

Building the California Women's Movement:
Architecture, Space, and Gender in the Life and Work of Julia Morgan

by

Karen Ann McNeill

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Committee in charge:

Professor Mary P. Ryan, Chair

Professor Paula S. Fass

Professor Susanna Barrows

Professor Paul Groth

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Abstract

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Between 1902 and 1932, Julia Morgan and her clients literally built their way out of the Victorian notion of separate spheres to create a landscape for modern womanhood. Their houses, clubs, and various organizations not only contributed to the growth and modernization of the cities, but served as a mode of political expression and left a permanent, material, and very public record of their contributions to California during the Progressive Era. Morgan's life serves as a gateway to and path through the historical transformation of this landscape. Because Morgan accorded to her clients an unusually high level of influence during the design process, and because her career intersected with so many individuals and groups comprised of multiple ethnicities and classes, this one person's life provides an important window into the broader relationship between gender, social change, and the built environment. The landscapes of her childhood and the people who inhabited them inspired Morgan to embark on a long and daring journey through the

masculine world of the architectural profession. Morgan's experiences at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, directly affected her gender consciousness and awakened the budding architect to the direct relationship between the spaces of women's lives and the breadth of opportunities women had in the world outside the home. After earning her architectural degree, Morgan spent a lifetime creating a new landscape for women that would help expand those opportunities. This period of building activity reinforced the already notable influence of women and their organizations in the California landscape, as well as their sophisticated understanding of the capitalist economy, property rights, and the accumulation of wealth. No single issue united the women's groups; rather, the buildings stand as public and material investments in the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic growth of California and its urban centers.

To my grandmother, Rebecca McNeill,

and my parents,

Leslie and Russ McNeill

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List of Abbreviations

ANF	Archives nationales françaises, Paris, France
AP	Albert Osias Parmelee
BMD	Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, Paris, France
CBM	Charles Bill Morgan
CSM	Cyrus T. and Susan Mills Papers, Special Collections and Archive, Mills College, Oakland, California.
EMN	Emma Morgan North
EPM	Eliza Parmelee Morgan
GPAH	Papers of George and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. BANC MSS 72/204c, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
JM	Julia Morgan
JMAD	Julia Morgan Architectural Drawings, 1907-1939. BANC MSS 71/156c, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
JMAHP	Suzanne B. Riess, ed., <i>The Julia Morgan Architectural</i> , Vols. 1 and 2, manuscript (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1976).
JMC-Cal Poly	Julia Morgan Collection, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
JMC-CEDA	Julia Morgan Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley
LeBrun	Pierre LeBrun

MCA	Mills College Archives, Special Collections and Archive, Mills College, Oakland, California.
PAH	Phoebe Apperson Hearst
Record Files	Record Files, 1876-1970. Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America National Board, microform 689, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Introduction

On May 15, 1929, the University of California, Berkeley, conferred upon Julia Morgan its highest award, an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. In his tribute to the San Francisco Bay Area architect (1872-1957), President William Wallace Campbell described Morgan as a “distinguished alumna of the University of California, artist and engineer; designer of simple dwellings and of stately homes, of great buildings nobly planned to further the centralized activities of her fellow citizens; architect in whose works harmony and admirable proportions bring pleasure to the eye and peace to the mind.” Local papers carried the story as front-page news and included photos of the architect at the ceremony. Dozens of clients, colleagues, and friends sent letters of congratulations, citing the honor as well deserved; a recognition of her vision, genius, social service, and acclaimed success; and an achievement “that sheds a glory over the endeavors of all womanhood.”¹

Morgan had mixed feelings about this event. Though she purportedly did not like the attention – especially having her photograph published in the local newspapers – she had willingly accepted the honor from the university and for weeks before the event, kept it a secret from family, friends, colleagues, and clients.² She probably did not care too much for President Campbell’s description of her work – too many adjectives that would bias those who had yet to experience one of her buildings for themselves – but it did

¹ Sara Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, revised edition (New York, 1995), 49; “Academic Pomp Marks Granting of Degrees at U.C. Commencement,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 15, 1929, p. 3; *San Francisco Examiner*, May 16, 1929, p. 1; “Class of ’29 is Graduated at Berkeley,” *ibid.*, p. 21/8; “Highest Honor Given Woman,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 16, 1929, p. 15/7; Letters of congratulations, 1929. JMC-Cal Poly I/06/02/12 & 13; and Florence Stull to JM, May 17, 1929. JMC-Cal Poly I/06/02/13.

² Interview with Mrs. H.C. Forney, by Richard W. Longstreth, Berkeley, California, September 12, 1973. Provided to the author by Richard W. Longstreth; W. W. Campbell to JM, May 4, 1929, JMC-Cal Poly I/06/02/11.

recognize her education, productivity and breadth of creativity, the quality of craftsmanship, and the social significance of her work. Best of all, Campbell made no reference to Morgan's gender. As the letters poured into her home and office, Morgan must have been proud to know that her life and work had touched so many people in profound ways, and that she was admired and respected by individuals within and outside the profession. Thirty-two years earlier, as she was battling the faculty of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, to become the first woman accepted to that acclaimed institution's architecture program, Morgan could not have imagined the day that she would receive such unqualified praise for her work. Her journey from childhood to this period, the apex of her career, is the subject of the story that follows.

Historiography

Between 1902 and 1932, Julia Morgan and her clients literally built their way out of the Victorian notion of separate spheres to create a landscape for modern womanhood. Their houses, clubs, and various organizations not only contributed to the growth and modernization of the cities, but served as a mode of political expression and left a permanent, material, and very public record of their contributions to California during the Progressive Era. Morgan's life will be a gateway to and path through the historical transformation of this landscape. Because Morgan accorded to her clients an unusually high level of influence during the design process, and because her career intersected with so many individuals and groups comprised of multiple ethnicities and classes, this one person's life provides an important window into the broader relationship between gender, social change, and the built environment. The landscapes of her childhood and the people who inhabited them inspired Morgan to embark on a long and daring journey through the

masculine world of the architectural profession. Morgan's experiences at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, directly affected her gender consciousness and awakened the budding architect to the direct relationship between the spaces of women's lives and the breadth of opportunities women had in the world outside the home. After earning her architectural degree, Morgan spent a lifetime creating a new landscape for women that would help expand those opportunities. This period of building activity reinforced the already notable influence of women and their organizations in the California landscape, as well as their sophisticated understanding of the capitalist economy, property rights, and the accumulation of wealth. No single issue united the women's groups; rather, the buildings stand as public and material investments in the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic growth of California and its urban centers.

Popular myth states that Julia Morgan died in obscurity. On the contrary, she has nearly always been a local favorite in the San Francisco Bay Area, recognized among architects as a leader in the development of a Bay Area style, and commanded a similar tone of respect and prestige from various parties in the 1960s as was accorded to her in 1929 by the University of California, her friends, clients, and colleagues. Examples abound. Less than ten years after her death, the Berkeley City Club hosted a tour of Morgan buildings to honor the architect's "enduring legacy." Two years later, Marilyn Tucker, a writer for the *Oakland Tribune*, declared that Morgan was "still considered by many... as the world's greatest woman architect to date," and a month after that, a real estate advertisement published in the *New York Times* for a mansion on Belvedere Island, in Marin County, California, noted Morgan as the original designer. The "Julia Morgan"

brand apparently still carried with it some prestige eleven years after her death and three thousand miles away from the primary region of her architectural practice.³ In 1970, William G. Dauben, a Berkeley professor whose grandfather and father were architects in the area, stated simply, “California has developed two architects who have been viewed as creating a California style, they are Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan.”⁴ All of this attention came before any exhibitions were staged or scholarly biographies and articles were published in the name of recovering Morgan from obscurity.

Academic interest in Julia Morgan has varied. California architecture in general, and San Francisco Bay Area architecture more specifically, captured little attention among academic circles before Elisabeth Kendall Thompson published her essay on the Bay Area’s domestic architecture in 1951. In that sense, Morgan was no more obscure than most of her local colleagues were. Published by the time Morgan is supposed to have been doomed to obscurity, Thompson’s seminal article featured Morgan as one of nine of the most influential architects in the region.⁵ More than twenty years passed before further inquiry into Morgan’s oeuvre appeared. Richard W. Longstreth wrote the first lengthy academic study of Morgan’s work in 1972, which he published in 1975, and conducted some of the first interviews with former Morgan employees.⁶ Since the mid-1970s, however, Sara Boutelle’s extensive research and published writings on Julia

³ “Yule Gifts Told by City Club,” *Oakland Tribune*, December 23, 1959, p. 22D; Louise Wright, “Julia Morgan’s Enduring Legacy,” *ibid.*, March 27, 1966, pp. 1S, 7S; Marilyn Tucker, “Julia Morgan – For 50 Years a Beauty,” *ibid.*, July 21, 1968, p. 16CM; classified ad, *New York Times*, August 9, 1968, p. 10.

⁴ William G. Dauben to Fortney Stark, February 17, 1971, *ibid.*, 20e.

⁵ Elisabeth Kendall Thompson, “The Early Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 10 (October 1951), 20; Leslie M. Freudenheim, *Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts & Crafts Home* (Salt Lake City, 2005), vi.

⁶ Richard Longstreth, “Julia Morgan (1872-1957): Some Introductory Notes,” manuscript (Berkeley, 1972); Richard Longstreth, “Julia Morgan: Some Introductory Notes,” *Perspecta* 15 (1975): 74-86; interviews by Richard Longstreth with Walter T. Steilberg, Lucy Hale, Mrs. H.C. Forney, Edward Hussey, Dorothy Wormser Coblenz, George C. Loorz, and Judith Morgan (1972-1974), provided to author by Richard Longstreth.

Morgan have been the most widely consumed and referenced group of sources, making Boutelle the single most influential figure in shaping the historical image of this architect. In more recent years, several scholars have taken up Morgan as their subject of inquiry. They have produced biographies aimed at younger audiences, as well as more focused treatises on such things as Morgan’s office procedures, her quest for anonymity, or case studies of specific commissions. The work of Cary James, Ginger Wadsworth, Victoria Kastner, Diane Favro, Taylor Coffman, and Russell Quacchia stand out. Despite the growing variety of voices, most scholarship on Morgan continues to emphasize the architect’s relationship to and elaborate commissions for media tycoon and sometimes politician, William Randolph Hearst. As important as he was to her career – and I readily admit that he was an important patron who made it possible for Morgan to accept many money-losing commissions – the significance of Morgan’s life and work must be understood within a broader historical and historiographical framework.

Abigail van Slyck articulated in 1992 one of the goals for this study: For all of the biographies of women architects that had been published to date, she argued, no “serious investigation of how gender ideology affected the career paths of these women” had been explored, and “the usual record of completed commissions” sufficed as a way to understand the women, their careers, or the times in which they lived and worked, not to mention the cultural or social significance of the buildings themselves. Sixteen years and several more biographies later, the same issues still exist. Indeed, since Susanna Torre edited the encyclopedic volume, *Women in Architecture* in 1976, we have learned little more about this first generation of women architects and the historical details that shaped their decisions to pursue a career in architecture, the impact of gender on their experience

in that field, or the larger significance of their work. Even as Alice T. Friedman exposes the influential and empowering role of female clients on celebrated proto-modernist or modernist architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, she writes about exceptional houses of previously well-known male architects and their well-known work.⁷ Julia Morgan enjoyed an exceptional career, but her success derived from her ability to navigate the gendered landscape of her times. In that sense, Morgan's life and career magnify and allow us to demystify the experiences of pioneering women architects in this male-dominated profession. More importantly, the prolific nature of Morgan's career and the variety of people and organizations for whom she worked, provides a significant set of data for examining the broader impact of architecture and space on the lives of women during the early twentieth century.

Morgan belonged to a generation of American women who enjoyed greater access to higher education than any generation of women before them, but who, at the outset of their careers, found few opportunities to fully participate in politics or professions beyond the domestic sphere. During the 1870s and 1880s women had proven that pursuits in higher education led neither to debilitating health or reproductive problems, but they had achieved little in overturning the notion that women were biologically predisposed to be "pious guardians of the hearth and the young."⁸ Some women – college-educated or not,

⁷ Abigail van Slyck, "Women in Architecture and the Problems of Biography," *Design Book Review* 25 (Summer 1992), 19-22; Susanna Torre, ed., *Women in Architecture: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (New York, 1977); Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (New York, 1998).

⁸ Dr. Edward Clarke expounded upon his thoughts about the dangers of higher education on the physical well-being of women in a book entitled *Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls*. According to his theory, which he supported with the physical and social evolution theories of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, men and women had grown biologically distinct from one another. Whereas men had evolved into strong, practical, intellectual, and creative beings, women were passive, weak, emotional, and intellectually inferior. Higher education was therefore incompatible with a woman's biological makeup and could lead to physical and mental harm. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres* (New Haven, 1982): 1-27.

married and single – appropriated this ideology of sexual difference and corresponding separate spheres of influence as a political strategy to secure women a public role in civic reform.⁹ A still smaller group of women rejected the notion of sexual difference and segregated spheres of gender all together. These women pursued intellectual careers and devoted their lives to disproving dominant gender theories.¹⁰ Morgan found value in both of these groups; she devoted a large part of her career designing buildings for women's groups of various kinds at the same time as she sought a way to diminish the value of gender as a category of difference that ultimately denied women equal access to work, education, politics, or even space.

Morgan did not consider herself a feminist, but her personal life course and the impact she had on so many women in California forces one to grapple with the idea of feminism in Morgan's life. The word "feminism" came into popular usage in the United States around 1912 and was associated with ideas of revolution and social rupture. Influenced by leftist politics, feminists saw themselves as part of an oppressed class who would not achieve any form of equality without radically transforming the social and economic structures that had created that inequality in the first place. Morgan was likely sympathetic to the critique of gender hierarchy, which could trace its roots back at least to the nineteenth century. She also likely supported such tenets as equal access to higher education and participation in the work force, or the idea that no single set of cultural and social expectations for women could or should exist. But Morgan was no revolutionary

⁹ Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979): 512-529 (hereafter, Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy").

¹⁰ See Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, 1982).

and did not express significant discontent with the overall social or economic system.¹¹

Morgan's own struggle for autonomy resulted in a biography that many self-defined feminists would have admired. By taking advantage of opportunities within the pre-existing social system, Morgan received the highest education that California and the architectural profession could offer, achieved economic independence, exerted authority over a workforce that included many men, shared profits when she could have accumulated much more personal wealth, and created a heterogeneous, mostly egalitarian, office environment.

Morgan's biography resembles a feminism that Joyce Antler has called "life-process." According to Antler, individual challenges to gender norms sometimes, and rather inadvertently, "marked paths for others and set the context for larger social change."¹² Indeed, no evidence indicates that Morgan originally saw in architecture a feminist tool for greater social change, but as her career evolved, that is what it became. Early on, for example, she purposefully fostered close architect-client relationships that made the creative process a completely collaborative effort and gave this largely female clientele unprecedented influence in the development of the built environment. Morgan was lucky to find institutional patronage in the Young Women's Christian Association too, but she also had a personal desire to contribute to the causes that women's organizations championed. She fought for the opportunity to design spaces for women's organizations, and thereby revealed a certain self-conscious alliance with feminist goals for greater social change. In the end, Morgan's life and career illustrate how access to the

¹¹ Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, 1987), 4-50 (hereafter, Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*).

¹² Joyce Antler, "Feminism as Life-Process: The Life and Career of Lucy Sprague Mitchell," *Feminist Studies* 7 (Spring 1981), 134-5.

creation and use of physical space helped to reconceptualize the place of women in society in the early twentieth century.

The relationship between gender, space, power, and politics, has been a major theme in the history of women and gender in America. Studies like Karen Blair's early work on club women and the role of clubs in shaping feminist identities, Estelle Friedman's influential essay "Separatism as Strategy," and Nancy Cott's contention that feminism did not end after suffrage all inform this study.¹³ While these three studies address the movement of women from the domestic sphere into civic, social, cultural, and political activities, they do not examine the physical space and material culture that accompanied this shift. Mary Ryan's observation that if historians focus on physical spaces they will see that nineteenth-century city women populated public spaces in large numbers and with ease, marked a significant shift in the historiography of women and gender in America. Sarah Deustch, for example, has since demonstrated how Boston women remapped the city for themselves by appropriating old spaces and transforming them into clubs and institutions. In doing so, the white, middle-class leaders also created spaces where working-class and minority women could resist or manipulate to their advantage gender conventions – including those of the reform-minded leaders. According to Rachel E. Bohlman, the construction of new buildings and related forays into property accumulation and real estate management exposed fractures within the women's movement and marked a turning point among women activists away from Victorian notions womanhood. Most recently, Renée Somers has argued that Edith Wharton equated the physical and aesthetic use of space with the moral status of late nineteenth-

¹³ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York, 1980); Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy," *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979): 512-529; Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*.

century American society. In her fiction and through her houses Wharton described the physical and material signs of moral decadence, and presented models for reform.¹⁴

The recent work of four scholars is most influential to my project in framing debates specifically about women in California from 1880 to 1930. In *Becoming Citizens*, Gayle Gullett catalogues the myriad women's clubs and institutions founded in the late nineteenth century to address such issues as public education, playgrounds, and temperance. These women defined their causes and achievements as acts of citizenship, which influenced the passage of state suffrage for women in 1911. Marta Gutman's local study of Oakland focuses more specifically on the "charitable landscape" California women created in the form of such institutions as orphanages, settlement houses, community centers, and hospitals. As she defines this feminine geography, Gutman also illustrates the incremental growth of cities, historically a more traditional and relatively slow process of urban growth that is characterized by appropriation, reuse, and modification of existing structures to fit changing needs. Lee Simpson's *Selling the City*, in contrast, documents the role of women in the urban growth machine. Schooled in capitalism since the 1880s, usually through home ownership, women applied their self-defined and increasingly accepted roles as civic housekeepers to influence the growth of their communities – not just morally, but profitably as well. Women's clubs were the most important form of organization in this process. Finally, Jessica Sewell traces the

¹⁴ Mary Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore, 1990); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York, 2000); Rachel E. Bohlman, "Our ‘‘House Beautiful’’: The Woman’s Temple and the WCTU Effort to Establish Place and Identity in Downtown Chicago, 1887-1898," *Journal of Women’s History* 11 (July 1999): 110-; Renée Somers, *Edith Wharton as Spatial Activist and Analyst*. Studies in Major Literary Authors, edited by William E. Cain (New York, 2005).

ways by which women in San Francisco manipulated gendered spaces in the urban landscape and politicized them in their suffrage campaigns.¹⁵

Methodology and Sources

Upon reading the news of Julia Morgan's honorary Doctor of Laws degree, Clara Louise Safford wrote of her old friend, "Again I ponder on her store of unknown things and wonders and long to find the secrets of her beauty and her mind."¹⁶ Such is the goal of any biographer, and Julia Morgan has made this task a particularly challenging one. One of the first things I heard about Morgan was that she had burned all of her personal and professional documents. This myth began in the 1970s, when interest in Julia Morgan was making a resurgence in the San Francisco Bay Area. Sara Boutelle, journalists, and organizers of an exhibition of Morgan's work, all recounted the story that Morgan had ordered first the superintendent of the Merchants Exchange Building, where her office was located in downtown San Francisco, then her nephew Morgan North to destroy any documents that were not claimed by former clients and which North himself did not want.¹⁷ Some documents indeed may have been lost, but as Victoria Kastner, historian of Hearst Castle, has noted, "Drawings letters, records and the clear-eyed recollections of

¹⁵ Gayle Ann Gullett, *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement* (Urbana, 2000); Marta Ruth Gutman, "On the Ground in Oakland: Women and Institution Building in an Industrial City," University of California, Berkeley, Fall 2000; Lee M. A. Simpson, *Selling the City: Gender, Class, and the California Growth Machine, 1880-1940* (Stanford, 2004); Jessica, Sewell, "Sidewalks and Store Windows as Political Landscapes," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture IX* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003): 85-98; and Sewell, "Gendering the Spaces of Modernity: Women and Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000).

¹⁶ Clara Louise Safford to Julia Morgan, June 3, 1929, JMC I/06/02/13.

¹⁷ A few examples where this story has been recounted include "The New Professional: Historical Beginnings," *Progressive Architecture* (March 1977), 44; "Architectural Drawings by Julia Morgan: Beaux-Arts Assignments and Other Buildings" pamphlet for exhibition at the Oakland Mueum (Oakland, 1976); "Julia Morgan: Unassuming Architect," *Montclarion*, August 31, 1978; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 241.

her staff allow us to find the humanity behind Morgan's myth-making achievements.”¹⁸ Nonetheless, I embarked upon this project under the assumption that Morgan's words would be difficult to find and that I would have to devise creative research strategies to undercover new material. Morgan's clients and her buildings would be the key to understanding her life, career, her understanding of and impact on the world in which she lived.

A number of people and institutions hold collections related to Julia Morgan. The Special Collections department at the Robert Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, has the largest collection devoted exclusively to Julia Morgan. Among the treasures one can find there are some family records and artifacts, family correspondence – especially dating to Morgan's years in Paris – travel diaries, newspaper clippings, office records and professional correspondence, and an extensive collection of blueprints, drawings, photographs, and other materials related to individual commissions. The Bancroft Library and College of Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley, hold multiple Morgan collections, which include school work from both the University of California and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, as well as blueprints, drawings, photographs, and specifications for individual commissions. In addition, the Regional Oral History Office, at Berkeley, conducted an oral history in the 1970s of Morgan's relatives, clients, and colleagues, which has been transcribed into two volumes and includes newspaper clippings, articles, bills from the Seldon and Elizabeth Glide house (1928), and other ephemera. Lynn Forney Stone McMurray, Morgan's goddaughter and the daughter of Morgan's secretary, retains several boxes of materials as

¹⁸ Victoria Kastner, “Morgan and Associates: Julia Morgan's Office Practice as Design Metaphor,” in Linda Kiisk AIA, ed., *20 on 20/20 Vision: Perspectives on Diversity and Design* (Boston, 2003), 44.

well, which she graciously shares with interested researchers. These collections have been the main resources for Morgan scholars, and have provided a wealth of material for my project as well.

Beyond these standard resources are a number of underused and previously unknown materials. The Archives nationales françaises, for example, has collections related to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Morgan's student file, minutes of faculty meetings, various administrative reports, newspaper clippings, and student correspondence in this collection all proved enlightening, not to mention surprising. The Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, a library dedicated to the history of women in France, also has materials related to the organized efforts of women to seek admission to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, an institution that excluded women from its classrooms, library, and degree program until 1896. The National Board of the YWCA maintained extensive records of board meetings, financial records, site reports of individual associations located throughout the country, and reports from regional committees. These files are available at Smith College's Neilson Library, or on microfilm through interlibrary loan. Many organizations that hired Morgan and/or to which her clients belonged, as well as the family papers of several clients are housed at the Bancroft Library. There are still other resources that I used and others to explore, mostly related to specific clubs and institutions and held at various locations throughout California, as well as in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Honolulu, Hawaii.

The internet has proven to be an invaluable research tool as well. Online versions of Sanborn fire insurance company maps, the United States census, vital statistics, and city, social, and club directories have facilitated my efforts to map out the clients and

create general biographical profiles of them. I have found hundreds of previously unknown articles on Morgan in newspapers and journals from her lifetime, which have revealed some new anecdotes that provide colorful detail and, more importantly, force us to reconsider previous interpretations of Morgan's public persona.

Despite this relative wealth of sources, Morgan's own words are indeed difficult to find. I recovered her voice and a better understanding the impact of her work, in part, by developing a geography of Morgan's clientele and a genealogy of their common affiliations with clubs and institutions. Third-party documents – particularly letters, diaries, scrapbooks, autobiographies, and memoirs of Morgan's clients – provide insight into the clients' backgrounds, their relationship to the architect, their experience of inhabiting the spaces Morgan created, or the ways in which those spaces affected their life courses. Like secondary sources, third-party documents provide context for the physical and social world in which Morgan group up, worked, and lived.

Architecture serves as an equally vital indicator of Morgan's opinions about the world in which she lived and the intentions behind her designs. Drawing from Sara Boutelle's list of commissions (which is not completely accurate) I set out to map the buildings, gather as much information as possible on the client(s) and building site, and divide the commissions by city or town, date of construction, style of architecture, type of building, and background of client(s). Only at that point did I begin to pick specific buildings to analyze and interpret their historical significance or Morgan's intentions. Particularly in relationship to houses, I rarely ended up focusing on the biggest, most expensive, elaborate, or even beautiful ones. By downplaying cost and aesthetics as the measure of significance, I have also been able to attribute greater importance to some of

the smaller institutional buildings that other scholars have overlooked. I did focus exclusively on Morgan's houses in the San Francisco Bay Area, as she designed the vast majority of her houses in that region, but the only buildings I purposefully ignored were those commissioned by William Randolph Hearst.¹⁹

Chapter Summary

Part I: Becoming “Julia Morgan, Architect”

In Chapter 1, the Morgan family serves as a microcosm to study changing notions of gender that marked late nineteenth-century America. On the surface, Julia Morgan's parents adhered to stereotypical mid-Victorian notions of proper gender roles: Charles Bill Morgan engaged in business and politics to support his family, while Eliza Morgan reared the five children and served as the moral center of the family. In reality, Charles Morgan's dream to extract his fortune from the western mines was inherently unpredictable, and he achieved moderate success at best. Temperamentally, he was sentimental and prone to depression. Eliza Morgan's inherited wealth, meanwhile, provided the financial stability, material comfort, and social prestige. She did not revel in motherhood, disdained sentimentality, and exerted more authority than her husband in the marriage and household. This gender structure carried into the next generation. Much like their father, the three Morgan boys largely floundered as they tried to define their roles in the adult world. The two girls, in contrast, consistently demonstrated directed ambition. They pursued higher education and earned degrees in traditionally male-dominated fields: law and architecture.

¹⁹ Though it was published long after I started this process, Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley's book, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes* (Knoxville, 2005), provides a good summary of the method I devised in an ad hoc fashion.

California in the late nineteenth century, like American society more generally, provided an increasing number of opportunities for women like Julia Morgan to break out of the domestic sphere (not that it would be an easy journey). A suffrage movement organized in California around 1870, just two years before Morgan's birth, set in motion a series of changes that provided women of Morgan's generation greater opportunities outside the home, including greater access to higher education and a women's network that active in civic, social, and cultural causes throughout the state. During the early 1890s, Julia Morgan and her fellow coeds at the University of California, Berkeley, created social networks and physical spaces that helped them succeed in a largely masculine environment. Morgan graduated with honors in civil engineering in 1894, at which point one man's belief in her talent and potential played the most crucial role in Morgan's career: Bernard Maybeck, an eccentric young architect, trained Morgan, encouraged her to seek artistic training at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art in San Francisco, and persuaded her that the Bay Area could not yet produce the best architects in the world. For a chance at that, Morgan would have to go to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Chapter 2 follows Morgan's years in Paris. She arrived in that city at an inauspicious time. Male students at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts rioted over the administration's recent decision to break a centuries-old tradition and allow women to enroll in evening courses. American middle-class associational traditions and growing popularity of the grand European tour, however, eased Morgan's transition to life in the European capital (she had women to travel with, a place to stay when she arrived in Paris, and could find food establishments that catered specifically to American women).

Notably, the lack of such an infrastructure at the Ecole and her singular status as the only woman pursuing a degree in architecture made Morgan's endeavors all the more challenging. She had to create alternative spaces to the Ecole's classrooms, ateliers, and loges to perfect her craft. Nationalism and modernity also shaped Morgan's Parisian education. As the new century dawned, the campus grounds became a site of international rivalries, and the rise of new technologies undermined the institution's time-honored position as the international leader in the art of architecture. Julia Morgan would leave Paris with the best architectural education one could find at the time; a fledgling philosophy towards architecture that embraced technology and academic eclecticism; and a unique sensitivity – especially among Beaux-Arts trained architects – to everyday life, women, and children. Most importantly, she would leave Paris a modern, independent woman.

Part II: Practicing Architecture and Shaping California's Future

All the while Morgan was coping with the realities of life in Paris, a gulf was emerging between her experience as a woman trying to break into a male-dominated profession and the expectations of friends, family, and the media in the United States. When she returned to California in 1902, the first woman ever to have graduated from the architecture program at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Morgan found herself burdened with the role of pioneering woman icon. Male colleagues tried to discredit her competency, and both the popular and professional press fashioned images of Morgan as either a manly woman and freak of nature, or as the embodiment of the twentieth-century "new woman." Though she would have preferred otherwise, nobody simply accepted Morgan

as an architect deserving of the same respect as any other person with her background and training.

Chapter 3 considers the number of strategies Morgan adopted to transcend these gender structures, resulting in a professional style that underscores the minutiae that women in traditionally male careers had to consider in their quest for legitimacy and success. For example, chroniclers of Morgan's life and career quickly point to her nondescript attire as a product of her Victorian upbringing or extreme shyness; in fact, the costume reflects Morgan's own image of herself as a modern professional woman as well as her astute understanding that appearance could profoundly affect how well she was received by clients and colleagues alike. Similarly, while scholars and journalists have interpreted Morgan's refusal to engage in verbal or written discourse about herself or her work as a quest for anonymity and professional invisibility, the coverage she received in popular, professional, and women's press throughout her career underscores the architect's intentional efforts to maintain a public profile without engaging in formal competitions or contributing verbally to restrictive gender stereotypes. She also did not want to divest individuals from their interactive experience with her buildings; rather, her buildings would speak for themselves. Most importantly, in 1904 Morgan founded her own architectural practice in the heart of San Francisco's financial district. With this act, Morgan again transgressed the physical boundaries of traditional womanhood. She also devised a means to express her professional authority through the manipulation of urban and interior spaces, a principle that would guide her career and give lasting meaning to the hundreds of homes, schools, hospitals, clubs, churches, and businesses that she created.

Like most architects, domestic commissions sustained the early years of Morgan's career. Housing forms the basis of Chapter 4. Progressive women reformers formed the nucleus of Morgan's clientele and designed their houses to express their civic ideals. Houses in the Arts and Crafts style dominate the four to six hundred houses Morgan designed and represent a moderate step towards a more independent landscape for the twentieth-century woman. With their less formal floor plans, rustic simplicity, and idealized relationship to nature, the arts-and-crafts home provided the perfect template on which to critique modern patterns of consumption and a politically and morally corrupt society, as well as to reform the gender hierarchy within the home and re-envision the aesthetics of femininity. Other domestic designs, whether in the Arts and Crafts style or some other genre, facilitated more directly to women's break away from the domestic sphere. Apartment houses Morgan designed for single working women and widows, for example, offered instant communities, generated a steady source of income, and undermined the ideal of the single-family dwelling. Even the most modern women – highly educated professionals, often single, maybe lesbian – needed shelter. While their departures from popular convention are subtle to the contemporary eye (suggesting how normative they became), the houses Morgan designed for this group of women blurred the public and private spheres most distinctly and redefined the twentieth-century woman's relationship to them.

By 1912, women's institutions, the subject of Chapter 5, replaced houses as the mainstay of Morgan's practice. Her involvement with the women's movement had begun in 1902 with a brown shingle cottage at the Mary Smith Trust orphanage, underscoring nineteenth-century visions of women as nurturers. In 1930, with the opening of the

Berkeley Women's City Club and its appropriation of male symbols of dominance and power – the church, the castle, and the sky scraper – Morgan presented a modern vision of womanhood. In between these landmarks came dozens of other clubs, schools, and hospitals that documented the growth of the California women's movement – how it became more public, literally made its aesthetic and institutional mark on the landscape, and, at the same time, found itself confronting changing values over who should fund and oversee the social welfare of the state. All the while, Morgan acted as mediator between the wealthy women who ran the institutions and the working, poor, or ethnically marginalized women and children they hoped to serve and reform. She also crafted her most overtly political statements with these buildings.

Conclusion

Architectural historians have not always been charitable toward Julia Morgan. In particular, they criticize her for not doing more to open the profession to women. She simply followed a career path that was typical of any male architect of her generation and was lucky enough to succeed: she graduated from a top architecture program, opened a private practice, joined the American Institute of Architects, garnered attention in professional journals, and designed a variety of public and private buildings. A further tendency to equate Morgan's career with her work for William Randolph Hearst has undermined Morgan's significance.

In reality, Morgan's career was anything but conventional and cannot be reduced to one celebrity client. Unlike most architects at the time, she maintained a practice that almost always comprised men and women, all of whom strove to achieve Morgan's standards of perfection. She employed women not only as administrative workers, but

also as engineers, architects, draftswomen, artists, and decorators. Her adherence to an Arts and Crafts ethic, while considered outmoded and unprofitable by the 1920s, helped women, in particular, to continue to work in a variety of artistic fields. Most importantly, Morgan gave professional and lay women alike unprecedented power in designing and creating spaces that have left permanent marks on the landscape and remain influential in the development of California architecture. Morgan did not provide many words of wisdom to inspire a new generation of women to follow in her footsteps in the architectural profession. A number of California women who led active lives in paid professions or volunteer societies in the first half of the twentieth century, however, named the same institutions that took them from their parents' home to their respective careers – a sorority or social hall at the University of California, a private school for girls in Piedmont or San Francisco, a variety of hospitals and churches, and any number of YWCA facilities throughout the state. Not coincidentally, Morgan designed these spaces. The women took the architect and spaces for granted, meaning Morgan had achieved her goal: Her buildings articulated her vision and provided a physical infrastructure for women to work their way out of the home and pursue a diverse range of activities that had been previously closed to them. Though very few women were registered architects when Morgan died, her friends, family, and colleagues always knew that Julia Morgan's greatest legacy was the unconventional and often lonely path she braved to break down barriers that had inhibited women from realizing their potential in the life path or career of their choice.

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have also invited me to speak, including the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and Mills College for the rededication ceremony for their campanile (Morgan, 1905). The Special Collections Department and Department of Architecture and Environmental Design at California State Polytechnic University-San Luis Obispo asked me to speak in their Hearst Lectures Series, and I gave a lecture at the Berkeley City Club to help raise funds for the renovation of this Julia Morgan building (1930). An informal talk that I gave at the University of California, Berkeley's, monthly California Studies dinner resulted in one of the most congenial and stimulating environments for intellectual exchange about my work. Thank you to everybody who has come to hear me speak, ask questions of me and my work, and offer criticism too.

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At any rate, she was making the attempt. And as I watched her lengthening out for the test, I saw, but hoped that she did not see, the bishops and the deans, the doctors and the professors, the patriarchs and the pedagogues all at her shouting warning and advice. You can't do this and you shan't do that! Fellows and scholars only allowed on the grass! Ladies not admitted without a letter of introduction! So they kept at her like the crowd at a fence on the race-course, and it was her trial to take her fence without looking to right or left. If you stop to curse you are lost, I said to her; equally, if you stop to laugh. Hesitate or fumble and you are done for. Think only of the jump, I implored her, as if I had put the whole of my money on her back; and she went over it like a bird. But there was a fence beyond that and a fence beyond that. Whether she had the staying power I was doubtful, for the clapping and the crying were fraying to the nerves. But she did her best.

