

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022

How James Hague Became Friends with Charles Darwin

By Gage McKinney

In 1905, Grass Valley mine owner James D. Hague authorized building of the North Star House, commissioning Julia Morgan to create the design. Three decades earlier his path had crossed another person of even greater fame, Charles Darwin.

Like others of his generation, Hague knew the author of *The Origin of Species* through his scientific writing. After Hague completed his university studies in America and Germany, he took a job in 1859 developing mineral resources in the South Pacific. He sailed the vast ocean with Darwin's book *Voyage of the Beagle* beside him.

Later, Hague developed a friendship with Sir Charles Lyell, the foremost British geologist, who had urged Charles Darwin to write his books. On a visit to London in 1871, Hague, then 34, casually told Lyell, 73, he would like to talk with Darwin about the South Seas. Hague expected nothing to come of the remark, because he had heard of Darwin's frail health and knew the great man saw few visitors. A short time later, however, Hague received a lunch invitation from Darwin's wife, Emma.

On arriving at the house in Queen Anne Street in London, Hague was led upstairs to a small library where he found Darwin alone. "He came forward very cordially," Hague recalled, "putting out his hand in a way to make a

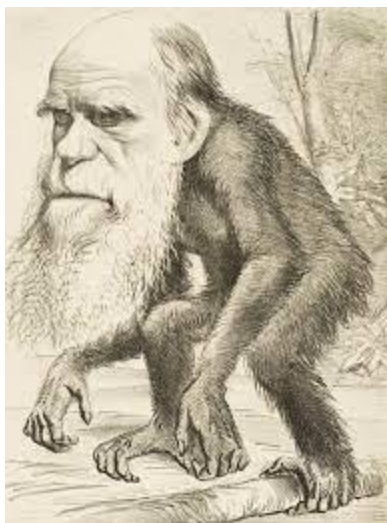
stranger feel welcome, and entered directly into conversation in a manner lively enough to relieve any apprehension of his suffering as a great invalid."

Darwin, age 62, in his full grey beard, sat with Hague to compare their South Seas experiences. "He spoke with great vivacity and interest of his voyage in the *Beagle*," Hague recalled. Darwin spoke of "the wonderful impression those islands make upon the mind of an observer, and of the charm and poetry they possess in their singular beauty."

As they talked, Hague admitted he had felt poorly prepared to study the birds, fishes and corals of the islands when he sailed the Pacific. Darwin acknowledged he had felt the same way. Sailing with the *Beagle* was the beginning of his scientific studies, Darwin explained. "If only I could go now," he said, "with my head sixty years old and my body twenty-five, I could do something."

After talking with Darwin, Hague joined the great man with his sons, George and Francis, both scientists, and his daughter in the dining room. (Mrs. Darwin was ill.) Darwin's *The Descent of Man* had recently appeared and caused a sensation with its discussion of human evolution. Hague discovered over lunch that Darwin carefully read the reviews and accepted criticism with good grace.

Hague, a cheerful conversationalist who recognized his host could take a joke, repeated what he had read in *Punch*, the satiric magazine* The table laughed. Darwin topped that by showing Hague a cartoon from another magazine which depicted Darwin as a gorilla, standing by a tree and holding a club. More laughter followed. Soon after lunch, having been warned by Lady Lyell not to overtax his host, Hague said goodbye.



"A venerable Orang-Outang. A contribution to natural history,"
Hornet magazine, 03/22/1871.

When Hague visited England again, in May 1878, Darwin invited him to his country house near the old village of Downe, Kent, little more than an hour's journey from London by train and horse-cart. Hague met George Darwin on the way, and the two got drenched by a sudden shower. The ever-cheerful Hague noted the alternating sun and shower made the countryside sparkle.

At Down House, Hague dried himself before a hearth fire and talked with Charles Darwin, who sat comfortably surrounded by pictures and books, looking "as though he might have spent the day at work in the garden or laboratory." Later, Darwin showed Hague to his room where the younger man dressed for dinner. Hague sat at the table with Charles and Emma Darwin, their two sons, and another house guest from America, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a militant abolitionist, soldier and women's rights advocate. Hague described the dinner as

"noteworthy for its wholesome simplicity in these days of excessive luxury," and the conversation as "personal and cheerful." With Colonel Higginson's presence, the talk turned to social reform in Britain and America. After dinner in the drawing room, Darwin asked after friends at Harvard and Yale whom Hague knew.

The next morning after breakfast, Hague walked the grounds with Francis Darwin, following the woodland paths where Charles Darwin did his best thinking. Hague visited the greenhouse to observe Darwin's latest botanical experiments.

