

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2022

Who Was Phoebe Apperson Hearst?

by Marrilee Shannon

She was a financial manager of a huge inheritance, an astute businesswoman, a reformer, and a philanthropist devoted to the women and children in society. She was one of the “Gilded Age’s” most prominent, powerful, influential, and generous women.

Phoebe was born into a middle-class rural Missouri family in 1842. Raised to be ambitious and trained to be a lady, she married wealthy miner George Hearst, 22 years her senior, in 1862. They moved to San Francisco.



Phoebe Apperson Hearst

Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Julia Morgan met each other in Paris when Julia was studying for admission to L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts. They became close friends. Phoebe was instrumental in connecting Julia with many architectural projects. And, of course, she introduced Julia to her son, William Randolph Hearst, which led to Hearst Castle and other projects. A future article will delve into the relationship between Phoebe and Julia ... two very remarkable and accomplished women.

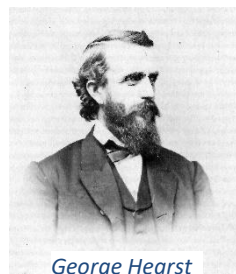
buildings, and beautiful things that can be acquired with great wealth.



Phoebe and baby William

A year after the wedding, Phoebe gave birth to William Randolph Hearst, their only child, who would become a towering publishing mogul.

When William was 10 years old, Phoebe took him on a grand tour of Europe. They spent more than 2 years visiting castles, museums, and cultural centers. Phoebe and William shared a love of art,



George Hearst

George Hearst was ambitious. In addition to his growing investments in several major mines, he became very involved in politics. He often left Phoebe alone as he travelled

to tend to his businesses. He became a U.S. Senator from California, which took the Hearsts to Washington, D.C. Phoebe oversaw the construction of an elegant mansion, where they lived until George's death in 1891 at age 70. He had become one of the richest men in the U.S.

At 48, Phoebe was widowed and became the sole beneficiary of her husband's vast fortune, which she intelligently and skillfully managed the rest of her life. She used her wealth plus her political and social connections to become a major. While she did some projects like preserving George Washington's Mount Vernon estate, she devoted a lot of her time, effort, and money to supporting women, children, and education.

Phoebe struggled to find a way to accept her materialism. She had been raised to believe that it was immoral to have great wealth when so many had so little. Becoming a philanthropist - donating large sums to various causes, institutions, charities and women's education - helped convince her that she was of good moral character.

As the first female regent of University of California, Berkeley, she ensured the continued inclusion of young women in college enrollment and helped provide housing and a source of income for coeds. She provided scholarship money for female students and created a social center for women since they were banned from male-only extracurricular activities. She remained very involved in the university, sponsoring a contest to select an architect to do a master design for the campus and funding several buildings.

Phoebe was dedicated to making education more accessible to children of all backgrounds. In San Francisco, she instituted the first free kindergarten for poor American children, which was open to both white and African American children. She established a training school for kindergarten teachers, created the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association and supported establishment of Kindergartens across the country.

Phoebe also cofounded and funded the National Congress of Mothers, which grew into the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Another organization that strongly supported women is the YWCA. Phoebe had strong associations with the organization, which provided safe, clean housing options for young women moving to cities for schooling or work opportunities. After hosting the annual conference of the YWCA association at her property in California, Phoebe used her connections to get a donation of property near Monterey for a permanent conference center for the organization. The result: Asilomar Conference Grounds, designed by Julia Morgan.

Initially, Phoebe was not in support of the suffragist movement but did support the right for women to vote in order to protect themselves and their children. By 1911, she had officially declared herself in support of women's suffrage.



In 1916, she marched in a suffragist parade in San Francisco. She had almost decided not to march until she read the mail that morning which contained seven letters of threat saying that if she marched, she would be killed. So she marched!

At age 74, she marched the entire route dressed completely in white. She was recognized and cheered on by many spectators. The participation of women like Phoebe helped dismiss the notion of women as dependent, frail, weak or disorderly.

However, just as warned, a pipe bomb exploded along the parade route killing 9 people and injuring many others. Ironically, the blast served to prove that women were fit to vote.

Observers noted that not a single woman faltered in her courage, being as fearless and noble as any male.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst died from the Influenza Epidemic in 1919 after visiting her son and grandchildren in New York. The day after her death virtually every newspaper reported that she was best known for her philanthropic, charitable, and educational work in support of women and children. They



recognized her as a woman with an ordinary background who rose to fame and prominence.

It was always frustrating to Phoebe that, despite her ability to exert political power and provide financial assistance on equal terms with men, the recognition she got from the press generally focused on her feminine qualities and traditional domestic roles ... traits that people (especially men) used to disqualify women from full citizenship rights.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst helped lead the way for financial freedom for women. She did not live to see the ratification of a woman's right to vote in 1920.

New Volunteers always wanted.



Mike French (left) and Lee Hentschel are among the newer members of the construction crew. They have taken on the job of finishing the shingling on the outside of the house.

Larry Dulmage met Lee because they go to the same gym ... and Larry recruited him. Lee brought along his friend, Mike, and they have tackled this important task.

Lee was a cardiovascular technician at Sutter Roseville. He lived in Nevada City and met his wife, Julie. They are now retired and doing what so many of us retired folks do:

finding interesting things to do in this active community.

Mike worked at UCD as an administrator in a clinical lab. He has done work with wood, metal and concrete. He is putting his wood-working skill to work at the North Star House.

