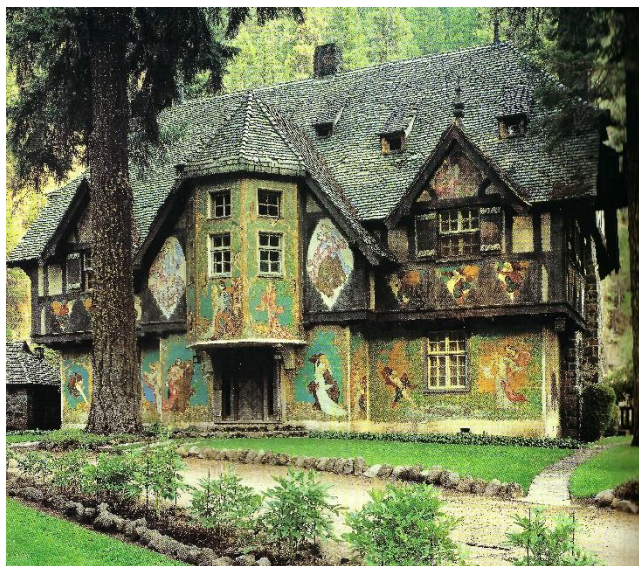
Sketch of 8-story Castle by Morgan and Maybeck

Morgan suggested a "Bavarian Village", with a few houses among the trees along the river. Hearst liked the concept. He sent Morgan to Austria and Bavaria in 1932 to get ideas for their village.

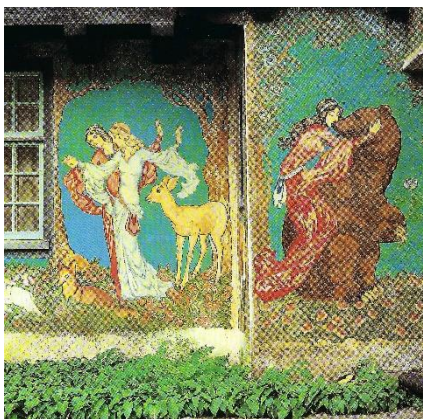


**MAP OF
WYNTOON**

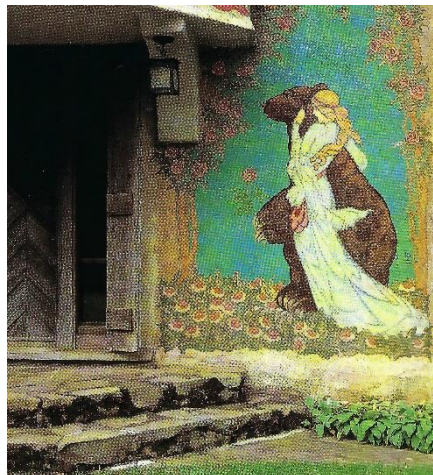
Morgan planned three separate 3-story houses, each with 4-8 bedrooms. They had half-timbered exteriors, steeply pitched gables, and German Gothic style wood decoration both inside and out. The backs of the cottages would face the river and the fronts would face a grassy meadow. A castle could be added in the meadow which the houses faced.



Above: Front of Bear House, facing the meadow



Above and Below: some details of the art



Hearst suggested adding some whimsy to the village, decorating the buildings with scenes from Russian and German fairy tales. The Cinderella House, The Bear House, and the Fairy House were designed. [The Bear House was also called the Snow White and Rose Red House. The Fairy House went by two other names: Sleeping Beauty House and Angel House.] The paintings were done by noted muralist Willy Pogany. More recently, they have been refreshed by Pogany's son.



Above: Back of Bear House

The story shown on the Bear House, AKA Snow White and Rose Red, is of two sisters who befriend a bear. They are able to help him become free from his enchantment and he turns back to a prince. One sister marries him and the other marries his brother. [This is a different Snow White than the one with the seven dwarves.]