Later in the day Hague returned to London, recalling: "At the moment of departure the family gathered at the door, each with a parting word and good wish, and I came away filled with pleasant memories of a charming house and gracious hospitality."

Charles Darwin died in 1882 and before Hague saw him again. By then Hague was becoming a familiar figure in Grass Valley, first as a consulting geologist and later as president and majority shareholder of the North Star mine. He hired Arthur de Wint Foote and the Foote family moved to Grass Valley in 1885-6.

*At this late date, the joke Hague told at lunch cannot be retrieved. It was something like this joke from an issue of *Punch* near the time of Hague's lunch with Darwin: *Women disliked Darwin's theories, fearing the word "Madam" (implying descent from "Adam") would be replaced by "Mapes" (confirming descent from "apes").*

Sources:

James D. Hague, "A Reminiscence of Mr. Darwin," *Harpers*, vol. 69, Oct. 1884, 759-763.

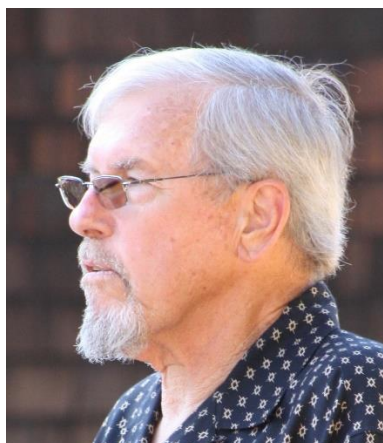
James D. Hague, "The Habits of Ants," *The Galaxy*, vol. 16, no. 1, July 1873, 134 (submitted by Charles Darwin).

Darwin's description of Hague was "world famous scientist and mining expert". This was included in a Hague obituary: "Geologist Hague, Explorer, Is Dead. World Famous Scientist and Mining Expert Expires at Stockbridge," *Evening World* (New York), August 4, 1908, 6.

Joke from *Punch*, vol 60, 05/06/1871, 182.

President's Message

Larry Dulmage, President



Let me start by saying thank you to all our supporters and to the many Volunteers for making it possible for us to continue to make progress on our mission to restore The North Star House to its former status as an active cultural center.

We are still actively focused on fire prevention by clearing, tree trimming and removal. Much progress has been made but more remains, so if

any of you feel inclined to join us on one of our workdays, let us know.

I am very happy to say that we are having a much-needed strong event season. It is bringing us some welcome relief after a couple of very lean years.

If you haven't been out to the house recently please join us at our Open House Celebration on Sunday, July 11, from 4-6pm. You can see what we have accomplished since your last visit.

Welcome New Board Members

We are very pleased to welcome two women who have been active in the community including working with the North Star House.

Lisa Hinman & Wyn Spiller

NSHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Open House!
The North Star House
Sunday, July 10 4-6 pm

Join us for a relaxing afternoon at the Historic North Star House

House & Garden Tours * Music * Photo Booth
Food & Drink Available * Free Admission

View our new Interpretive Displays to learn more about famous architect
Julia Morgan

12075 Auburn Rd, Grass Valley
www.theNorthStarHouse.org

INTRODUCING THE NORTH STAR RESEARCH GROUP

By Joan Clappier

The Evolution of the Research Group

Many of the members of this group are current or former docents at the Empire Mine or the North Star House. As docents, we hear interesting questions that aren't part of our usual presentations. That sends us back to the books or to the internet. Sometimes the information is not readily available, which requires some digging. That often leads to more interesting information. The North Star Research Group comprises people who enjoy this process of digging and finding more information, sharing it with each other and with the public.

The North Star and Empire mines have shared a lot of history for almost 150 years, so it makes sense that our two groups have decided to merge and work together.

Our goal is to make this information available to the public in various ways:

- Articles
- Lectures
- Interpretive displays
- Publications
- Website

Background History

The Empire and North Star mines have an intertwined history. Large mines were created when owners kept buying adjacent claims and continually increasing the number of acres for which they owned mineral rights. The North

Star and Empire mines ultimately abutted each other.

William Bourn, Sr. was a successful businessman with significant mining experience. Bourn bought controlling interest in the Empire mine in 1869. He died in 1874 when his son, William Bourn, Jr., was just 17. Bourn Sr.'s widow convinced friends from the mining world to oversee operations while her son attended Cambridge. Meanwhile, digging continued at the Empire until it had reached a depth of about 1,250 feet and it was declared "worked out".