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Part I

Becoming an Architect, 1872-1902

Chapter 1

Landscapes of Childhood: Oakland, New York, and Berkeley, 1872-1896

By all appearances, Julia Morgan experienced a normal childhood for the average upper-middle-class girl in Victorian America. She was born in San Francisco on January 20, 1872 to Eliza and Charles Bill Morgan, and grew up in a three-story house at 754 Fourteenth Street [Figure 1] in an affluent neighborhood of Oakland, California, across the bay from San Francisco. Upon entering the gate from the wooden sidewalk that ran along Fourteenth Street, one ascended a broad stairway flanked on either side by a carved balustrade to the gable-covered front porch. To the right stood a turreted bay window with stained glass panels. Carved moldings framed the window that dominated the third-story façade. The Brush Street elevation boasted a chimney with decorative carvings, a rounded bay window, and two overlapping gables. A window surrounded by still more carved moldings dominated the larger gable while a sunburst motif was set in the pediment of the smaller one. A balcony enclosed by arches also occupied this façade. A combination of clapboards and recessed paneling covered the ground floor exterior of the house, while scalloped shingles covered the rest of the house. Ornate carvings in a variety of styles decorated the entire exterior, and finials topped the gables and the turret. Americans during the Victorian era obsessed about expressing their social and moral status through public display of material objects, and no object compared in size or expressive value than the house. In accordance with Victorian signs respectability, then,

the Morgan house communicated that an affluent family of the highest moral standing occupied it.¹

Location mattered too. At the time, Oakland was home to some of San Francisco's wealthiest merchants and businessmen, and provided a simple commute by ferry to San Francisco's downtown district, as well as a quiet, bucolic setting that sheltered residents from the dangers of rapidly growing industrial cities. Boosters for the city boasted of Oakland's beauty and climate, fine public transportation and paved streets, wealthy banks and merchants, many churches, schools, and handsome homes.² Notably, the Morgan property occupied more than half the block between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets in this fashionable neighborhood. In addition, Oakland High School, then one of the best public high schools in California, was within walking distance of the Morgan home and the First Baptist Church – where the family attended services every Sunday – stood diagonally across the street.

Behind the façade of Victorian respectability they had built for themselves in Oakland – a husband who fulfilled his manly duty of providing his wife and family with material comfort through his hard work, and a wife who dutifully created a safe haven in the home where she nurtured the physical, mental, and moral well-being of her husband and children – lay a more complicated reality. Eliza Morgan did not revel in her motherly duties; she was an unsentimental woman with a strong will and ultimately controlled the family finances. If anything, Charles Morgan's adventurous spirited created permanent

¹ A number of historians have written about the public display of social and moral status of the family through material objects. See, for example, Richard L. Bushman, *Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York, 1992); Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* (Boston, 1992); John R. Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (New York, 1996) (hereafter, Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making*); and Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago, 1980).

² Beth Bagwell, *Oakland: The Story of a City* (Novato, 1982), 118-20 (hereafter, Bagwell, *Oakland*).

instability; he was an unreliable sentimentalist as well. The children learned from their parents' example and all but replicated them in their own adulthoods. While the male children struggled significantly in their personal and professional lives, perhaps for want of an authoritative model for manhood, the girls inherited the ingredients for modern womanhood.

While the immediate experiences of everyday life shaped her childhood and provided the impetus and lay the foundations for Morgan's long and prolific career in a profession hitherto occupied almost exclusively by men, her early years must be understood within an historical framework as well. For example, she was born at an auspicious time. In 1869, just three years before Morgan was born, the founding of the Woman's State Suffrage Association and publication of the first edition of *The Pioneer*, a newspaper devoted to women's causes, marked the beginning of an organized movement for the expansion of women's rights in California. Though launched more than twenty years after the 1848 convention in Seneca Falls, New York, and the reading of the "Declaration of Sentiments," which articulated a platform for women's rights to citizenship and equality in America, the movement took hold quickly in California and became an influential force in local and state politics, public policy and the formation of social institutions, and the development of the urban landscape. During the 1880s and 1890s, just as Morgan was coming of age in high school and college, "organized womanhood," began to flourish more significantly.³ Reformers established clubs to address such various causes as temperance, sanitation, child welfare, women's and children's health, and education, gradually creating what architectural historian Marta

³ Gayle Gullett notes that women reformers referred to their activities and organizations as "organized womanhood" in *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement, 1880-1911* (Chicago, 2000), 2.

Gutman has termed a “charitable landscape.”⁴ These causes often manifested themselves in the city’s built environment, as club houses and institutional headquarters, hospitals, orphanages, schools, playgrounds, and residential, recreational, and eating facilities for single working women. Reformers established a significant network of women who devoted themselves to the advancement of women politically, professionally, intellectually, and otherwise – women who would form the core of Morgan’s clientele.

Educational opportunities paralleled the movement of women into the public sphere. According to education historian, John L. Rury, the decades 1870-1900 marked the feminization of American high schools, at least among the privileged middle class who attended public schools. Not only did women begin to outnumber men in student population, they also earned higher marks. Oakland High School followed this pattern in terms of gender ratios; though men outnumbered women 31 to 25 in Julia Morgan’s own graduating class of 1890, women outnumbered men an average of 58 to 42 between 1887 and 1896.⁵ By the time Morgan graduated from high school in 1890, a university education remained the exclusive privilege of a small fraction of largely middle-class women, but it had become a more or less acceptable pursuit before marriage. Or, as one writer for *Overland Monthly*, the magazine of culture and society in the West, phrased it, “The higher education of women is no longer an experiment.”⁶ At the same time, social expectations for women’s roles in society did not change much. The same *Overland Monthly* writer, for example, justified college education for women by arguing that

⁴ Marta Ruth Gutman, “On the Ground in Oakland: Women and Institution Building in an Industrial City,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000).

⁵ I chose the decade book ended by Julia Morgan’s freshman year and Avery Morgan’s year of graduation. These class lists are not exact, but contain enough information to estimate gender ratios. “Class lists for Oakland High School’s graduating classes, 1887-1896,” <http://www.geocities.com/bevshul/OHS/history.htm>.

⁶ Horace Davis, “Collegiate Education of Women,” *Overland Monthly XVI* (October 1890), 337.

“When thousands of homes are presided over by such mothers, when our public schools are under their guidance, when the churches and public charities share the same generous influences, then we may hope that ‘society’ itself may be lifted from its vapid emptiness, its tawdry display of money and dress, and become an interchange of sympathy and sentiment between intelligent men and women.”⁷ Society still defined women first as mothers and pious, selfless nurturers of moral values; an education simply enhanced these traits.

As long as women did not express much interest in pursuing careers or redefining their position in society, coeducational public institutions offered a curriculum in which men and women competed in the same courses. The gap between social expectations and the public university’s curriculum offered women little direction in putting their education to practical use, but it did not filter them into gender-specific careers in the way that home economics and vocational training would begin to do just a few years after Morgan graduated from Berkeley. In theory, then, a women who wanted to pursue law, medicine, science, business and economics, or architecture – fields traditionally dominated by men – had access to the same academic training as their male counterparts. Julia Morgan certainly took advantage of this system by graduating with honors in civil engineering from the University of California in 1894 and going on to pursue a career in architecture.⁸

On Shaky Ground: California Beginnings and the Quest for Status

⁷ Ibid., p. 342.

⁸ John L. Rury, *Education and Women’s Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America, 1870-1930* (New York, 1991), 131-74 (hereafter, Rury, *Education and Women’s Work*).

Charles Morgan dreamed of being a sugar broker headquartered in the Sandwich Islands (modern Hawaii) when he and his bride Eliza Woodward Parmelee boarded the Central Pacific Railroad in New York in the summer of 1869.⁹ A few days later they arrived in Oakland, California, the terminus for the newly completed transcontinental railroad. They never did make it to Hawaii. Instead, Charles and Eliza Morgan spent the next dozen years trying to establish themselves as an upstanding family according to the standards of Victorian America. Charles, a trained engineer, tried his best to extract a fortune from the land, while Eliza bore five children and tried to create a home that served as both a safe haven and a status symbol for her family. While Charles Morgan built up a resume of failures, frequent trips between Brooklyn and California reminded Eliza Morgan of the material inferiority of her life in the West. By the 1880s, the Morgans achieved a status resembling something like that to which Eliza Morgan was accustomed. Along the way, however, they reconfigured gender roles – at least as defined by nineteenth-century American culture – and passed them on to the children.

Poor health and a severe bout of homesickness that accompanied Eliza Morgan to California in the fall of 1869 portended the difficulties she and her husband would experience as they transitioned to life in California.¹⁰ Within the first six months of their arrival on the Pacific Coast they moved no fewer than three times: William Blanding, a wealthy lawyer originally from South Carolina who may have known Eliza Morgan's father through his cotton trade business, first welcomed the young couple into his home in San Francisco.¹¹ A week later, Eliza Morgan found rental accommodations nearby,

⁹ JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 158-59.

¹⁰ AP to EPM, October 1, 1869, JMC-Cal Poly, I/01/01/01.

¹¹ By June 1870, the Blandings had moved to Alameda and owned \$55,000 in property. Their son, Gordon, followed his father's career path and in 1913 hired Julia Morgan to remodel his home in Belvedere, Calif.

and in March 1870, with the arrival of Eliza's sister, Julia, and the imminent arrival the of the Morgan's first child, a son named Parmelee, they moved to yet another house somewhere in the eighth ward, an area enclosed by Pine, Larkin, and Market Streets.¹² By the time their second child, Julia, was born on January 20, 1872, the Morgans were living in a hotel in Van Ness Street,. Within two years they had moved across the bay to Oakland.¹³

With each move, the Morgans sought a level of status and stability to match that into which they had been born. Little is known about Charles Morgan's background, but he was born to Avery and Jonsha Morgan in 1842 in New York and grew up in Colchester, Connecticut. His extended family was a prominent one. The Bill family, from whom Charles took his middle name, served in politics, and the Gardner and Bulkley families, whom the youngest Morgan child was named after, founded Aetna Insurance Company.¹⁴ Eliza Morgan had also only ever known a privileged life. Her father, Albert Osias Parmelee, had accumulated a fortune in the cotton trade. He never joined the Cotton Exchange, but so respected was he for his half-century career in the trade that upon his death in 1880, the Exchange lowered its flag to half mast.¹⁵ Every year Albert Parmelee toured southern plantations to assess the cotton crops and determine his investment in cotton futures. His wife, Sarah Emma, and two daughters, Eliza and Julia, often spent these periods at the family home in South Carolina, where a personal slave

United States Census, 1870, 1880, 1900, and 1910; Sara Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, rev. edition (New York, 1995), 14, 253.

¹² AP to EPM, October 1, 1869; October 8, 1869, March 10, 1870, JMC-Cal Poly, I/01/01/01; United States Census, 1870.

¹³ Certificate of Birth for Julia Morgan, JM-Cal Poly, I/03/01/30, JMAHP, Vol. 2, p. 158.

¹⁴ United States Census (1950), Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 244.

¹⁵ Obituary, *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 8, 1880, p. 2; "City and Suburban News," *New York Times*, July 8, 1880, p. 8.

slept outside each woman's bedroom door.¹⁶ Most of the year, however, Albert Parmelee provided his wife and two daughters a comfortable and even luxurious life in Brooklyn Heights [Figures 2 & 3], the first commuter suburb of New York City and, since the 1820s, one of Brooklyn's most exclusive neighborhoods. The Parmeleys lived on Remsen Street, a tree-lined avenue that hosted mostly three and four-storied Greek and Gothic Revival brownstones with brick or stone facades. Signs of wealth abounded on these houses: mansard roofs and doorways with columns of all types; elaborate wrought-iron fences, gates, balconies, and ornamental details; and ornately carved balustrades, pediments, and moldings around the windows. Some of Brooklyn's wealthiest and most powerful residents lived on Remsen Street as well. Richard Upjohn's Church of the Pilgrims (now Our Lady of Lebanon), with its towering spire, dominated the Remsen Street landscape, but the Parmeleys attended another Upjohn church located just a block away, Grace Episcopal Church. While Henry Ward Beecher, the charismatic evangelical minister of Plymouth Church, could boast that his parish was the most popular in Brooklyn Heights, Grace Church could boast that it was the most elite.¹⁷ Only these few details of Eliza and Charles Morgan's childhoods survive, but one can safely assume that they expected to lead a life of material comfort and social prestige.

Social prestige and material comfort were particularly important to Eliza Morgan. Though three-thousand miles away from her family in New York, she could not escape

¹⁶ JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 193-94. People familiar with the oral history and Sara Boutelle's biography, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, will note a discrepancy with my version of Morgan's family tree. According to Morgan's nephew, Morgan North, Albert and Emma Parmelee had three daughters, Mrs. Thornton, Julia Latimer, and Eliza. Census data shows consistently that Albert and Emma Parmelee had only two daughters, Eliza and Julia. The Latimer children – Lucy, Julia, Mary, and Caroline – were Eliza Parmelee Morgan's first cousins, not Julia Morgan's.

¹⁷ Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York, 1999), pp. 449-50, 728-29, 1192; Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985), 25-32. For a detailed overview of the architecture of Brooklyn Heights see Clay Lancaster, *Old Brooklyn Heights: New York's First Suburb*, second edition (New York, 1979).

the pressures to live according to her upbringing, nor the reality that her life in California failed to do so. Albert Parmelee expressly desired that his daughter live on no worse than “the best streets” in San Francisco, which, as he also noted, could prove a difficult task.¹⁸ Both the Parmeleys and the Morgans also boarded the transcontinental railroad relatively frequently, forcing Eliza Morgan to confront the material disparity between her life in California and the one she could have in Brooklyn. Her sister Julia traveled to California early in 1870 and helped search for proper housing accommodations; Julia reported their findings to the parents in Brooklyn, who, in turn, offered encouraging or discouraging remarks. Charles and Eliza Morgan also traveled to Brooklyn as many as five times between 1870 and 1880 (for each child’s christening), trips that were paid for by the Parmeleys.¹⁹

Five years after Eliza and Charles Morgan first relocated to California, the move still did not seem permanent. In February 1874, for example, Julia Parmelee Thornton informed her sister – with no small amount of glee – that their father had bought her a brand new house on Columbia Heights, just a block away from the waterfront promenade in Brooklyn Heights. So impressed was Albert Parmelee with the new house, Julia continued, that he considered buying a second one next door for himself and Emma Parmelee to inhabit until Eliza and Charles Morgan could return permanently from California. “If only you could come on wouldn’t it be fine?” Julia implored. Emma Parmelee, too, wished for the Morgan family to return to Brooklyn and confirmed Julia’s

¹⁸ AP to EPM, March 10, 1870, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/01.

¹⁹ According to Boutelle, the Morgans traveled to Brooklyn for the baptisms of each of their five children, which would be in 1870, 1872, 1874, 1877, and 1880, but evidence only supports such trips for Julia and Emma’s baptisms. Sarah Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, rev. ed. (New York, 1995), 19-20; Certificate of Baptism for Julia Morgan at Grace Church, Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn, NY, November 24, 1872. JMC-Cal Poly I/03/01/30.

story about the second house. She also added, “[Albert] says he cannot yet reconciled [sic] you to living so far away.” The pressure Eliza Morgan must have felt to return east with her family is palpable in these letters, and with an asking price of \$18,320, the house on Columbia Heights promised irresistible comfort and luxury.²⁰ But the Morgans did resist. Not long after this exchange, they moved to Oakland, the Brooklyn Heights of the San Francisco Bay Area, and eventually built the house at 754 14th Street. By the mid 1870s they appear to have achieved a level of material comfort and social status for which Eliza Morgan’s upbringing had prepared her.

Brooklyn Heights, New York, 1878-1879

In 1878, Eliza Morgan traveled to Brooklyn Heights with her four children, two boys and two girls aged between one and eight years old, for an extended period of time [Figure 6]. This episode is the only well-documented one we have from Julia Morgan’s childhood, but it provides insight into two critical aspects of her upbringing. Brooklyn serves as a foil to Oakland, making clear the idyllic freedom children of a certain class enjoyed in the temperate climate of the West. The episode also offers a telling glimpse into the relationship between Charles and Eliza Morgan and the gender dynamics that shaped Julia Morgan and her siblings’ formative years.

Two factors prompted Eliza Morgan to travel East with her children: news of her mother’s failing health and continuing financial instability in the Morgan household. Despite these circumstances, the trip started out as a great adventure – at least for the children. They spent the month of October at the Parmelee summer home in Morristown, New Jersey. When he was not staying at the vacation home and tormenting his younger

²⁰ Julia Parmelee to EPM [1874] and Emma Parmelee to EPM, February 8, 1974, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/19.

sisters, Parmelee took advantage of his Aunt Julia and Uncle Tom's hospitality, insisting, for example, that he always had cake for dinner at home. They, in turn, bought him gifts, gave him money, and frequently took him to the circus and parks. Young Julia, too, reaped the benefits of her aunt and uncle's generosity. She received a beautiful doll. The adventure continued when the extended family returned to Brooklyn. Eliza and the kids arrived at the Brooklyn Heights brownstone on October 26th and took over the entire fourth floor of the elegant old house. Relatives spoiled the children with trips to the big city (Manhattan) and showered them with gifts. Parmelee and Julia visited Barnum's museum, learned to knit, and cut and paste pictures to their hearts' content. The girls received books, and Parmelee received a brand new, bright red velocipede.²¹

Soon, however, the visit to Brooklyn turned into a living nightmare. Colds plagued all members of the family nearly from the day they arrived in New York. Then, in late October, five year-old Emma developed a high fever and sore spots on her throat. The doctor predicted diphtheria, so Eliza moved Emma to her bed and administered whiskey to the other children as a preventative measure. The doctor's diagnosis turned out to be correct. Eliza nursed Emma round the clock for two nights, and, in addition to the whiskey, gave the other children quinine and carbolic acid chloride of lime. Meanwhile, Eliza's mother's health grew worse as well. Between caring for her daughter and mother, Eliza quickly became a prisoner in the old house, not even leaving to attend church.²²

Emma's ailment soon passed, but minor disturbances that mark the lives of young children and toddlers continued to fray Eliza's nerves. Parmelee returned sick after a visit

²¹ See correspondence from Eliza to Charles Morgan between October and November 1878. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/04-05.

²² EPM to CBM, [October 1878], November 2 & 3, 1878. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/05.

to Barnum's, he generally misbehaved at his Aunt Julia's house, and bullied his sisters. Julia was a dutiful child, but hopelessly clumsy. She fell down the stairs the week after the trip to Barnum's, causing her to strain her arm and bruise her hip. More falls followed, leading Eliza to comment, "The way she uses her legs is simply bewildering."²³ Not a week later, Julia fell off of Parmelee's new bicycle, bruising her knees and eliciting a sharp rebuke from her older brother about nearly breaking his bike. Julia's eyes troubled her too, and she missed her father terribly. Eliza often remarked upon Emma's intelligence, but described her as "cool and calculating," a quick tempered alarmist.²⁴ Avery rarely elicited warm thoughts; he was a fat, irritable two-year old who refused to even look at a stranger, let alone enter a room full of strangers, and constantly tested his mother's nerves.

By December, sickness and tragedy returned to the household. In early December, Julia contracted Scarlet fever. Her health progressed well, however, and though bedridden for weeks, her spirits remained high. Two weeks into her daughter's sickness, Eliza reported that Julia, or "Dudu" as she was called, "has never made any fuss – she accepts the inevitable and is composed and serene. She is a real darling – she sits up in her bed as pleasant as an angel and it will be a week or two before [sic] she can leave it." Then Emma contracted the fever. Just days into her convalescence, Eliza reported that Emma "groans, snorts, kicks, yells, squirms, beats Dudu, quarrels with her and is about as trying as you can imagine, yet she is really [sic] very good for her disposition."²⁵ To prevent the other children from getting sick, Eliza had Parmelee stay with an aunt and Avery stayed in the back parlor with the live-in servant, Louisa. Eliza Morgan could not

²³ EPM to CBM, November 10, 1878. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/05.

²⁴ EPM to CBM, December 29, 1878. JMC- Cal Poly I/01/01/06.

²⁵ EPM to CBM, December 21 & 29, 1878. JMC- Cal Poly I/01/01/06.

interact with the younger boy and had to leave him to open his Christmas stocking alone with Louisa and his grandparents. Being separated from her sons, nursing her daughters, and constantly having to ascend and descend the three flights of stairs soon wearied Eliza's nerves and taxed her patience. She began to complain that the damp and drafty old house thwarted efforts to shield the girls from the winter's cold and accelerate their recuperation.²⁶

The new year did not bring any relief. One niece of Eliza's died of Diphtheric croup, which reduced the bedridden Morgan girls to tears. To make matters worse, Celeste, the infant sister of the deceased niece, had been born with a back condition that was feared to be paralysis and rendered her permanently sickly. Eliza worried that she suffered from diphtheria herself and would be dead within days; as it turned out, a severe case of frayed nerves amplified the symptoms of a bad cold. A few days later, however, she returned home from a rare outing on Fulton Street six dollars poorer than when she left, the victim of a pickpocket. Meanwhile, Eliza's mother quarreled with her nurse, causing the latter to quit, and the servant Louisa developed Scarlet fever. By mid January, Eliza had gone six weeks without changing her clothes or sleeping in a bed. Then, seven weeks after contracting Scarlet fever, and just one week after getting out of bed for the first time, Julia came down with a severe ear infection. Her patience was finally spent and the sweet disposition disappeared. Julia protested returning to the same room as Emma; she cried in agony and protest when her mother put drops in her infected ear; she screamed with pain in her neck, head, eyes, and back; she screamed through the night and became so nervous that she refused to move her head; she screamed and slapped and hit the doctor and her mother when they tried to inspect her ear or treat it. Eliza had to

²⁶ Multiple letters between EPM and CBM, December 1878. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/06.

syringe the ear three times a day to keep it dry and hopefully prevent permanent hearing loss, then drop morphine and glycerin to ease the pain. She administered Paregorics to quiet Julia and help the child get some sleep. Just as Julia's ailments were reaching a crisis point, Louisa fell too ill to work, so resigned, and an uncle fell from a window onto iron pickets, which pierced his thigh. Despair consumed Eliza's thoughts. "I do not know what new 'horror' tomorrow will bring," she wrote. "I live in continual fear."²⁷

Tomorrow brought still more disaster. By early February, Julia's ear was healing well, but her docile demeanor did not return. Avery, meanwhile, fell ill and it was feared he, too, would develop Scarlet fever. Then, one evening, Eliza accidentally set fire to the house and tried to put out the flames with her hands and clothes. The house sustained little or no damage, but Eliza burned her hands, rendering the left one useless and the right one just strong enough to scribble a few lines. She had to have her rings sawed off or lose a finger, and the doctor prescribed opium and morphine, which Eliza took reluctantly, to ease the pain and quiet her nerves. All the while, the relentlessness of the winter weighed her spirit down and the idleness of her existence grew unbearable. During their sojourn in Brooklyn Heights, the idea of home as a warm and healthy haven came tumbling down. In its place stood a place of danger and sickness. The home transformed from a refuge to a prison.²⁸

California had wrought a precarious existence in some ways, but in comparison to this world of sickness, death, danger, and sadness, California provided a carefree existence of unlimited opportunity – at least for the children. Oakland's temperate climate, safe streets, and large empty lots lured children outside. According to her

²⁷ General correspondence between EPM and CBM, January 1879, and EPM to CBM, January 26, 1879, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/07.

²⁸ EPM to CBM, February 4 & 12, 1879. KMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/08.

nephew, Julia Morgan particularly enjoyed the trapeze, bow and arrows, and athletics generally.²⁹ Mary McLean Olney, a childhood friend and future client who grew up just blocks away from the Morgan family, remembered climbing pine trees nearly to the top; climbing roofs and sliding down them again, all the while wearing a skirt. Hopscotch and collecting caterpillars were other favorite pastimes. As the city did not yet have an ordinance requiring sidewalks, few homeowners invested in them. Almost all homeowners in the neighborhood, however, built fences around their property – fences of all kinds – and the children turned these into their sidewalks. Apart from crossing the street, they could walk blocks with their feet never touching the ground. The 1880s later ushered in an era of cement sidewalks and a rolling skating craze. Broadway, Oakland's central commercial street, provided great adventure too. Kids walked up and down the street, gazing in the windows of the jewelry store, the book store, and the candy store. Newspaper racks exposed children to the salacious details of crimes of passion, and lurid pictures of men and women on the cover of the *Police Gazette*.³⁰

Oakland and the East Bay hills offered a variety of outdoor activities for the family as well. In 1869, Mayor Samuel Merritt, a Gold Rush settler who bought significant portions of land surrounding San Antonio slough, a natural tidal slough in the middle of Oakland, decided to raise the value of his real estate by building a dam. His investment created the jewel of Oakland, Lake Peralta, which Merritt also persuaded the state legislature to declare the nation's first a wildfowl refuge in 1870. Though it

²⁹ JMAHP. Vol. 2, p. 176.

³⁰ Mary McLean Olney, "Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California, 1880-1895," An Interview Conducted by Willa Klug Baum, Berkeley, 1963, under the auspices of the Regional Cultural History Project. Typed Manuscript on file at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 23-36 (hereafter, Olney, "Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California").

continued to serve as the endpoint for Oakland's sewage lines for a time and was noted for its rank odor, particularly at low tide, Lake Merritt [Figure 4], as the lake was unofficially renamed, quickly attracted wealthy home builders and boasted some of the city's most stately houses. Throughout Morgan's childhood, Oakland residents could rent skiffs, dinghies, or canoes to sail on the lake. While efforts to create a public park and boulevard along the shores of the Lake Merritt languished in political battles throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, Adams Point, a large, undeveloped tract of land owned by the son of one of Oakland's three founders and located at the northeast end of the lake, served as an unofficial park.³¹ Steam trains carried passengers to other leisure destinations as well: to the orchards of Fruit Vale to the south; to the college town of Berkeley to the north; to Mountainview Cemetery, a mortuary park designed in 1863 by America's foremost landscape architect, Frederic Law Olmsted; or to Piedmont Park, originally a resort area located in the foothills to the east of downtown and popular for its mineral springs.³²

The Morgan family also took pleasure in greater California's natural landscape. Traveling mostly by train, the family spent at least one month every summer at one of the state's many scenic locations. According to Morgan North, the family particularly enjoyed Catalina in Southern California and Pacific Grove [Figure 5], near Monterey. We cannot be certain if Morgan North's story is accurate, but Julia Morgan's childhood coincided with significant growth in California's tourist industry, as spearheaded by the

³¹ Bagwell, *Oakland*, pp. 123-28; John Heintz, "The Early Development of Lake Merritt, Oakland California: 1852-1907," masters thesis, California State University, Hayward, 1992, pp. 3, 20, 60-92, 118; Richard Longstreth, "A Short History of Lake Merritt, 1850-1974" (1974), pp. 1-13.

³² Bagwell, *Oakland*, p. 120, 137-40; Evelyn Craig Pattiani, *Queen of the Hills: The Story of Piedmont, a California City* (Oakland, 1982), 18-101.

Southern Pacific Railroad and other parties interested in attracting people to the state.³³

Among the places we definitely know some or all of the family members visited are St. Helena, a small town in the Napa Valley wine country; Los Gatos, another small town south of San Francisco; a house near Squaw Creek and Blue Lake in Humboldt County; and Hopsidan Ranch in the Santa Cruz mountains. While more rugged places like Yosemite in the Sierra Nevada beckoned ever more Californians in the late nineteenth century, the Morgan's seem to have preferred coastal sites and the comfortable resorts with easy access to outdoor activities. In any case, the coastal fog, Cyprus trees, and sand dunes of the Central Coast; the vineyards and rolling hills of the greater Bay Area wine country; and the shade of the giant redwoods in the Northern reaches of the state were all familiar landscapes of Morgan's youth and infused her with a love for the landscape that would influence her architecture.³⁴

If the six-month period in Brooklyn cemented the Morgan family's love for California, it also cemented the gender dynamics and hierarchy in the Morgan household. Back in California, Charles Morgan was doing all he could to make the family financially solvent – and failing at his task. Within the first month of Eliza and the children's departure, he traveled to Chicago to sell his stake in a mining venture, but that sale fell through. Upon his return to Oakland, Charles rented out the house on Fourteenth Street and found a room at a boarding house for himself. Unfortunately, the man who rented the house (at a lower rate than Charles Morgan originally requested) vacated the premises in

³³ See Richard L. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley, 2005), 130-65; Sheri Bernstein, "Selling California, 1900-1920," in Stephanie Barron et al., eds., *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000* (Berkeley, 2000), 65-101.

³⁴ EPM to JM, July 10, 1890; June 21, 24-25, 28, & 30, 1891; July 1, 3, 6, 1891; June 3, 7, 12, 1895, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/10.

less than a month and left the Morgan's to face the real possibility that they would have to sell the property.³⁵ In the meantime, Charles found work as a bookkeeper.

These financial problems occupied Eliza Morgan's thoughts all the while she was caring for her sick mother and children. Both Parmelee and Julia were old enough to attend school, but at \$11/month, or between ten and fourteen percent of her monthly budget, Eliza only had money enough to send Parmelee to the private school she wished her children to attend; Julia would have to wait to start school until the family returned to California in the spring. The children were growing like weeds, too, and needed new clothes, shoes, coats, and hats. Food, medical bills, and Louisa's salary consumed the rest of Eliza's money, leaving no opportunity to indulge in the simplest of treats or to buy new clothes for herself. Instead, Eliza wore the same threadbare dress everyday – the dress she was wearing when she board the train in Oakland – and refashioned a hand-me-down dress from her younger sister. Worst of all, the family finances made returning to California an impossibility.³⁶

Financial scarcity presented Eliza Morgan with practical, everyday challenges, but her response to the situation reveals more about her deep insecurities regarding social status. Exactly how Charles Morgan would transfer money to his wife, for example, filled the pages of many letters. Eliza requested that he not send drafts, for she could not easily escape the house to cash them and had to send her brother in-law instead. Had she been receiving large sums of money, such a situation would not cause much concern, but the twenty dollars her husband sent every week barely paid the bills and exposed how pinched Eliza was for funds. If Charles sent cash, Eliza could protect the privacy of her

³⁵ EPM to CBM, March 7, 1879, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/09.

³⁶ See correspondence from EPM to CBM, October 1878-March 1879. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/04-09.

finances and better maintain a façade of material comfort among her more affluent parents, sister, and cousins. Charles Morgan's failure to obey his wife elicited her wrath. She deemed his actions careless and mean; they left her disgusted with him and shamefully embarrassed in Brooklyn. "Crying mad is no idea of how mad I am," she raged. All the while Eliza worried about keeping up appearances in Brooklyn, she concerned herself with the family's social status Oakland too. Though thousands of miles away and caring for a household of sick people, Eliza wanted to know about the new houses being built in their Oakland neighborhood. In particular, she wanted to know if the neighbors' new house spoiled theirs.³⁷

The months of distance, sickness, and financial worry cast a shadow over the relationship between Eliza and Charles Morgan as well. Early on, Eliza worried anxiously about her husband's loneliness and assured him of her undying love. She even reprimanded him playfully, writing things like, "You old goose (fool).... Don't take a bath more than two or three times a week if you have any regard for your family."³⁸ As the children became sick, however, and Eliza's clothes and budget wore thin, the tone toward her husband changed. In a telling role reversal from the Victorian image of the patriarchal husband and obedient wife, she wrote:

I was much releaved [sic] that you'd written me a rational letter the two that I received befor [sic] were so weak and mankish [sic] I did not intend acknowledging them at all. I do not like sentimental letters. You can write me decent letters if you will, and I'd like to remind you, that you are supposed to be a man – and I wish you would write like a sensible one. If you [sic] life and business does not suit you, it's no worse than it has been, and you ought to enjoy a rest from family cares and domestic duties. You should be thankful for your liberty to go and do as you please. Don't be a bad Boy and quarrel with your mercies.³⁹

³⁷ EPM to CBM, October 23, November 12, 17, and December 12, 1878, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/04-06.

³⁸ EPM to CBM, November 10, 1878, JMC-Cal Poly, I/01/01/05.

³⁹ EPM to CBM, November 24, 1878, JMC-Cal Poly, I/01/01/05.

In a later letter, Eliza noted that men do not cry. Not only did Charles fail to provide for his family as a Victorian husband and father was expected to do, he also let down his guard and openly expressed feelings of love, loneliness, vulnerability, and inadequacy. Eliza, on the other hand, did not rejoice in her role as the nurturing mother and doting wife; she offered little in the way of emotional sympathy and clearly played the dominant role in the relationship.

A Family Portrait

Eliza Morgan and her four children left New York to return to California sometime during the spring or summer of 1879. The insights revealed in Eliza Morgan's letters to her husband during that interlude established the pattern that would characterize the power structure and consequent gender roles in their household. In many ways, the Morgans maintained conservative beliefs in the roles men and women played at home and in society. According to historian John Gillis, the Victorian "man's respectability was increasingly vested in ownership and dissociated from actual involvement with day-to-day homemaking," a formula to which Charles Morgan conformed perfectly.⁴⁰ He, of course, was completely absent from the drama that unfolded in Brooklyn, and otherwise spent most of his energy during Julia Morgan's childhood accumulating power and wealth outside the home. He tried his luck with mining ventures, real estate investments, and politics, and he tried to interest Charles Schwab in establishing an iron and steel works plant in Oakland.⁴¹ "He always had a major project of some kind of his own that

⁴⁰ Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making*, 123.

⁴¹ Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 19-20 ; correspondence between CBM and C. H. Burnett, South Prairie Coal Company, Miners, Shippers and Dealers in Steam, Gas and Domestic Coal, December 1903-January 1905. JMC-Cal Poly, I/02/01/25.

he was chasing,” his grandson Morgan North remembered. “I just never had the feeling that he cared so much about family ties.” Apart from managing for ten years a company that manufactured industrial tacks, bar iron, and mowing machines, Charles Morgan’s professional success remained tenuous at best. Again, Morgan North recalled, “He was in airplanes, balloons, nails, farm machinery, sugar – most anything that didn’t work he was in.”⁴² In a letter to Julia in 1900, Charles Morgan assessed his achievements and lamented, “How I wish that my life had been more successful and that I might contribute to the happiness of my children.”⁴³

Eliza Morgan, her husband and children understood clearly, claimed most of the power in the household in both symbolic and real ways. If childhood in the Morgan household was as “idyllic” as her nephew reported it to be and if Charles Morgan played the marginal role appears to have played, then Eliza Morgan successfully fulfilled her role in creating a home that evoked comfort, safety and sentimental nostalgia, a home where husband and children happily returned to time and again.⁴⁴ At times, Eliza Morgan also recognized her husband’s position as head of the household by deferring to his best judgment in significant life decisions. Though she might have preferred to return to Brooklyn when her family was struggling in California, for example, she followed her husband’s wishes to stay in New York,⁴⁵ and when the Morgans faced the possibility of losing the house, Eliza wrote to Charles, “You can give it up whenever you think best.” In the same sentence regarding the house, however, Eliza added, “only I won’t have you

⁴² JMAHP. Vol. 2, pp. 160, 208.

⁴³ CBM to JM, January 21, 1900. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/12.

⁴⁴ Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making*, 121-29.

⁴⁵ Emma Parmelee to EPM, February 8, 1874. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/19.

sell the furniture – it's mine.”⁴⁶ Early in their marriage, Eliza established power through a traditionally masculine trait, ownership, which in turn, divested Charles Morgan of one of the key virtues of Victorian manhood. This balance of power tilted more toward Eliza Morgan upon the death of her father in 1880. She not only inherited a fortune from him, but invited her mother to live out the rest of her days in California.⁴⁷ The combined wealth of these two women, more than the periodic windfalls of Charles Morgan, generated the financial stability and material comfort that marked Julia Morgan’s childhood.

In the end, the values Charles and Eliza Morgan shared regarding the proper roles for men and women in society conflicted with the reality of their own relationship, leaving an ambiguous model for the children to follow. Like their father, the three boys all strived and failed to achieve significant status in wealth, career, or family. Equipped with the knowledge that men could not necessarily provide material or social stability; influenced by the assertive personality of their mother; and intelligent, competitive, adventuresome, and ambitious in their own right, the two girls forged paths that deviated significantly from the Victorian ideas of “true womanhood” and anticipated the “new woman” of the twentieth century.

Just as Parmelee Morgan’s activities barely register in the correspondence between his mother and father during this period in Brooklyn, so did he remain a vague presence in the family throughout his life. He graduated from Oakland High School in 1888, then worked as a shipping merchant in the Bay Area before he set sail for a world

⁴⁶ EPM to CBM, March 7, 1879. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/09.