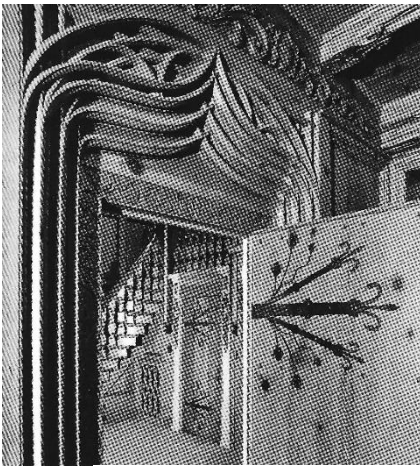


Left: Front of Cinderella House

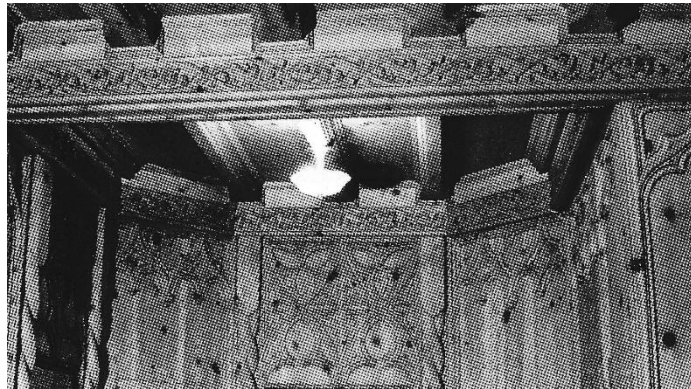


Right: Detail of drawing above the entrance. Cinderella dashes to her coach as the clock is about to strike midnight.

Below: Carved wood paneling, Fairy House



Doorway, Bear House

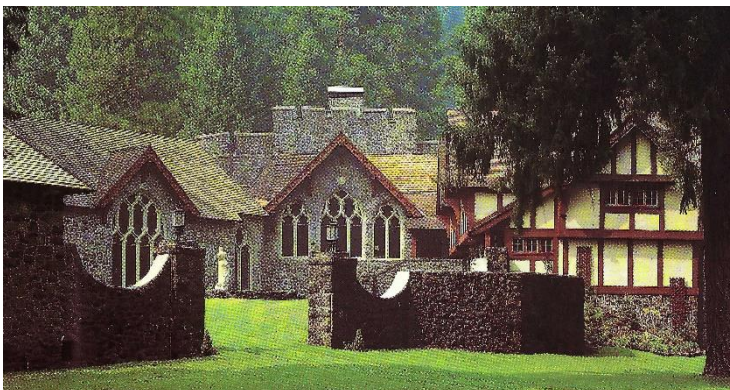


Interior Décor

Below: Fireplace, Cinderella House



Morgan designed many more buildings on the property. There was a Willis Polk-designed fieldstone structure built at the Bend in approximately 1900. Morgan added several buildings to that group: two solid fieldstone buildings that resemble small English medieval halls, plus a half-timbered German medieval house. The Bend included a large dining hall and living quarters.

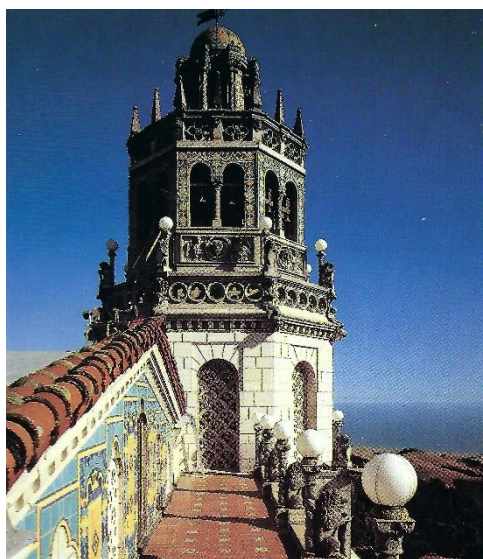


The Bend

Other buildings and facilities provided more lodging and dining plus places for movies, dancing, swimming, tennis, croquet and horseback riding. Hearst loved entertaining.

SAN SIMEON Hearst had fond memories of camping and riding horses at San Simeon with his parents and then his own wife and 5 sons. The property had grown to approximately 250,000 acres, with 41 miles of Pacific coastline.

In 1919, Hearst told Morgan that he was tired of camping out and he wanted her to build a bungalow up on the hill for his family to stay in when they vacationed. This turned into a massive project which Hearst and Morgan worked on for about 25 years.