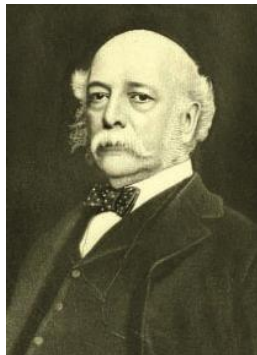
William Bourn Jr.

William Bourn, Jr. completed his studies at Cambridge and came home in 1879. He was told that the mine was worked out and should be shut down. He took control and began systematic exploration to find new ore. By 1883, he had hit a new, rich vein.

The North Star Mine had also been worked to about 1,200 feet and was declared "worked out". But the proximity and geologic similarity of Empire and North Star made Bourn, Jr., think he might have the same success with North Star. He bought controlling interest in North Star in 1884, worked his same techniques that he had used at Empire, and turned around the North Star mine.

In 1885, Bourn had the foresight to build a reservoir about 3000' elevation (where the Grass Valley airport is now located) and pipe the water down to the Empire mine and onward to the North Star mine. The total elevation drop of over 800' provided pressure to drive the Pelton wheels at Empire and ultimately the 30' Pelton wheel at the North Star. Once again, the two mines were intertwined!

In 1887, Bourn sold controlling interest of the North Star mine to his friend, James Hague, who was also a successful businessman and mining engineer. Then in 1888, Bourn turned his interests elsewhere and sold controlling interest of the Empire mine to Hague.



James Hague

For a few years, Hague controlled both mines. Then in 1895, Bourn returned to Grass Valley and re-purchased Empire from Hague.

Both Bourn and Hague continued expanding their operations. In 1929, Newmont Mining Company bought both the mines, combined the business operations and the processing, and renamed it the Empire-Star mine. This was the richest gold mine in California in that era.

Along with most of the mines in California, the Empire-Star shut down in the mid-1950's because the price for gold was fixed by the government at \$35/ounce, the cost of labor and materials kept going up, and gold mining was no longer profitable. (The government set the price at which you could sell gold and you could only sell it to the government.)

What happened after the mining stopped?

Gold mines got dismantled, equipment was sold for scrap metal, and a lot of the evidence of gold mining activity disappeared from Nevada County. But local people with foresight made sure that some of the history was preserved.

- In 1968, the North Star Mine Powerhouse was restored and turned into a museum, with the finest collection of gold mining equipment, tools, memorabilia, models and history in California. The 30-foot Pelton wheel at the North Star Mine Powerhouse, the largest Pelton wheel in the world, was saved from the scrap heap and can be seen at the Museum. Knowledgeable docents can answer almost any question you have about the technical aspects of hard-rock gold mining.
- The Empire Mine was purchased by the State of California in 1975 and is part of the State Park system. You can see some of the above-ground parts of the operation and sit in a skip, which the miners used to go down into the mines. There are demonstrations and explanations about mining operations. You can take a docent tour and see the "Cottage" which was the Bourn's house.
- The North Star House, which was built in 1905 by famed architect Julia Morgan, was almost destroyed when it sat vacant for over 20 years in the late 1900's. During that time vandals wreaked havoc on the property, breaking all the windows, smashing fireplaces, and much more damage. Local people knew this house was of historic importance and they were trying to get ownership of the home from developers in order to restore it. In 2003, a new developer

cooperated. The house is now being carefully restored by the North Star Historic Conservancy, using volunteer labor and contributions from the community. It is being restored to be a community resource for both public and private activities. Tours are available.

And so, the story continues. The North Star Research Group looks forward to researching and consolidating more of our mining history and bringing the information to life via various methods of public presentation.



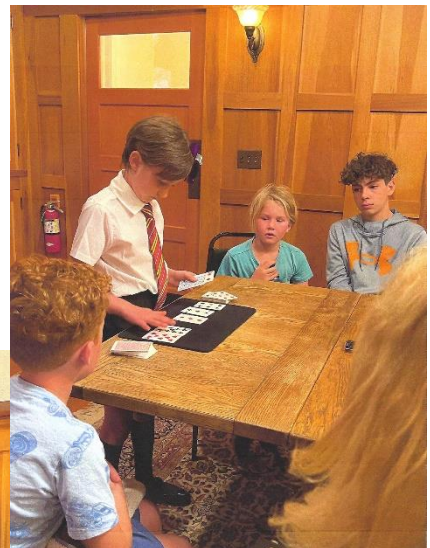
A few members of the North Star Research Group meet in the North Star dining room.

Magicians in the House

We were pleased to welcome the Nevada County Magicians Guild back to the North Star House after the pandemic. They put on a show that is enjoyable for both children and adults.