⁴⁷ Eliza Morgan reported to Julia that Emma Parmelee stayed up to watch the fireworks on July 4, 1890, suggesting she occupied a permanent space in the Oakland residence. EPM to JM, July 5, 1890. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/10.

tour in 1900. He decided New York City offered better trade possibilities, so relocated there in 1901 to follow in his maternal grandfather's work in the cotton trade business. After returning to Oakland for one year in 1906, Parmelee moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where he lived in a lodging house. He then met Sarah Moon, a young woman eighteen years his junior, and apparently fell in love. In any case, the two married and had a daughter, Judith Avery Morgan, in 1912. Sometime in the next five years Parmelee Morgan's family moved to California and settled in Los Angeles. Then, in 1918, at the age of forty-seven, Parmelee Morgan died. He left behind his young wife and five year-old daughter.⁴⁸

Avery's ornery disposition as a toddler evolved into chronic depression as an adult. During a trip in 1891 Eliza Morgan described him as anxious and "giving way to his worst tempers and is very ugly to get along with – he don't care what the people think of his actions and is very trying to one." Not satisfied with his natural disposition, Eliza Morgan forced Avery to read a book on etiquette.⁴⁹ An intelligent man, he followed his sisters to the University of California where he, like Julia, studied civil engineering. After graduating from university in 1898, Avery traveled to Paris where he lived with Julia and studied architecture in the atelier of Victor Laloux. Avery never adjusted to life in the French capital or the carnivalesque culture of the atelier,⁵⁰ so he returned to Oakland early in 1900 and took up residence once again at the family home. Like his older brother Parmelee, Avery changed jobs several times. For twenty years he worked as a draftsman

⁴⁸ "The History of Oakland High School," Class of 1887, <http://www.geocities.com/bevshul/OHS/history.htm>; Parmelee Morgan to JM, June 1, 1900, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/16; JMAHP. Vol. 2, p. 162; United States Census, 1880, 1910; Obituaries, *Oakland Tribune*, March 24, 1918, p. 42, and *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1918, p. 12; California Death Index, The Vital Search Company, http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/picdata/CA/deaths/190/_CA_de90_MORGAN-8.jpg.

⁴⁹ EPM to JM, June 24-25, 28, & 30, 1891. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/10.

⁵⁰ For more on atelier culture, see Chapter 2, "Parisian Foundations: Julia Morgan at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1896-1902."

at various firms, including Julia's, but he never held a job for more than a couple of years. If he was not fired from a job, he would just leave for lunch one day and never return. From the late teens through most of the 1920s, Avery worked as Julia's chauffeur, and the 1930 census listed him as a musician (he played the organ and violin). Avery's already unreliable disposition worsened in the mid 1920s when the stress of caring obsessively for his bedridden father led to a nervous breakdown from which he never completely recovered.⁵¹ Life hit a low point in 1931 when, while living with friends or under the care of a nurse in Los Altos, a small town about forty miles south of San Francisco, fifty-two year old Avery disappeared. After eight days, Julia Morgan notified the police of her brother's disappearance, which resulted in a statewide search for him and publication of his disappearance in newspapers in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Sheriff's deputies found him a few days later living in a rude cabin on an abandoned ranch twenty miles east of Mount Hamilton and surviving on canned milk and oats. He could recount little of his wanderings or of himself. Julia Morgan attributed Avery's disappearance to amnesia, but what precipitated that diagnosis remains a mystery.⁵² In 1944, at the age of sixty-seven, Avery died.⁵³

Gardner Bulkley Morgan [Figure 7], the youngest child, described himself as a "block head," but showed more love for life and genuine interest in the world than his older brothers. He typified the emerging culture of manliness that Gail Bederman found

⁵¹ JMAHP. Vol. 2, pp. 163-64.

⁵² Gertrude Harmon to JM, [May or June 1929], JMC-Cal Poly, I/06/02/12; "Architect Missing for Week, Hunted," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 28, 1931, p. 1; "Lost Architect Amnesia Victim," *ibid.*, March 31, 1931, p. 8; "Friends Search for Avery Morgan," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 28, 1931, p. 5; "Architect Found Living as a Hermit," *ibid.*, March 31, 1931, p. 17; "Search for Missing Architect Asked," *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 1931, p. 5; "Search Hills for Vanished Architect," *San Francisco Call*, March 28, 1931, p. 3.

⁵³ United States Census; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 22; The Vital Search Company, www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/ca/_vitals/cadeygen.htm.

in sport, popular culture, and political discourse of turn-of-the-century America. Physical strength and rugged adventure were two key components of the new, “strenuous manhood.”⁵⁴ Sam, as Gardner was called, had little time for church and even less time for society. Despite his mother’s best efforts to persuade Sam to attend exclusive dances with his high school cohort, he preferred to spend time with a friend who owned a bicycle store, or with the local firemen. By the age of eighteen, and before he graduated from high school, Sam had joined the fire company, sometimes responding to three alarms in a night. After graduation, he had no desire to attend university and showed little inclination to seek regular employment. His brother in-law, Hart North, refused to offer any help “unless he promises to take whatever is offered him,” his mother wrote, “and Sam never makes promises.”⁵⁵ Sam sought adventure instead. He reveled in his sister’s descriptions of her travels in Europe, and in 1901 he set off on an American tour. “Of course, it will set me [back] a few dollars, but then I am liable to get killed any hour, and I might as well see a little of this world as well as the next,” he wrote all too presciently to Julia.⁵⁶ Upon his return to Oakland, Sam worked for Aetna Life Insurance Company. Then, perhaps seeing an opportunity both in the rapid development of housing tracts in the East Bay and by his oldest sister’s growing architectural practice, Sam and a friend founded a moving and storage business in 1904. All the while, Sam remained active with the fire department and in 1912 advanced to the rank of Assistant Fire Chief. He was his parents’ favorite child, for, as his nephew understood, “he was fulfilling his masculine

⁵⁴ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago, 1995), especially her discussion of Theodore Roosevelt, 170-215.

⁵⁵ EPM to JM, May 19, 1901. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

⁵⁶ GM to JM, September 29, 1901. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/15.

role.”⁵⁷ Alas, on March 17, 1913, the fire department roadster he was riding in collided with a streetcar, ejecting Sam and his driver from the car. Gardner “Sam” Morgan broke his jaw, suffered internal injuries, and a “partially torn scalp.” A hemophiliac, he never stopped bleeding and died in hospital six months later at the age of thirty-two.⁵⁸

The life paths of Julia and her younger sister Emma portended a coming age of greater independence and opportunities for women outside marriage, family, and the home. After graduating from Oakland High School [Figure 8] in 1892, Emma Morgan enrolled in the University of California and joined Kappa Alpha Theta, the sorority to which Julia already belonged. Emma graduated from college in 1897 with a degree in literary. Though Hart North, a young lawyer, had been courting her since her high school days, Emma resisted marriage at this time. She first took classes at the Hopkins Institute of Art in San Francisco, then enrolled in San Francisco’s Hastings School of Law in the fall of 1899.⁵⁹ Ten months later, after ten years of courtship, Emma Morgan finally married Hart Hyatt North, a traditional milestone she reveled in, for she filled pages of stationery detailing her dress, the house and its decorations, the food, the guests, and the presents.⁶⁰ In terms of status, wealth, and material comfort, Hart North could fulfill all of Emma’s wants and desires. As she boasted to Julia in 1901, when Hart North was only thirty years old, he “has gone up to Sacramento to open the Legislature which you know could not be done without him.”⁶¹ Within a few years, North named the first Chief Immigration Officer for the Pacific Coast and in 1910, he oversaw the opening of Angel

⁵⁷ JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 163, 170.

⁵⁸ “Assistant Fire Chief is Badly Hurt in Crash,” *Oakland Tribune*, March 18, 1913, section II, p. 1; “Fire Chief’s Aid Hurt St. Patrick’s Day Dies,” *San Francisco Call*, September 4, 1913, p. 9; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*, p. 22; The Vital Search Company, California Death Index, http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/picdata/CA/deaths/190/_CA_de90_MORGAN-e.jpg.

⁵⁹ EMN to JM, September 3, 1899. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/14.

⁶⁰ EMN to JM, July 10-15, 1900. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

⁶¹ EMN to JM, January 6, 1901. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/14.

Island Immigration Station. Despite her husband's powerful position within the legal and political community, Emma Morgan North did not abandon law after she married. She graduated from law school, passed the bar, and, for a time, practiced law. Doctors' conclusions that a heart murmur would likely render Emma constitution too frail to bear children served influenced her decision to pursue a professional degree. After several years of marriage and the discovery that Emma did not much care for the legal profession, however, the Norths tried to start a family. They had four sons, only one of whom survived. At that point, Emma Morgan North, thirty-eight years old, retired definitively from active practice. Never one to completely abandon her modern impulses, she maintained her membership on the California bar until she died at the age of ninety-four in 1965.⁶²

Julia Morgan inherited her father's adventurous spirit and her mother's unsentimental willfulness, a combination that resulted in the most modern woman of her family. She showed early signs of scholastic aptitude. A childhood friend congratulating Morgan on the honorary Doctor of Laws degree that the University of California awarded her in 1929 commented, "You must have looked sweet at the happy moment, just as you used to as a gentle eight-year child, when the school prizes fell into your tiny hands."⁶³ As the Scarlet fever incident in Brooklyn revealed, however, a defiant streak lay dormant behind this veneer of shyness, modesty, and obedience. It surfaced in the face of adversity, as when the Scarlet fever turned into a severe ear infection. As Morgan grew up, this defiance manifested itself in the ambition to excel against often daunting odds

⁶² JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 208-10; Carol Green Wilson, *Chinatown Quest: One Hundred Years of Donaldina Cameron House, 1874-1974* (San Francisco, 1974), 85. For more on Hart Hyatt North, see also Hart Hyatt North Papers at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

⁶³ Margaret Fowler to JM, May 23, 1929. JMC-Cal Poly I/06/02/12.

rather than hitting and screaming. In 1886, Morgan enrolled at Oakland High School, a three-storey Victorian building located just a few blocks from her home and one of the most prestigious high schools in the state. Like most American coeducational public high schools at that time, where classrooms were not segregated by sex, Oakland High offered no vocational training. Girls and boys alike could – and did in almost equal numbers – study Latin, Greek, French, German, algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, and general history.⁶⁴ Children from prominent Oakland families – Olney, de Fremery, McChesney, and McLean, to name a few – attended the school. And the school graduated other notable Californians of Morgan’s generation, including architects Arthur Brown ('92) and George Applegarth ('93), and authors Gertrude Stein ('92), Frank Norris ('95) and Jack London ('96).⁶⁵ Morgan graduated from Oakland High School in May 1890. That summer, she sought a letter of recommendation to enroll in the University of California.

University of California

Julia Morgan’s matriculation at the University of California established a pattern that would come to define her adulthood and career. She immersed herself in heavily masculine environments only to achieve largely unprecedented levels of success. In contrast to Oakland High School, where women outnumbered men nearly 5 to 4, men outnumbered women at the University of California nearly 4 to 1. Morgan followed a course in mechanics and finally graduated with a degree in civil engineering, effectively exaggerating for herself this already significant gender imbalance. In the four years previous to her arrival at Berkeley, no woman had enrolled in agriculture, mechanics, or mining courses; only one woman each year had studied civil engineering; and two each

⁶⁴ Rury, *Education and Women’s Work*, 37-48.

⁶⁵ <http://www.geocities.com/bevshul/OHS/history.htm>.

year took chemistry. While the vast majority of women pursued majors either in Latin and Modern Languages or Letters and Political Science, Julia Morgan pursued a course of study where men outnumbered women more than 6 to 1.⁶⁶ Henrietta Brewer, a childhood friend and sorority sister, also recalled that Morgan was the first woman to apply to several courses in mathematics and physics. Despite these potentially intimidating circumstances and a painfully modest and retiring character, Brewer further remembered, Julia Morgan “nevertheless won a most enviable position in the respect and regard of her professors and classmates, and was considered a true exponent of the finest type of woman student.”⁶⁷ Stated another way, Morgan quickly discovered how to navigate a masculine world and defy gender expectations by downplaying her fierce ambition and letting her work speak for itself. As a result, she graduated from Berkeley with honors in civil engineering in 1894.

Intelligence, ambition, and quiet defiance can account for some of Morgan’s academic achievement at Berkeley, but her success depended as much on developing a place for women at the university as it did on personal character. Changing attitudes towards women in higher education throughout the country, combined with increased interest and financial support of local women literally and figuratively made the university more accessible to women. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz has argued that the physical environment of university campuses directly influenced the development of women’s culture and feminine consciousness. The same was true at Berkeley. The private, East Coast institutions in Horowitz’s may have inadvertently cultivated a women’s culture that produced many activists of the Progressive Era, but the institutions

⁶⁶ Horace Davis, “Collegiate Education of Women,” *The Overland Monthly* XVI (October 1890): 337-44.

⁶⁷ Henrietta Brewer, “Julia Morgan, Our Architect,” *Kappa Alpha Theta Journal* (1909), pp. 473-74.

had intentionally created all female environments and a staff and faculty to support the education of women. Berkeley only began to provide deliberate institutional support for its female students after 1900. Before then, a women's culture was born mostly out of the deliberate actions of the students, and it was during Morgan's undergraduate years that women students began to carve new spaces for themselves at the university. They expanded beyond the classrooms and the Ladies' Room in the basement of North Hall to the gymnasium, playing fields, new clubs and societies. By far the most important new women's space for Morgan was the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority house. Though limited to an elite few, this space exemplified the transitional status of women at the university and the potential new spatial arrangements held for liberating women from a life defined largely by home and family. This burgeoning women's culture at the university offered safety and empowerment for Morgan to venture into the masculine world of engineering and architecture.

The College of California was founded in 1858 as a private Congregationalist institution, and transformed into the University of California in 1868. The Morrill Act of 1862 facilitated this change; the act was designed to publicly fund institutions to train men for careers in business, industry, agriculture, and other practical professions in addition to traditional classical educations in arts and letters. Like other federally funded institutions in the West, however, financial insolvency at the university and teacher shortages in public schools – rather than progressive impulses – inspired the University of California's decision to admit women.⁶⁸ Consequently, women attended the University of California beginning in 1870, but faculty and administrators took little or

⁶⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between teaching, finances, and female enrollment in universities, see Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, 1982), 30-31.

no notice of them or their needs throughout much of the nineteenth century, not even as the number of women students began to increase dramatically every year from 1885 onward. As a result, the university implemented what educational historian, John Rury, defines as a “gender neutral” curriculum, but might more accurately be termed “masculine.” Students could apply to one of the following majors: Classical, Literary, Letters & Political Science, Agriculture, Mechanics, Mining, Civil Engineering, or Chemistry. To what end Morgan or any other woman of her generation enrolled in universities remained elusive, for society still expected the vast majority of women to marry and raise families, as they had done for generations. Similarly, as the first Dean of Women, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, complained in her autobiography, the structure of the curriculum offered women little direction to pursue a post-college life beyond marriage or teaching. Mitchell did not recognize the potential in this academic program to offer women the training that could enable them to pursue careers traditionally occupied by men, rather than be funneled into gender-specific courses and gender-specific careers. Women could follow any of the course offerings, provided they had the classes and grades to qualify, and receive an education identical to their male classmates. Thus, in the fall of 1890, Julia Morgan, who already had designs to pursue architecture, began her freshman year as a mechanics major.⁶⁹

Just as the curriculum took for granted a static idea of women’s role in society, so did the design of the campus virtually ignore the needs of a growing body of female students. Until 1873 the campus was located in downtown Oakland. That year, the

⁶⁹ Rury, *Education and Women’s Work*; Admissions Applications, UARC CU-10 Box 2 Folder 2; Admissions Oakland High School 1889-1890, UARC CU-10 Box 2 Folder 7, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, *Two Lives: The Story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and Myself* (New York, 1953), 194 (hereafter, Mitchell, *Two Lives*).

university relocated to a hilly site in Berkeley, still a small rural town just a few miles north of Oakland [Figure 9].⁷⁰ Though spacious, picturesque, and easily reached via steam train, the Berkeley site proved inconvenient to the middle-class women who were still expected to ride public transportation accompanied by an escort or in groups. Large farms and homesteads with picket fences and grazing goats surrounded the campus, and a handful of red brick buildings with mansard roofs comprised the school's classrooms, laboratories, and offices. Large grassy fields separated the buildings, while dirt paths connected them. Little had changed twenty years later when Julia Morgan arrived. Mary McLean Olney, a childhood friend and classmate of Morgan as well as a client, described this landscape as particularly inhospitable to women. Rain quickly transformed the dirt paths into muddy walkways, creating quite a spectacle when coeds who were carrying their books slipped in their long, heavy skirts and heeled shoes. Male students had benches to rest on and fields to recreate on, but women could find few such amenities. North Hall [Figure 10] provided the one refuge on campus designated exclusively for women: "The ladies' room" occupied most of the basement of the building and provided a space where women could study, relax on the couch or comfortable chairs, store books for a small fee in lockers, or store superfluous shoes, clothing, or other items. More than anything, Olney remembered, "the ladies' room was quite a gathering place for the coeds

⁷⁰ When the College of California became the University of California in 1868 and intended to relocate from downtown Oakland to the rural town of Berkeley to the north, the university faced a lot of land, no buildings, and little money. Isaac H. Brayton, a Congregationalist minister and large property owner who owned the College of California buildings, loaned money to the college to save it from imminent bankruptcy in 1868. The new university planned to continue to use the downtown Oakland buildings until it could afford to build in Berkeley and relocate there, so it offered to swap all of its land outside the boundaries of the future Berkeley campus for the mortgage on the buildings of the Oakland campus. Its debts cleared by this deal, the university could finally move to Berkeley in 1873. Verne Stadtman, *The University of California: 1868-1968*, p. 40.

and very much used.”⁷¹ Other coeds remembered the space differently. Not five years after McLean Olney and Morgan’s graduation from Berkeley, women students described the ladies’ room as uninviting and unsanitary; nonetheless, rainy days drew the ladies inside, for it was the only place on campus where they could find shelter.

Housing created still more difficulties. Dormitories did not exist for men or women at Berkeley until the 1920s. What few housing opportunities the still small town of Berkeley did provide in the 1890s were either unacceptable or essentially off limits to the mostly middle-class women who attended the university. When Dr. Mary Bennett Ritter surveyed boarding houses near campus in the late 1890s, she discovered unsanitary living conditions: Though by then Berkeley had installed a sewage system, not all boarding houses were connected to it; outhouses and water wells were not uncommon, nor were houses without bathrooms. Ritter also found women cooking, eating, sleeping, and studying in small dark rooms, often located in attics or basements. A few years later Lucy Sprague Mitchell found some students living and working in what she termed as brothels because they could not find affordable alternatives. Poor hygiene and bad nutrition accompanied these living conditions. No same-sex boarding houses existed at all, and most boarding house matrons refused to admit women altogether.⁷² These housing conditions reinforced the perception that living away from home would only introduce young women to danger and vice.

In turn, Berkeley coeds perpetuated the practice of commuting between their parents’ home and the university, which, as historians have demonstrated, directly affected academic achievement and the development of a college life for women. Helen

⁷¹ Olney, “Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California,” 126-27.

⁷² Mary Bennett Ritter, *More than Gold in California, 1849-1933* (Berkeley, 1933), 207-9 (hereafter, Ritter, *More than Gold*); Mitchell, *Two Lives*, 195.

Lefkowitz Horowitz has examined one extreme, the all-female colleges and seminaries of the East Coast. Young women formed bonds of friendship, an ambition to work outside the home, and a taste for independence from the family dwelling that most American women never experienced.⁷³ In contrast, Lynn Gordon has noted of Berkeley, in particular, that living at home did not simply deprive students the opportunity to participate in campus life and develop a significant female student culture because of logistical difficulties, but diverted their attention from rigorous and potentially liberating intellectual pursuits to their more traditional place in society as domestic caretakers. Stuck at home, few women students could imagine careers outside of teaching, marriage, and motherhood.⁷⁴ The commute itself further reduced the amount of time women could devote to their studies and virtually forced them into a state of dependence. Julia Morgan followed a relatively easy commute. She walked about eight blocks east to Telegraph Avenue, where she could board a horse car that would take her to North Oakland, then board a steam train to Berkeley. A half hour later, Morgan arrived at a small bridge that crossed Strawberry Creek and marked the south entrance to the Berkeley Campus. Students who lived in San Francisco, however, had to travel from their homes to the ferry building, then cross the bay before boarding the streetcars. Their journey took well over an hour, and inclement weather only exacerbated the commute.⁷⁵ As social customs still dictated that respectable women not ride public transportation alone, Morgan, like her female classmates, traveled with an escort. Julia Morgan had three brothers charged with

⁷³ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s*, second edition (Amherst, 1993), 3-27.

⁷⁴ Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, 1990), 54-55, 65, 68.

⁷⁵ Olney, "Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California," 158; Bagwell, *Oakland*, 152-67.

chaperoning her day and night; other students may have found it more difficult to organize safe or socially acceptable arrangements.⁷⁶

The late 1880s and early 1890s marked a turning point for women in higher education in California. The actions of three women – Susan Mills, Jane Lathrop Stanford, and Phoebe Apperson Hearst – literally made universities more accessible to women. In 1885, the state of California granted a college charter to Mills Seminary [Figure 11], then under the leadership of president and cofounder Susan Mills, which created the first all-women's college on the Pacific Coast. From that point forward, the college instituted and regularly modernized more rigorous programs in mathematics, science, languages, and literature; updated laboratory facilities; and constructed more specialized buildings for classrooms and living quarters. As the school's reputation grew, it attracted students from nearly all the states in the union and several foreign nations as well. National and international dignitaries visited the school and local political, civic, intellectual, and business leaders offered their public respect and financial, administrative, and intellectual support. By 1890, when Julia Morgan was contemplating university, Mills College stood as leading institution for the higher education of women in California and compared itself favorably to the most respected women's institutions of the East Coast.⁷⁷ 1891 marked the opening of Stanford University, a private coeducational institution in Palo Alto. With its \$20 million endowment, the new university could afford to offer free tuition to men and women, though Jane Stanford, widow of railroad tycoon Leland Stanford, limited the number of women students. Jane Stanford also continued to invest money in the construction of several California mission

⁷⁶ JMAHP, Vol. 2, p. 170.

⁷⁷ Rosalind Amelia Keep, *Fourscore Years: A History of Mills College* (Oakland, 1931), 51-94.

style buildings, which received widespread praise. The endowment and the buildings, combined with the charismatic leadership of university president David Starr Jordan ensured that Stanford's reputation would grow quickly.⁷⁸ Phoebe Apperson Hearst, widow of mining magnate and California senator George Hearst, and mother of media tycoon and sometimes politician William Randolph Hearst, founded a scholarship program in 1891 for young women to attend the University of California. Over the next decade, Hearst poured money into the establishment of new departments, underwrote an international competition to design a new campus in 1898, helped fund the establishment of a new Ladies' Room, and in 1900 donated a house built for the architectural competition to be converted into a gymnasium for women.⁷⁹

Women students also organized to work within this preexisting campus landscape to create a new set of spatial arrangements that were more conducive to their social, academic, psychological, and physical well-being. One of their first acts, a campaign to gain access to the university's gymnasium, underscored their commitment to transform the landscape and their resourcefulness in doing so. Harmon Gymnasium opened in 1879 and, according to the 1880 edition of *Blue and Gold*, the university yearbook, women could use the new gym on Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Though both the gym and a belief in the benefits of exercise to women's health expanded over the next decade, female students' access to the gymnasium apparently disappeared. In 1889, the gym instructor again invited women students to patronize the gymnasium on Wednesday and

⁷⁸ Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York, 1973), 307-44.

⁷⁹ Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley, 1999), 285-91 (hereafter, Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*); Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education*, 55-62; Roy Lowe, "A Western Acropolis of Learning": *The University of California, 1897* (Berkeley, 1996); Roberta Park, "A Gym of their Own: Women, Sports, and Physical Culture at the Berkeley Campus, 1876-1976," in *Chronicle of the University of California* 1 (Fall 1998), 24 (hereafter, Park, "A Gym of their Own");

Friday afternoons, but a requirement that all students undergo a medical examination before participating in physical education effectively barred women from such activities. Funds for a female examiner did not exist and nineteenth-century sensibilities rendered moot the idea that a man would examine the girls. Not satisfied with this situation, women students organized to change it. They beseeched Mary Bennett Ritter, wife of a professor of zoology and herself a doctor who specialized in women's medicine, to volunteer her services. She agreed. Phoebe Hearst soon agreed to pay Mary Ritter a salary. In the interim, current and former students petitioned the board of regents to fund the appointment of a female examiner. Two years later they again petitioned the regents, this time to extend gym access to ten hours a week. That year the regents also agreed to subsidize the physical examinations for one year.⁸⁰

With their access to the gymnasium secured, the women extended the boundaries of their physical education to the outdoors as well. The Young Ladies' Tennis Club organized in 1891 with a membership of about thirty, and a new tennis court was built in the picturesque valley on the eastern edge of campus, Strawberry Canyon (referred to as Co-ed Cañon). Archery and boating clubs began that year too. With the organization of these clubs and better access to the gymnasium, female students experienced for the first time a long tradition of the male college experience, participating in athletics. Though the women continued to wear their fancy hats, long skirts, and high-necked blouses, they also began to redefine proper femininity by appropriating as their own this traditionally male domain.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Park, "A Gym of their Own," 21-28; Ritter, *More than Gold*, 201-6.

⁸¹ "Young Women's Christian Association," *The Blue and Gold* 17 (1891), 80; "Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity," *ibid.*, 17 (1892), 91; "Young Women's Christian Association," *ibid.*, 107; "Ladies' Tennis Club," *ibid.*, 115.

Access to the gymnasium and the requisite physical exam created an unintended and perhaps more important consequence too: For the first time in the University of California's history, women students could meet regularly with an accomplished female mentor in an easily accessible and protected space. There, Mary Bennett Ritter taught students about hygiene, the body, disease prevention, healthy exercise, and caring for the injured – subjects these students would never learn in the classroom. And every morning, Ritter attended to girls who consulted her “about their ills of body, mind or ‘hearts.”⁸² Together, Ritter and the students had planted seeds to encourage the growth of a women’s culture.

According to her nephew, Morgan North, Julia Morgan had a penchant for athletics, but we do not actually know if she patronized the gymnasium or participated in any sports. In June 1890, however, twelve coeds signed a charter to establish the Omega chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta [Figure 12], by far the most important institution to impact Julia Morgan’s undergraduate career. As historian Diana Turk has noted, historians of women in higher education have been correct to note that an institution like the sorority served an elite few, but, for the same reason, they have dismissed sororities all too quickly as an object of study. Turk examines extensively in her study the social activities of sororities, but I am interested in the sorority house itself and its real and symbolic impact on the lives of college students generally, and Julia Morgan in particular.

The sorority house exemplified the transitional moment in the life of college women at the University of California during the 1890s. Though plenty of cheap lots were located near the campus, the father of charter member Jessie Watson purchased a lot on College Avenue near Parker Street, about a mile south of the campus edge (and still

⁸² Park, “A Gym of their Own,” 21-28; Ritter, *More than Gold*, 201-6.

about half a mile from the current edge of campus). Twelve years after it was built, only one other house stood on the same block as the original Kappa Alpha Theta house and similarly undeveloped blocks surrounded it to the east and the south. Fewer buildings existed near the sorority house in 1891, placing it virtually in the country; thus, this location drew the women away from the campus and the small town that was growing around it, even as it created a more autonomous space for them where they could begin to develop a rich college life.

The isolation of the house also underscored the exclusivity of the fraternity during Morgan's undergraduate days, which played an important part in academic development of Theta members. Diana Turk has noted a definitive shift from the first generation (1870s and 1880s) of women fraternities' focus on academic excellence to a primary concern for social events and external appearances among fraternity women of the 1890s and 1900s. This trend followed the more general pattern of women students at colleges throughout the country and reflects a general acceptance of higher education for upper-middle- and middle-class women; a related decline in the need for women to prove their stamina and aptitude for intellectual pursuits; the introduction of extracurricular pastimes like intercollegiate athletics; and, particular to women's fraternities, a dramatic rise in the number of clubs and competition between them to secure the best pledges. The Omega chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta, however, literally stood alone as the only fraternity for women at Berkeley. With no fraternities to compete against, Thetas could take their time to nominate, interview, debate about, and finally choose pledges. In this context, academics remained a central asset of the Omega chapter, perhaps longer than it did among sororities in other parts of the country. Among the forty women who joined

Kappa Alpha Theta between 1890 and 1894, at least six women became school teachers – for a while, anyways; Mclean Olney taught English at Stanford for a year, followed by a year as “Lady Principal” at Pomona College in Claremont, California. Two other women obtained law degrees, though only one actively practiced law for a significant period of time, and three others earned graduate degrees. The particularly high number of graduate degrees earned by them distinguished sorority members from Berkeley’s women graduates in the nineteenth century more generally.⁸³ This supportive network of individuals who encouraged academic excellence and with whom Morgan interacted nearly everyday in the intimate environment of the fraternity house facilitated Morgan’s efforts to pursue a most rigorous course of study in mathematics and science.

The chapter house also held the potential to dramatically change a woman’s relationship to work, family, and home, a momentous opportunity that few women took advantage of. They certainly took pride in having a house to call their own and decorated it with care, including Julia Morgan. During the summer of 1891, in preparation for moving into the new house, she painstakingly recovered a couch with a floral print, using so many tacks that the cover lasted for the next eight years.⁸⁴ For most of the fraternity members the house served a more exclusive and more comfortable meeting space than the Ladies’ Room in the basement of North Hall. Members walked to the house everyday to eat their lunch and socialize. Special events and meetings required their presence at the house as well, but otherwise, Thetas continued to live at their parents’ houses. Julia

⁸³ EPM to JM, June 12, 1895, JMC-Cal Poly I/0101/10; EMN to JM, May 25, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/14; Olney, “Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California,” 141; *Omega*, 2-3; United States Census, 1900; *University of California Directory of Graduates, 1864-1905* (Berkeley, 1905) (hereafter, *Directory of Undergraduates*); Diana Turk, *Bound by a Mighty Vow: Sisterhood and Women’s Fraternities, 1870-1920* (New York, 2004), 13-79 (hereafter, Turk, *Bound by a Mighty Vow*).

⁸⁴ EMN to JM, August 28, 1898. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/14.

Morgan marked an exception to this rule. With the opening of the sorority house in the fall semester of 1891, Morgan no longer had to depend on her brothers to chaperone her to campus. She and two other Theta sisters moved in, literally loosening the reins of the family and allowing Morgan to shift the center of her priorities from home life to an independent academic life.⁸⁵

Theta members had to learn to manage an entirely new set of responsibilities related directly to the chapter house in what historian Lee Simpson would call “an ‘apprenticeship’ in property owning and management.”⁸⁶ Though George Watson donated the funds to buy the property and build a house for the new club, he required that the sorority members pay rent. Keeping the seven bedrooms occupied proved to be more difficult than anticipated, in part because custom had kept women coeds at home with their parents. As Mary McLean Olney noted, too, the sorority actively preserved its exclusivity; while this aspect of the club fostered intimate friendships, it also dramatically reduced the number of potential tenants.⁸⁷ In addition, the girls had to secure at least a chef and a chaperone. Hiring the right chaperone was challenging, for as Eliza Morgan noted to Julia, the college women would resent an over-weaning presence. While the young women consented to certain social practices, they intended to create a more independent space for themselves.⁸⁸ More importantly, the staff expected to be paid. Membership dues did not cover the costs, forcing the Omega chapter, like most other sororities of the period, to institute special assessments for all events.⁸⁹ Five years into its

⁸⁵ Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 23; Sanborn fire insurance map #374 for Berkeley, California (1903); Olney, “Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California,” 2-4, 25, 30-32, 35.

⁸⁶ Lee Simpson, *Selling the City: Gender, Class, and the California Growth Machine, 1880-1940* (Stanford, 2005), 16.

⁸⁷ Olney, “Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California,” 147-49.

⁸⁸ EPM to JM, June 18, 1891. JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/10.

⁸⁹ Dodge, *Kappa Alpha Theta*, 4; Turk, *Bound by a Mighty Vow*, 56-57.

ventures in house renting, the sorority was forced to move to smaller and less aesthetically pleasing accommodations. Still, Emma Morgan wrote to her sister, debtors reclaimed the piano and a loan association held title to the house, rendering the sorority in constant fear that they would lose their property.⁹⁰ As Morgan and many of her cohort would later discover, finances dictated the growth of an institution as much as any other factor, and the institution's building consumed the most finances in one way or another.

A house provided sorority members with a convenient space to host social functions and, as with most women's fraternities around the country, planning and hosting social events did occupy most of the Omega chapter's meetings. Rushing, initiation, teas for the faculty and their wives, "dancing parties," "musicales," theater parties, and bicycle rides, among other events, filled the Theta calendar. These activities, however frivolous they may seem, cannot be dismissed, for they introduced women to another important aspect of institution building, an occupation that would absorb a number of the members' post collegiate lives. Each event required a guest list and invitations, funding, buying supplies, hiring a band, or hiring extra help to cook, clean, and serve guests. The official fraternity leadership delegated tasks, with the president presiding over all functions. Julia Morgan served this highest position during her senior year.⁹¹ Quite apart from the leadership and organization skills that Morgan developed as a Theta and could later apply to her architectural practice, her future success depended heavily on the strength of social networks and understanding how they worked. Not only did she form valuable friendships with people who would later hire her to build their homes and clubs, she also regularly interacted with professors and their wives who

⁹⁰ EMN to JM, September 18, 1898. JMC-Cal Poly, I/01/01/14.

⁹¹ Dodge, *Kappa Alpha Theta*, 3-4.

offered support to the sorority girls. This group would form another important client base in the early years of Morgan's practice. Phoebe Hearst, who was one of Morgan's earliest champions and most important patrons, may have also attended some of these functions hosted by the sorority.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell remarked upon the primitive college life of coeds when she arrived in Berkeley in 1903 to become the first Dean of Women, and under her watch great changes took place in earnest. Between 1905 and 1912, Mitchell made it her mission to make the University of California a place for women as well as men. During her seven years as the first Dean of Women, she offered an informal series of lectures to women in sororities, clubs, and other small groups on the topics of sex, pregnancy, and sexually-transmitted diseases; she opened her house to all coeds for Wednesday afternoon tea, where subjects as diverse as parliamentary reform or oratory filled the hours of lively discussion. The Dean of Women introduced students to the real world that surrounded them by taking them to it, specifically leading field trips to baby health centers, settlement houses, orphanages, a leper colony, a home for the poor, and the San Francisco docks. She also founded *The Parthenia*, an annual play that was written, produced, and performed by women in the Faculty Glade. In 1911 Mitchell took a leave of absence from Berkeley for the purpose of learning about careers for women other than teaching and, upon her return, suggested to President Benjamin Ide Wheeler changes in the curriculum that would better prepare women to pursue those careers.⁹²

While Mitchell's arrival brought a much needed democratizing influence to the university, it did not mark the beginning of a new era; rather, it marked the success of the women who had been changing the university for the past dozen years and raised the

⁹² Mitchell, *Two Lives*, 194-201, 204-12.

awareness of the administration to the need for devoted attention to women students.