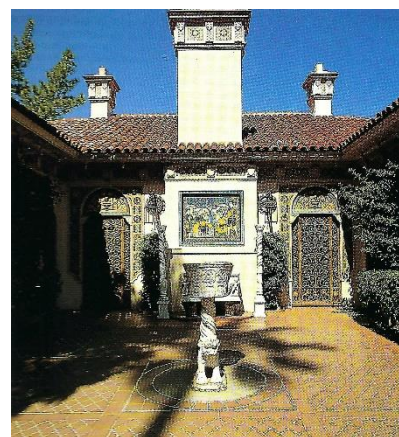
Walkway between the towers

Morgan travelled to San Simeon almost every weekend, taking the overnight train on Friday from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo, then a long taxi ride to San Simeon, arriving Saturday morning. She worked all day Saturday and Sunday, then reversed the trip to San Francisco and arrived back at her office Monday morning. When the Wynton project started in 1924, she took a similar trip to northern California one weekend per month and went to San Simeon many other weekends.

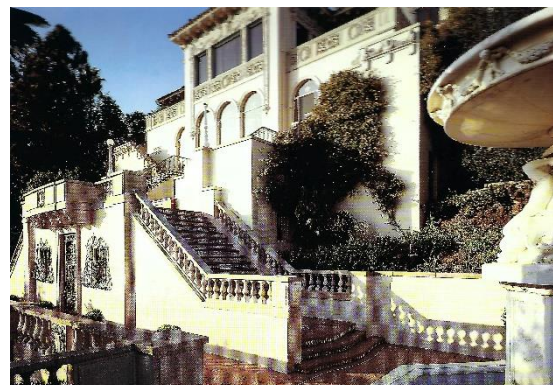
At San Simeon, there was a lot of major work to be done before serious construction could start. They had to build a

road that would support trucks hauling heavy loads of materials. The mountain was very rocky, which made many things challenging. It was fortuitous that Morgan was an engineer as well as an architect. A wharf was built that could handle ships bringing materials from San Francisco or Los Angeles. Warehouses and some small houses for workers were built near the San Simeon Bay. Additional warehouses and houses were built as needed.

The basic plan was to have a large, main house on the top of a 1600' hill, with a 360-degree view of ocean, mountains, and sunsets. Three guest cottages (A, B and C) would be built around it, but placed further down the hill so they would not obstruct the view from the main house. Each small house would have a nice view. Since the three cottages were on a slope, each one had a single-story



Above: Entrance to Cottage A; Below: Cottage B from below





Assembly Room: 16th century French Renaissance stone fireplace from a chateau in Burgundy.

Morgan maintained a good relationship with some top artists, who provided woodwork, tile, metalwork, plaster, and many other decorative touches to her buildings. Morgan demanded the same excellence in each of their work that she demanded of herself. Although they sometimes had to re-do something that was not to her standards, she always gave them good sketches or requirements and recognized good work.

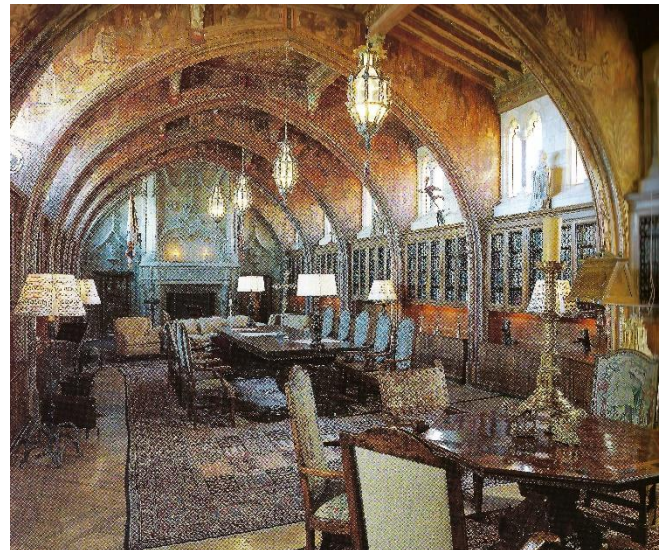
One of Morgan's many challenges at San Simeon was integrating Hearst's collection from multiple centuries and regions into the same room,



*Ceiling in Doge's Suite, 3rd floor Main House
School of Joachim Wtewael (Dutch, 1566-1638)*

entrance facing towards the main house, and the downhill side of each was 2-3 stories high. See pictures on previous page.