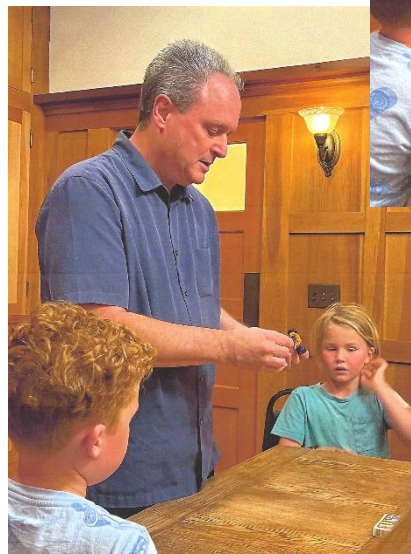


Performances are set up in 3 different rooms, and the audience is divided into 3 groups that move from room to room to see all of the shows. Both adults and children perform, and different styles of magic are demonstrated.



The Guild began nearly 30 years ago. They meet monthly to perform for one another and to learn new tricks. If you are interested, you are invited to attend.

www.nevadacountymagiciansguild.org

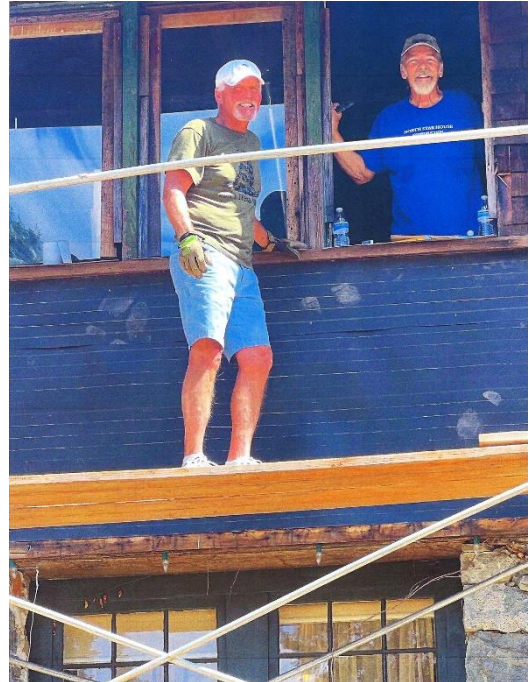


What's New at the North Star House?



LEFT

Dennis Westcot and Ken Underwood discuss the ceiling of the library, which they are getting ready to start on.



RIGHT: Lee Hentschel and Mike French are working on the shingling on the South side of the house. (The footprints give the paper an interesting look ... but they'll be covered by shingles.)

Help Needed! **Volunteer Work Party at the House** **Sunday, July 17, 7:30 am - noon**

We need to knock the weeds down in the area of the Hague House (above the North Star House) before we get any further into fire season.

We'll provide snacks, water and soda.

We're starting early to work before the afternoon heat.

Bring weed whackers, trimmers, clippers... whatever you have for yard clean-up.

If you can help, please contact Sherian Kutzera. Tell her what tools you can bring.

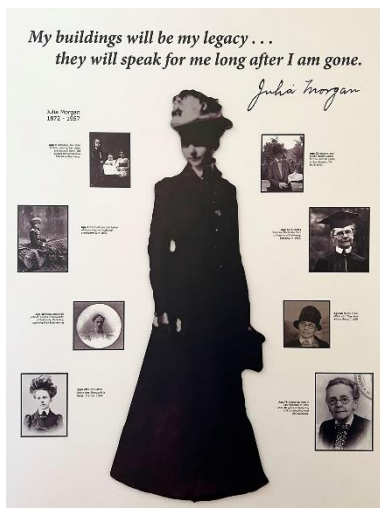
Message or Text: 530-306-8547

Interpretive Displays in the Julia Morgan Room



Our artist volunteer, Marrilee Shannon, put her creativity to work turning a couple of odd-shaped cabinets into displays of some of Julia Morgan's buildings plus glimpses into her life and personality.

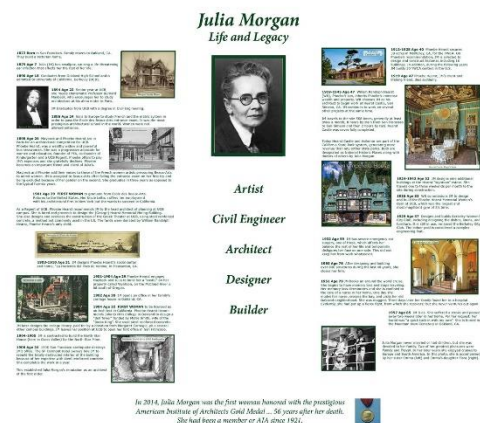
Joan Clappier contributed her layout experience to the project and Laurie Harrison contributed some content. Marrilee and Joan both dug through many books and articles to select what would be included in the displays to convey the incredible skill and stylistic variety in Ms. Morgan's work. She was an amazing architect.