These changes manifested themselves as much in the proliferation of sports and clubs for women as they did in the physical spaces that they could occupy and navigate. The number of women from Morgan's cohort who led notable lives – quite apart from Morgan's own exceptional career – underscores the important effect these changes had on shaping the lives of Berkeley's undergraduate coeds. Among Morgan's future clients alone, Jessica Peixotto, traveled to Paris with Morgan, where she studied economics at the Sorbonne. She later earned her doctorate from the University of California and taught courses in economics and sociology, eventually becoming the first woman to be granted the title of professor at that institution.⁹³ Emma Morgan, Julia Morgan's sister, earned a law degree at the Hastings School of Law and Jessie Watson became an attorney. Grace Fisher headed the Oakland branch of the YWCA and oversaw the fund drive for the construction of the building Morgan designed for that club in 1913.⁹⁴ After she married,

⁹³ Dr. Jessica Blanche Peixotto (1864-1941) was born to a Sephardic Jewish family in New York City and moved San Francisco in 1869, where her family rose to prominence. Raphael Peixotto (1837-1905), Jessica's father, was a successful businessman in the mercantile industry, and in 1896 became president of Temple *Emanu-El*, San Francisco's largest Jewish congregation. Jessica Peixotto graduated from the University of California in 1894 and traveled to Paris with Julia Morgan to study economics for two years at the Sorbonne. Her studies resulted in the dissertation, "A Comparative Study of the Principles of the French Revolution and the Doctrines of the Modern French Socialism." In 1900, Jessica Peixotto became the second woman ever awarded a Ph.D. from Berkeley. As a member of the Berkeley faculty, Peixotto lectured on the history of socialism, poverty control, the child and the state, and household economies. She also helped found the School of Social Welfare and the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics. In 1918 she became the first full woman professor at Berkeley. Outside academia, Peixotto belonged to the American Association of Adult Education, the American Sociological Association, the National Consumers League, and the National Probation Association. California Governor Hiram Johnson appointed Peixotto to the State Board of Charities and Corrections in 1912, where she helped draft social welfare laws until 1924. During World War I, Peixotto served as a member of the National Defense Council committee on child welfare, and under the National Recovery Act during the Depression, Peixotto served on the Federal Consumers Advisory Board. Jessica Peixotto retired in 1935 and died in 1941. Obituaries, *New York Herald, Tribune, Call, San Francisco Chronicle, and Examiner*, all dated October 21, 1941; William M. Kramer, "Raphael Peixotto: Head of the Western Peixottos" and "Jessica Peixotto: U.C. Professor and Pioneer Women's Activist," both located in *Western States Jewish History* 28 (1996): 247-279; EPM to JM, May 7, 1899, JM-Cal Poly.

⁹⁴ Michael G. Warning, "The Promotion and Construction of the Oakland Young Women's Christian Association Center: A Thesis (M.A. thesis, State University of New York, Oneonta, 1976).

Grace Fisher Richards moved to Saratoga, where she again oversaw the funding and construction of a woman's club that Morgan designed. Although she retired from paid work upon her marriage to William Olney, Jr., Mary McLean Olney continued to be active in charity work, serving on the National Board of the YWCA and playing a principle role in the development of Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, the first conference center in the country for the YWCA and one that Morgan designed between 1913 and 1928.⁹⁵ These women represent only a few who graduated from the University of California in the early to mid 1890s. According to the 1905 directory of University of California alumni, sixteen of the twenty-four women in Morgan's graduating class of 1894 held jobs, including thirteen teachers, one physician, one university lecturer, and one architect. Six women of that class – not including Morgan – earned graduate degrees, including three masters, one doctorate, and one medical degree. That same directory shows that of the 352 women who graduated between 1890 and 1899, 196 held jobs in 1905. Teachers counted for the majority of these jobs, but other professions included musicians, lawyers, journalists, university teachers, doctors, nurses, an illustrator, and an actress. Thirty-four women earned graduate degrees, including eighteen masters degrees, eight medical degrees, six law degrees, and three doctorates.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Mary McLean Olney (1873-1965) was the daughter of John Knox McLean, the influential pastor of First Congregational Church, Oakland; trustee and president, Pacific Theological Seminary; member State Board of Charities and Corrections; and trustee of Pomona College. After graduating from the University of California in 1895 with degrees in English and Latin, Mary McLean taught briefly at Stanford, then became the first dean of women students at Pomona College in southern California. In 1899 McLean ended her academic career to marry Warren Olney, Jr., the son of one of fifteen freeholders chosen to draw up Oakland City Charter 1888 and a beloved mayor of Oakland. The younger Olney practiced law in San Francisco, was a Regent of the University of California from 1911 to 1919, and was an associated justice of the California Supreme Court from 1919 to 1921. McLean Olney devoted much of her adult life to the YWCA, eventually distinguishing herself as a member of the National Board of the YWCA. She played a prominent role in the early development of the Asilomar conference center that Morgan designed between 1913-1927 near Pacific Grove. Obituary, "Mary McLean Olney Taken by Death at 92," *Saturday Gazette*, August 14, 1965; Mary McLean Olney, "Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California," i-iii.

⁹⁶ *Directory of Undergraduates*.

Far from reflecting the primitive state of women's education at Berkeley that Mitchell saw, these demographics are comparable to national trends among women with degrees in higher education. This generation of college women instituted changes in the landscape at the University of California that helped prepare them for a life outside the home, and they laid some foundations for succeeding generations of students to build upon.

The Path to Paris

Julia Morgan [Figure 13] graduated from the University of California in 1894 with honors in civil engineering. The burgeoning women's culture had provided her the moral support to lean on as she navigated the highly masculine environment of math, science, and engineering as well as the physical space to devote to her studies, but neither the women students nor the university could not give her all the tools she needed to pursue a career in architecture, a dream she cherished for a long time. During Morgan's undergraduate years the United States and the Bay Area saw a marked increase in the interest of architecture and urban planning, particularly as influenced by the Parisian institution, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Only a few universities in the country, however, offered a formal education in architecture; the San Francisco Bay area had only the most rudimentary of academic resources. Bernard Maybeck, a young architect from New York, played a pivotal role in Morgan's future. Through his mentorship Morgan gained practical professional experience and training. More importantly, Maybeck's progressive politics towards women, his belief in her talent, and his devotion to the Beaux-Arts method influenced her take a daring risk: to travel to Paris and try to enroll in the

architecture program at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, an institution that had never to date admitted women.

Exactly how or when Julia Morgan decided to pursue a career in architecture is unclear. Jessie Watson, a childhood friend and sorority sister, once alluded to Morgan realizing “the vision seen in youth.”⁹⁷ Morgan’s father was an engineer, and his interests conceivably influenced his daughter’s chosen career. As a child Morgan also met Pierre LeBrun, a relative by marriage to Eliza Parmelee’s cousin Lucy Latimer, and an architect his father’s highly respected firm in New York City, Napoleon LeBrun and Sons. Their most famous commission, a fifty-story tower for the headquarters of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company at Madison Square earned the firm an award from the American Institute of Architects for “the most meritorious work of 1909.” It represents one of the earliest uses of steel columns, and was the tallest building in the world at the time of its completion. Long before the construction of this tower, however, Napoleon LeBrun and Sons had established itself as one of the most highly regarded firms in the nation.⁹⁸ Julia Morgan spent some time in New York with the LeBruns during the spring 1896 before she set sail for Paris. If LeBrun had not been her inspiration to study architecture, he and his wife certainly encouraged her with enthusiastic support.

A notable increase of interest in the state of American architecture also marked Julia Morgan’s undergraduate years. By the 1890s the architect had clearly differentiated itself from the builder; the former found increasing cachet in his status as an artist, while balloon frame housing and new technologies increasingly stripped the builder of craftsman status. Professional organizations like the American Institute of Architects

⁹⁷ Jessie Watson to JM, May 17, 1929. JMC-Cal Poly I/06/02/13.

⁹⁸ Thomas W. Ennis, “1909 Tower Here Getting New Look,” *New York Times*, January 7, 1962, pp. 261-62.

(AIA) and the Western Association of Architects, which merged with the AIA in 1887, were well established institutions too. They focused on rationalizing business procedures; establishing standards for the architect-client relationship, licensing, and professional ethics; and, increasingly, defining educational requirements.⁹⁹ Since the 1846 admission of Richard Morris Hunt to the architecture program of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, that institution's influence had grown steadily in the United States as well. Ironically, however, the work of Daniel Burnham, who was not trained at the Ecole, catapulted this institution to the highest level of prestige in both training for aspiring architects and style for public architecture in the United States. Formal public spaces surrounded by monumental neo-Classical buildings comprised much of the 1893 Columbian World Exposition in Chicago. Supervising architect Daniel Burnham's "White City," as the fair grounds came to be known, confirmed the preeminence of urban planning principles and aesthetics of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.¹⁰⁰ By 1895, the Ecole was producing as many American architects as all nine architecture schools in the United States combined, and over the eight years following the 1893 fair, as many American students studied in the architecture program at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts as had done so during the previous forty-seven years – and that during a period of drastically reduced numbers for any foreigners allowed to enroll at the Ecole.¹⁰¹

Morgan witnessed many local changes in architectural trends as well. Owners of the three most influential newspapers in San Francisco, the *Call*, the *Examiner*, and the

⁹⁹ For a history of the professionalization of architecture and the changing relationship between architect and builder, see Mary N. Woods, *From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, 1999), 27-52, 148-49; and Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (New York, 1998), 247-79.

¹⁰⁰ Kristen Schaffer, *Daniel Burnham: Visionary Architect and Planner* (New York, 2003).

¹⁰¹ Statistics are based on James Philip Noffsinger's inventory of Americans who attended the Ecole. See James Philip Noffsinger, *The Influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (Washington, 1955), 25, 106-8 (hereafter, Noffsinger, *Influence of the Ecole*).

Chronicle, tried to assert their power through the construction of tall buildings. Michael de Young, owner of the *Chronicle* attacked first in 1889. He hired the Chicago firm of Burnham and Root to design a ten-story building and the first steel-frame skyscraper in the West [Figure 14]. The *Examiner's* William Randolph Hearst followed with a building directly across the street, and in 1895 Claus Spreckels, owner of the *Call*, commissioned a nineteen-story building topped with a baroque dome and sky restaurant. [Figure 15]¹⁰² Michael de Young also tried to upstage his rivals in 1894 by replicating the success of Chicago's world fair in 1894 and staging the California Midwinter International Exposition in Golden Gate Park [Figure 16]. Hastily conceived and executed by de Young, the fair was generally regarded as an architectural failure. It nonetheless signaled San Francisco's foray into the City Beautiful movement and a new interest in architecture and public space.¹⁰³

Apart from these few exceptions, the Bay Area's wealthy residents had yet to express and invest their fortunes in architecture. A growing group of young architects who were migrating from the Midwest and East Coast, however, hoped to tap into this latent resource. The late 1880s and early 1890s witnessed the arrival of such figures as Arthur Page Brown, Willis Polk, A.C. Schweinfurth, Ernest Coxhead, and Bernard Maybeck. The first three had been trained through the apprenticeship system in established architectural firms of the East Coast and in the Midwest, while the latter two brought with them more formal training. Coxhead attended the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and the Royal Institute of British Architects in London, and Bernard Maybeck had

¹⁰² Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 178-79.

¹⁰³ Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (New York, 1983), 225-29 (hereafter, Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World*).

graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.¹⁰⁴ They all saw in California a chance to express their creativity on a virtually empty canvass, to contribute to the creation of a regional and national style, to tame a wild landscape and civilize it largely according to the best European models.¹⁰⁵ Though never trained as an architect, Joseph Worcester was one of the most influential figures in California architecture during the late nineteenth century. His austere, brown shingle houses set the precedent for the first San Francisco Bay Area Arts and Crafts style, which found followers in Maybeck and many other East Coast and European trained architects who migrated west, not to mention Julia Morgan.¹⁰⁶

Despite these national and local developments, Julia Morgan could find little direction towards achieving her goal of becoming an architect when she graduated from college. Only a handful of architecture schools existed, all in the Midwest or East Coast, and most Americans still trained in professional offices, which were generally hostile to women or wary of their capacity to participate in the profession. The Bay Area offered no formal architecture programs, the avenue through which the few American women who wished to do so found an opportunity to study architecture. As well as she had performed in the engineering program that Frank Soulé, Jr., directed at Berkeley, the curriculum was outdated and relatively rudimentary.¹⁰⁷

Only one institution offered Morgan further education in the arts, the Hopkins Institute of Art in San Francisco [Figure 17]. William Alvord founded San Francisco's

¹⁰⁴ Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 180-82; Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 55-62.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 67-81.

¹⁰⁶ Leslie M. Freudenheim, *Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Home* (Salt Lake City, 2005) (hereafter, Freudenheim, *Building with Nature*).

¹⁰⁷ Noffsinger, *Influence of the Ecole*, 24; Woods, *From Craft to Profession*, 76-78.

Art Institution in 1872, which became known as the School of Design when Roman-trained artist Virgil Williams became head of the institution. Over the next twenty years the school offered classes in still life, casting, and life drawing. Then, under the leadership of Dr. Edward Searles, the school changed its name to the "Institute of Art," became affiliated with the University of California, and expanded its curriculum to include music, literature, antiques, sketching, portraiture, and modeling. The former Nob Hill mansion of railroad magnate Mark Hopkins was donated by his widow's second husband to the school at this time as well, and that is the site where Morgan attended modeling classes.¹⁰⁸ The architecture of this sprawling mansion was indicative of the state of architecture and architectural training in California and the San Francisco Bay Area. Ernest Peixotto, artist and brother of Jessica, could have had in mind the Hopkins mansion as much as any number of other residences in San Francisco when he lamented, "They are piled up without rhyme or reason, – restless, turreted, gabled, loaded with meaningless detail, defaced with fantastic windows and hideous chimneys."¹⁰⁹

The one change that did directly impact Morgan's career was the arrival of Bernard Maybeck [Figure 18]. He was born in the heart of Greenwich Village in 1862 to Bernhardt and Elisa Kern Maybeck, both German immigrants. His father, a cabinet maker who specialized in wood carving, influenced Maybeck's turn towards art, crafts, and architecture. In 1881, Maybeck set sail for Paris, where he found work in the studio of Pottier and Stymus, which was located close to the famous Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Watching the students come and go everyday, carrying their drawings and wearing their

¹⁰⁸ JM to Aurelia Reinhardt, September 10, 1917, Papers of Aurelia Reinhardt, Mills College, Record Group 2, Folder 44. The school still exists as the San Francisco Institute of Art. Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 23; Kate Montague Hall, "The Mark Hopkins Institute of Art," *Overland Monthly* 30 (December 1897): 539-548.

¹⁰⁹ Ernest Peixotto, "Architecture in San Francisco," *ibid.*, 21 (May 1893), 462.

silk hats, inspired Maybeck to attend the Ecole as well. He decided to study architecture. The Ecole did not begin awarding *diplômes* to foreign students until 1887, so in 1886, after five years in Paris, Maybeck returned to the United States. Maybeck had left the United States, his biographer Kenneth Cardwell wrote, “an eager fledgling with a sparse mustache, dressed in an ill fitting suit and stiff collar.” He returned a mature and confident man, “dressed in a stylish cape pulled close to his open collared shirt and flowing silk tie.” A full beard adorned his face, and a “pot hat” covered his thinning hair. Back in New York City, Maybeck joined the new firm of Carrère and Hastings, Thomas Hastings being an old school friend, but ultimately found New York’s architectural environment stifling. In 1888, then, and with the hopes of finding more creative freedom, Maybeck moved to Kansas City, Missouri, a move that coincided with a national depression and left Maybeck unable to find much work. Willis Polk, a young architect in San Francisco, encouraged Maybeck to head west, which Maybeck did in 1889. After two years of struggling to find work, he joined the offices of A. Page Brown, the most prestigious architectural firm in San Francisco, and in 1892 he and his wife Annie moved to Berkeley. During the summer of 1894 Frank Soulé invited Maybeck to join the Department of Instrumental Drawing at the University of California, a move that forever changed Maybeck’s and Julia Morgan’s careers.¹¹⁰

More than anybody’s influence or any historical circumstances to date, Bernard Maybeck turned Julia Morgan into an architect. Contrary to the currently accepted story, Morgan did not meet Maybeck during her senior year in college, for Maybeck did not begin any association with the university until the fall 1894, the fall after Morgan

¹¹⁰ Kenneth H. Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck: Artisan, Architect, Artist* (Santa Barbara, 1977), 13-38 (hereafter, Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck*).

graduated.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, Morgan did likely attend the informal architecture seminars Maybeck held at his house in North Berkeley beginning in the fall of 1894; she did, after all, know quite well other students who attended the seminars and who could have apprised her of them, especially Arthur Brown, Jr. Brown had been a classmate of Emma Morgan's at Oakland High School and undoubtedly attended many of the same courses as Julia Morgan at Berkeley. By her own account, Morgan worked as an apprentice for Maybeck for about eighteen months following college graduation.¹¹² During that period Maybeck bought a house on Berryman Street in North Berkeley and invited students to help him enlarge it. The house was a two-story brown shingle structure nestled among trees; it presented Morgan her first opportunity to work in the Bay Area Arts and Crafts style. She also assisted in designing and building geology professor Andrew Lawson's house, which combined historic eclecticism with the Arts and Crafts style. The exterior followed Mediterranean lines, while the interior featured redwood paneling and exposed beams.¹¹³

Maybeck, who was also directly involved in trying to establish an architecture course at the Hopkins Institute of Art, knew quite well that California could not offer the training Morgan – or any of her colleagues, for that matter – needed to build outstanding careers.¹¹⁴ A devoted student of the Ecole, Maybeck persuaded Morgan to look beyond the borders of the United States and take her chances on Paris. Odds were against her success, for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was a centuries-old bastion of masculinity that

¹¹¹ Sarah Boutelle originated the story that Morgan met Maybeck during her senior year at the University of California, but Kenneth Cardwell's biography of Maybeck contradicts her chronology. See Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, p. 23, and Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck*, pp. 37-38.

¹¹² JM to Aurelia Reinhardt, September 10, 1917, Papers of Aurelia Reinhardt, Mills College, Record Group 2, Folder 44.

¹¹³ Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck*, 39-40, 57-58; Freudenheim, *Building with Nature*, 169.

¹¹⁴ Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck*, 38, 40.

women had been battling to enter for nearly ten years already. Still, Julia Morgan let adventure and ambition guide her. With the support of her family, friends, Pierre LeBrun, and Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan dared to immerse herself in yet another overwhelmingly masculine environment. In June 1896, she set sail for Paris.

Chapter 2

Parisian Foundations: Julia Morgan at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1896-1902

Julia Morgan arrived in Paris on June 5, 1896 [Figure 19], to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, an institution formally organized in 1819, but the direct descendent of several Royal Academies founded during the reign of Louis XIV. Since its establishment in 1671, the Royal Academy of Architecture had produced the architects of the French kingdom and Republic. Though suppressed during the French Revolution, reorganized as part of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1819, subject to significant – though short-lived – reforms in 1863, and always at the center of debates regarding the definitions of and relationships between beauty, science, and architecture, the institution had survived more or less intact for more than two centuries. It espoused classical architecture as the embodiment of true beauty, and taught students how to design buildings by first addressing the plan, or arrangement of interior spaces based on the function of the site, followed by the elevations, or exterior designs of a building. While any amount of architectural study at the Ecole carried prestige for the first two centuries of the institution's existence (and gained value among Americans in the 1850s), the *diplôme*, or official degree in architecture, carried unparalleled prestige with it from the 1880s till the eve of World War I, rendering the Ecole the most prestigious architectural program in the world. Only the *Grand Prix de Rome*, the highest honor accorded to any French student, carried more weight.

To earn a diplôme, students followed a rigorous study of art and architectural history, architectural theory and composition, and advanced mathematics and science. The process began by securing an *atelier*, or studio, where students trained under a

master architect. All applicants, or *aspirants*, then had to pass the entrance examinations, which were renowned for their difficulty, to secure a place in the Second Class of the architecture program. Successful participation in official *concours*, or exhibitions, earned students points towards their advancement into the First Class. Each concours required students to produce an *esquisse*, or sketch, which they produced *en loge*, or sequestered for eight hours and drawing by candlelight in a small room on the campus of the Ecole. A month later, students presented their *projet rendu*, or formal plans, elevations, and drawings of the building first proposed in the esquisse, for exhibition; a jury then judged the work and awarded points accordingly [Figure 20]. Most students took five to seven years to complete all of these requirements and had to complete them by the age of thirty, which offered plenty of time to French students who often began their studies at the Ecole at the young age of fifteen. Like most Americans, however, Julia Morgan arrived in Paris equipped with a bachelors degree in engineering and at the advanced age of over twenty-four years. Unlike every other architecture student, Morgan was a woman.¹

Morgan may have sensed the enormity of the challenges she faced in her efforts to enroll in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts when she saw the buildings of the institution, which is located on the site of an old monastery on rue Bonaparte, and along the Quai Malaquais. The Arc de Gaillon [Figure 21], a remnant of Alexandre Lenoir's collection of gothic and French Renaissance architectural fragments that comprised his Musée des Monuments Français, and a column topped by a statue of St. Denis, stand in front of Félix Duban's early Italian Renaissance style Palais des Etudes (1834-40), creating a dramatic and imposing welcome to all who passed through the gates of the school. During the 1850s

¹ For a comprehensive history of the architecture program the its requirements, see Richard Chafee, "The Teaching of Architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts," in Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the*

and 1860s, Duban added an exhibition hall fronting the Quai Malaquais and painted the cloister of the old monastery in the style of a Pompeii garden. He also designed a steel and glass ceiling to cover the courtyard of the Palais des Etudes [Figure 22], where plaster casts of two monumental Corinthian columns as well as Trojan horses, the Venus de Milo, and other gods, goddesses, warriors, and leaders of the ancient world were stored and used by students for drawing practice. Duban's successor, Ernest-Georges Coquart, actually installed the glass ceiling, which was supported by iron columns, and painted the walls in a neo-Greco pattern. With references to the gardens of Pompeii, the arches of Rome, the Colosseum, and the Cancellaria, combined with elements of Gothic and Renaissance architecture and modern glass and steel technologies, a tour of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was like walking through a textbook of Western art and architecture since ancient times.² The Ecole also paid homage to the bastions of power and masculinity that shaped history for centuries. Missing from this collection of structures and art were any references to women, apart from mythic or allegorical ones; indeed, until the late nineteenth century, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts gave no thought to women whatsoever.

This chapter will examine the relationship between gender, space, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the formal education and personal growth of Julia Morgan. The story begins in 1896 when Morgan arrived in Paris to study at an institution that was struggling to define itself in a changing climate of cultural internationalism, modern technologies, and competing ideas of beauty. While all of these factors affected Morgan's experiences at the Ecole, gender played the most important role in shaping her time there. She benefited directly from the actions of the *Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs*

Ecole des Beaux-Arts (New York, 1977), 60-109 (hereafter, Chafee, "Teaching Architecture").

[hereafter, UFPS], a group founded in 1889 to advance the place of women in art and responsible for convincing the French government and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to allow women to enroll in courses and compete for degrees. While the women quickly discovered the necessity of establishing separate spaces for their studies and campaigned vigorously for them, Morgan understood this need from the beginning. After a long struggle, she secured a mentor and atelier, but her particular circumstances would render the city and Europe her most important classroom and tutor. Julia Morgan left Paris in 1902, the first woman ever to have earned a degree in architecture from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the only woman to do so until at least the 1920s. In addition to gaining a solid architectural education, Morgan also developed a profound understanding of women, gender, work, and the importance of everyday life, which would shape her professional career.

Creating a Modern Facade: The Ecole des Beaux-Arts at the Turn of the Century

The Ecole des Beaux-Arts stood at the apex of its international prestige and influence when Morgan arrived in 1896. She was one of thousands of aspiring architects from around the world who descended upon Paris to study at the institution before the outbreak of World War I, and Beaux-Arts style buildings were being constructed throughout France and the French empire, and all around the globe – from Glasgow to Rio de Janeiro, from Bucharest to Berkeley, and beyond.³ At the same time, pressures from within and outside the Parisian art and architectural community rendered the venerable institution a site of increasingly contentious debate and tenuous authority.

² Chafee, “Teaching Architecture,” 60, 78-81; Robin Middleton, “19th-Century French Classicism,” in Robin Mitchell, guest ed., *Beaux-Arts* (London, 1978), 6.

³ Chafee, “Teaching of Architecture,” 107.

Faculty frequently debated the relationship between art and science in architecture as well, particularly in the wake of the *art nouveau* movement, new construction technologies, and the rise of the American skyscraper. Ironically, the Ecole perceived its international prestige as potentially the greatest threat to its hegemonic power, and the institution's responses to this issue had the greatest impact on the curriculum and entrance requirements.

Debates about enrollment numbers and science requirements arose during faculty meetings throughout 1896 and 1897. Between 1869 and 1901, the total number of students admitted to the Ecole rose by 229%, with a 175% increase in sculpture, 218% increase in painting, and a 252% increase in architecture. Noting that new construction technologies, particularly steel frame construction, demanded more than an artist's eye to determine with any certitude the stability of a structure; that architects must act as both artists and scientists; that in foreign countries – most notably in the United States – students studied the sciences from the beginning of their architectural training; and in an effort to lower enrollment numbers, the faculty decided to raise the entrance requirements in math and science. The faculty added more science classes to the architecture program as well. And in April of 1896, they lowered the number of students admitted to the Ecole during any examination period from fifty to thirty.⁴

Underlying these debates and changes in curriculum was an insecurity over the institution's hegemonic authority in the architectural world. The short-lived *art nouveau* movement represented the most dramatic revolt against Beaux-Arts classicism and

⁴ "Commission des Professeurs de sciences et architectes professeurs à l'Ecole chargée d'étudier les Programmes des Courses de Sciences, afin de les mettre en accord les un avec les autres," December 7, 1896, ANF AJ52 973; Liste des élèves admis dans la seconde classe d'architecture, April 16, 1896, ANF

influenced a more general call for more creativity, individualism, and decoration among Parisian architects. In his novel *L'Atelier Chantorel*, Frantz Jourdain, founder of the Société du Nouveau Paris, published a scathing critique of the Ecole – its atelier system, the curriculum, its devotion to Classical architecture, the faculty, and the pre-Revolutionary class system it perpetuated. The Ecole's allegiance to Classical architecture and the related belief in universal principles of beauty, Jourdain argued, extinguished all creativity and would either lead to the institution's demise or the demise of France as the world leader of art and culture, for classicism ignored the changing realities of modern life. Despite its claim to the contrary, then, the Ecole no longer produced artist architects. While Parisian architecture did adopt more decorative details in the early twentieth century, Jourdain's revolution did not really materialize. The Art Nouveau movement had come and gone by 1905, and the Ecole's influence more or less remained intact until World War I.⁵

Foreign invasion and appropriation of the Ecole's methods and aesthetics presented a greater threat. Morgan and other foreign students who had strong backgrounds in engineering, for example, potentially benefited from the decision to raise the mathematics and science requirements. To counter the adverse effects on the ability of French students to pass entrance examinations and dominate the student population, therefore, the administration capped the number of foreign students admitted during any examination period to just ten. The top thirty French candidates, even if they tested lower than all of the foreign applicants combined, would also be admitted. Whatever advantage

AJ52 483; Séance, February 2, 1897, Procès verbaux des séances du Conseil Supérieur d'enseignement de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1863-1924, ANF AJ52 20.

Morgan gained by the new math and science requirements was mitigated by the now much higher level of competition between all foreigners. Insecurity still reigned two years after the implementation of this policy. Some faculty members feared that the continued overabundance of foreign students threatened to reduce Beaux-Arts architecture to little more than another commodity for exchange in an increasingly capitalist world, a trend led not coincidentally led by the United States. Louis Pascal, distinguished architect and maître of one of the largest ateliers, attempted to assuage such fears by arguing that architecture inherently was not a product that could be exported, with reproductions sold en masse like paintings. A judge for the international competition for the new University of California campus in Berkeley, Pascal noted in particular that the finalists for this “colossal” concours were, without exception, trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The visibility of the Ecole in this event proved positively that the popularity of the institution among foreigners reflected the “incontestable superiority” of the French, their architecture, and their teaching methods.⁶ Again, this debate resulted in few changes to the aesthetic philosophy or methodologies taught at the Ecole, but the anxieties resulted in the most direct challenge to foreigners in their attempts to enroll in the school.

Morgan’s dossier differed little from other aspirants, but reveals the vulnerability of the school to the pressures of modernity and internationalism... with a twist. She obtained the necessary letters from the American Ambassador in France and professional architects who could attest to her age, place of birth, and academic qualifications. Both

⁵ Annie Jacques, ed., *Les Beaux-Arts, de l’Académie aux Quat’z’arts* (Paris, 2001), 423-69 (hereafter, Jacques, *Beaux-Arts*); Frantz Jourdain, *L’Atelier Chantorel* (Paris, 1893); Anthony Sutcliffe, *Paris: An Architectural History* (New Haven, 1993), 117-20.

William Aldrich, the Secretary of the American School of Architecture in Rome, and Bernard Maybeck requested that the administration make haste in finalizing their decision to allow women to register for entrance examinations to the degree programs, for Morgan was twenty-five years old and already had precious little time to complete all the requirements for a degree in architecture before her thirtieth birthday, the age at which all Ecole students must leave. Maybeck raised the stakes of this apparently simple and straightforward request by appealing to the French sensibility of maintaining its international prestige: “The Ecole des Beaux-Arts has always shown so much good will towards foreigners,” he wrote, “that we have been encouraged to ask this new favor of you and we sense the strong opinion that you will act in our favor, all of which depends on you.”⁷ If the Ecole des Beaux-Arts wanted to maintain its international prominence in architecture, it not only had to modernize its curriculum, it also had to retain the good will of foreigners and recognize social change. In this case, that meant addressing the status of women.

Remodeling an Institution: Women, Gender, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts

However important modernization of the curriculum or internationalism were in the history of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts at this period, gender played the most important role in shaping Morgan’s experience. Only during the summer of 1896, the same summer Morgan arrived, did the Ecole allow women access to any of its facilities. This concession came after a long struggle on the part of the UFPS; the battle for women to

⁶ “Séance, April 24, 1899, May 5, 1897, Procès verbaux des séances du Conseil Supérieur d’enseignement de l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1863-1924, ANF AJ52 20.

⁷ “L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts s’est toujours montrée si complaisant envers les étrangers que nous avons été encouragés à vous demander cette nouvelle faveur et nous sentons la conviction que vous ferez en notre

gain equal access to education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts continued into the new century. Unlocking the gates of this historically masculine space to women did not translate immediately into the creation of a gender neutral environment. On the contrary, it highlighted the need to create a mechanism that fostered the transition from a single sex to a coeducational institution. Separate ateliers for women eventually served that purpose. While Morgan benefited directly from the actions of the UFPS, her age and particular circumstances as the only woman pursuing a degree in architecture made her acutely aware of the need to find a women's atelier and forced her to negotiate the issue outside the organized efforts of her fellow female students.

French women, like their American counterparts, organized in increasing numbers during the latter half of the nineteenth century to agitate for political rights, labor rights and reforms for women and children, health and sanitation reform, birth control rights, education reforms, and access to professions usually reserved for men. People of a variety of political persuasions – from anarchists to Catholic conservatives – comprised the women's movement in France as well. Historians of late nineteenth-century French feminism have paid particular attention to the role of women in the public sphere – that theoretical space of political debate – by emphasizing the links between reform, theater, spectacle, and the press. Marguerite Durand, publisher of *La Fronde*, the first feminist newspaper in France, for example, was a retired actress who espoused fashion as a tool for women to emerge from the protective and repressive walls of their homes; women could express themselves, deliberately attracting attention to themselves and their causes. Public officials throughout the country, on the other hand, embraced the annual

faveur, toust ce qui depend [sic] de vous.” Bernard Maybeck to Conseil de l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts, April 29, 1897, ANF, AJ52 409.

reenactment of *Le Couronnement de la Muse*, a part ballet, part mime spectacle first performed in Montmartre in 1897 to the music of composer Gustave Charpentier. Even as the government sanctioned the presence of women in public life, it empowered men by redirecting attention from more radical ideas of mature activists like Durand to innocent, vulnerable, and beautiful young women. Though ultimately conservative in nature, *Le Couronnement* still made women central to public discourse.⁸ The UFPS similarly took advantage of spectacle and media to advance their goals. Like other groups, women with fiery and charismatic personalities – Mme Léon Bertaux and Mme Virginie Demont-Breton – led the union through its various battles. The artists disseminated their work through popular media, including women's magazines and for a time, their own magazine, *Journal des femmes artistes*. An annual banquet hosted by the UFPS also became a spectacular and well-publicized event in the Parisian press.⁹

As important as these strategies were in the cause for or against social change, French feminists became increasingly conscious of the relationship between physical space and women's place in society. During the mid and late 1890s, they often cited American and English women's spaces as models to learn from. On the one hand, women's spaces could stifle women's freedoms. Oxford University in England, for example, imposed such strict rules of conduct on its female students, including a six o'clock curfew, that the school essentially rendered women prisoners and prevented them from developing well-rounded lives, even as it did open to women one of the most

⁸ For more on gender, spectacle, and the press in late nineteenth-century France, see Jo Burr, Margadant, ed., *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 2000); David M. Pomfret, “‘A Muse for the Masses’: Gender, Age, and Nation in France, Fin de Siècle,” *The American Historical Review* 109 (December 2004), 1439–74; Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago, 2002); and Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds., *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology* (Lincoln, 1994).

prestigious universities in the world. A four-part series in *La Fronde* on boarding clubs for women in the United States, in contrast, provided numerous models for housing growing populations of young and single working women. Paule Vigneron, a journalist for *La Fronde*, wrote about a group of American women artists who had established a club in a quiet neighborhood in Paris. The site had gardens, lecture halls, social rooms, and, notably, space to host an annual, non-jury exhibition. Another journalist for *Le Figaro*, a Parisian daily, summarized the importance of women's spaces in facilitating change. She described an American woman's club, the first of any such clubs for women in Paris, as both practical and ingenious. It provided a space where women could find familial comfort and intellectual stimulation in an otherwise lonely and isolating city, as well as much needed exhibition space for women artists. As French women discovered when they founded a similar club of their own, women's spaces also provided a means for achieving personal autonomy and group solidarity, for they brought together under one roof and created a shared experience for a diversity of people and ideas.¹⁰ While liberal feminists ultimately envisioned a world where men and women inhabited the same spaces and lived as equals in every sense of the word, separate women's spaces could serve important roles in the transition from exclusion to inclusion.

From its inception, access to space played an integral role in shaping the agenda of the UFPS too. Starting in 1882, the union hosted the annual *Salons des femmes*, the first, largest, and most well known exhibition devoted exclusively to women artists. By 1896, the *Salons des femmes* exhibited nearly 1000 works by 295 artists, and served as a

⁹ Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women's Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, 1994): 70-104 (hereafter, Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*).

model for the potential achievements of women who were provided with adequate space to practice and display their work.¹¹ In 1889 the UFPS launched its most ambitious campaign to date, and one that would change Julia Morgan's life forever. It fought for the permission of women to enroll in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and compete in the school's highest honor, the *Grand Prix de Rome*. Underscoring her sense of occasion and the power of spectacle, Mme Bertaux stood before the *Congrès International des Oeuvres et Institutions Féminines* (International Congress of Women's Work and Institutions), which had convened at the World's Fair in Paris that year, and shrewdly pointed out the hypocrisy of the French government. During this centennial celebration of the Revolution and the Republican ideals of democracy and equality it espoused, the government still barred women artists from the Ecole.¹²

Even as they employed the language of sexual difference to justify their ambitions, Bertaux and her union were reacting against a belief in sexual difference that profoundly shaped the current system of education. As Tamar Garb has argued in her work on the UFPS, the majority of French society adhered to the notion that only men possessed the individuality and genius to produce fine art as well as the freedom to inhabit every aspect and corner of the city to develop his craft and find inspiration. The government, therefore, sponsored the instruction of women in art for vocational and industrial purposes only, not for careers in fine art. Women would have to pay private institutions for that purpose. While women could find excellent educations in some of these private academies and even develop a career in fine arts, feminists protested a

¹⁰ *La Fronde* July 28, 1898, p. 1; ibid., September 26-29, 1898, p. 2; Paule Vigneron, "Carnet Artistique," ibid., December, 18, 1897, p. 3; and Haryett Fontanges, "Les Club de Femmes à Paris," *Le Figaro*, September 4, 1896, p. 3.

¹¹ Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*, 4.

policy of publicly sanctioned exclusion that perpetuated perceptions of gender inferiority.

To achieve their goals, however, the union did adopt a rhetoric of gender difference that downplayed the radical nature of their aims, making them more amenable to the masculine and more conservative bodies of power involved in the fate of the Ecole.

Bertaux argued that women were intrinsically suited for the highest forms for art, that a formal education at the Ecole would only help them refine their skills and put them to good use, and that few women were ambitious and persistent enough to pursue full careers in the arts.¹³ After seven years of contentious debate, the Ecole finally agreed to allow women to enroll in evening courses starting in the fall 1896. A year later, women finally won the right to take entrance examinations for all degree programs at the Ecole.