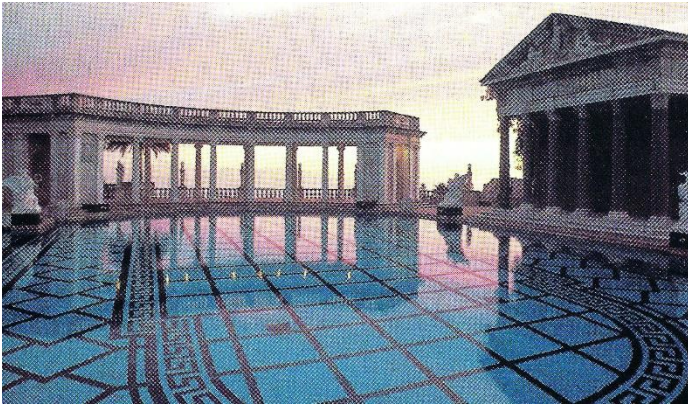
Hearst believed that the Mission Style would be suitable in this area of California, but he thought it was too "primitive". Instead, he opted for something closer to a Renaissance style found in southern Spain. Morgan used reinforced concrete as the base building material, which was appropriate for a building site this close to a major earthquake fault line. A fine grade of concrete was made from rock quarried on the property. An overlay of white stone produced a clean, elegant finish.



Gothic Library of Casa Grande

making the move from one architectural style in one room to a different style in the next room, and to have it all feel visually comfortable. She often had to use her artisans to "fill in the gaps" or do repair work, and their work blended seamlessly with work hundreds of years older.

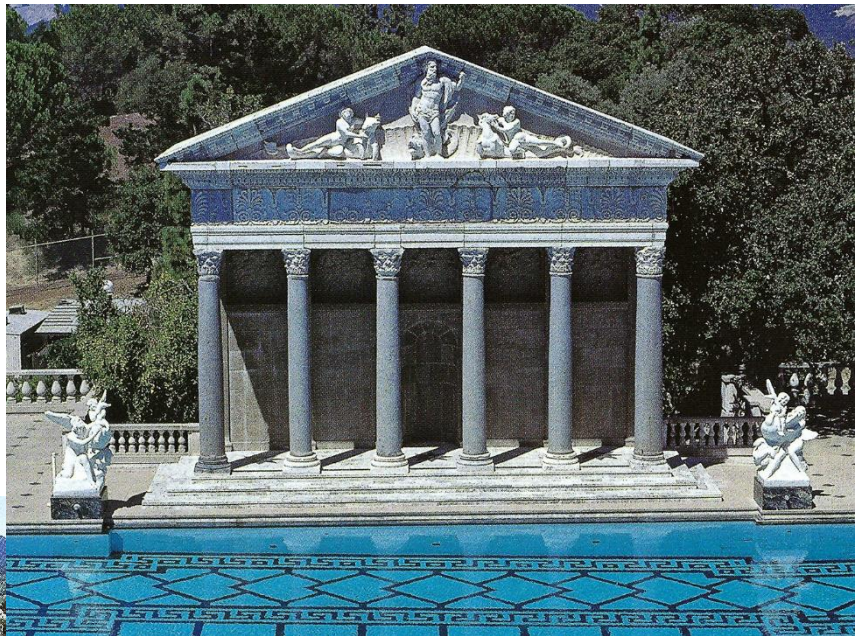
After World War I, many beleaguered families were selling off valuables for a fraction their value. Hearst would purchase ceilings, huge fireplaces, and entire rooms from mansions and castles, have them disassembled and shipped to California. Decorative ceilings would be suspended from the concrete structure so that they were not weight-bearing.