The North Star volunteer family is excited to see the shingling project approach completion.

AutumnFest 2022

We held our second annual AutumnFest on October 2, 2022. The weather was perfect, many people attended and enjoyed the music, shopping, North Star House and garden, and a chance to relax among the trees.



Above and below: The audience



Music provided by Harmony Groove



The Soroptimist Craft Shop offers many beautiful, hand-made items for sale to support charities. Each item is designed by members.





Photo by Sherian Kutzera

The Heritage Garden was open to the public, with a docent available to talk about the plants. This garden is a Tribute to Arthur De Wint Foote, who used his horticultural skills and passion to landscape the grounds around the North Star House. A self-guided tour of the grounds is also available.



Photo by Doug Young



Photo by Doug Young

LEFT: Docents in the House led tours and answered questions.

BELOW: A big thanks to Lisa for decorating the house and courtyard so beautifully for the fall.



Photo by Doug Young



Photo by Marrilee Shannon

LEFT: Wine, beer and beverages were available to quench your thirst plus hot dogs, pie and ice cream to top off a pleasant day.

From All of Us at Soroptimist and North Star House, Thanks for Coming

Mark Your Calendars for

AutumnFest 2023

October 1, 2023

What's Happening in the House?

We're enjoying a lot of progress in the **Mary Hallock Foote room** (AKA "Study" or "Mary's office").

After making careful measurements, Rich built the entire wood front of the fireplace in his home workshop, then brought it to NSH and installed it. Of course it fit!!



LEFT: Rich installing the new structure.

RIGHT: Looking beautiful.

The bookcases on either side of the fireplace will have glass fronts for displays and for our collection of first edition books written by Mary Hallock Foote. (One or more of the cabinets will be locked.)



Photo by Joan Clappier

BELOW: Restored walls and electrical wiring are in place.



Photo by Joan Clappier

BELOW: Custom windows have been built for the MHF Room.



Photo by Joan Clappier

The **Library** is another room that has been getting a lot of attention.

Ken, the master of the library, has been making and installing custom plate holders.

A plate holder for one specific location



You can see a plate holder installed between the window and the corner, to the right of Ken.



And then there's the ceiling.

In case you are thinking that perhaps Dennis looks a bit glum . . . the flat, horizontal boards that were laid between the beams in the ceiling were not supported properly, and over the years they have all split. Each board needs to be taken down, repaired, and reinstalled on the ceiling. It takes several guys to take these long boards down and put them back up.



The area in and around the **Living Room**

The electronics room, just outside the MHF room, has been wired and is awaiting some walls and a door.



Photo by Doug Young

Tom is in the entryway, wiring up an outdoor light over the courtyard entrance. It will be nice to have a light there to greet guests.

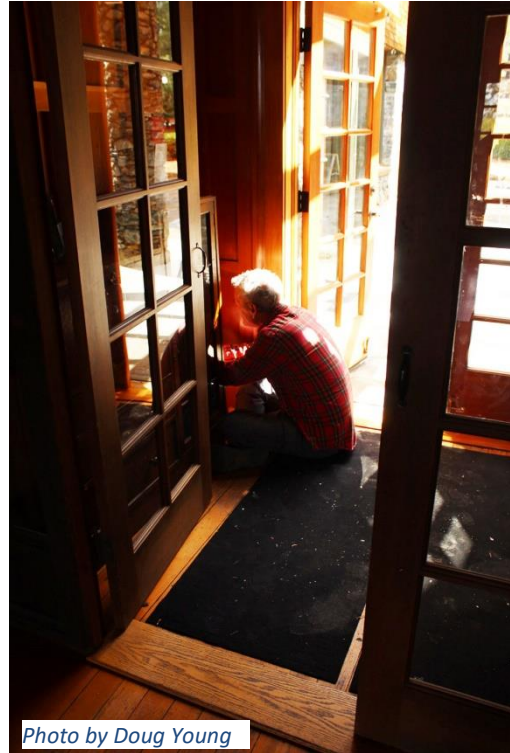


Photo by Doug Young

Rick is finishing the corner Living Room wall.



Photo by Joan Clappier



Photo by Doug Young



RIGHT: Meanwhile, TONS (literally!) of plaster have been removed on second floor to prepare the upstairs for work.



Please Join Us For
A North Star Holiday

Sunday, December 4
4 pm - 6pm

12075 Auburn Road
1 mi. south of fairground



The Historic North Star House
will be festively decorated for the season

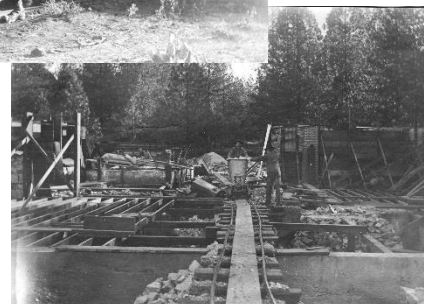
We are very pleased to announce that
The Cornish Christmas Choir
will sing at the House.



Mark your calendar.
More details available later.

Fun Historical Pictures (1904)

While building the house, they laid temporary track from the tailing pile to haul rock to the building site for walls and columns. As you can see in the bottom picture, they also ran track across the foundation to bring rock to courtyard area before the house was "in the way".



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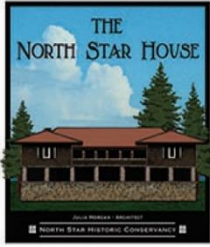
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NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

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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