As Morgan and her colleagues quickly discovered, opening the Ecole to women did not translate into guaranteed access to a complete Beaux-Arts education. Parliament notified the school of its decision to grant women the right to participate in entrance examinations in February of 1897. Only in early May, however, did Bernard Maybeck, who was traveling in Europe at the time and maintained a Paris address, receive a letter from the Minister of Instruction that women would be accorded the right to participate in examinations for the architecture program. Registration for the next exam, which would begin on June 25 – or about five weeks later – would take place between May 15 and June 5.¹⁴ Such short notice presented all aspiring female applicants certain difficulty, but confronted Morgan with a monumental task. Not only did she have to obtain all of the necessary letters attesting to her age and qualifications in less than a month, the

¹² Ibid., 70-104.

¹³ Ibid., 70-84.

architecture program also demanded that she develop a command over a particularly wide breadth of knowledge. As Morgan wrote to her mother's cousins, Pierre and Lucy LeBrun, she had “a great deal to do — Descriptive Geometry entirely, besides the Esquisse work for the Architecture, modeling, cast drawing, Algebra, Geometry, one examination written, one oral, and the same in history from the Commandments to modern times.”¹⁵ In an unprecedeted move, and one that she would never again repeat in her life, Morgan argued along gender lines to persuade the faculty to waive the entrance examinations for her; after all, she was the only woman trying to enroll in the architecture program, and therefore did not really pose a threat to the competition. Her efforts elicited a response that typified the faculty and administration’s position on the subject of women and the Ecole: “The decision of the Ministry that opened the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to women created no special privileges for those in question. Mlle Morgan, therefore, will have to go through the standard examinations if, as is her undeniable right, she wants to be admitted to the second class and take part in the concours.” The faculty and administration would do little to facilitate women’s chances for successfully gaining admission into the Ecole beyond honoring the rules of the state, which stipulated equality of opportunity to women, not special privilege.¹⁶

After weeks of virtually non-stop studying, Morgan “did not go it very fresh and vigorous” on the day of the examination. To make matters worse, arrangements Morgan

¹⁴ Bernard Maybeck to the Conseil de l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts, April 29, 1897; and Ministère de L’Instruction Publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultes.École Nationale et Spéciale des Beaux-Arts to Bernard Maybeck, May 7, 1897, ANF, AJ52 409.

¹⁵ JM to Pierre LeBrun, July 19, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

¹⁶ “La décision Ministérielle qui a ouvert l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts aux femmes ne crée pour celles-ci aucun privilège. Melle Morghan [sic] aura donc à subir les examens reglementaires si, comme c'est son droit indéniable, elle veut être admise au seconde classe et prendre part aux concours.” Séance du mercredi 5 mai 1897, Procès verbaux des séances du Conseil Supérieur d’enseignement de l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts. 1863-

had made with the guards to see her into the examination rooms early fell through. She hoped to shield herself from the gaze of her male competitors, not to mention the general chaos created by hundreds of *aspirants* who gathered in the courtyard of the Ecole, waiting with their T-squares, triangles, drawing boards, and paints and brushes, and subject to taunts of other artists already *en loge*, or paint-tainted water pouring onto them from the windows above. After a poor night's sleep in the sultry heat of the summer, Morgan arose at five o'clock to breakfast and dress, arrived at the Ecole just before seven, and immediately learned that the guards "had made a mistake;" she would not be the first person to be let in, but the last. Morgan paced along the Quai Malaquais and watched the men against whom she was competing pass through the gates. At 8:30 am, half an hour after the exam officially started, the guards finally led Morgan through the smoke-filled corridors of the loge building to her 6'x 8' room, complete with a skylight for a ceiling and a window overlooking the courtyard; at least she would not have to share the relatively well lit, but particularly hot space with another *aspirant*, as students had had to do until just a few years earlier. Almost eight hours later, her sketch nearly complete, Morgan realized that she had not yet mastered the metric system and had miscalculated the measurements for the entire project. Hot, tired, famished, and nerves shattered, Morgan returned home for dinner and a short rest. She awoke at three in the morning.¹⁷

Despite the mistakes she made in her architectural sketches, Morgan completed the remaining four parts of the exam, included modeling , drawing from a cast, history,

1924, ANF AJ52 20; Conseil des Professeurs, le 22 janvier 1898, Assemblée des Professeurs, ANF AJ52 973.

¹⁷ JM to LeBrun, July 19, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01; Alexis Lemaistre, *L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Dessinée et Racontée par en Élève* (Paris, 1889), 226-27 (hereafter, Lemaistre, *L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts*).

and mathematics. The mathematics exam, American student John M. Howells noted, was “the test which only the fittest (or the luckiest) survive.” All students gathered in a gloomy auditorium, where they sat until, as Howells described it, “it is all your lungs can do to suck in the hot garlic-tainted gas in which your head beats with semi-asphyxiation.” The examiner proceeded arbitrarily to call students one by one to stand on the stage in front of his peers and usually fail to answer correctly the mathematics question posed. With three hundred applicants, this process could take days and, more often than not, was a humiliating rite of passage. Morgan was the last of the *aspirants* to take this exam, but had the pleasure of performing in front of a full house. Nobody wanted to miss the trial of the first female *aspirant*.¹⁸ Morgan actually passed all the parts of this first examination, including the mathematics section, but her scores were not high enough to earn her a spot in the architecture program.¹⁹

Gender had to some extent shaped the course of her first examination attempt, but Morgan understood the debacle as part of an initiation process that nearly all prospective architecture students endured and accepted their failure in stride. “As they say it is necessary to fail once, to know how to take the Examinations, perhaps it was best anyway,” she wrote to her cousin and assured herself. “Every one takes their [sic] defeat in the most cheerful way, for you are always with the majority at least.”²⁰

¹⁸ JM to Pierre LeBrun, July 19, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

¹⁹ John M. Howells, “An Architect at the Gates of the Beaux-Arts,” *Harper’s Weekly*, December 22, 1894, p. 1222 (hereafter, Howells, “Architect”); Lemaistre, *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, 160-176, 193-211; Jacques, *Beaux-Arts*, 18; JM to LeBrun, July 19, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01.

²⁰ John Howells observations verify those of Morgan’s regarding failed aspirants. According to him, French students had become so accustomed to failing at least once that they leveraged these low expectations to avoid tedious work assigned to nouveaux in the ateliers. “What do you want me to do?” they would say. “I don’t have a chance.” JM to LeBrun, July 19, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01; Howells, “Architect,” 1222.

Blatant gender discrimination elicited less equanimity. In October of 1897 Morgan attempted the entrance examinations for a second time. Though she felt better prepared when she entered the exam and completed each part thinking she had performed better than before, she actually scored lower on every section and failed for a second time. “I felt very much ashamed and badly,” she confessed to the LeBruns, “for I thought I’d made mistakes I did not recognize, carefully avoiding the Atelier and M de Monclos [the atelier where Moran had been training] — he had been so ashamed of me before.” Whether M. de Monclos’s disappointment in Morgan was real or perceived, Morgan’s first attempt and failure to pass the examinations both shattered her ego and made clear to her that her quest to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts carried more weight than vain ambition. She owed her mentor and all those people who had supported her through the years a successful examination.²¹ This second failure only deepened Morgan’s wounded pride and exacerbated her feelings of guilt. Unable to avoid M. de Monclos forever, Morgan finally ran into him one day on the street. Much to her surprise, he did not scold her or reprimand her in any way. Instead, she learned, “The Jury had openly said they ‘ne voudraient pas encouragé les jeunes filles’ and that everyone said it would make no matter what I did.” Morgan’s only failure had been her failure to be a man. “It was such a relief I did not care much,” she claimed, for at least such overt gender discrimination restored her confidence in her skills as an architect. Just as apparent nonchalance had disguised Morgan’s crushed ego after the first examination, however, this dismissive remark masked her anger. The faculty’s discrimination had not only inflicted unnecessary psychological damage on Morgan, it had adversely affected a constellation of people to whom she was indebted, a realization that only fueled

²¹ JM to LeBrun, December 12, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01.

Morgan's determination to earn a degree at the Ecole. She declared to her cousins in her usual understated way, "I'll try again next time anyway even without any expectations, just to show 'les jeunes filles' are not discouraged."²²

Before Morgan could concentrate her efforts on the third examination, however, she had to secure a position at an atelier. Pierre de Monclos's atelier had been a friendly and convenient place to begin her studies in Paris, but Morgan had always known that it would be a temporary situation. De Monclos, a young man married to an American woman, offered a welcoming environment to aspiring female architects. Morgan was one of two women in the six-person atelier, and he had also mentored Fay Kellogg, an American woman who had actively petitioned the Ecole des Beaux-Arts on behalf of the rights of women students.²³ Kellogg left the atelier just before Morgan arrived, however, and Katherine Budd, the other woman, left within six months. Just a month after starting at the Monclos atelier, in July 1896, John Vredenburgh Van Pelt, a fellow American who had recently completed his architectural studies at the Ecole and whom Morgan met through a mutual American friend, assured her that de Monclos would be a good enough person to begin her studies with, but had neither the prestige nor expertise to be her permanent mentor. Indeed, in January of 1897 the de Monclos atelier submitted the only outside entry to an Ecole competition, but by the following month the atelier's work had fallen to virtually nothing and pupils were leaving. In May 1898, Morgan informed her

²² Ibid.

²³ See Fay Kellogg to Monsieur le Directeur de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts," December 19, 1895, in Marina Sauer, "*L'Entrée des femmes à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1880-1923* (Paris, 1990), 67-69 (hereafter, Sauer, *L'Entrée des femmes*).

cousin that no students remained at the de Monclos atelier and de Monclos himself had lost interest in the work.²⁴

By August 1897, Morgan had already determined that she too would leave. She hoped to study under Louis Pascal.²⁵ Unfortunately, Pascal had different ideas. When Morgan arrived at his door with Bernard Maybeck simply to seek his critique of her work, Pascal immediately assumed that she wished to join his atelier and immediately disabused her of any such notion. He did, however, like her work and thought she would perform well at the examinations.²⁶ While most architecture students had little trouble securing a place in one of the free ateliers at the Ecole or, for a fee, any number of independent ateliers in the city, Morgan faced a daunting task.

The rejections Morgan faced in her quest to find an atelier stemmed from two issues: Male teachers and students ridiculed women who expressed the slightest interest in pursuing a career in architecture. Their derision emanated from assumptions about women's capacity – or lack thereof – to master both the artistry and complex mathematics and science of architecture. Morgan's own success at the Ecole did nothing to undermine these sentiments either; she simply represented an exception to the rule. She did, however, present a threat to the culture of masculinity and fraternity that had come to shape the architecture student's experience as powerfully as did academics. Every member of an atelier, for instance, endured an elaborate initiation ritual that involved deceit, humiliation, interrogation, and drunken revelry in the crammed quarters of the

²⁴ Correspondence from JM to LeBrun, between June 1896 and May 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01-02.

²⁵ The atelier of Victor Laloux, most famous for designing the Gare d'Orsay (1898-1900) and the patron of Morgan's eventual mentor, François-Bernard Chaussemiche, was the most popular among American architects. He mentored ninety-seven Americans over the course of his career. Jean-Louis Pascal was the second most popular with forty-eight American students. Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (New York, 1977), 459.

²⁶ JM to LeBrun, August 15, 1897 and May 30, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01-02.

atelier or the smoke-filled rooms of a nearby café or bar. Artist and illustrator, Alexis Lemaistre, described such a ceremony in his 1889 treatise on the Ecole des Beaux-Arts: Upon arriving at the atelier, the *nouveau*, or new arrival, sought the *massier*, or student responsible for the atelier's finances, to pay his entrance fees. He only located this person, who feigned deafness so as to force the nouveau to speak loudly, after being falsely directed to every other person in the room. Next, the nouveaux underwent intense questioning about his knowledge of geometry, geography, and history, followed by a physical examination, the only purpose of which was to force the nouveau to completely disrobe in front of his colleagues. Fellow atelier members then hid the clothing and left the nouveau to greet the head of the Ecole completely naked. A nouveau might also have to fetch something from the high reaches of the gallery, only to have the ladder removed from under him and left stranded until a sympathetic comrade came by to save him. The initiation ceremony culminated with all members of the atelier removing themselves to the Quai Malaquais, or sidewalk above the banks of the Seine and directly across the street from the Ecole, where the nouveaux genuflected and recited an irreverent song or pledge of solidarity to architecture and the atelier. American architect John M. Howells also described drunken revelry and a carnivalesque atmosphere of barefoot and costumed nouveaux parading around the grounds and through the gates of the school, singing and blowing brass instruments. All the while, older students sprayed water on the nouveaux. Duels – two naked men armed with paint brushes and a bucket of paint – served as the most common initiation ritual [Figure 23].²⁷

²⁷ Jacques, *Beaux-Arts*, 18-20; Lemaistre, *L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, 23-24, 67-78; Howells, "Architect at the Gates," p. 1222; Chafee, "Teaching of Architecture," 89-95.

In general, atelier life alternated between, or even combined, hard work with smoking, drinking, singing, talking, and general revelry; it appealed only to a certain type of character, thereby creating an informal means of separating men who would succeed at the Ecole from those who would abandon their formal studies. Julia's brother Avery Morgan (who had no trouble finding a place in Victor Laloux's atelier when he arrived in the summer of 1898) enjoyed the actual work, for instance, but complained about atelier culture. If he invited one fellow atelier member to lunch at the apartment, at least five were sure to turn up. He sometimes came home wet, his hat torn and ruined. Ironically, Avery noted, the greatest mischief makers produced the best work. This lifestyle did not suit Avery's already nervous constitution; he vacated the atelier, Paris, and his sister after just over a year. While images of *fin de siècle* Paris include women reveling in decadent pleasures in the bars and dance halls of Montmartre, no woman dare compromise her respectability or subject herself to the sophomoric behavior of the young men by crossing the threshold of an architecture atelier. Similarly, no atelier would accept Morgan – whatever talents she could bring to it – as long as this spectacular culture of masculinity persisted. Or, as Morgan responded to the idea of mixed ateliers, "I don't think... that is a very possible arrangement."²⁸

As hopeless as her prospects seemed in her quest to secure an atelier, Morgan was not completely alone and without support. The UFPS, the same group who had successfully campaigned to earn women their right to enroll in degree programs at the Ecole continued to fight for further access to the institution's programs, including the right for women to participate in the school's most prestigious competition, the *Grand Prix de Rome*, and the establishment of separate women's ateliers for painting, sculpture,

²⁸ JM to LeBrun, June 8, 1896 and February 11, 1899, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01-02.

and architecture. In relationship to the latter, the union quickly came to realize what Morgan had concluded within days of her arrival in Paris: Women would not enjoy the same caliber of success and receive an equal education at the Ecole unless they had separate ateliers, for a change in admission rules could not erase centuries of history or cultural norms. In their efforts to convince the Ecole to establish separate ateliers, the women argued that the mixed ateliers were overcrowded, which adversely affected everyone's education. Overt favoritism towards male students further compromised education for women. Apparently persuaded by arguments like these, the administration was moving forward with plans to establish four ateliers for women – one each for painting, sculpture, engraving, and architecture – as late as the fall of 1899. When it finally secured the funds and space to open women's ateliers in 1900, however, the Ecole only opened one for sculpture and one for painting. In an atmosphere of over enrollment, limited finances, and a generally hostile attitude toward the presence of women at the Ecole, allocating funds and space to an atelier that would host just one female student could not be justified. Besides, most architecture students studied at ateliers located outside the campus and used the Ecole for concours purposes only.²⁹

Morgan, meanwhile, did not wait for the disappointing news. She turned once again to her other source of constant support: Bernard Maybeck. During the spring of 1898, while he was in Paris to promote the international competition to design a new campus for the University of California, he learned that François-Benjamin Chaussemiche, winner of the Prix de Rome and considered one of the finest of France's

²⁹ Memo, July 1899, ANF AJ52 909; Newspaper clipping, n.d.; *Figaro*, August 21, 1899; "Le féminisme en marche: les femmes à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts Un vote à la chambre," *Rappel*, February 4, 1900; "Les femmes aux beaux-arts," *Le Paris*, September 27, 1900; J. de Marguerie, "Les Femmes et l'Ecole des

young architects, expressed interest in starting an atelier for women and introduced him to Morgan. The new mentor and student developed an immediate affinity for one another and established a friendship that would last a lifetime. If not for the kind and progressive attitudes of these two men, the aspiring architect soon would have left Paris altogether, not wanting to waste any more time or money in a hopeless endeavor.³⁰

Instead, just a few months later, Morgan took the entrance examinations for a third time. In a draft of his report to the director of the Ecole on the status of women during the latest round of entrance examinations, a juror wrote,

In general, the work of the young women has been extremely weak. The number of women students officially admitted to the Ecole supports this absolute inferiority. The three students admitted participated in the concours open to men but their inferiority was such that there was never any question that they would earn nearly the lowest scores. The jury thought their designs were more like those of commercial artists rather than those by students of our school.

Of Morgan, specifically, however, the writer noted, “Finally, a young American woman with satisfactory notes wants to be admitted in architecture.”³¹ He could not vent with the

Beaux-Arts,” *La Fronde* [n.d.]. All the above articles were found at the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, Paris, BEA Dos 707.

³⁰ François-Benjamin Chaussemiche (1864-1945) was born in Tours to a manufacturer. After studying at the Ecole régionale des beaux-arts in Tours, Chaussemiche enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he studied architecture under Jules André and Victor Laloux. In 1891, Chaussemiche earned his architecture degree and placed second in the Grand Prix de Rome competition; two years later, he won the Grand Prix de Rome. Between 1893 and 1898, Chaussemiche resided at the Académie de France in Rome and spent his time drawing and writing about his tours of Italy and Greece, most notably publishing an essay on the restoration of the acropolis at Anxur in Terracine. The French government then deployed Chaussemiche to southern Italy in 1898 to study the French-style edifices erected by Frederic II, emperor and king of Sicily. Chaussemiche was appointed principal project inspector for the Gare d’Orsay, which was designed by his mentor Victor Laloux, became chief advisor for public buildings in 1900, then chief architect for public buildings of the national palaces in 1904. Chaussemiche and his family were living at the Palace of Versailles in 1919 while the architect prepared the palace for the arrival of President Woodrow Wilson and the signing of the Treaty of Paris, which ended World War I. In addition to numerous hotels, villas, and apartment buildings, he constructed the facades of the high school for girls in Tours, the museum of Alésia, and many funerary monuments, notably at Montparnasse cemetery. M. Prevost and Roman D’Amat, eds., *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française* Vol. 8 (Paris, 1959), 884; JM to LeBrun, May 30, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/02; François-Bernard Chaussemiche to JM, June 8, 1919, JMC-Cal Poly II/02/02/23.

³¹ Anonymous to M. le Directeur des B[eaux] A[rts], November 24, 1898, ANF AJ52 909.

same level of bias and hostility as he did toward the other successful women candidates because Morgan not only passed the examinations, she did so with flying colors, ranking thirteenth out of 392 applicants. On November 14, 1898, Julia Morgan was now the first woman to be accepted in the architecture program at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Once again, in her typically understated fashion, she wrote to Pierre LeBrun, "A mixture of dislike of giving up some thing [sic] attempted and the sense of its being a sort of test in [a] small way, of work itself overcoming its natural disadvantages made it seem a thing that really had to be won. Its [sic]not much but has taken quite a little effort."³² Ironically, given the troubles she had endured getting to this point, the Ecole only noted her gender by writing "Mlle" next to her name on the list of students admitted to the second class in the architecture section.³³

Setting the Foundations for a Career in Architecture: A Beaux-Arts Education

In some respects, Morgan's educational experience at the Ecole differed little from those of her classmates. Her inability to access an *atelier officiel* automatically placed her in the same category as most students: searching for an *atelier libre*, or private atelier located in the Left Bank neighborhoods near the Ecole. Occasionally, too, a student might be the sole pupil of his patron, as Morgan eventually was. Lectures were not required of any students and often did not include formal examinations, so, like everyone else, Morgan could pick and choose the lecture courses she attended and how often she attended them. Before she successfully passed the entrance examinations, Morgan attended many courses, including theory of architecture, history of architecture, and general history. Following her examinations, Morgan only ever mentioned attending

³² JM to LeBrun, Nov. 14, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/02.

courses in architectural history and construction. The latter course was required of all students, for the scientific requirements of the Ecole demanded the most time and effort among the students. In addition to individual exams for mathematics, descriptive geometry, stereotomy, and perspective, students had to compete in a construction concours. That competition, alone, required twelve drawings with attention to particular aspects of stone, wood, and iron, as well as the mathematics to prove the building would stand. The construction course at the Ecole was so demanding that most students engaged in nothing else for the year it took them (on average) to complete it. Morgan, however, tried to complete architectural composition requirements as well, so took a year and a half to pass all the requirements for the construction course.³⁴

The similarities between Morgan's experiences and those of other Ecole students diverged from this point, for the atelier played the most constant and significant role in a Beaux-Arts education. Most students studied in large teaching ateliers of thirty to eighty students. Here, a hierarchy existed between advanced and beginner students as well as camaraderie, mutually beneficial assistance on a given project – an older student might delegate the inking of a competition drawing to a newer student, which saved the former time and gave the latter practice in developing basic skills, for example, or atelier members carted each others' drawings to competitions [Figure 24] – and space for continuous intellectual exchange of architectural ideas. The patron visited the atelier a few times a week to critique the pupils' work. A student who was the sole pupil of a patron usually worked as an apprentice in the business offices of his mentor. Like atelier members, this student benefited from regular intellectual exchange and close critique of

³³ Liste des élèves admis dans la seconde classe d'architecture," November 15, 1898, ANF AJ52 483.

³⁴ Julia Morgan's individual dossier, ANF AJ52 409; Chafee, "Teaching Architecture," 83.

the student's work and progress. He also gained rare insight into the practicalities of running an architectural practice and realizing the construction of actual buildings rather than merely designing theoretical spaces.³⁵

Morgan's circumstances differed dramatically from these. She counted herself as one of those rare individuals to be the sole pupil of a patron, but she did not work in the business offices of François-Benjamin Chaussemiche. Instead, Morgan's home doubled as her atelier. These working conditions also affected Morgan's interaction with fellow architects; unlike those men who practiced in a formal atelier or patron's office, Morgan did not enjoy regular discussions about architecture. Just weeks into her partnership with Chaussemiche, the French government sent him to Italy to complete some restorations; he would be gone for two months.³⁶ The matron at the American Club knew one Mrs. Van Pelt, an American woman from New York, who introduced Morgan to her son, John Vredenburgh Van Pelt. He was a recent graduate of the Ecole and the "Laureate" of the French Société des Architectes des Beaux Arts, having earned more honors as a student than any other member of the group to date. As noted earlier, he offered Morgan generous advice when she first arrived in Paris. Occasionally, too, Bernard Maybeck was in town and would gather all the Californians for a repast and debriefing. Morgan and Katherine Budd exchanged ideas if the latter was in town, childhood friend Arthur Brown arrived in Paris about six months after Morgan, and she shared an apartment with her brother Avery for a little over a year. The closest Morgan came to the constant exchange of ideas that men enjoyed in the ateliers, however, was her ongoing correspondence with her cousin, Pierre LeBrun. In those long letters, she described in painstaking detail all of

³⁵ Chafee, "Teaching Architecture," 89-94.

³⁶ JM to LeBrun, May 30, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/04/02.

the sites she saw in the city – especially the buildings being constructed for the World’s Fair of 1900 – and on her travels in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and France. She sought his advice for everything from the best clothes to wear for drafting to the best books to purchase, and evidently yearned for an outlet to relate her observations. LeBrun’s letters from these years no longer exist, but he did regularly send Morgan architectural magazines, including *Architect and Builder* and the British publication, *Architecture* (Morgan’s favorite), as well as newspaper clippings and articles of note.³⁷

Like all students, Morgan took advantage of the city itself to study architecture. Her atelier circumstances, or lack of regular formal instruction, however, rendered the city all the more important to her education. The first atelier on rue de l’Ancienne Comédie was situated particularly well for studying the plans of Paris architecture. Morgan explored every corner of the Left Bank, taking in all sorts of churches and gardens, Sorbonne buildings at various stages of completion, or walked to the other side of the Seine to the Place de la Concorde and through the Tuileries to the Louvre. Nearly four months to the day after her arrival in Paris, Morgan had thoroughly studied and explored the Left Bank from the Hotel des Invalides to the Jardin des Plantes, as well as Ile de la Cité, Ile Saint Louis, and twenty-four churches (or all of Map 4 and the left side of Map 5 in her Baedeker guide to Paris [Figures 25 & 26].³⁸

Over the next four years, Moran watched the city transform itself for the Exposition Universelle, or World’s Fair, of 1900, which proved an excellent education in engineering and architecture. All along the Seine, from the Tuileries to the Trocadero and

³⁷ See correspondence from JM to LeBrun at JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/01-02.

³⁸ Morgan actually stated to Pierre and Lucy LeBrun that she had “covered thoroughly only map IV of Baedeker, and left half of map V,” which comprise the sites listed above. JM to LeBrun, October 4, 1896,

Eiffel Tower, iron and steel-framed buildings were built. Few of the buildings captured Morgan's fancy, but she took great pleasure in the Grand and Petit Palais and the Pont Alexandre III. She particularly liked the use of mixed and contrasting materials of the Grand Palais, with its gleaming white façade and immense glass and steel roof. Both the steel frame and reinforced concrete construction technologies that the palaces and bridge employed fascinated her as well. Morgan also had direct access to one of the most celebrated buildings of this event, Victor Laloux's Gare d'Orsay, because Benjamin Chaussemiche served as the supervisor for the construction of this railroad station. While Morgan may have learned something from the innovative design that allowed the waiting rooms and train tracks to occupy the same space, all she could say is that it looked "just like a Beaux Art Projet [sic]." From time to time Morgan witnessed and commented upon the installation of tunnels for the Metropolitaine subway system, a significant lesson in engineering itself; the uncovered streets exposed a fascinating maze of sewers, old tunnels, aqueducts, and allies that lay beneath the city.³⁹

Morgan's dependence on the city and destinations outside Paris exposed her to a subject of architecture that the Ecole dismissed entirely, but which would profoundly shape her career: the common person and everyday life. Children provided a constant source of joy. Morgan tried to spend at least one hour every day to "see something new" or draw, usually in the garden at Cluny. She liked this spot particularly for all the children at play. "I have come to know twenty or more quite as good friends," she professed to her cousin. In particular, she befriended a woman and her two grandsons who frequented the

JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01; Karl Baedeker, *Paris and Environs with Routes From London to Paris: Handbook for Travelers*, 14th revised edition (London, 1900), maps IV and V.

³⁹ For Morgan's commentary on the architecture of the Exposition Universelle of 1900, see especially JM to LeBrun, February 11, 1899; May 7, 1899; and November 21, 1899, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/02.

park everyday and who loved to demonstrate their rudimentary knowledge of the English language. Morgan delighted in their company and they in hers; though by all outward appearances the family was quite poor, they always entreated Morgan to visit their home.⁴⁰ Unlike atelier students who lunched and imbibed at nearby cafés or bars, Morgan regularly picnicked on a bench at the Luxembourg Gardens “to watch the children with their nurses,” she said, “the ducks in the little ponds, and all the fascinating daily panoramas of people and animal and vegetable life.”⁴¹ Throughout her career, Morgan would pay particular attention to the needs of children and their capacity for fun and all things imaginary.

During the summer of 1899, Morgan kept a journal of the trip she took to Germany and Italy with her brother Avery. Architectural sketches and descriptions of architectural features – from monumental cathedrals to decorative elements of a hotel room ceiling – cover the pages of her diary. More striking, however, are the observations Morgan made of the locals and fellow travelers she met. She had a knack for learning the details of people’s lives and establishing instant friendships. She met a young soldier, for instance, who had just turned twenty-one and visited San Francisco; the soldier invited Avery and Julia to lunch in Lucerne. Another woman told Morgan she was one of thirteen children and had thirty-two nieces and nephews. Of two young children, one Italian and one German, Morgan delighted in their ability to chatter happily with one another, though not understand a word of the other’s language. A scene of German peasants – “the old fat man...the thin lady...the gentleman – all sharing the same knife and laughing heartily over a pitcher of beer” – inspired Morgan to sketch, as did the

⁴⁰ JM to LeBrun, October 4, 1896, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/01/01.

⁴¹ JM to Chaussemiche, January 27, 1936, JMC-Cal Poly II/02/03/26.

costume of the local girls. In a more poignant moment, Morgan befriended a young woman named Kathrina who insisted that Morgan take a hand-woven blue silk scarf; in exchange, Morgan could only offer the young woman a sketch. Instead of exchanging money, they traded in arts. Over and over again, Morgan remarked without condescension upon the charming simplicity of life among the peasants in the village.⁴² The people who would form the nucleus of Morgan's clientele represented the affluent rather than the poor and ordinary. Often, however, the institutions Morgan designed for this group would serve the needs of the disadvantaged – the sick, poor, laboring classes, or marginalized members of society. Whether a building was intended for the rich or poor, Morgan's sensitivity to and admiration for simplicity and community deeply influenced the architectural spaces she designed.

All of these factors contributed to Morgan's emerging architectural philosophy. She never subscribed completely to the Beaux-Arts way of building, once commenting to Pierre LeBrun in reference to an assignment she had just completed, "Its on the principle, 'in the Beaux Arts region, do as the Beaux Arts do', only I'd promise that, given one to build, it would not be like this one."⁴³ Not surprisingly, then, Benjamin Chaussemiche noted that his young pupil liked to mix styles a little bit too much, rather than adhere to historical purism. Both characteristics have rendered Morgan's signature style difficult to define for the chroniclers of her life and work. Morgan did, however, adhere closely to the Ecole's methods of composition. Working from the inside out, the architect created a plan, first, that took the function of the site into close consideration. The elevations followed the plan and could be drawn from any number of historicist styles. Morgan

⁴² Diary, August 5-27, 1899, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/05.

⁴³ JM to LeBrun, April 29, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01.

loved gothic architecture, in particular, and took pains to find churches and cathedrals to sketch wherever she traveled. Modern technology fascinated her as well, the use of which would become a hallmark of her architecture. Most importantly and uniquely for an Ecole graduate, women, children, ordinary people, and everyday life played equally important roles in Morgan's architectural inspiration.

Transitional Spaces: Oakland and Paris, 1901

As Julia Morgan's years in Paris drew to a close, two distinctly different images of her began to emerge and foreshadowed competing notions of womanhood that would shape her early career. Friends and family, with the help of the media, chronicled Morgan's every step in Paris, all the while constructing an increasingly idealized image of Morgan as a pioneer in the advancement of women. This image was completely removed from Morgan's experience and ultimately based on conservative values of women's proper place in society. Morgan, meanwhile, juggled her growing celebrity with studies, her first paid commission, and the challenges of living alone in a big city. Already ambitious when she set sail for Europe, Morgan departed with the best architectural education in the world, and her own ideas about women, work, and home. She left Paris a modern woman.

The story of Morgan's housing arrangements in Paris chronicles her growing independence and distance from Victorian womanhood for which she had been groomed much of her life. Morgan arrived in Paris on June 5, 1896, and immediately paid for one month's lodging at the American Club [Figure 27], a pre-Revolutionary, eighteenth-century building on rue de Chevreuse, and just a five-minute walk from Gare Montparnasse. Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, wife of the American Minister to France, rented the

property in 1893 and, in conjunction with the American Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, established a club for young American women. The three-story building, with its white-washed walls and shuttered windows blended into the “measly little street with a two foot sidewalk,” as Morgan described it, and quickly proved to have all the amenities Morgan needed to ease her transition from the comparatively small town of Oakland. It was also of architectural interest. Though she found cracks in the China, thought the service might be “a trifle more dainty,” and the furniture lacked some conveniences, Morgan thought the place “cheerful enough.... perfectly safe and proper,” with a large and pleasant garden. She described the house as “very quaint and old, but clean, - with all sort of dark and devious hallways and unexpected steps and stairs.” The building intrigued her. Best of all, the house was full of fellow American women – mostly aspiring artists and musicians – with similar backgrounds and at least one other woman who was also attending classes at the Ecole. Whereas Morgan would spend virtually all of her years in Paris recognized as the sole woman architect at the Ecole, moreover, she immediately found another one at the American Club: Katherine Budd, a woman about ten years Morgan’s senior who went on to enjoy a distinguished career in the greater New York City area. The two women would work in the same atelier for a time. Not unlike a sorority house or a YWCA in the United States, the American Club provided a safe, welcoming, and studious atmosphere, if not a luxurious one, as well as instant companionship that enabled Morgan to transition smoothly into life in this international metropolis. Consequently, it allowed her to focus most of her energy on the more daunting task of gaining acceptance to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Originally a country house of the Duc de Chevreuse, the building at 4 rue de Chevreuse served as a porcelain works during the Revolution, and from 1834 to 1893 it housed the Institution Keller, a well-

After a year of communal living Morgan decided to find an apartment. She was tired of eating in restaurants and cafeterias, and she wanted to be able to host dinner parties, serve American specialties, sing, talk, look at pictures, and socialize with newly arrived Americans in Paris.⁴⁵ Finding the perfect apartment, however, proved more difficult than she expected, for it presented a host of considerations Morgan had never had to address. Katherine Budd was excited to have Morgan share an apartment with her come the summer of 1897, but Morgan demurred. While she knew that such a situation would be “convenient and homelike,” she also realized that one had to be careful about choosing roommates. Something “intangible” about the otherwise “kindhearted” Budd, whom Morgan professed to like quite well, kept her from committing to that living arrangement. Reliability may have been one factor, as Morgan once described Budd as “not always very certain.”⁴⁶ Instead, Morgan spent the summer of 1897 subletting the apartment of two women from San Francisco and discovered the joys of cooking her own meals.⁴⁷ After a month of moving around from the American Club to an apartment to the home of a French family, Morgan and a friend finally settled in an apartment in the same building as Bernard Maybeck and his family at 7 rue Honoré Chevalier [Figure 28]. Though more spacious, the apartment did not signify status or luxury. “It seems extravagant to say one has four pretty rooms, kitchen, hall, big closets, fine plans in each

known men’s school and the first Protestant school in France. The American Club served American women students until World War I, when the American Red Cross used it for a hospital and later the Paris Red Cross headquarters. Mrs. Whitelaw Reid finally bought the property in 1920 and turned it over to the American Association of University Women, resuming its use as a home for foreign students. Columbia University bought the property in 1964; since then, it has housed international academic organizations and hosted numerous study-abroad programs. By 1930 the club was named Reid Hall, but exactly when that name was established is unclear. Dorothy Louise Mackay, “Reid Hall: A Relic of Old Paris,” reprinted in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* (July 1931): 260-71; <http://www.ce.columbia.edu/paris/intro.cfm>; <http://international.udel.edu/aboutcfis/where.html>; JM to LeBrun, June 8, 1896, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

⁴⁵ JM to LeBrun, December 12, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

⁴⁶ JM to LeBrun, March 1, 1897 and April 29, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

room,” Morgan wrote of this apartment to Pierre LeBrun. “But in reality it is not dearer than the one furnished room apiece at the club or elsewhere. We have one chair for each room, and the furniture absolutely necessary – which will not make much housekeeping – and will get our own breakfasts and dinners with lunch out as now. It’s the location which takes my especial feelings, right one block from San Sulpice [sic], and half way between the atelier and the Beaux Arts, the trams all right at hand, and very healthy neighborhood.”⁴⁸ Location and economy of time and money mattered more than anything else for the young working woman. These principles held true in the search for Morgan’s last apartment as well. Most of the ones she found were too small to accommodate two people and a home office. In the end, instead of renting a newly refurbished apartment with big rooms and windows looking onto the Seine from the Quai des Orfèvres, on Ile de la Cité, she chose “an unreproachably respectable one behind the fashions” on rue Guénégaud [Figures 29 & 30]. By this time, Morgan knew that she would be working with Benjamin-François Chaussemiche who did not have an atelier where she could work, so function guided her decision too. Located on this narrow street, across from the Hôtel des monnaies and little more than a block away from the Ecole, the apartment on rue Guénégaud offered no picturesque views. But it had large windows that faced onto a courtyard, allowing plenty of light to flood the apartment, as well as a flexible floor plan that included a work room, and doors to make that room private or invisible as needed.⁴⁹

The apartment at rue Guénégaud came to embody Morgan’s growing confidence and independence. The American Club had provided security, familiarity, and communal life. Though she desired other arrangements, it was only with the help of Bernard

⁴⁷ JM to LeBrun, July 19, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

⁴⁸ JM to LeBrun, October 12, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

Maybeck that Morgan managed to find acceptable accommodations outside of the club. The last apartment, however, Morgan had found by herself. It was originally intended for herself and her brother Avery, who arrived in August of 1898, but never having adjusted to life in Paris he returned to California by January of 1901, leaving Julia to live alone. She considered moving — at least the ninth time in four and a half years — but as her mother said, “You probably would loose [sic] the difference in rent – if – there was any in moving – not having ‘Madame’ to do for you and a concierge who knows all about you and the nearness to the Beaux Arts – and as far as I am concerned the rent don’t bother me at all wherever you want to live – just suit yourself.”⁵⁰ Despite a lack of domestic help and the significant disruptions that installation of a new plumbing system and reconfiguration of the building entrance created, the apartment was safe, convenient, familiar, and within Morgan’s budget, so she stayed. Besides, she had just one year to earn nearly all of the points required to complete the first class (at least ten), ultimately meaning she would have to complete at least nine projects in drawing, modeling, architectural history, and architecture before her thirtieth birthday if she wanted to graduate with a degree from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Moving would only take valuable time away from her work.⁵¹

And Morgan was a working woman. By September of 1901, while she was still studying at the Ecole, Morgan secured her first professional commission. Harriet Fearing hired Morgan to remodel her home in Fontainebleu, just outside of Paris. While this job presented a fantastic opportunity for experience and potentially gave Morgan entrée to a

⁴⁹ JM to LeBrun, July 31, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

⁵⁰ EPM to JM, May 19, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

⁵¹ Section d’Architecture – Feuille de Valeurs for Julia Morgan, Dossiers individuels des élèves, ANF AJ52 409.

circle of wealthy East Coast patrons, it also proved taxing on her nerves and introduced her to some of the unappealing aspects of patronage and the practice of architecture. Morgan's letters to her immediate family no longer exist, but both her mother and sister frequently alluded to the difficulties Morgan experienced in dealing with Harriet Fearing. "It was real low down mean of Mrs. Fearing to make you all that extra work and I wish you won't have any more hitches or changes to bother you – from what I've known of Architects work I fear that thing often happens, especially when working for ladies,"⁵² her mother wrote. Emma similarly wrote, "I have heard privately & never to be mentioned of your trials in practicing the professions... and hope [they] have developed better."⁵³ In the end, Morgan successfully completed the Fearing project and endured her initiation into the world of architect-client relationships.