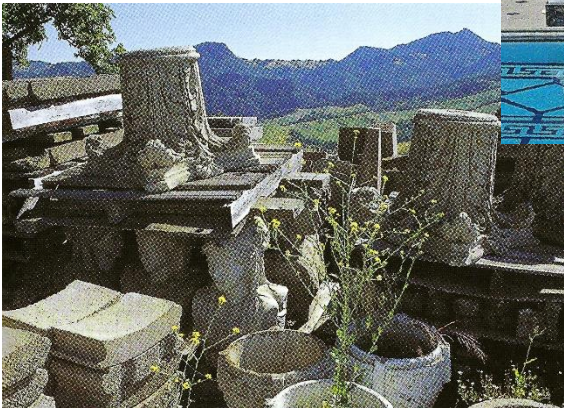
The **Neptune Pool** was an engineering feat for a couple of reasons:

1. It was on a steep slope. The weight of the concrete and water had to be supported by a carefully designed system that would allow it to sway and not break during an earthquake.
2. Pool construction went on from 1924-1936 because it kept getting larger and fancier.

The Roman temple at the pool is a composite structure Morgan and her artisans created by incorporating parts from several ancient Roman temples dating from the first to fourth century A.D. The marble columns and capitals, pediment, and section of the frieze were made from fragments of old Roman temples, with modern concrete added to extend and support them,



Roman Temple at Neptune Pool



Left: Tucked behind the main house is a “boneyard” of unused sculpture.

WATER AND LANDSCAPING: Another major issue was providing enough water for domestic use, the pools, the extensive landscaping in the primary building area, and for vegetable gardens and orchards (to provide fresh produce for guests). Three reservoirs were constructed to capture water and Morgan devised an aqueduct water delivery system to transport water from nearby springs to the reservoirs. The water also provided electricity using a private hydroelectric plant until a utility company began to service to the castle in 1924.



EPILOGUE

Hearst's expensive building and art-acquisition habits, combined with the ongoing Depression, put the Hearst Corporation in significant debt by the mid-1930s and it faced a court-mandated reorganization in 1937. Hearst had to sell many of his antiques and art collections to pay creditors, and he no longer had free rein to spend on his construction projects.

Construction on both San Simeon and Wyntoon came to a halt for a while. Lesser amounts of construction happened on and off until the mid-1940's when everything came to a complete halt. By then, Morgan was in her 70's and Hearst was in his 80's.

The Fairy House at Wyntoon was unfinished. The potential "castle" in the middle of the meadow in front of the cottages was never built. The south wing at Casa Grande was unfinished and several wish-list items were never built.

Hearst left San Simeon for the last time in 1947 due to health problems. He had an apartment in Los Angeles and he went there to be closer to good medical facilities. He died in Los Angeles in 1951.

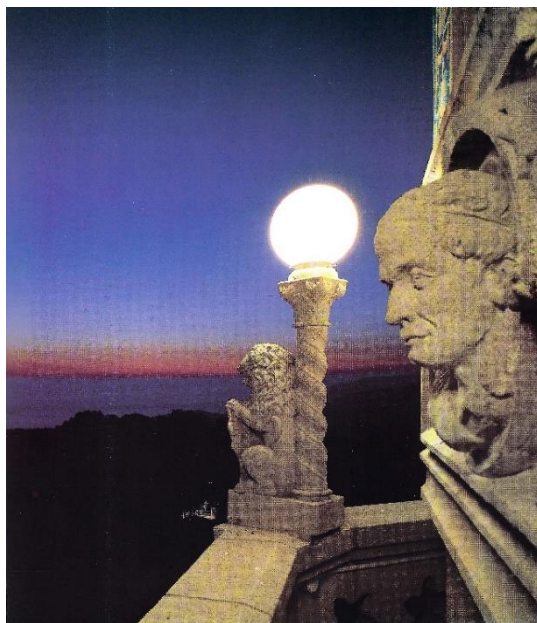
Morgan closed her office for good in 1950 and died in 1957.

SAN SIMEON: The castle area was donated to the State of California as a State Park. 13 miles of shoreline was deeded to the State of California. The remainder of the property is now held as a conservancy in perpetuity as a ranch. It is still operated as a cattle ranch.