There are two, large wall displays of Julia's life and legacy. You will have to go to the house to read them.

There will be a bit more added to this room.

The library will be the A.D. Foote room and the study will be the Mary H. Foote room. Those displays will be developed when restoration of the rooms is completed.



State of the Star Gathering

State of the Star was postponed last fall because of the uptick in Covid. We held it on May 11.

Emily's Catering and Cakes provided a scrumptious array of appetizers.



RIGHT: Board President Larry Dulmage gave a talk to the attendees, who gathered in the Living Room and Library. He covered what we have done in the past year and where our focus is right now.

The audience was engaged and asked many good questions, which Larry answered. Lisa Robinson showed a slide presentation of work done in the past year. It is nice to visualize things.

The attendees also got a first look at the new Julia Morgan displays.



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Just go to the eScrip website, www.eScrip.com/signup. Please consider designating The North Star Historic Conservancy as a recipient. It's a terrific way to support our efforts to refurbish The North Star House.



If you shop at Amazon.com, start using smile.amazon.com

Designate **North Star Historic Conservancy** as your charitable organization.

Shop the same as always, at all of the same stores. Amazon will donate a portion of your purchases to NSHC.



Our Marketing Team
is looking for
2 - 3 New Volunteers

Our Marketing team creates marketing campaigns and promotional materials, maintains our website and social media sites, promotes events, and monitors local and regional outreach opportunities to be sure that we are properly represented in those sources. We need **2-3 new volunteers** to join our team. *Bring your own ideas and experience to the team!*

If you have some of these skills and would like to join our marketing team, we'd like to meet you. We don't expect any one person to be an expert on everything on this list. (But we won't complain if you do.)

TOP PRIORITY

- Framing a Marketing Campaign
- Writing articles, press releases, promotional pieces
- Updating/maintaining Wordpress website (We have a webmaster who does things like backups and security; this task is for keeping content up-to-date, etc.)
- Keeping us current on Social Media
- Designing flyers, ads (ownership and use of Adobe Creative Suite software very desirable)
- Be comfortable with both Word and Excel

WOULD LOVE TO HAVE

- Graphic designer
- Someone experienced working with databases
- Improving SEO on website (search engine optimization)

If you would like to help us with marketing, please go to this link to indicate your skills and interests.

www.TheNorthStarHouse.org/marketing

If you have a resume or other information you want to send: joan@thenorthstarhouse.org


If you are interested in other volunteer opportunities, such as docents, events, construction , etc.

www.TheNorthStarHouse.org/volunteer




Mark Your Calendar and

Join Us At The North Star House

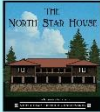


Open House!
The North Star House
Sunday, July 10 4-6 pm

*Join us for a relaxing
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House & Garden Tours * Music * Photo Booth
 Food & Drink Available * Free Admission



View our new Interpretive Displays
 to learn more about famous architect
Julia Morgan

12075 Auburn Rd, Grass Valley
www.theNorthStarHouse.org




AutumnFest
at the North Star House

Sunday, October 2, 2022
 12 - 4 pm \$10 admission
 presented by
 Soroptomist International
 of the Sierra Foothills
 &
 North Star Historic Conservancy

Artisan Craft Shop
 Music, Tours, Food Drink

12075 Auburn Road, Grass Valley
 1 mile south of Fairground

More details later
www.TheNorthStarHouse.org



The North Star House
invites you to
Share the Holidays With Us.

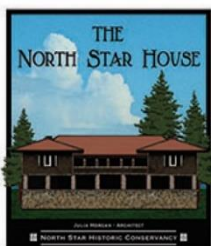
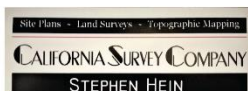
*This Historic Julia Morgan House
 is particularly lovely when we
 decorate it for the holidays.*

Sunday, December 4
4-6pm

Additional Information Coming.
Check our website periodically.

www.TheNorthStarHouse.org

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

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

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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- ☐ Rising Star \$ 100 +
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Online Membership or Donations can be made on our website. Use Links on upper right side-bar.