As time consuming as her work was, Morgan's sense of adventure sent her searching often for new places to explore. From the outset, Morgan described Paris as a place that "wakes one up wonderfully" and "does not make you feel a stranger."⁵⁴ She spared no time in acquainting herself with the city and learned to navigate it with ease. Within the first three days of her arrival in Paris, Morgan toured the Luxembourg Gardens, the Church of the Trinity, Notre Dame Cathedral and the Ile de la Cité, the Palais de Justice, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and the Bon Marché. All of these places soon became Morgan's regular stomping grounds (except the Bon Marché; she vowed never to return to the famous department store). Less than a month later she had investigated nine churches, visited two salons, took the omnibus to Arc de l'Etoile, Pere Lachaise

⁵² EPM to JM, September 1, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

⁵³ EMN to JM, September 9, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

⁵⁴ JM to LeBrun, June 8, 1896, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

cemetery, and the Opéra Garnier.⁵⁵ Morgan's adventures took her beyond Paris as well.

She and three other women from the San Francisco Bay Area traveled around Switzerland during the summer of 1896, and by the time she returned to California she had explored Germany, Italy, and much of France as well. Sometimes her journeys were well planned, and other times not planned at all. When she and a San Francisco acquaintance decided to find a place outside of the city to sketch one day, they based their choice on the name of a place that struck their fancy and the cost rail fare.⁵⁶

Few people, if any, would ever mark Morgan as a bohemian radical feminist, but while she was in *fin de siècle* Paris, she was developing a worldview and understanding of gender norms that diverged from those of the insulated networks of Bay Area society. Morgan did tend toward the conservative in some ways: In her letters to Pierre LeBrun, Morgan revealed that she preferred more restrained American fashions to those of French women, and though she frequented the theater, she notably did not venture out to the more risqué ones, like the Folie- Bergères. She did, however, see a production of *Sappho*, an opera based on the novel by Daudet, which was itself based on the Greek poem renown for its lesbian eroticism. In turn-of-the-century debates about sexuality, the literary figure was cited alternately as evidence for the relationship between a woman's intellect and sexual degeneracy or as a celebration of beauty within an ostracized group.⁵⁷ Daudet's *Sappho* represented the degenerate type, but still broached taboo subjects to

⁵⁵ Ibid., JM to LeBrun, July 5, 1896, JM-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01.

⁵⁶ JM to LeBrun, March 1, 1897, JM-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01.

⁵⁷ For more on the role of Sappho in public discourse about sexuality see, for example, Marylynne Diggs, "Romantic Friends or a 'Different Race of Creatures'? The Representation of Lesbian Pathology in Nineteenth-Century America," *Feminist Studies* 21 (Summer 1995), 317- ; Margaret Gibson, "The Masculine Degenerate: American Doctors' Portrayals of the Lesbian Intellect, 1880-1949," *Journal of Women's History* 9 (Winter 1998), 78-103; Christina Simmons, "Women's Power in Sex Radical Challenges to Marriage in the Early-Twentieth-Century United States," *Feminist Studies* 29 (Spring 2003), 168-.

depict the moral of the story. While the staging received poor marks from the young architect, she remained neutral on the content.⁵⁸ Nowhere did Morgan mention any ventures into the most notorious neighborhood of fin-de-siècle Paris, Montmartre (not even to visit Sacré Coeur, and Morgan visited just about every church in Paris), but students, artists, and writers of all persuasions filled the Latin Quarter, the neighborhood Morgan knew best and a bohemian one in its own right.

As conservative as the Ecole was in many ways, it too exposed Morgan to new levels of cultural and political diversity. She was struck by the diversity of her female classmates and once commented to her cousin Pierre LeBrun, "I have become acquainted with a number of Russian women, fine strong workers, and very intelligent and good,- but they smoke & drink tea – the first almost I've seen of bohemianism."⁵⁹ Again, Morgan placed no value judgment upon these women, as different as their mannerisms and politics may have been from her own. They intrigued her, though. Similarly, members of the UFPS attended the same classes as Morgan, and while she never specifically mentioned interacting with these activists, she was privy to their discussions about agitating further for the right to take entrance examinations for degree programs, compete in the Prix de Rome, and secure separate ateliers for women. The extent to which Morgan subscribed to their ideologies remains unclear, but, as noted earlier, they certainly knew Morgan and were sympathetic to her cause well enough to include her in their endeavors. One can assume, in turn, that Julia Morgan was sympathetic to some of their ideas.

⁵⁸ JM to LeBrun, February 7, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01.

⁵⁹ JM to LeBrun, July 31, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/02.

Living and studying abroad rendered Morgan an independent, modern woman. She could now navigate an international metropolis with ease and felt comfortable living alone; she was a well-seasoned traveler; she had a more cosmopolitan perspective of her world; she had successfully challenged an institution once reserved only for men; and she could manage wealthy, high-maintenance clients and negotiate with men in engineering, construction, labor, and craft professions. This image of Morgan, based on her everyday experiences in Paris, stood at odds with the one local San Francisco Bay Area papers, and eventually national and international papers had been constructing of her since she departed for Paris in 1896.

Interested residents tracked Morgan's progress in the society pages of the local papers from the moment she boarded the train for Chicago in March 1896. While she was touring architectural programs around the country, one columnist declared, "Oakland will be very proud in the future of her woman architect, for Miss Julia Morgan has rare ability, a capacity for work, and is with it all very popular among a large circle of friends." When Morgan set sail for Paris in May 1896, the same columnist reiterated, "Oakland will expect and receive much in the future along architectural lines from so thorough and good a student."⁶⁰ These articles suggest that Julia Morgan's early professional success was virtually sealed before she ever set sail for Europe; the people Morgan had known all of her life eagerly awaited to supply her with work.

Whatever level of support Morgan received in her quest to succeed in a male-dominated profession, Bay Area residents comprehended her endeavors within the

⁶⁰ Sara Holmes Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, rev. ed. (New York, 1995), 23-24 (hereafter, Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*); E. Richey, *The Ultimate Victorians of the Continental Side of San Francisco Bay* (Berkeley, 1970), 83; JMAHP, Vol. 2, p. 195-6; "Roxie's Column," *Saturday Weekly*, March 28, 1896, and May 30, 1896, in *ibid*.

limiting context of prevailing gender norms. These early articles indicate that, to them, Morgan was already a successful architect. She had graduated from Berkeley with honors, studied at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art in San Francisco, and had worked with Bernard Maybeck on the design and construction of the house of a University of California professor. Moreover, Morgan was expected to study in Paris for one year only. If her European education followed the pattern of most women of her class, she would return with little more than a new set of mannerisms and fancy clothes.⁶¹ In short, Morgan's Parisian education simply added social prestige to her already impressive credentials.

Once the earnestness of Morgan's pursuits and rigor of her education became apparent, she complicated the gender paradigm. A San Francisco journalist could only explain this woman's accomplishments in masculine terms: Morgan was the first woman to be accepted in the architecture program because "the mathematics upon which the course is based [is] very technical and extremely difficult." Not only did Morgan have the intellectual capacity of a man, but the emotional strength as well; the oral examination before a committee of masters was "of such a nature as to try the nerves of even strong men." Described in this way, Morgan was no role model for young girls, but an aberration from the dominant gender structure. In a telling shift in tone, however, the journalist retreated from the supposed masculine qualities of Morgan's character and turned instead to a discussion about the social, local, and national prestige of Morgan's achievement, her imminent rise to the ranks of the best architects in the world, and

⁶¹ *Saturday Weekly*, March 28, 1896; Jane Armstrong, "Woman Architect Who Helped Build the Fairmont Hotel," *San Francisco Call*, June 16, 1907, p. 12.

finally, restored Morgan to her place as a California heroine.⁶² Whatever threat Morgan's ambition and success in a masculine profession might have posed to the gender structure was diminished by removing Morgan from the context of her actual work and placing her in an idealized vision of a pioneering woman.

Morgan did not see all of the newspaper clippings, but she could sense in the letters of her own family the dueling notions of womanhood that were emerging in California. Even as Morgan surmounted one obstacle after another to meet with success, her parents, in particular, could not relinquish themselves of the belief in a woman's innate fragility and the detrimental effects that intellectual activity or work outside the home might have on her physical well-being. Morgan did need some dental care while she was in Paris, and did have the occasional cold and a case of the grippe. A boil in her ear also put her out of commission for a couple of weeks in 1899, and, most notably, Morgan's eyesight deteriorated rapidly under the strain of working long hours, often by candle light. While poor eyesight did stem directly from work and working conditions, these ailments hardly amounted to life-threatening – even severely debilitating – diseases, and most certainly had nothing to do with gender. Still, Charles Morgan worried that long days would be detrimental to his daughter's health. Tellingly, Morgan's first private commission for one Harriet Fearing, a wealthy American from Newport, Rhode Island, raised the greatest level of anxiety in her father; he entreated Julia to employ whatever help she could so as not to over exert herself. Her mother pleaded with Julia to take a rest from work and keep walking to a minimum, lest the heat of the summer or too much exercise overstrain her body. For all of her moral and financial support in Julia's endeavors, Eliza Morgan also expected that her eldest daughter would ultimately settle

⁶² "California Girl Wins High Honor," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 6, 1898, p. 7.

down and raise a family. Apparently without considering the age and marriage prospects of Julia, or perhaps from a state of complete denial, Eliza tactlessly wrote, “Your [sorority] sister [Annie] Brewer is going to be a real old maid and so is [sorority] sister [Grace] Fisher and I think its too bad – for they are nice girls.” She reiterated her opinion a few months later: “I hope someone will get Annie Brewer, for she’s going to be a sad old maid if they don’t hurry up.”⁶³ Even Morgan’s sister Emma, who graduated from Hastings School of Law and joined the California Bar, reveled more in her wedding than her intellectual achievements. She wrote in great detail about her July 10, 1900 marriage to Hart Hyatt North. Evidently, marriage and a family remained the preferred path for and among women in Morgan’s cohort in Oakland, but nothing indicates that the young architect had the slightest interest in dating or marriage. As her family’s letters foreshadowed, however, Morgan would have to contend with clients and colleagues who held steadfast to their beliefs in inherent gender difference and proper gender roles that stood in stark contrast to her own experience and desires.

Of course, Morgan always stood out at the Ecole as well. She was, after all, one of five women in both the descriptive geometry course, which had fifty-five men, and general architectural history course, which had forty-two men, as well as the only woman in both architectural theory and architectural history of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which both had thirty male students. Her status as an aspiring architect also impressed Ecole administrators more than her foreign status. Registration records for the entrance examinations always noted the foreign status of students. Officials only noted Morgan’s foreign status the third time she registered, but they always noted

⁶³ EPM to JM, October 23, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/10; EPM to JM, March 5, 1899, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

“architecture” by her name. During the height of organized efforts to establish equal access to Ecole programs and separate ateliers for women, the media often singled out Morgan as the one woman, the American, who was defying history and pursuing architectural studies as well. Before Morgan successfully completed her entrance exams one reader of the feminist newspaper *La Fronde* pointedly asked if any women were studying architecture at the Ecole, to which the columnist replied that just one American woman had attempted to pass the entrance examinations.⁶⁴ Sometimes the French papers cast Morgan’s efforts in more profound terms, as in the case of an article related to the establishment of separate women’s ateliers. “This architecture student,” it read, “[is] the first woman no doubt that ever won over this branch of art, indicating a new opening in feminists’ advancements.”⁶⁵

These notable exceptions, aside, Morgan always enjoyed a degree of anonymity in Paris and at the Ecole. For all the allusions to Morgan in the Paris papers about her singular status in the architecture program, for example, only one ever mentioned her by name.⁶⁶ Policies at the Ecole also shielded Morgan from excessive exposure. According to the centuries old tradition, all students participating in a concours submitted their esquisses and projets rendus anonymously, ostensibly to prevent any partiality toward a particular student. In reality, students, faculty, masters, and judges came to know one another’s work, so the unbiased anonymity never completely materialized. In theory, however, this policy meant that Morgan’s gender and celebrity were not issues. For the

⁶⁴ “Jusqu’à ce jour, une seule femme de nationalité américaine, s’est présentée à diverses reprises au concours d’admission dans la section d’architecture.” *La Fronde*, May 22, 1898, p. 3.

⁶⁵ ANF AJ52 909; ANF AJ52 73bis; “Cette élève architecte, la première femme sans doute qu’ai jamais séduite cette branche de l’art, un nouveau débouche n’avait été indiqué aux progrès féministe,” [1899?] BMD BEA Dos 707.

⁶⁶ An excerpt of an interview with Benjamin-François Chaussemiche that was first printed in *La Fronde* was reprinted as, “She Qualifies in Paris as Architect,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, December 8, 1901.

most part, the quality of her work spoke for itself.⁶⁷ If ever Morgan did need to escape the pressures of her unique status, she could always retreat into the city of two million people.

By the fall of 1901, Morgan could not help but notice the media attention and could not escape it; reports emerged that she had graduated from the Ecole and her celebrity status reached a new pitch. Just days after Eliza Morgan tolled the death bell on Morgan's hopes for earning her diplôme, the following article appeared in London's *Pall Mall Gazette*:

“The First Lady Architect”

For the first time in the history of the arts, an academically accredited woman architect has come to the front in France. She is a young American student named Julia Morgan, and belongs to San Francisco. When the courses of the Beaux Arts were first thrown open to women four years ago Miss Morgan was the only one of her sex then or since to elect for architecture, in which she has just taken honors.⁶⁸

Similar stories soon began to appear in the *New York Sun*, the *New York Herald*, the *New York Times*, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, San Francisco papers, and Oakland papers. “Celebrity clippings” arrived daily at the Morgan home in Oakland, several of them stating that she had already earned her diploma and would soon be returning to the United States. Morgan’s family grew increasingly impatient with the daily disruptions of nosy reporters knocking at the front door and did not hesitate to express their frustration in their letters to the rising star.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ JM to LeBrun, March 1, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/01; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 28.

⁶⁸ “The First Lady Architect,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 28, 1901, later reprinted in the *New York Times*, November 12, 1901, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Saturday Weekly*, March 28, 1896; *La Fronde*, May 22, 1898, p. 3; “She Qualifies in Paris as Architect,” *SF Bulletin*, Dec. 8, 1901; newspaper clippings, BMD BEA Dossier 707; “Points about People,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 27, 1901; EPM to JM, November 4, 13, 22, and December 6, 15, & 29, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11; EMN to JM, December 7, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11; Gardner Morgan to JM, September 29, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/15; and Parmelee Morgan to JM, November 5 and December 16, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/16; .

Unfortunately, the stories were not accurate and only added to the pressure that was already mounting for Morgan to complete her Ecole work. At the end of October 1901, Morgan discovered that the latest *projet* she had been working on was “thrown out,” judged unworthy for any points. With just three months until her thirtieth birthday and still six points shy from completing the first class, prospects for successfully graduating appeared grim. Her mother appears to have given up hope: “I am very, very sorry indeed,” she wrote, “after all your work and hopes that you lost. It was too sad. I hoped so much you could ‘make your Diplome.’”⁷⁰ The rest of the family expressed similar, if less direct, sentiments. Would so many years of hard work and personal battles come to naught? How would Morgan live down the crushed expectations of so many people? How could she make up the invasions of privacy and daily disruptions her family experienced for attention that, in the end, she did not quite deserve? The glaring difference between the culturally constructed image of Morgan and the Morgan who had evolved through lived experience made clear that during the six years she lived abroad, the young architect had come a long way geographically, intellectually, and psychologically from Oakland. Such distance portended a gulf that Morgan would somehow have to bridge between herself, her family, friends, future clients and colleagues.

On May 28, 1897, Morgan had become the ninety-second woman to enroll in lecture courses and gain permission to study in the galleries of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts; by the time she left Paris nearly five years later, over three hundred women had achieved that feat. On February 4, 1902, however, two weeks after her thirtieth birthday, Morgan

⁷⁰ EPM to JM, October 26, 1901, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

received a first mention for her *projet rendu* of a palace theater, giving her enough points to earn a degree in architecture from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the first woman ever to do so and the only woman to do so for at least twenty more years.⁷¹ She returned home to Oakland later that year and faced new obstacles of space, place, and gender, but the young architect returned to California with a thorough architectural education and the knowledge that women could achieve some measure of equality without having to settle for a limited sphere of influence and opportunity. She also learned that men were hostile to women who invaded their territory, but through perseverance, hard work, and resourceful use of space, she could overcome the most difficult gender obstacles [Figure 31].

⁷¹ “Ordre d’Inscription des femmes (à partir du 1er avril 1897 pour suivre les cours oraux et étudier dans les galeries,” ANF, AJ52 971, in Sauer, *L’Entrée des femmes*, 70-76.

Part II
Practicing Architecture, 1902-1932

Chapter 3

An Atelier of One's Own:

Architecture, Gender, and Julia Morgan's Professional Style

Hettie Belle Marcus hired Julia Morgan in 1934 to design an additional story for the Marcus family home on San Francisco's famously crooked block of Lombard Street. A board member of the San Francisco YWCA, Marcus had previously worked with Morgan between 1929 and 1932 in relationship to the design and construction of the San Francisco Residence, the Japanese YWCA, and Chinese YWCA. In her oral history for the *Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, Marcus remembered how much the women of Chinatown loved their new association building, for Morgan had included "some things that were very sacred to the Chinese." Morgan's designs for the Residence, in contrast, elicited a lot of skepticism and disagreement among that association's board. "So, it was very interesting," Marcus commented, "how [Morgan] so quietly got her own way.... [She] never fought for anything, she just quietly stated plans." Other characteristics of Morgan stuck with Marcus as well: a small, frail frame, quiet voice and reticent nature, beautifully tailored and perfectly ironed suits, a sharp eye for detail, and "this wonderful power that she had.... [that] was part of the wonderful thing, I think." Seventeen years younger than Morgan, Marcus was of a different generation than the friends, family members, and patrons who helped Morgan launch her practice in 1902. Marcus did not know that Morgan had graduated with honors from the University of California, nor that Morgan was the first woman to earn a degree in architecture from the

Ecole des Beaux-Arts. She simply knew that Morgan as “a very successful architect.”¹ Morgan could attribute much of her success to the professional style she had forged in the first decades of her career. Not coincidentally, Hettie Marcus remembrance of Morgan captured many of the key elements of that style, or the way Morgan established authority and crafted relationships with the public, clients, colleagues, and employees.

Though she would be loathe to admit it, gender significantly shaped Julia Morgan’s professional style. One of Morgan’s earliest commissions, the campanile at Mills College in Oakland, exposed her to the power dynamics of the client-colleague-architect triumvirate that she would have to negotiate throughout her career. In response to the gender constructs that shaped that triumvirate and the culture of the architectural profession, Morgan developed a professional style – marked in particular by her costume, her relationship to the media, the spatial language of her downtown San Francisco office, and her direct relationship with clients – that directly affected her authority over and relationship to clients, colleagues, and employees. A reexamination of Morgan’s costume underscores the minutiae women had to consider during the early twentieth century as they emerged from their traditional place in domestic sphere. Morgan’s savvy use of the media allowed her to build a professional reputation and maintain a public profile without having to engage in competitions or express a single word. Her financial district office contributed to a re-imagining of the geography of women in the city during the Progressive Era. Julia Morgan was also known to have given her clients an unusually influential role in the design of their buildings. Rather than understand this as a sign of Morgan’s submissive nature and a detriment to her creative expression, one should think of it in terms of customer service. Unlike most architects, Morgan placed clients’ needs

¹ JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 136-43.

over the architect's ego, assured the highest standard of quality to whomever passed through the doors of her office, and most importantly for the history of women and the built environment, empowered clients to an unusually high degree. In general, Morgan's professional style downplayed or even rejected language – written or verbal – resulting in a rather paltry sampling of her thoughts and ideas as told in her own words. Consequently, Morgan challenges us to rely less on text than actions, material culture, space, and the built environment in developing an interpretation of gender discourse.

A Monumental Task

Founded as the "Young Ladies Seminary" in 1852, in the quaint capital city of Benicia, Mills College played a vital role in yielding "a vast influence for good upon the mental, moral, and social growth" of California. It sheltered daughters of the leading citizens of California from an otherwise overwhelmingly masculine culture of vigilance committees and promiscuous pleasure in the gambling halls and saloons of San Francisco, or the unsettled, dangerous life in the mining towns.² By 1871, Benicia was no longer the state capital nor a safe haven from the vagaries of urban and camp life that it once had been, so the new proprietors, Cyrus and Susan Mills, relocated the seminary to fifty-five acres of pristine land in Alameda County, five miles outside of Oakland.³ Mills

² Rosalind Amelia Keep, *Fourscore Years: A History of Mills College* (Oakland, 1931), 1-11 (hereafter, Keep, *Fourscore Years*).

³ Cyrus T. Mills (1819-1884) attended Union Theological Seminary in Massachusetts after he graduated from Williams College in 1844. He met Susan Tolman (1825-1912) in 1848 while she was working as a teacher at her alma mater, Mount Holyoke. The two married in 1848 and set sail for Ceylon, where they were missionaries for the next twelve years. Poor health enticed Cyrus Mills to accept a position as president of Punahoa School on the Sandwich Islands – or Oahu College, in Honolulu, Hawaii – where they educated children from such notable families as Dole and Waterhouse. Mary Atkins, head mistress of the Young Ladies Seminary at Benicia, persuaded the two missionaries to become proprietors of the young California institution, and after seventeen years abroad, Cyrus and Susan Mills sailed back to the United States. From the beginning of their history with the seminary, the Mills aimed to create a women's college to rival the best women's colleges of the East. Ibid., 34-50; Elias Olan James, *The Story of Cyrus and Susan Mills* (Stanford, 1953).

recruited teachers from the best institutions of the East Coast and abroad, and as the school's reputation grew, it attracted students from nearly all the states in the union and several foreign nations as well. The state of California granted Mills Seminary a college charter in 1885, making it the only women's college on the Pacific Coast.⁴ Despite its long history and reputation among the citizens and institutions of California, the future of Mills was uncertain by the turn of the century. Coeducation, economic depression, and the philanthropic rivalry of Jane Lathrop Stanford and Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who were respectively underwriting the design and construction of grand new university campuses in Stanford to the south and Berkeley to the north, threatened to render Mills redundant.⁵

Mills could not possibly compete on the same scale as either Stanford or the State University, but Mills did have one unique instrument with which to stake its claim in the future of a women's college on the Pacific Coast: Lying silently in the corner of the Mills music hall lay ten award-winning chimes, some of the only surviving artifacts of both the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, and the San Francisco Midwinter Fair of 1894. Mary Smith, socialite, philanthropist, and wife of borax mining

⁴ Keep, *Fourscore Years*, 86-94.

⁵ A *San Francisco Chronicle* article claimed in 1899 that "there exists no woman's college of high grade west of the Alleghenies." Jane Seymour Klink, President of the Mills Alumnae Association, blamed the eclipse of Mills College in the public consciousness to wealthy patrons who, since 1891, poured all their money into coeducational institutions. Susan Mills tried to persuade Phoebe Hearst to divert some of her fortune towards Mills College. In a letter to Hearst beseeching her to endow a chair at the women's college, Mills argued that "co-education is not desirable for many young women." Without Mills College, in essence, the moral fabric of California society would fray. Hearst refused to endow the chair; instead, she decided to fund the \$200,000 international architectural competition for a new Berkeley campus – a "City of Learning" – and underwrote the establishment of academic departments. In the words of Gray Brechin, Phoebe Hearst "single-handedly [raised] the University of California to national prominence." Jane Seymour Klink, "Shall There Be a Woman's College in California?" *Overland Monthly* 33 (May 1899), 461-467; Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York, 1973), 307-344 (hereafter, Starr, *California Dream*); Susan Mills to Phoebe Apperson Hearst, April 6, 1895, GPAH Box 48 folder 13; Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley, 1999), 233, 280-289; Roy Lowe, *A Western Acropolis of Learning: The University of California in 1897* (Berkeley, 1996).

and real estate magnate Francis Marion “Borax” Smith, volunteered to fund the design and construction of a campanile to house the bells; it would be the first free-standing bell tower on any college campus in the United State.⁶ In 1903 they commissioned Julia Morgan to design a tower sensitive to the history of Mills, yet signaling its transition from an almost obsolete frontier finishing school to a leading woman's college of the twentieth century.

Morgan’s solution was a seventy-two foot tall, California Mission Style tower situated among the California Oaks that stood at the southeastern edge of the oval driveway in front of the main campus building, Seminary Hall [Figure 32]. The front and back of the tower measured twice as wide as the sides, and a series of low pitched red tile roofs created colorful contrast to the drab cement. The award-winning bronze bells were housed in seven arched openings that pierced through the concrete walls, and on the edifice of the campanile, surrounded by the chimes, hung a blue and gold clock. A massive wooden door, the nails and lock of which came from an old Spanish church in Mexico, created an imposing entrance to the tower. Morgan also designed twenty-eight earthenware jars fashioned after those in Alhambra, in Granada, Spain, in which Southern

⁶ Oakland was growing rapidly during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Within a thirty year period, its population increased sevenfold, four times as fast as California’s population as a whole. By the mid-1890s, the area stretching from Fruitvale to San Leandro had been parceled into small tracts and sold to eager settlers; it was the fastest growing part of the East Bay. Francis Marion Smith (1846-1931), who had earned his fortune by mining borax in the deserts of Nevada and California, was largely responsible for this trend. After founding the Pacific Borax Company in 1890 and establishing his position as the leading magnate in the borax industry, Smith turned his attention to real estate and transportation. During the 1890s, he began to acquire, consolidate, and extend electric car lines throughout the East Bay; the California Railway, whose line stopped at Mills College, was the first company in which Smith bought a significant interest. Next, Smith and several wealthy businessmen began to organize the Realty Syndicate with the intention of subdividing the land and selling it to prospective homeowners. To make this mostly remote landscape more accessible, practical, and appealing for settlement, Smith and his colleagues extended the East Bay transit system, eventually establishing a transbay ferry and rail network known as the Key Route System. Cecil Hammerton, “The City of Oaks: Oakland and Alameda County,” *Overland Monthly* 27 (June 1896), 674-704. George H. Hildebrand, *Borax Pioneer: Francis Marion Smith* (San Diego, 1982), 18-92 (hereafter, Hildebrand, *Borax Pioneer*).

California fauna such as palms, cacti, and yucca would grow. They sat atop a low wall at the edge of a broad walk that surrounded the tower.⁷ In May 1905, *El Campanil* was unveiled with more fanfare, praise, and public attention than any campus structure had received before or since. [Figure 1]

El Campanil's most obvious characteristic is its California Mission Style. This historicist style, however, was by no means an obvious choice; for nearly half a century, the school's architecture offered no references to California history at all. Instead, the buildings reflected East Coast and European precedents, which underscored the institution's antithetical position to frontier culture. In contrast to the temporary tents, lean-tos, shanties, abandoned ships, prefabricated buildings, and hastily constructed balloon-frame structures that sheltered the often transient populations who poured into the state in the early 1850s, the fledgling seminary was housed in a stately mansion.⁸ A two story structure with horizontal wood slats, a shingle roof, shutters, and surrounded by a white picket fence, the building bore little or no reference to California history, climate, topography, or culture. Instead, it resembled a large home on the East Coast, where the country's best educational institutions flourished, nuclear families remained intact, and religion still played a significant role in everyday life.

By the 1870s, when the Seminary moved to Alameda County, Californians were developing a cosmopolitan image of themselves and, some contemporary writers suggested, were more European in character than Yankee. With French restaurants and

152-189.

⁷ "The Campanile," *White and Gold* 10 (Oct. 1903), 32; "Statement by Mrs. C.T. Mills," *Dedication of El Campanil and Its Chime of Bells at Mills College, April 14, 1904* (hereafter, *Dedication*), 4, MCA; "Mills History," Aug. 9, 1949, MCA.

⁸ Keep, *Fourscore Years*, 1-15; Michael Corbett, *Building California: Technology and the Landscape* (San Francisco, 1998), 13-19 (hereafter, Corbett, *Building California*).

brothels lining its streets, and bands, dances, picnics, and promenades interrupting the monotony of Sunday afternoons, San Francisco had a particularly Parisian flare.⁹ Mills, too, looked beyond the East Coast for inspiration and fashioned itself as a denizen of European culture. Mills College historian, Rosalind Keep, described the main campus building, Seminary Hall (later renamed Mills Hall) [Figure 11], as "an imposing structure, presenting a front of two hundred and thirty feet,... three stories in height, surmounted by a mansard roof and a cupola"¹⁰ – and unmistakably French in style. Inside the grand building hung paintings of the Madonna by Murillo, Correggio, and Raphael, while pictures of Paris graced the walls of the French Room. If Mills and its urban counterparts shared a common interest in European culture, however, they drew upon vastly different qualities of it: San Franciscans based their Parisian identities on an exuberant public life, where "home is less and the street more." In contrast, Seminary Hall, a living and learning space, personified the school's emphasis on domesticity and the more sobering cerebral, spiritual, and artistic heritage of the old world.¹¹

The end of the nineteenth century saw California begin to emerge from its wild adolescence. The Bay Area could boast of such notable writers as Frank Norris and Jack London; it became a center for shipping, trade, transportation, and banking; and, after the United States' victory in the Spanish-American war, California found itself in a position as the capital of a new empire. Leading citizens, meanwhile, had begun to invest in the cultural and intellectual heritage of the state at this time as well. Notably, Jane Lathrop Stanford and her husband founded Stanford University in Palo Alto, and Phoebe Hearst

⁹ Starr, *Californian Dream*, 124; John S. Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco, 1878).

¹⁰ Keep, *Fourscore Years*, 51.

¹¹ Starr, *Californian Dream*, 124.

donated significant amounts of her fortune to the University of California, in Berkeley.

All of these factors affected Mills College and directly influenced the design of *El Campanil*.

The Mission Style of the campanile distinguished Mills clearly from its competition to the north and south, for unlike the architecture at Berkeley and Stanford, it referred only to the history of California and Mills College. Any references to the pagan architecture of ancient Greece and Rome were inappropriate for the Mills campus.

"Classic architecture," a speaker stated during the dedication ceremonies, "had no suggestion of such hiding-places for this sonorous orchestra.... the exquisite, soaring beauty of the finished Campanile, is an evolution which advanced the spirit of Christian art."¹² *El Campanil* celebrated the school's half-century commitment to a Christian education on the Pacific Coast. More importantly, the style recalled the early days of the institution in the frontier capital of Benicia, when the Young Ladies' Seminary and the missions offered some of the only permanent architecture in the state. Thus the Mission Style was a reminder that Mills was one of the oldest educational institutions on the West Coast.

Housed individually and in plain view, the ten bells marked the passage of every hour with the familiar Westminster chime, offering a note of continuity and tradition. If Mission architecture and the tower's incorporation of the landscape underscored the history of Mills in California and the scope of its influence in that state, the chimes connected Mills to the uninterrupted history of humankind. "To tell the story of the Bells would be to tell the story of the Race," a patron said. Since the most primitive times, he

¹² F.W. Damon, "Belfry and Bells," *Dedication*, 11.

continued, “all history has been marked by aerial music.”¹³ Indeed, just as Mills was marking its passage from a frontier seminary for young ladies to an urban college for women with the ringing of its bells, so too have people of virtually all cultures and epochs used similar instruments to mark a wide range of rites of passage – from birth, marriage, and death, to welcoming strangers and harvesting crops.¹⁴ To emphasize the particular Christian chapter of this history to which Mills College belonged, Susan Mills named the bells after the graces of the spirit as written in Saint Paul's letter to the Galatians. Faith, Hope, Peace, and Joy chimed every hour, and thus became the most regular sentiments emanating from the Mills campus to its East Bay neighbors. The largest bell was named Love, the smallest and least often rung called Meekness. Rounding out the names were Gentleness, Self Control, Longing, and Suffering.¹⁵ These names also typified nineteenth-century notions of femininity, reflecting the conservative values of Susan Mills and assuaging any fears that Mills College would plant the seeds for social rupture by offering young women access to higher education. On the contrary, in its education of women, Mills College would help preserve the moral stability of a rapidly urbanizing region.

As much as *El Campanil* stood as a nostalgic emblem to the school’s long history, so too did it signal the institution’s commitment to progress and change in the twentieth century. Between the Mission Style and Beaux-Arts trained architect, Mills could boast that it stood at the cutting edge of regional expression in architecture and employed only the best-trained architects. The decision to hire Julia Morgan also suggested that the school no longer aimed simply to provide young women with “good home training,

¹³ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁴ Rodney Needham, "Percussion and Transition," *Man* 2 (Dec. 1967), 611-612.

teaching them to care for the ward – robes, their rooms, to wait upon themselves – in short training them as daughters should be in a good home," as Susan Mills had once written to Phoebe Hearst, but also supported women pioneers in male dominated professions.¹⁶ In its most dramatic commitment to the changing tide history, Mills embraced California's role in the new empire. The missions had been part of the architecture of the Spanish empire in North America, but by appropriating this style, Mills College joined its Bay Area neighbors in suggesting that the old imperial powers of Europe must give way to the manifest destiny of America. The lock and nails that Mills acquired from a Spanish church in Mexico literally linked the school to the old empire, reiterated the transfer of power to America, and indicated that Mills College intended to play a key role in building it further. Like the institution had done in the past, it used architecture to emphasize its role in shaping the California landscape, but in stark contrast to the original building in Benicia or Seminary Hall, *El Campanil* demonstrated that the institution would no longer define itself by East Coast or European standards of excellence.