WYNTOON: Wyntoon is entirely private, owned by the Hearst Corporation. It is sometimes used for meetings or retreats or sometimes it is used by Hearst descendants for a vacation. The unfinished Fairy House was finished in 1990.

Julia Morgan and William Randolph Hearst -- what a team! In some respects, Morgan and Hearst had potentially conflicting personalities. Hearst was flamboyant and impulsive, Morgan was reserved and disciplined. Hearst was constantly changing his mind and Morgan accommodated his new ideas. But their similarities made their partnership both amazing and productive. They were strong, accomplished, visionary people. They both pursued these complex projects with passion and intensity. While they didn't always agree with each other about details, Hearst always deferred to Morgan's architectural and engineering prowess. And they always respected each other.

Nighttime view of the ocean from the Castle



REFERENCES:

Sara Boutelle: "Julia Morgan, Architect"

Mark Wilson: "Julia Morgan, Architect of Beauty"

Ginger Wadsworth: "Julia Morgan, Architect of Dreams"

Russell Quacchia: "Julia Morgan Architect, and the Creation of Asilomar Conference Grounds"

Phyllis Perry: "All about Julia Morgan"

President's Message

Paula Campbell, President

Lessons Learned By An Amateur Gardener

I would like to share a moment I experienced in my garden one spring many years ago. If my service with the North Star House has a theme, it's embedded in this epiphany, an unexpected inspiration grounded in the insights of an amateur gardener.



Its roots are in winter, when leaves are down and the shape of deciduous shrubs and trees (hopefully) inform pruning decisions. Perennials are cut down to the crown that will be the source of new growth. In the spring, I spread my first load of mushroom compost, move or divide plants, and plant the beds I have been planning all winter. Then I'll hover through the summer, checking. By the fall, I can see the fruits or futility of my labors; the plants hold me accountable. With winter comes rest for all, and a quiet time to rethink the plan. Every year.

While I was gardening that spring morning, I looked up to a stand of delicate, dark blue Japanese iris in bloom, tall and stately next to a mountain bluet with spidery blue flowers low to the ground. The bed teemed with new growth: perennials, forsythia, spirea, grasses—all the bright, clean green of early spring, filled with morning light; nearby were two small rhododendrons, covered with purple blooms. Everything looked so right, it just took my breath away. It was a moment of promise and grace I won't soon forget.

This sweet scene caused me to reflect on how my garden grows. *I*, of course, do not grow anything. All I can do is carefully nurture an environment in which my garden can thrive. Oh, I plot and plant and make adjustments. I feed, water and prune. I correct past mistakes. But I don't actually *grow* anything. The plants take care of that themselves, if I make the right decisions and put some muscle behind them.

I'm certain you see my metaphor. As supporters of the North Star House, 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". As our construction crew reveals and renews Morgan's original design and lovingly brings each room back to life; as community members open and restore our beautiful landscape to facilitate a lovely stroll; as the North Star House serves as the site for family weddings, community celebrations, and educational events, we are revealing and nurturing the promise and grace which inspired Julia Morgan's design.

I am inspired by this thought: Our task as advocates of the North Star House is to understand the gift we have been given and support the skills and talents which have inspired its restoration. Our task is to keep our vision, mission and goals—our purpose—clear in our mind and hearts



Sherian Kutzera joins NSHC Board of Directors

We are pleased to welcome Sherian Kutzera to the Board of Directors. As a new board member, Sherian has assumed responsibility for the Membership Committee. She has prior experience on several Boards and brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to everything she does.

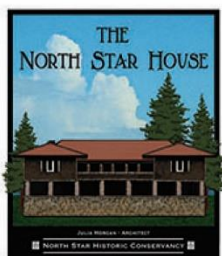


Sherian has become a familiar sight around the House, starting as a Docent in 2017, and expanding her involvement to Construction, Interiors Committee, Events and assisting as a Site

Manager for weddings. She offered to be Volunteer Coordinator and found Nevada County's "Connecting Point", which has helped us connect with some key volunteers.

Sherian has always loved animals and has raised several species. After retiring, she became a veterinary technician and does volunteer work at a vet hospital. She is also a member of the Nevada County Animal Evacuation Team. She still has two donkeys at home and raises chickens for their eggs.