One speaker at the dedication ceremonies proclaimed, "So perfectly does [the campanile] blend in line and color with the surrounding trees and lawn that we already feel as if somehow the tower had always stood here and was today but rediscovered."¹⁷ Like the missions, Mills faced extinction, but like the ruins of the missions, it was determined to survive. This bell tower symbolized the school's permanent presence in the California landscape. As if to reiterate this point, Morgan incorporated the natural

¹⁵ Galatians, V: 22-23; Keep, *Fourscore Years*, 102.

¹⁶ Susan Mills to Phoebe Apperson Hearst, April 6, 1895, GPAH Box 48 folder 13.

¹⁷ "Address of Charles R. Brown at the Dedication of the Bell Tower at Mills College," *Dedication*, 22-23 (hereafter, "Charles R. Brown").

landscape into the design of the tower. The arches that housed the chimes allowed sun, sky, and trees to show through, thereby making the natural elements permanent fixtures of the tower. The southern California fauna that grew in the earthenware jars surrounding the tower further underscored that the influence of Mills College reached far beyond the boundaries of the Bay Area and literally placed Mills at the center of intellectual leadership of the Golden State.

The landscape this tower celebrated, however, was rapidly changing. Mills College responded to urbanization and the industrial and technological innovation that accompanied it with *El Campanil*. Though historicist in style, the campanile was a tower of modernity. For decades, the college had tried to shelter its students from the demoralizing influence of the boom-and-bust mining economy, but Morgan mined the rock for the cement of the campanile from the quarries in the hills behind the college. In constructing the campanile, Mills thus turned its own campus into a mining site and became a direct participant in that culture it had so long maligned.¹⁸ More importantly, the reinforced concrete technology that Morgan chose to construct the tower was the most modern technology available at the time. Morgan also physically changed the orientation of the campus. Whereas Mills Hall was built in the center of an open green, with no other logical reference, Morgan situated the tower at an angle to Mills Hall and facing due north. [Figures 2-4] At the time, the position of the building was noted as "admirable," but this subtle gesture rationalized the landscape and signified the triumph of human reason over nature.

The clock, too, demonstrated the school's commitment to modernity. As railroads, communication, science and technology, factory production, and wage labor developed

throughout the nineteenth century, precise measurement of time became increasingly important. Local time gave way to standard time, days gave way to hours, minutes, and seconds.¹⁹ Mills escaped the nineteenth century without overtly acquiescing to industrial time, but that ended with the new clock. Where once students played croquet on the front lawn, with little more than the rising and setting of the sun (or a school matron) to indicate the passage of time, they now watched every minute tick by.

El Campanil was a rousing success. I have already noted the celebratory speeches delivered at the unveiling ceremony. In addition, newspapers uniformly described Morgan's tower as simply beautiful.²⁰ Susan Mills was so pleased with Morgan's work and the public reception of it that she immediately commissioned Morgan to design the new campus library, which would be named after the daughter of its benefactor, Andrew Carnegie [Figure 33].²¹

The devastating earthquake the Bay Area early in the morning of April 18, 1906, reinforced the praise lavished upon Morgan's work and catapulted her to the ranks of the most prominent architects in the region. San Francisco bore the brunt of the damage; many of those buildings that were not turned to rubble by the shaking, were devastated by fires that raged through the city over the next few days. In downtown Oakland, chimneys fell, brick facades and terra cotta cornices shattered to the ground, and wooden frames

¹⁸ "El Campanil," from the Office of the President, 1953, MCA.

¹⁹ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge, 1983).

²⁰ "Miss Morgan's Good Work," *Oakland Tribune*, April 16, 1904, p. 9; "Thousands Do Honor to Loved and Noble Woman," *ibid.*, November 20, 1905, found in CSM; "Alumnae of Mills Put Shoulders to Wheel," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 15, 1904, p. 10; Helen Dare, "The Big work of One Little Woman," *San Francisco Sunday Call*, January 7, 1906, found in CSM.

²¹ Keep, *Fourscore Years* 102.

twisted out of shape. Most of the architecture of Stanford's celebrated "Spanish dream city" came tumbling down too.²²

Julia Morgan was called upon to assess the damage at Mills College. Some buildings would have to be torn down, but Susan Mills informed Mills friends and students that the campanile survived the quake "without a crack." Moreover, she wrote to Andrew Carnegie, who had recently paid for the construction of the new library, "The Margaret Carnegie Library was very well built and the only harm done by the earthquake to this building was to the fresh kalsomine in the interior, which, because of its being cracked, had to be scraped off and replaced. The building itself is as firm as a rock." Architects from around the state flocked to the Mills campus to study these model reinforced concrete structures.²³ Between her work on the classical architecture of the Greek Theater at Berkeley, the California mission-style of *El Campanil*, the Mediterranean architecture of the Margaret Carnegie Library, and more than two dozen private homes, many of them in the brown shingle, Arts and Crafts mode, Morgan had already demonstrated great versatility in architectural design. When her work all survived the earthquake relatively unscathed, those clients could find comfort in knowing that their architect's work had sustained nature's most violent test of strength and endurance. Similarly, fellow architects and builders learned that Morgan was not only a fashionable architect, but a highly proficient one as well.

During the months immediately following the catastrophe, Morgan was commissioned to repair the structural damage incurred by the Fairmont Hotel, San

²² Octavius Morgan, "A Los Angeles Architect's Impression of the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire," *Architect and Engineer* 5 (May 1906); Starr, *California Dream*, 307-344.

Francisco's latest palace hotel, which looked down upon the city from high atop Nob Hill. Dr. Hartland Law, co-owner of the Fairmont Hotel, also hired Morgan to design the *Viavi* Building, the international headquarters for his pharmaceutical plant and private medical practice. Morgan designed the interior decoration of the Merchants Exchange Building as well. Willis Polk oversaw the structural repairs of the building. Across the bay, Morgan was hired to restore the interior of and design the towers for the severely damaged First Baptist Church in Oakland.²⁴

This public veil of praise and glory obscured the conflicts Morgan faced during the construction of the tower. For all the laudatory attention Morgan received for *El Campanil* and important commissions she secured, she found herself being cast repeatedly as an idealized feminine icon rather than a serious architect. Many of the comments made during the dedication ceremony, for example, praised her work only in terms of aesthetic value. The campanile was a "quaint and picturesque" work of architecture.²⁵ Even at moments when speakers broached the topic of women's increased presence in education and the professions, they assumed that an asymmetry in women's opportunities would continue. One speaker stated that it was "fitting that in a woman's college, a woman should have designed the tower." Given that male architects had and would design all of the buildings on campus – excluding the six by Morgan [Figures 32-34 illustrate three of these]– it was apparently not unfitting that a man should design buildings for a women's college.²⁶ In emphasizing Morgan's gender, the speaker

²³ Mills to Andrew Carnegie, Jan. 7, 1907, CSM; "Copy of Note Written to Friends of the Students," *White and Gold* 13 (Aug.-Sept. 1906):1; "Mills History," Aug. 9, 1949, MCA; see also, C.W. Whitney, "Ransome Construction in California," *Architect and Engineer* 12 (April 1908):55.

²⁴ Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 42, 69, 78-79.

²⁵ F.W. Damon, "Belfry and Bells," *Dedication*, 12.

²⁶ Morgan designed the following buildings at Mills College: *El Campanil* (1903-4), Margaret Carnegie Library (1905-6), gymnasium (1909-10), Kapiolani Rest Cottage (1909), Alumnae Hall (1916), and

suggested that had Morgan performed such work anywhere other than a pre-established woman's space, her role might have been deemed inappropriate, unfitting.²⁷ A woman's work had to be justified and was still defined within discrete boundaries. Another speaker proclaimed that "this tower [was] reared by the genius of a woman's brain," but retreated from suggesting that her genius was equal to a man's. He acknowledged Morgan's genius not as the product of years of expert training and hard work, but rather, but as a product of "instinct with her creative spirit." He further commended Morgan for her "noblest self-sacrifice and whole-hearted devotion," which would serve as "an inspiration to other women to all high and lofty achievement."²⁸ Morgan earned real praise and respect from the local business, intellectual, and philanthropic elite who attended the dedication ceremonies, but by couching her work in the rhetoric of femininity – instinct, devotion, and moral superiority – they undermined the integrity of her efforts to be recognized as a serious and professional architect.

Morgan had faced similar difficulties throughout the life of the campanile project. Technology served as a lightning rod to spark tensions over power and creative authority between Morgan and Bernard Ransome, the builder for the campanile project. Reinforced concrete construction was a compelling issue in California architecture at this time. Every issue of *Architect and Engineer*, the primary professional journal published on the West Coast, contained at least one story related to the strengths and weaknesses of concrete. The debates ranged from the aesthetic values of concrete, to overall cost and labor

Alderwood Hall (1924-25). This last building was originally the Ming Quong Chinese School for Girls, the relocated campus of the San Francisco Chinese Presbyterian Mission School run by Donaldina Cameron, and was absorbed by the campus in 1932. MCA.

²⁷ "Charles R. Brown," 22-23.

²⁸ Damon, *Dedication*, p. 16.

concerns, to fire resistance and earthquake safety.²⁹ Detailed instructions for mixing and building with concrete also appeared in these articles, and an entire journal, *Cement Age*, was devoted to the technology.

If anybody in the Bay Area could lay claim to expertise in this matter, Bernard Ransome and Julia Morgan were those two people. Relatively few reinforced concrete buildings existed in California, but Bernard Ransome's father, Ernest, played a leading role in advancing the technology in the state and nation. According to architectural historian Peter Collins, Ernest Ransome was "the only person exploiting it in America" during the 1860s. He introduced reinforced concrete to San Francisco in 1870, patented a square-twisted reinforcing bar in 1884, and an apparatus to build concrete walls in 1885. A few years later, F.M. Smith hired the Ransome family to build the Alameda Borax works refinery, the first reinforced concrete factory in the United States. Ransome's most important contribution to the technology came in 1902 when he patented a space and money-saving system that replaced mass walls with a series of columns and floors between which only a thin layer of concrete curtain walling need be cast. The system allowed for more window space and introduced new potential for the aesthetic value of concrete buildings.³⁰

Morgan, too, had an impressive resume. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts incorporated the technology into its mandatory construction course, a course generally recognized as the most difficult requirement students faced. Transcripts show that Morgan consistently performed better in areas of science than design, underscoring her aptitude for

²⁹ Corbett, *Building California*, 20-20-31, 40-43.

³⁰ Peter Collins, *Concrete: The Vision of A New Architecture* (Montreal, 2004), 61-64; Corbett, *Building California*, 30; Hildebrand, *Borax Pioneer*, 38; C.W. Whitney, "Ransome Construction in California," *Architect and Engineer* 12 (April 1908), 20-24, 49-56.

understanding the technology side of architecture. Paris itself served as a classroom too. They city was bustling with architectural activity in preparation for the Exposition Universelle of 1900, and Morgan took a keen interest in all of the construction. She once described in detail – and with some awe – the building of the Grand and Petit Palais as well as the Pont Alexandre IX, which all employed reinforced concrete construction. What she learned in theory she saw in practice. Years before she began her work for Mills College, she gained practical experience as well. In Paris, Morgan’s design for a *grand salon* for American expatriate, Harriet Fearing, called for reinforced concrete, and John Galen Howard named Morgan supervising architect of the Greek Theater because of her expertise in reinforced concrete construction.³¹

One can argue about who had greater expertise in concrete technology, but Morgan was hired undeniably as the architect and the person of greatest authority on the campanile project. For Susan Mills, president of the college, and Mary Smith, whose husband’s fortune underwrote the project, Morgan’s work on the campanile marked an extension of the progressive causes to which they and other California women devoted themselves, causes like education, child welfare, suffrage, working women, health and housing reform, environmentalism, and cultural production. As Mary Smith wrote to Susan Mills, “We wanted [the campanile] to be a great success for many reasons, one, the greatest of these, it was planned by a woman, and for a woman’s college.”³² Morgan reiterated repeatedly in the specifications the status accorded to her by Susan Mills and

³¹ Richard Chaffee, “The Teaching of Architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts,” in Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (Cambridge, 1977), 83; Dossiers individuels des élèves, ANF AJ52 409; JM to LeBrun, February 11, 1898, JMC-Cal Poly I/04/02/02; Contract, L. Ferembach to JM, August 15, 1901, JMC-CEDA; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 52.

³² Mary Smith to Susan Mills, February 19, 1904, MCA.

Mary Smith.³³ She demanded that the builder brings samples of all materials to the architect's office for the architect's final approval, for example, and she held the builder responsible for a number of years for the quality of his work (though not her own). The specifications do not in themselves represent any particular departure from the hierarchical relationship between architect and contractor that had been established over the several previous decades, or guidelines suggested by the American Institute of Architects. In a professional climate marked by a significant culture of masculinity, however, Morgan's gender exacerbated tensions between architect, contractor, builder, and laborer that had been growing for years.³⁴

Ransome did not take well to his secondary status, particularly since Morgan did not have her state architectural license at the commencement of the project. He began to undermine Morgan's authority early in the course of the campanile commission. During the fall of 1903 Morgan had to apologize for construction delays because Bernard Ransome insisted that the blueprints be sent to his father. Before Ernest Ransome's comments upon Morgan's design and calculations arrived, Mary Smith exposed her insecurity over Morgan's abilities to Susan Mills. "I hope Mr. Bernard Ransome will personally superintend the work," she wrote. "[Miss Morgan] should insist upon him as an overseer."³⁵ Smith naturally had confidence in Ransome's abilities; though both the young architect and veteran builder had worked for the Smiths before, only the latter had overseen the construction of other reinforced concrete buildings for the Smiths'

³³ "Specifications of Masonry of Bell Tower," JMC-CEDA.

³⁴ See Mary N. Woods, *From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, 1999) (hereafter, Woods, *From Craft to Profession*).

³⁵ Smith to Mills, September 3, 1903, MCA.

enterprises.³⁶ At this point, Morgan still held the position of highest authority over the project, but Smith's misgivings portended change. The balance of power had begun to shift.

By the end of the project, Ransome had stripped Morgan of virtually all credit for El Campanil. Just two weeks before the dedication ceremonies were to be held, Susan Mills received another letter from Mary Smith. The two women had agreed that special mention should be made at the dedication of Julia Morgan's role in designing and constructing the campanile, but Mr. Smith and Mr. Ransome were of a different opinion. Mr. Smith, wrote his wife, "says that Mr. Ransome claims that he had to reconstruct the whole thing, and had to be governed by his own ideas on the subject." Significant changes had been made to the structural design; Ransome's call to apply his father's system of 6 to 8-inch walls of concrete between the buttresses prevailed over Morgan's original design for 12-inch walls, which did result in a lighter and less expensive building. Ransome went further, asserting "that Miss Morgan knows very little about cement." In light of our knowledge of her credentials and experience, Bernard Ransome's comments to the Smiths were disingenuous at best. His attack on Morgan's knowledge and design restored the balance of power and credit in this project towards him. Mary Smith closed her letter to Susan Mills by stating, "It is needless to say that Mr. Smith has the greater faith in Mr. Ransome, and is thoroughly convinced that his statements are *correct* beyond the shadow of a doubt. And we desire that at the dedication, Mr. Ransome's work be recognized as fully as the architect's if not more fully."³⁷ The Smiths' readiness to believe Ransome's story without reservations and attributing to him more

³⁶ Morgan had designed a brown shingle cottage for Mary Smith's orphanage in 1902. Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 249.

credit in the project than Morgan underscores a fundamental weakness in their belief that a woman could participate successfully in all aspects of a traditionally male career.

Bernard Ransome's name did appear above Morgan's on the program for the dedication ceremony. He had successfully exploited preconceived notions of gender difference to undermine Morgan's professional status and bolster his own.

Aiming to Please

Morgan could not have predicted the important impact the campanile would ultimately have on her career; instead, her immediate experience with the Mills College project made abundantly clear that gender rather than skill and merit was driving her professional success. Life thus far had taught Morgan that with sheer perseverance and the support of a few key individuals, she could achieve her goals despite her gender. Now, with actual clients and colleagues to contend with, she would have to develop professional strategies that empowered her to achieve unqualified success. A more extensive glimpse into the nature of Morgan's clients and colleagues is warranted before delving into the professional style that Morgan carefully crafted to overcome the gender obstacles the clients and colleagues imposed.

A significant part of Morgan's success depended on that group of people who had been supporting her architectural endeavors since college: the women's network [Figure 35]. Any one client quickly linked Morgan to dozens of others. For example, take Oma and Ralph Eltse, a lawyer and future United States Representative for whom Morgan designed a house in 1915: Oma Eltse was a member of the Twentieth Century Club, a women's organization in Berkeley that devoted its energies to cultural, social, and civic

³⁷ Mary Smith to Susan Mills, March 29, 1904, MCA.

matters. Five other Morgan clients belonged to the club as well. Two of them, J.N. Rogers and Ethel Hall, also belonged to the Claremont Club, a country club in Berkeley for which Morgan did some remodeling in 1910. Eleta Wadsworth belonged to the Hillside Club, described by one of its members as a social and civic organization dedicated to "to the possibilities in building groups of picturesque homes upon the North Berkeley hills.... [and] influencing public opinion in the direction of sound and unostentatious architectural construction."³⁸ The Hillside Club included four more Morgan clients, the most important of whom was Malvina Kellogg. Through her associations with the Century Club of San Francisco and the Town and Gown Club of Berkeley, she linked the Eltses to thirty more Julia Morgan clients. From there, the network grows rapidly, eventually connecting at least eighty-seven people for whom Morgan designed homes and twenty clubs and organizations, nearly half of which hired Morgan to build or remodel their headquarters.³⁹

Sometimes the influence of these loyal patrons extended beyond securing architectural commissions as well. Following the El Campanil debacle, for example, Morgan severed ties with Ransom and teamed up in 1905 with David B. Farquharson to build the Margaret Carnegie Library at Mills College. In notable contrast to the tension-filled construction site of the campanile, Susan Mills reported to the Board of Trustees that "the work is proceeding very quietly, without any accident, and will, I am sure, be very satisfactory to us all."⁴⁰ Apparently having erased fragile male egos from her daily

³⁸ "A Retrospection," *Year Book of the Hillside Club* (Berkeley, 1907), 2-3.

³⁹ These numbers and clubs come from a variety of sources, but reflect mostly a cross reference between the project list in Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect* and a directory of women's organizations and members, Louis S. Lyons and Josephine Wilson, eds., *Who's Who Among the Women of California* (San Francisco, 1922).

⁴⁰ Susan Mills to Board of Trustees, Jan. 29, 1906, MCA.

routine, Morgan could proceed without incident; however, Phoebe Hearst undoubtedly played a significant role in uniting the architect and builder who got along so famously. For years, Farquharson, had worked for Hearst, and evidently held her in great esteem. He wrote to her in 1911, six years after he and Morgan established their professional relationship, to apologize that he had “been so long in reporting to you with suggestions in the way of books for Miss Morgan, as requested.” Two years later he again dutifully reported that Morgan “understands what is necessary to complete the required equipment” for Asilomar, the Young Women’s Christian Association conference center Morgan designed near Pacific Grove.⁴¹ One must wonder if Farquharson’s congenial relationship with Morgan resulted as much from his allegiance to Phoebe Hearst as to his respect for the architect. Hearst’s influence underscores how much Morgan depended on the women’s network for professional support, as well as how Morgan needed to forge a professional identity that created distance between her and her family, friends, and social networks.

An expansive clientele represented only one variable in the equation of Morgan’s success. She would also have to earn the respect of builders like Ransome and Farquharson as well as that of artisans, laborers, electricians, plumbers, and fellow architects. She faced a daunting task. As architecture developed into an increasingly specialized and elite profession over the course of the nineteenth century, hostilities and jealousies developed between architect, engineer, builder, and contractor.⁴² By the 1890s,

⁴¹ David B. Farquharson to Phoebe Apperson Hearst, December 6, 1911 and June 30, 1913, GPAH Box 18 folder .

⁴² Woods, *From Craft to Profession*, 148-61.

New York, London, and Paris-trained architects flocked to San Francisco.⁴³ This new generation of California architects adopted many of the institutions and characteristics found among its colleagues who remained east of the Mississippi. They founded a West Coast branch of the American Institute of Architects [AIA]. Founded in 1857 primarily to regulate prices and process, this “gentlemen’s club” increasingly focused on regulation, hierarchy, and professionalization — things like fee schedules, licensing, and an architects’ code of ethics — by the late nineteenth century.⁴⁴ California architects also published such professional journals as the *Architect and Engineer*. Ongoing debates about the relationship between architects, engineers, contractors, builders, and decorators frequented these pages, as did signs of apparently hostile attitudes toward women’s presence in the field. Along with the occasional nod to women’s growing presence in different facets of the architectural profession – interior decoration, in particular – *Architect and Engineer* frequently published articles, editorials, and jokes disparaging of the female sex. One writer argued that women were unsuited to practice architecture because "The female intellect has, so far, proved its incapability of producing high-class architectural work.... Even in little things they have a wonderful inability to grasp practical essentials." A woman interested in architecture should recognize her limitations early and resign herself to roles in design and ornamentation. Even relegated to ancillary roles, women still posed a threat: they stole jobs from men.⁴⁵ Derogatory comments that struck a chord with architects’ general belief in male superiority and impractical, ignorant, and just plain dim-witted womanhood need not relate specifically to

⁴³ Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (New York: the Architectural History Foundation, 1983), 67-81 (hereafter, Longstreth, *Edge of the World*).

⁴⁴ Woods, *From Craft to Profession*, 33-52.

architecture. Among the jokes editors published were "A Boy's Essay on Woman" and "Just Like A Woman." The former read: "Woman is what men likes to marry. Man is logical; woman is zoological. Both man and woman sprang from monkeys, but men sprang the farthest;" and the latter: "Plumber – Reckless and extravagant – I? When did I ever make a useless purchase? Wife – Why, there's that fire extinguisher you bought a year ago; we've never used it once."⁴⁶

Like Frances and Mary Smith, Susan Mills, and Bernard Ransome, Morgan's clients and colleagues operated under conservative assumptions about women's roles in society. Popular myths that pursuits in higher education led neither to debilitating health and reproductive problems had gradually given way to an acceptance of women pursuing a university degree during the 1870s and 1880s, but the notion that women would pursue careers had not reached the same level of acceptance. Despite the capacity for being educated, women were still considered to be biologically predisposed to raise children and tend to the home. As indicated in the jokes above, evolutionary theories only served to reinforce this idea. Most middle-class women of this era — including many of Morgan's clients — followed a traditional pattern of marriage, motherhood, and conservator of Christian values. This was the gender system Morgan had to negotiate as she embarked on her career.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Women as Architects," *Architect and Engineer* 13 (June 1908), 67-69; "Again – The Woman Architect," *ibid.*, 21 (Oct. 1910), 73-75.

⁴⁶ "A Boys Essay on Woman," *ibid.*, 28 (Aug. 1909), 7; "Just Like a Woman," *ibid.*, 25 (Sept. 1909), 50.

⁴⁷ Dr. Edward Clarke expounded upon his thoughts about the dangers of higher education on the physical well-being of women in a book entitled *Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls*. According to his theory, which he supported with the physical and social evolution theories of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, men and women had grown biologically distinct from one another. Whereas men had evolved into strong, practical, intellectual, and creative beings, women were passive, weak, emotional, and intellectually inferior. Higher education was therefore incompatible with a woman's biological makeup and could lead to physical and mental harm. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres* (New Haven, 1982): 1-27.

Self-Fashioning Part I: The Body Politic

Jane Armstrong, a reporter for the *San Francisco Call* who interviewed Julia Morgan in 1907, held strong ideas about what an architect looked like. She expected to find the woman in charge of the post-earthquake reconstruction of the Fairmont Hotel “dressed in a color scheme of the impressionistic school.” Instead, she found “a small, slender young woman, with some thing so Quakerish about her that I felt all preconceived notions come tumbling about my head.... Here was a young woman dressed in drab and severely hair pinned.”⁴⁸ Since Armstrong first published this description, most chronicles of Morgan’s life and work place significant emphasis on her costume. Some writers underscore the utilitarian aspect of Morgan’s wardrobe: “Eschewing a regular purse, which would encumber her hands, she utilized suit pockets to carry necessaries,” Morgan’s first biographer, Elinore Richey, wrote.⁴⁹ Others argue that Morgan’s attire embodied her self-contradictory character: “She was a tiny, fragile-looking woman not much over five feet tall, but she could swing a sledge hammer with the strength of a hefty man. She was given to wearing severely tailored suits, but she wore them with cream-colored French silk blouses.... She spoke softly, but when she issued orders it was with the finality of a Marine drill sergeant.”⁵⁰ Most often, however, writers equate Morgan’s clothing with her painfully modest demeanor and quest for anonymity, an inevitable product of her Victorian upbringing. Their favorite quote to

⁴⁸ Jane Armstrong, “Woman Architect Who Helped Build the Fairmont Hotel,” *San Francisco Call*, June 16, 1907, p. 12/1 (hereafter, Armstrong, “Woman Architect”); republished in *The Architect and Engineer of California X* (October 1907): 69-71.

⁴⁹ Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of California* (Berkeley, 1975), 254.

⁵⁰ Bernice Scharlach, “The Legacy of Julia Morgan,” *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, August 24, 1975, p. 24.

emphasize this point comes from former Morgan employee, Dorothy Wormser Coblenz: “She looked like a nobody.”⁵¹

While all of these interpretations bear an element of truth, they all ignore the historical context in which Morgan fashioned this costume and remove from her the conscious act of deciding how to dress. Early in her career, Morgan exchanged the enormously puffy sleeves, fancy high collars, and ornately decorated blouses of her college years for her now famous plain tailored dark suits with nearly straight sleeves and skirts, worn with white French blouses, starched collars, and short neck ties [see Figures 12, 13, 19, 30, and 31]. The costume combined practical concerns of a working professional with consideration for the semiotics of outward appearance and the culturally charged meaning of clothing at home, in the architectural profession, and American culture at the turn of the century.

The architectural profession provided model dress codes for Morgan to follow. Artist and illustrator, Alexis Lemaistre, commented in his history of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts that architects always arrived “correctly dressed,” in the most elegant and artistic fashion.⁵² Capes, smocks, open-collar shirts, full beards, and “pot hats” completed an aspiring architect’s outfit.⁵³ This tradition crossed the Atlantic in exaggerated forms. Architectural historian Dell Upton has argued that turn-of-the-century Americans had a fixed image of the architect: “white, middle-class, forceful” and an artist.⁵⁴ This formula privileged men and allowed architects like Bernard Maybeck, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Henry Hobson Richardson to wear flamboyant costumes — Maybeck’s smocks and long

⁵¹ JMAHP, Vol. 2, p. 108.

⁵² Alexis Lemaistre, *L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Dessinée et Racontée par en Élève* (Paris, 1889), 67.

⁵³ Kenneth Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck: Artisan, Architect, Artist* (Santa Barbara, 1977), 19.

⁵⁴ Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (New York, 1998), 275.

beard, Wright's berets and capes, and Richardson's medieval peasant robes. These men, in part, built their professional reputations by flaunting cultural norms for men's fashion, and Americans based their perception of the architect on exceptional men like those mentioned above.

Morgan understood that flamboyant styles in the Richardson/Maybeck/Wright tradition carried with them significant risk, particularly in the budding career of a young woman. Nobody impressed upon Morgan the power of appearances more than her mother. Eliza Morgan tried to understand her child's choice to wear plain clothes, writing, "I want you to look nice and comfortable if you can't be elegant."⁵⁵ If Eliza Morgan intellectually understood why her daughter chose to dress more practically than fashionably, however, she also instilled in her daughter a sense that one's attire emphatically reflected one's character. She often wrote to Morgan of her friends' activities and included a summary of their clothing: Of Jessica Peixotto, who studied economics at the Sorbonne and in Germany and who would go on to become the first full professor at the University of California as well as a member of State Board of Charities and Corrections, Eliza Morgan communicated to her daughter, "[Jessie] is looking very pretty and pleasant. Sent her love to you. She had a beautiful hat and a new brownish tailor suit."⁵⁶ Eliza's commentary on fashions extended to Morgan's mentor, Bernard Maybeck. Eliza once wrote to her daughter, "Today Emma saw the Maybecks on the Boat dressed in their worst Berkeley clothes — she escaped them as she considers them embarrassing acquaintances....[Mrs Maybeck] really makes a show of herself and it's a sin to dress that child as she does — she dresses worse than ever — and they must have

⁵⁵ EPM to JM, October 21, 1901, JM-Cal Poly.

⁵⁶ EPM to JM, May 7, 1899, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/11.

pleanty [sic] of money — for Mrs. Hearst keeps Mr. Maybeck constantly at work. He is a kind nice looking man – when dressed decently – looks all right.”⁵⁷ External appearances weighed particularly heavily in Eliza Morgan’s judgment of an individual, and her words reminded Morgan time and again that outward appearances shaped a client’s first impression of her. Since Morgan initially depended upon family, friends, and acquaintances who shared similar views that her mother and sister had towards personal attire, she knew she could not afford to alienate them by adopting an overly flamboyant persona. Moreover, if Maybeck’s appearance sometimes elicited ridicule, a similar costume for Morgan would certainly compromise her chances for earning general respect among colleagues or clients. The reporter for that 1907 *Call* article, for example, not only expected to find Morgan dressed in bright colors, but equated such expectations with women whose “talent [was] merely a by-product of a wonderful new set of mannerisms and a novel and fuzzy way of doing the hair.”⁵⁸ She was prepared to meet a woman of modest – even superficial – goals. Morgan’s surprisingly plain appearance directly affected the reporter’s interpretation of the architect.

The average male American architect provided an alternative uniform, one that differed little from that worn by most professional men during this period: a plain dark suit, a light colored shirt, starched shirt collar, and tie. While practical – durable, far less cumbersome than a woman’s long dress, easy to move in and scale ladders at construction sites as Morgan in fact did – this uniform had its limitations too. It could signify unorthodox, disruptive, and even radical tendencies in a woman. At the time, a woman’s sexual deviance, the relative feminine or masculine qualities of her dress, and

⁵⁷ EPM to JM, September 29, 1901. JMC-Cal Poly, I/01/01/11.

⁵⁸ Armstrong, “Woman Architect,” 70.

women in higher education and pursuing careers, all elicited fear for the strength of social order. German sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing's theories of the Mannish Lesbian were gaining popularity in America, providing scientific language to justify these fears. By the 1910s, in contrast, feminists began to adopt male dress as a protest against oppression and Victorian expectations of women's roles in society. In either case, such deviant or politically charged semiotics could offend the sensibilities of Morgan's clients.⁵⁹

The absence of a well-defined uniform for women architects underscores their marginal position in the profession as well as the opportunity for experimentation. Berkeley architect Lilian Bridgman did don an eccentric outfit: She regularly wore long Chinese silk robes in green, blue or gold, a velvet band around her neck, and her hair pulled back loosely in a bun while she worked in her rustic studio in the Berkeley hills. As her attire suggests, Bridgman embraced her mentor, Bernard Maybeck's romantic relationship to the art.⁶⁰ Similarly, the independently wealthy Connecticut architect, Theodate Pope Riddle, could be found wearing silk scarves, pearls, and a fur stole.⁶¹ Neither of these women depended on architecture to fuel the economy of their daily lives, giving them the freedom to dress as they pleased without worrying about public reaction. Most women architects of Morgan's generation – Katherine Budd in New York; Hazel Wood Waterman of San Diego; and Boston architects Lois Howe, Eleanor Manning, and Maria Almy, for example – adopted more understated attire: blouses and dresses with

⁵⁹ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York, 1985), 270-73, 288.

⁶⁰ Bridgman designed only fifteen houses. Lilian Bridgman Davies, *Lilian Bridgman, Architect* (Berkeley, 1983), 9-22, 34.

⁶¹ Susana Torre, *Women in American Architecture: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (New York, 1977), 65; photograph of Riddle at Avon Old Farms, 1920s, from Hill-Stead Museum collections, located <http://www.valint.com/~smithash/theodate/50.html>.

open or square neck lines, detailed with lace trim or embroidery, cinched waists, and hair pulled back in a loose bun. While none of these women designed *only* domestic architecture, they all justified their presence in the profession as a natural extension of woman's inherent domesticity and found a voice in the professional and popular press by publishing articles related to women's traditional sphere, the home.⁶² By accentuating their femininity in the details of their clothing, these women reinforced their self-defined relationship to the profession.

Morgan's signature style likewise reflected her desired status in the field of architecture. Unlike her contemporaries mentioned above, Morgan did not believe that women were naturally disposed to designing houses or kitchens, houses did not fuel her passions, and she did not try to build her practice based on such a premise.⁶³ Fittingly, Morgan's severe appearance exuded a level professionalism akin to most male professionals rather than soft femininity or a nurturing type. At the same time, familiar signifiers like the hair bun and skirt reminded clients and colleagues that she was a woman, and mitigated any threat to the social order that her chosen career may have represented. French blouses suggested Morgan's worldliness and a touch of style without allowing fashion to overshadow the depth of her professionalism and goals, while the highly tailored nature of her suits matched her emphasis on quality and precision in

⁶² Katherine C. Budd, "The Bungalow in America," *Architectural Review* 11 (October 1904): 221-24; Budd, "The American Pantry," *Architectural Record* 18 (September 1905): 225-31; Budd, "Japanese Houses," *ibid.*, 19 (January 1906): 1-26; Budd, "Gardens, Large and Small," *Architecture* 35 (1917): 105-11; picture of Katherine Cotheal Budd in "That Exceptional One": *Women in American Architecture, 1888-1988* (Washington, 1988), 18; Doris Cole and Karen Cord Taylor, *The Lady Architects: Lois Lilley Howe, Eleanor Manning and Mary Almy, 1893-1937* (New York, 1990), 7, 8, 143-44; Sally Bullard Thornton, *Daring to Dream: The Life of Hazel Wood Waterman* (San Diego, 1987), 58, 59, 113; photographs of Hazel Wood Waterman from October 1921, San Diego Historical Society Negative Collection (C004) California Border Region Digitization Project: 1870-1939.

⁶³ JMAHP Vol. 1, p. 89; interview with Walter T. Steilberg, conducted by Richard Longstreth, Nov. 1, 1972, provided to author by Richard Longstreth.

design and construction. Morgan's chosen uniform blurred the distinction between masculine and feminine, marking a shift toward modern ideals of womanhood that valued women for their work and minds rather than biological destiny or superficial appearance.

A 1928 photograph of Morgan, Bernard Maybeck, and their employees at Morgan's Merchants Exchange office captures the dynamics of her costume [Figure 36]. Seated front and center in his white smock, long beard, and sucking on his pinky is Bernard Maybeck, the eccentric artist. Standing directly behind him in the back row is Morgan, complete with dark suit, white shirt, and hat. A sea of men in dark suits, ties, and light shirts surrounds her. At five feet tall, she nearly disappears into the woodwork. Or, perhaps one might say, she blends in with the crowd, marking her successful foray into this male dominated profession. By looking like "a nobody," as Dorothy Wormser Coblenz remarked, Morgan's clients and colleagues were less likely to fixate on her gender or idealized fantasies of her as a pioneering woman who blazed a path-breaking trail. Instead, she could get on with the business of architecture.⁶⁴

Self-Fashioning Part II: In the Media

H.C. Forney, who worked for Julia Morgan as her secretary for ten years, starting in 1931 or 1932, recalled that numerous people tried to do stories on the architect and all were roundly refused.⁶⁵ Morgan's historians have relied upon anecdotes like Forney's to conclude that the architect shied away from all publicity and avoided the media entirely. Diane Favro, for example, described Julia Morgan's professional visibility as invisible, and Sarah Boutelle explained away Morgan's relationship to the press in one sentence:

⁶⁴ Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, and their employees, in her office, San Francisco, c. 1928, Collection of Hans U. Gerson, El Cerrito, California, reprinted in Upton, *Architecture in the United States*, 265.