Thank you, Sherian, for becoming a member of the NSHC Board.



NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

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

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Save the Date
Sunday
October 17, 2021

Soroptomist International
of the Sierra Foothills
&
North Star Historic Conservancy
*are partnering to bring you
a fun, autumn event at the
Historic North Star House*

*Garden Shop Tours Heritage Garden
and much more*

*We're still planning ...
Look for details this summer*



Learn more about
Renowned Architect *Julia Morgan*
designer of The North Star House

Article: On website under HISTORY menu,
Julia Morgan

Video: Link at bottom of that article,
above the bullet points

Books: Bottom of newsletter page 8

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Earn!

Taming the Hawthorn Hedge



Left: Approx. 1968, the grounds before the property was abandoned and neglected. The nicely trimmed hawthorn hedge separates the lawn from the driveway up to the house.

Just like the house, the grounds fell into disrepair and is part of restoration.

Recently, a team of volunteers spent hours doing Round 1 of restoring the hedge.

Before trimming, the hedge reached up over 20', with blackberries and other plants intertwined. With careful instructions about cutting above the buds so that the hedge would start leafing out nicely, the team

- Cleared blackberries and other plants out from within the hawthorn
- Cut enough of the branches back to the right place to get good regrowth
- topped what was left with a chainsaw



Below: Pictures are during trimming. It will take more sessions to complete the job. Helpers welcome!



Left and right,
views from lawn.

If you look
carefully you can
see people among
all the cuttings.



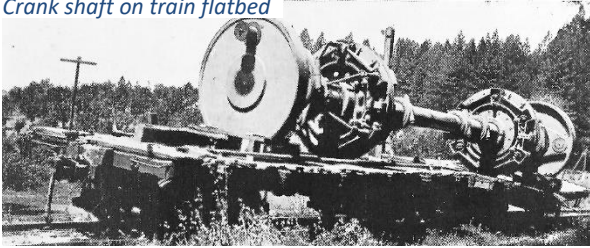
Want to Join Our Grounds Committee?

We're looking for a leader and helpers to plan and implement improvement of our grounds. Become part of the dedicated (and fun) team of volunteers that is restoring the North Star House for the benefit of the community. Contact Sherian: skutzera@sbcglobal.net Job description will be posted on website soon.

Upgrading the Central Shaft Mine

As many of you know (or remember from the Article in June, 2020, issue of this Newsletter), a new, vertical mine shaft was sunk in 1896 along Allison Ranch Road. This was the Central shaft. Mine operation buildings were built there, while the Auburn Road facility was still operating.

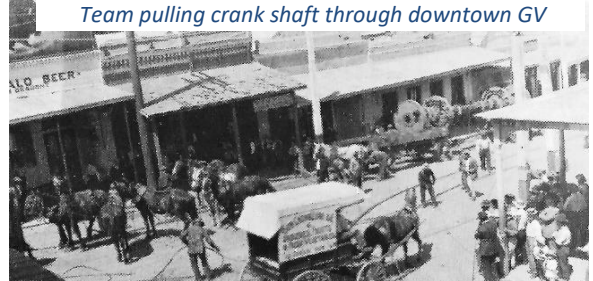
Crank shaft on train flatbed



The new equipment was ordered and would be shipped via train to Colfax, then transferred by NCNG railroad to Grass Valley. Weight of the equipment was estimated at 11 tons. That was a major underestimate. The largest piece, a crank shaft, weighed 23 tons.

By 1914, the Central shaft equipment had to be scaled up for higher hoisting capability. The decision was made to rebuild the Central shaft hoisting works and to move office, milling operations, and shops from Auburn Road to the Central Shaft on Allison Ranch.

Team pulling crank shaft through downtown GV



Final stretch up the hill

Getting the crank shaft from Colfax to the Grass Valley was challenging. A special NCNG train with two flat cars was used. To get from the GV train station to Central shaft, they hired three 8-horse teams. That should have been enough horses for the weight, but the teams had never worked together. The team with the fastest gait would pull most of the load and then quit. It took two days to get the crank shaft two miles to the Central shaft.

Reference: "Gold Mines of California", Jack R. Wagner

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