“Her admiration for the anonymity of the medieval artisan may have been at the root of this unwillingness to appear in print, or perhaps it was just her personal reticence.”⁶⁶ The absence of Morgan’s words in the press does not mean she abandoned it altogether and retreated into anonymity. By the time Forney joined Morgan’s office, the architect had completed hundreds of buildings, and William Randolph Hearst’s megalomaniacal – and profit-bearing – projects kept her office busy. Morgan no longer had to prove her reputation nor solicit clients. She could finally turn her back completely to the media she so disliked. During the previous two and a half decades, however, Morgan actively, if reluctantly, maintained a public profile in a variety of forums and sanctioned the publication of her work to enhance her reputation among clients and colleagues alike.

Julia Morgan’s disdain for the press was grounded in personal experience as much as it was in social mores she learned during her Victorian childhood and adolescence. As recounted at length in Chapter 2, local newspapers chronicled her activities from the moment she boarded the boat for Paris, and they continued to do so throughout her years at the Ecole. Parisian papers like *Le Figaro* and the feminist weekly, *La Fronde*, made special mention of Morgan – though usually not by name – in their coverage of women artists and their efforts to gain access to all aspects of the Ecole. By 1901 the press was becoming a burdensome distraction. Articles arrived daily at the Morgan home in Oakland, several of them stating that she had already earned her diploma and would soon be returning to the United States, and journalists pestered the family to share more details

⁶⁵Interview with Mrs. H.C. Forney, conducted by Richard Longstreth, Berkeley, September 12, 1973, provided to author by Richard Longstreth.

⁶⁶Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 46.

about their rising star.⁶⁷ Just as these articles of her success were hitting the newspapers, Morgan had actually had less than three months to earn more than half the total points she needed to complete her degree.⁶⁸ The media continually cast Morgan in an iconic role, emphasized her singular status or the manliness of her pursuits, and generally focused on the person and a dream rather than the work and reality. These tendencies, combined with inaccurate details and a loss of privacy all contributed to Julia Morgan's early wariness toward the press.

A child of the Mid-Victorian period, Morgan was reared in a culture where published words increasingly defined every aspect of life. As Burton Bledstein put it, "A riot of words and a crisis of confidence alarmed a society which began placing its faith in professional persons," who, in turn, increasingly used popular and professional publications to exert their authority.⁶⁹ In keeping with this cultural practice, and despite her distaste for publicity and self promotion, Morgan granted her first interview to Jane Armstrong of the *San Francisco Call* in 1907 during the reconstruction of the Fairmont Hotel. In contrast to all of the articles written about Morgan during her Ecole days, Morgan could define in her own words exactly who she was and what she did as an architect. To the journalist's assumption that Morgan must have "reveled...in this chance to squeeze dry the loveliest tubes in the whole world of color," Morgan politely

⁶⁷ Saturday Weekly, March 28, 1896; *La Fronde*, May 22, 1898, p. 3; "She Qualifies in Paris as Architect," *SF Bulletin*, Dec. 8, 1901; newspaper clippings, Dossier 707 BEA, La Bibliothèque des femmes Marguerite Durand; "The First Lady Architect," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 28, 1901, later reprinted in the *New York Times*, November 12, 1901, p. 2; "Points about People," *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 27, 1901; EPM to JM, November 4, 13, 22, and December 6, 15, & 29, 1901, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/11; EMN to JM, December 7, 1901, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/11; Gardner Morgan to JM, September 29, 1901, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/15; and Parmelee Morgan to JM, November 5 and December 16, 1901, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/16; .

⁶⁸ EPM to JM, October 26, 1901, JM-Cal Poly, I/01/01/11; Dossiers individuels des élèves, ANF, AJ52 409.

⁶⁹ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York, 1976), 65-79.

responded, "My work has all been structural." She pointed to the staircases, skylights, bar, and offices that were within the domain of her responsibilities. To further emphasize her technical expertise, Morgan explained that she had to replace a glass dome, and added, "You have no idea how much important detail is involved in a skylight of such magnitude."⁷⁰ By the end of the interview, Morgan successfully disabused her interviewer of the notion that a woman's architectural role was limited to interior decoration.

The article as published, however, infuriated Morgan, for it ultimately placed her on a pedestal and cast her in the role of pioneering icon. For instance, Armstrong conceded that intelligence had no regard for gender, yet the journalist could not reconcile herself to a woman's unqualified role in a technical profession that required "no amount of sensitive feeling." Morgan was as an exceptional figure, impossible to replicate, and architecture remained an impractical career choice for "a mere woman." Armstrong closed her article with a melodramatic flourish: "When I was crossing the bay that night and saw, rising far over the waterscape, the Fairmont, fitting the skyline without a wrinkle, I wanted to emblazon above it the part that a Woman has played in its construction. And the fact that the foreman nobly insisted it is Julia Morgan, Architect, will not prevent me from hyphenating it as Julia Morgan, (Woman)-Architect."⁷¹ From Morgan's perspective, this statement undermined her efforts to present herself as an equal among peers in her profession, regardless of gender, who sought nothing more grandiose than to execute to the best of her abilities the work for which she had been trained.

⁷⁰ Armstrong, "Woman Architect," 70.

⁷¹ Ibid.

From this point forward, Morgan changed her tack in dealing with the media and the shaping of her image in the public sphere. She granted few interviews, never taught a class or lectured in public, and she never published a book, memoir, essay, or a word of commentary on her own work. However much Morgan disdained the media, self-promotion, and publicity of any kind – and by all accounts she loathed it – Morgan did not retreat into anonymity and did not even abandon the press.

In a sense, Morgan could not escape the media. Both the architectural profession and the women's network who made up such a large part of her clientele had their own mechanisms of publicity that functioned without Morgan's participation or consent. For twenty years local papers catalogued Morgan's work and activities in the social pages, resulting in free, unsolicited, and unabashedly enthusiastic endorsements nearly every month. The *Oakland Tribune* alone published over 100 articles and notices about Morgan between 1902 and 1920.⁷² As Morgan's work ventured increasingly into women's clubs, and especially work for the YWCA, she received mention in national publications for women as well.⁷³ The *Daily Pacific Builder* listed Morgan's commissions as permits were granted, as it did of most building activity in the region, and *Architect and Engineer*, the most prestigious journal for the profession in California and the West, also

⁷² A sampling of such notices includes, "Miss Morgan in Named Architect," *Oakland Tribune*, January 9, 1904, 10; "Miss Morgan's Good Work," *ibid.*, April 16, 1904, pp. 8, 9; "Hundreds Attend Fabiola Reception," *ibid.*, May 5, 1905, p. 4; and "Another Costly Oakland Home," *ibid.*, July 3, 1910; "Chapel of the Chimes," *ibid.*, December 4, 1927, p. 2-M; "Gossip on the Bench," *Daily Californian*, January 29, 1915, 4; "Who's Who in the Alumni," *ibid.*, March 12, 1923, p.2; "Graduate Designer of Island Building," *ibid.*, July 15, 1927, p. 3; "Woman Is Architect of New Y.W.C.A. Club House," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 2, 1929, p. 5S.

⁷³ "In Charge of Culinary Department," *American Food Journal* 9 (December 1914), 670, found at Home Economics Archive, Cornell University, <http://hearth.library.cornell.edu> [hereafter, HEARTH]; Mary Alden Hopkins, "Conserving Woman Power in War Time." *Journal of Home Economics* 10 (April 1918), 171, found at HEARTH; and "Honolulu Employs Woman Architect," *Equal Rights* 13 (January 15, 1927), 386, found at Gerritsen Collection: Women's History Online, 1543-1945, <http://gerritsen.chadwyck.com>.

documented Morgan's work. Between 1915 and 1925, the journal listed approximately thirty notices of Morgan's activities.

Architect and Engineer's editors culled sources like *Daily Pacific Builder* and *Edward's Daily Tract* to compile these simple listings, but they also called upon "the co-operation of the members of the profession,"⁷⁴ suggesting Morgan's complicity in fostering some media attention. Indeed, throughout her career, Morgan participated in professional and social events that she must have known would warrant media attention. In 1908, for example, she and Ira Hoover, her business partner for a brief period, along with other notable Bay Area architects, exhibited to good review selections of their post-earthquake commissions in the Assembly room of the Merchants Exchange Building.⁷⁵ This was not an isolated incident. The Home Club, an organization in Oakland dedicated to issues of modern housing and one that Julia Morgan belonged to for a time, exhibited the work of regional architects in 1908; and the Hillside Club, the North Berkeley club responsible for popularizing the "simple home" and arts-and-crafts style in the Bay Area, hosted a similar exhibition in 1913.⁷⁶ By publicizing her work in this fashion, Morgan confirmed her status without having to engage in a competition or speak a word on her behalf. The American Institute of Architects also held a convention in San Francisco where Morgan exhibited examples of her work. In its catalogue of the event, *The Architect and Engineer* included only ten photographs; they included two Morgan designs and three other projects in which Morgan played a central role in the design,

⁷⁴ See, for example, "Among the Architects," *Architect and Engineer* 4 (March 1906), 82.

⁷⁵ Willis Polk, John Galen Howard, John Bakewell and Arthur Brown, Charles Dickey, and Clinton Day were among the architecture to exhibit at the Merchants Exchange. See "The Beaux-Arts Exhibition a Success," *ibid.*, 12 (February 1908), 62.

⁷⁶ "Architects to Exhibit Plans," *Oakland Tribune*, January 26, 1908, p. 40; "Every Character of Work Shown," *ibid.*, January 31, 1908, p. 11; "Architecture Is Exhibit Them," [sic] *ibid.*, January 19, 1913, p. 53.

construction, or reconstruction, again indicating Morgan's participation in building her reputation and the continued respect accorded to her by colleagues.⁷⁷ In 1915 Morgan accepted a judgeship for the competition to design the Tubercular Ward of the San Francisco City and County Hospital.⁷⁸ She is unlikely to have sought this responsibility, which means that her colleagues continued to take notice of her work, particularly three hospitals she had designed to date.⁷⁹ Implicit in the articles associated with the hospital competition, is a public expression of praise and acceptance by her colleagues – including John Galen Howard, with whom she is supposed to have had that irreparable falling out over ten years before – and her complicity in maintaining a public presence in the profession.

Morgan similarly maintained a public presence in the women's network through her use of the media. She appeared occasionally at events commemorating the completion of a building. By attending these quasi-public events, Morgan placed herself in the company of affluent, well-connected people who contributed in a variety of ways to the development of the built environment. And while no record exists of any lengthy speeches Morgan presented at such events, she occasionally offered a few words of comment to reporters and her name, sometimes accompanied with accolades, appeared in stories covering the events.⁸⁰ In 1917 Aurelia Reinhardt, President of Mills College,

⁷⁷ The article included pictures of the Greek Theater and the Hearst Memorial Mining Building at the University of California, and the Fairmont Hotel. August G. Headman, "Splendid Exhibition of the San Francisco Architectural Club," *Architect and Engineer* 23 (January 1911): 1-10.

⁷⁸ "Competition for Municipal Hospital Wing," *ibid.*, 41(April 1915), 107; "Herman Barth Wins San Francisco City Hospital Competition," *ibid.*, 41(June 1915), 69-70.

⁷⁹ The hospitals include the Kapiolani Rest Cottage (1909-10), an infirmary at Mills College; King's Daughters Home (1908-1912), a women's hospital in Oakland; and the hospital at Angel Island Immigration Station (1910-11). Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 249, 253, 254.

⁸⁰ Two ribbon cutting ceremonies that Morgan attended include the Senior Women's Hall (now Girton Hall) at UC Berkeley and the Hollywood Studio Club. See, "President Wheeler to Address Senior

requested from Morgan a biographical sketch to be published in an annual devoted to the activities of women in California and their contributions to the development of the state. Morgan complied. An edited and updated biography appeared in the 1922 publication, *Who's Who Among the Women of California*, where Morgan also published photographs of some of her commissions and was cited as one of the “main contributors.”⁸¹ Again, Morgan quietly, but actively, maintained a public profile.

From the republication of the *San Francisco Call* interview in a 1908 edition of *Architecture and Engineer* to New York-based *Architecture* magazine featuring the Honolulu and San Francisco Chinese YWCAs in 1928 and 1933, respectively, Morgan’s work occasionally appeared in the pages of the professional press, presumably with Morgan’s consent. She subscribed to *Architect and Engineer* and knew people on its editorial board – particularly Arthur Brown – but never appears to have requested that they halt publishing photographs of her work. At least six articles in addition to those notices mentioned earlier featured Morgan buildings to illustrate such diverse topics as reinforced concrete construction, ornamental plaster work, and school and house design. In 1931 she allowed employee Julian C. Mesic to publish a lengthy article about the Berkeley Women’s City Club in *Architect and Engineer*.⁸² This last article differs dramatically from any of the others. While pictures of Morgan’s work appeared in

Women,” *Daily Californian*, January 17, 1912, p. 1; “Film Stars to Aid Club Ceremonies,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1925, p. 7.

⁸¹ Julia Morgan to Aurelia Reinhardt, September 10, 1917, ARMC; Louis S. Lyons and Josephine Wilson, eds., *Who's Who Among the Women of California* (San Francisco, 1922), v, 600, 603.

⁸² Jane Armstrong, “Woman Architect Who Helped Build the Fairmont Hotel,” *Architect and Engineer* 10 (October 1907): 69-71; “Recent Examples of Ornamental Plaster Work,” *ibid.*, 62 (March 1920): 97; Charles K. Sumner, “Some Neglected Aspects of School Architecture,” *ibid.*, 64 (March 1921): 46-57; Irving F. Morrow, “Reflections on Houses,” *ibid.*, 73 (April 1923): 50-59; Morrow, “The Riviera Revisited,” *ibid.*, 80 (February 1925): 44-54, 83, 84; Julian C. Mesic, “Berkeley Women’s City Club,” *ibid.*, 105 (April 1931): 24-47; “A College Bell Tower,” *Cement Age* 13 (October 1911), 151.; “YWCA

articles, direct commentary about the architect or the building was usually limited to the materials used in construction or the particular design element that the photograph featured.

In 1918 *Architect and Engineer* approached Morgan to request the opportunity to devote an entire issue to her work. This example provides the greatest insight into Morgan's idiosyncratic relationship to the press and publicity. She consented to the invitation and allowed Walter Steilberg to take photographs of her buildings. The published article, however, infuriated Morgan, for she did not know that Steilberg had included written commentary.⁸³ He opened the article with the following statement: "Working drawings and photographs of executed work illustrate...necessary qualities which often distinguish the architect from the architectural designer; the capacity to interpret clients' real needs and to secure their cooperation; skill in the handling of detail and in the use of building materials; and that mastery of practical knowledge which enables an architect to keep in the general vicinity of prescribed cost, and which alone commands the respect of the builders and craftsmen who are his real instruments of expression."⁸⁴ An introduction like this preconditioned the reader to judge the architect and the buildings favorably, which ran contrary to Morgan's desire for her work to speak for itself. Steilberg generally limited his comments to such simple descriptions as, "The capitals of the columns... recall... the days which are dear to the memory of every Californian." Implicit in this comment, however, are the architect's intentions, in this case a desire to evoke feelings of nostalgia. Other descriptions described the architect's

Building, Honolulu, Hawaii," *Architecture* 57 (March 1928): 151-54; "Chinese YWCA Building, San Francisco, Calif." ibid., 67 (April 1933): 195-98.

⁸³ Walter T. Steilberg, "Some Examples of the Work of Julia Morgan," *The Architect and Engineer of California* 55 (November 1918): 38-105; JMAHP, 52.

inspiration, her concern for economy, professional dialogue with other architects' work, originality, or opinion about a given genre of architecture.⁸⁵ The words written on the page were those of Walter Steilberg, but would be taken as insight into the mind of Julia Morgan. Steilberg also breached the privacy of Morgan's clients by describing them as "persons of culture and broad experience," but often lacking in abundant funds, and by presuming their opinions of the completed structure, which itself was the solution to desires and concerns discussed between client and architect in private conversations.⁸⁶ From her earliest encounters with the press to this tribute to her work, Morgan did not have so much an issue with publicity and professional recognition as she did with language, its use and misuse.

An Atelier of One's Own

The most critical of Morgan's strategies to tear down gender barriers was her decision to open her own practice. As required by state law, Morgan first had to pass an examination before the State Board of Architecture to secure a license to practice architecture in California; she became the first licensed woman architect in the state in March 1904.⁸⁷ By the end of that year, she had opened an office in the Italian American Bank building, located in San Francisco at 460 Montgomery Street. After the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed that structure she built temporary headquarters on the property of her parents' home in Oakland. By October 1907 she had opened the Merchant's Exchange building office, but the telephone directory also lists her and

⁸⁴ Steilberg, "Some Examples of the Work of Julia Morgan," 39.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁸⁷ As part of an effort to standardize the profession and formally distinguish architects from builders and contractors, California passed a law on March 23, 1901, requiring all persons who wished to practice

business partner Ira Hoover at 1572 Bush Street, suggesting that they retained interim headquarters in the city while they waited for the Merchants Exchange building to reopen [Figure 37].⁸⁸ Located on California Street near Montgomery Street, in the heart of the city's financial district, and not far from the retail center of downtown, the Merchants Exchange office was easily reached from the Ferry Building by foot or via the California Street cable car line.⁸⁹ Morgan was not alone among professional women to locate her office in a financial district, but this decision was not obvious or natural.⁹⁰ Such an assumption dismisses the historical implications that decisions like these had on redefining the physical boundaries of women's place in the city, or the minutiae that made pioneering careers of women in the era possible. Like her clothing and her relationship to the press, the precise site of and use of space in Morgan's office played an integral role in establishing and maintaining her authority, especially in relationship to clients and employees. With a space to call her own, Morgan also had the chance to foster a work culture like she had never known in Paris or in California, one that emphasized camaraderie over competition and hierarchy, generosity over profit, and merit and skill over gender.

Throughout much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries women had carved new spaces for themselves in the urban landscape. Women of Morgan's class, in particular, campaigned for urban reform: higher sanitation standards, public education,

architecture in the state to obtain a license by passing an examination before the State Board of Architecture. State Architectural Certification, 1904 & 1927. I/06/02/10. JM Collection, Cal Poly.

⁸⁸ Morgan established her own firm sometime after March 1904, when she received word that she had passed the state's architectural license examination. California State Architecture License #B344, March 1, 1904, California State Archives; *Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. Telephone Directory* (January 1905), 174; "Miss Morgan's Loss," *Oakland Tribune*, July 21, 1906, p. 9; *Crocker Langley's San Francisco City Directory* (October 1907), 1743, 1744.

⁸⁹ Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 41-42.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Cole and Taylor, *The Lady Architects*, 2.

child labor and safety laws. They also created shelters, recreation centers, and restaurants for working women, children, and the poor. By the twentieth century women populated this landscape in significant numbers, with their presence growing dramatically between 1890 and 1930. They worked in shops, factories, department stores, and in office buildings as typists, clerks, and secretaries. White, middle-class women increasingly ventured to downtown as well, especially as consumers — of fine food, theater, lectures, and, especially, retail goods.⁹¹

The Victorian tendency to divide spaces into discrete categories for specific groups of people and for designated purposes, however, brought order to these changes and circumscribed women's place in the urban landscape. According to Jessica Sewell, for example, San Francisco's sidewalks were heterogeneous spaces, but men and women increasingly separated from one another as they filtered into their unofficially designated spaces of work and leisure. Inside the workplace, companies tried to reinforce gender hierarchies and work roles literally by dividing time and space according to sex. And while women worked in business offices and men worked in retail shops, Sewell argues, "these spaces were imagined as single-gender." Even as San Francisco's suffragists took advantage of the imagined feminine landscape and politicized it by campaigning in store front windows and along the sidewalks of Market Street, they halted their activities at the

⁹¹ See Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (Oxford, 2000); Marta Gutman, "On the Ground in Oakland: Women and Institution Building in an Industrial City" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000); Mary Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore, 1990); Jessica Sewell, "Gendering the Spaces of Modernity: Women and Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000); John L. Rury, *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America, 1870-1930* (Albany), 91-130; William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York, 1993); Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven, 2001), 9-43.

edge of the financial district. They did not ultimately redefine the physical boundaries of socially accepted feminine and masculine spaces.⁹²

Morgan's decision to locate her office downtown undermined this gendered landscape in symbolic ways. Few buildings survived the catastrophic earthquake and fire of 1906 that followed, but towering high above the rubble stood the Merchants Exchange Building, a thirteen-story skyscraper designed in 1903 by celebrated Chicago architect Daniel Burnham. It was not simply located in the center of the masculine bastion of commerce and law, it was at the time *the hub* of San Francisco's financial district, the most powerful center of commerce on the West Coast. Important law firms established offices there, as did fellow architects, and, for a time, the Pacific Stock Exchange and the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. The rooftop radio tower, meanwhile, relayed messages from arriving ships to businessmen throughout the district.⁹³ Julia Morgan established her office on the top floor of this powerhouse of activity, as if to say that the new city rising from the ashes of destruction ushered in a new era of equality among men and women [Figure 38]. Of course, Morgan did not literally profess such idealistic dreams; she did, however, take advantage of the unsettled urban landscape to insert herself in a traditionally masculine space and thereby begin drafting a new map for women in the city.

⁹² Jessica Sewell, "Sidewalks and Store Windows as Political Landscapes," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 9 (2003): 85-98; Angel Kwolek-Folland, in *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore, 1994), 94-128 (hereafter, Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*).

⁹³ "Mary McLean Olney Taken by Death at 92," *Saturday Gazette*, August 14, 1965; Olney, "Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California," i-iii; Randolph Delehanty, *San Francisco: Walks and Tours in The Golden Gate City* (New York, 1980), 114-15 (hereafter, Delehanty, *San Francisco*); and Peter Booth Wiley, *National Trust Guide: San Francisco* (New York, 2000), 170. *Crocker-Langley's San Francisco City Directory* (October 1907).

Real advantages combined with this romantic symbolism to make downtown San Francisco an ideal place for Morgan to locate her office. The anonymity of the city created the perfect antidote to the sometimes oppressive insularity of the social circles from which Morgan drew her clientele. As in Paris, Morgan drew excess attention from a relatively small group of people for choosing an exceptional career path. Whereas the faculty and fellow students at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts either reluctantly assisted Morgan in her endeavors or competed directly against her, the Bay Area women's network was vested in Morgan's success and did not miss an opportunity to cast her as a local-girl-turned-pioneering icon for women's progress. Again, as in Paris, the crowded streets of San Francisco rendered Morgan a nobody and released her from the pressures blazing a new trail for women.

At the same time, a California Street office enhanced Morgan's legitimacy and authority among her clients. Instead of entering the informal and familiar quarters of her parents' carriage house, these clients entered a glass-roofed lobby, beyond which lay the Grain Exchange Hall, a grand space remodeled by Morgan after the earthquake and marked by a vaulted glass ceiling, four monumental marble columns, and six paintings of maritime life.⁹⁴ Clients then traveled to the thirteenth floor where they entered a formal office. Morgan divided this space into four distinct compartments: the central drafting room, where engineers, draftsmen and women, and model makers worked; a small office for the secretary and bookkeeper; a library that held hundreds of books on art, architecture, and design; and Julia Morgan's private office. All clients first met with Morgan in her office to discuss ideas about a prospective project, then followed Morgan to the library where she introduced some design ideas and invited clients to peruse the

collection to develop ideas of their own. Libraries were a common feature in executive offices of America's modern cathedrals of commerce like the Merchants Exchange. They represented the masculine space of power in houses and, as the workplace became increasingly heterogeneous, served to perpetuate in a familiar spatial and semiotic manner gender hierarchies that reigned throughout the Victorian era.⁹⁵ By appropriating this space as her own, Morgan undermined those gender hierarchies and called attention to her own authority. This hierarchical arrangement and use of space repeatedly confirmed the exclusivity of the relationship between Morgan and her clients, immersed them in the design process, and, most importantly, silently reinforced Morgan's superior status over her employees, whom the clients rarely met. Instead of seeing their patronage as a favor for an old friend of the family, these clients could not help but see her as a professional first and foremost.

A functional office required qualified employees, who, especially during the earliest years of Morgan's career, were most likely men. By locating her office in the financial district, Morgan communicated to these men that working for a young woman would not devalue their training or stunt their careers; she was a serious architect who intended to achieve the same level and breadth of work as any other architect with her training. Walter Steilberg admitted as much in recounting his story about coming to work for Morgan: Steilberg had worked for two of the most celebrated architects in Southern California, Irving Gill and Myron Hunt, before attending the University of California. Upon graduating from Berkeley in 1911, he sought work with the best architects in the Bay Area and naturally looked to the city to find them. He first sought employment in

⁹⁴ Delehanty, *San Francisco*, 115-16.

⁹⁵ Kwollek-Folland, *Engendering Business*.

Arthur Brown, Jr.'s, office, but the Beaux-Arts graduate who would go on to design San Francisco's City Hall and be inducted into the French Legion of Honor for his accomplished career, had no work at the time and no prospects of any in the near future. He instead directed Steilberg to inquire at the offices of Julia Morgan, whom he had known since high school and had competed against in Paris. Brown had to ease the young graduate's skepticism about working for a woman. "Don't fool yourself, young man," he said. "She's one of the best architects in this city. I don't know of any better." Being endorsed by one of the city's best architects and situated among them rendered Morgan's gender irrelevant and Steilberg's skepticism short-lived.⁹⁶

An office of her own empowered Morgan, as it would any architect. Indeed, Helena Steilberg Lawton, daughter of Walter Steilberg, once wrote that Morgan "expressed a feminine monarchistic 'l'état, c'est moi.'"⁹⁷ While most architects at the time increasingly focused their attention on attracting clients and delegating responsibilities to various employees, Morgan maintained an uncommon level of involvement in every aspect of a project.⁹⁸ The first rule of her office was quite simple: all employees must address each other by first name only, but they must always address their boss as "Miss Morgan." All clients met alone with Morgan in her private office and the library; they rarely met or even saw any other employees. Those conversations inspired the design Morgan sketched with her T-square and triangle, which she then gave to a draftsperson who developed detailed elevations and floor plans. Dorothy Wormser Coblenz vividly remembered that "if you didn't understand something from a sketch,

⁹⁶ "Berkeley's Architecture," in *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 19, 1974; JMAHP, Vol. 1, pp. 11-18, 31-35, 43-45.

⁹⁷ Helena Steilberg Lawton, "Walter Steilberg, Architect: The Man, His Times, His Work," in JMAHP Vol. 1, pp. 243-44.

you didn't go to her....You waited for her to come and then you asked. You didn't go off on any other tack; if she told you to do it thus and thus so, you worked on that. If you came to a stumbling block... you didn't [try your own solution] until she gave you the go ahead.”⁹⁹ These circumstances allowed for limited creative input on the part of the drafting staff, which ultimately cost Morgan some talented employees, but it also ensured that a Morgan commission was a Morgan commission from start to finish. So hard had Morgan struggled to establish her professional authority that she found it difficult to relinquish control while running her office.

An architect's office extends to the construction site, and Morgan asserted the same level of consistency and control over the construction of a house as she did over her draftsmen. Builders received the same thirty-plus page specifications detailing everything from how to mix the cement, to how to ensure the strongest foundation, to the type and size of wood to be used and color of paint that would adorn the kitchen walls. Differences lay in the particulars that had no bearing on the quality of design or construction—size of the home, bathroom and lighting fixtures, how extensive the electrical wiring would be, and leading for the windows, for instance. To be certain that the builders realized Morgan's plans and her clients' visions correctly and according to the highest standards, Morgan often visited the work site, where she would climb the scaffolding, and tear down parts of the structure with her hands if she was not satisfied with the work. “She was a perfectionist and each job was a maximum effort,” Dorothy Wormser Coblenz remembered. “Nothing was left incomplete and nothing was left to chance.”¹⁰⁰ Morgan's frequent presence at the work site and the strength of her engineering background

⁹⁸ Upton, *Architecture in the United States*, pp. 252-55.

⁹⁹ JMAHP, Vol. 2, p. 121.

desensitized the laborers to her gender and secured their respect. As a member of the construction crew at the Fairmont Hotel state to the reporter Jane Armstrong, “Now, this building is in charge of a real architect and her name happens to be Julia Morgan, but it might as well be John Morgan.”¹⁰¹

Despite the authoritarian aspect to Morgan’s management style in the office, she fostered a culture that few atelier masters in Paris, architectural firms in the United States, or companies in America’s financial districts could have imagined or would have desired. Whereas most architectural firms – whether headed by men or women – and virtually all of the Parisian ateliers remained homogenous, Morgan consciously maintained a heterogeneous staff. A number of employees proffered that she hired women in the hopes of finding a protégée to follow her path breaking lead. They likewise noted that men always outnumbered women in the office to ensure against being labeled, and thereby marginalized, as a “women’s firm.” In either case, she was clearly trying to address the issue of gender in an architectural firm, and ameliorate the hostile conditions that she had experienced so often in the past. Morgan also ran her office like an atelier. She regularly lost money on her apprentices for a year while they developed drafting skills, a practice that once caused Louis Schalk to complain, “I don’t want to work with or train, hopeless prospects.” She also heaped upon them considerable constructive criticism, which meant that an architect who apprenticed in the Morgan atelier received the most thorough training in the region and would therefore be welcomed at any other firm.¹⁰² Though their skills and productivity improved, few people achieved a higher status than draftsman. As with Morgan’s overweening control over design, this wont for professional

¹⁰⁰ Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 44-6.

¹⁰¹ Armstrong, “Woman Architect,” 70.

advancement could cause particularly talented employees to resign, but it also helped foster an atmosphere where men and women worked side by side in the more or less egalitarian space of the drafting room. Morgan even located her own drafting desk in this room. Again, this division of space ran contrary to the growing pattern in financial districts to separate employees by rank and sex.

More than the absolutist monarch Walter Steilberg's daughter remembered, Morgan was a nurturing matriarch. Her interest in teaching novices reflected this spirit, as much as it reflected her own interest in protecting her authority. She shared profits with employees during good years; lavished gifts upon them and their children — even after they left the atelier; and sold one of the two speculative houses she ever designed and built for \$2 to her draftsman, Thaddeus Joy, when his house succumbed to the 1923 Berkeley fire.¹⁰³ As Taylor Coffman's analysis of Morgan's business records has revealed, her practice cleared nearly \$1 million in profits on projects for William Randolph Hearst alone between 1919 and 1939.¹⁰⁴ Despite the financial success of the atelier suggesting otherwise, profits were not Morgan's primary concern.

¹⁰² Ibid., 140; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 86; JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 104-6, 116.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 46-47; Taylor Coffman, *Building for Hearst and Morgan: Voices from the George Loorz Papers* (Berkeley, 2003), 250, 353 (hereafter, Coffman, *Building for Hearst and Morgan*); and JMAHP, Vols. 1 and 2.

¹⁰⁴ One of the underlying agendas in Taylor Coffman's minutely detailed study of the papers of George Loorz, construction superintendent at the San Simeon building site from the 1932 to 1937, is to debunk the "Morgan myth" — that she was so prolific that her work for Hearst represented only a fraction of her business and that she was a selfless, underpaid pawn to her clients, and shared all of her profits with employees. Coffman, *Building for Hearst and Morgan*, 12-13, 63, 353, 418, 420, 531-50.

Customer Service

Julia Morgan is renown as a clients' architect, a characteristic that has been interpreted largely as negative to her creative freedom.¹⁰⁵ This final aspect of Morgan's professional style, however, is key to understanding both the success of her business and the significance of her oeuvre. The unusually intimate relationship Morgan fostered with her clients and the freedom of input she gave them in the design of a building was empowering for both parties. From a simple business standpoint, Morgan's level of customer service fueled the word-of-mouth praise that kept a steady flow of commissions flowing into the Morgan office for nearly forty years. Because Morgan gained the complete trust of her clients, she could also insert her personal beliefs into the design of a structure, even if they were initially at odds with those of the clients. For their part, clients enjoyed an unprecedented level of influence in the design process and, by extension, in shaping the development of the built environment. In the most dramatic cases, the power Morgan infused in her clients sparked a new and modern feminine – and even proto-feminist – consciousness.

Morgan guaranteed the same quality of service to every client. Whether she was designing a \$2000 house or a \$21,000 house, a \$20,000 or \$350,000 institutional facility, she followed the same procedure detailed earlier. Specifications always called for the finest quality materials and best craftsmanship possible; Morgan would rather sacrifice size for overall quality of design and construction. Morgan also never charged clients more than 6 per cent on residential projects, and therefore rarely made much of a profit

¹⁰⁵ Sara Boutelle stated this sentiment most explicitly: "[Morgan's] primary weakness in domestic architecture was a lack of boldness in design, but that was what pleased her clients." Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 129.

from them.¹⁰⁶ This business formula for residential commissions could not sustain her practice alone —the larger women’s clubs and especially the frequent and elaborate commissions from William Randolph Hearst secured the business — but it reassured Morgan’s clients that profit motives did not cloud design decisions; whatever final shape a given house took, it was a unique reflection of the needs and character of the people who would live in it.

Having established her professional authority and developed a trusting relationship with her clients, Morgan could exert her own will and power, much like Hettie Belle Marcus observed in the reminiscence that opened this chapter. For example, Morgan steered clients clear of design choices that she deemed vulgar, inappropriate, or overly commercial, like flowered chintzes. Walter Steilberg remembered one such incident that occurred during the interior decorating stages of Ira Wells’s home in the Rockridge neighborhood of Oakland. “There was some argument,” he recalled, “and Miss Morgan... was getting a little warm about it. She looked out the window with a funny little smile on her face and said, ‘Well, it seems to me that there’s quite a nice vision right outdoors. The bark of the eucalyptus tree is very beautiful and so are the colors, and the leaves are two different colors. Couldn’t you find something in that?’”¹⁰⁷ Though Morgan pressed her own opinions on the clients, she did so in such a way as to surrender the final decision to them. In this instance, she won her battle to bring the outside inside; it was only one of many small victories Morgan quietly achieved.

The individual attention she accorded her clients could have more dramatic results. Elizabeth Watt, for instance, devoted much of her adult life to community

¹⁰⁶ JMAHP, Vol. 1, p. 66; ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 105-121; ibid., 149; Specifications, various projects, JMC-CEDA.

service. During the 1870s and 1880s she transformed the parlor at the family's home in San Rafael into a school room, and she helped raise money for Protestant churches and founded a theatrical club. When the family moved to Oakland in the late 1880s, Watt joined the local women's network of social clubs, charities, and other institutions that often met in private homes to discuss points of social, civic, and cultural reform. A constellation of events in the early 1890s — the death of her eldest son, James, a trip to the Woman's Pavilion at the 1893 Columbian World's Exposition in Chicago, and a growing relationship with Hull House founder, Jane Addams — fueled Watt's devotion to civic life. She transformed the West Oakland Free Kindergarten Association, an organization she had nominally been a member of for years, into the West Oakland Settlement and, ultimately, the New Century Club of Oakland. Located in Oakland Point, a poor, ethnically diverse working-class neighborhood in West Oakland, this club offered a diverse range of community activities and services, including a free kindergarten education, a Sewing School, a Working Girls Club, a Boys Club, a Mothers' Meeting, cooking classes, a library, and a gymnasium. In 1895, the settlement occupied one modest working-class house. Over the next thirty years, Elizabeth Watt witnessed her club's facilities grow to occupy the width of an entire city block, include a state-of-the-art gymnasium, and a playground across the street. The institution played a vital role as Oakland Point's community center until it was demolished and replaced by a parking lot in 1960.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 133-34.

¹⁰⁸ For a complete history of Elizabeth Watt and the New Twentieth Century Club, see, Marta Ruth Gutman, "On the Ground in Oakland: Women and Institution Building in an Industrial City," (Ph.D., diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000), 287-362 (hereafter, Gutman, "On the Ground in Oakland").

For all of her ambitious civic activism, Elizabeth Watt held tight to many conservative values. In 1863, at the age of nineteen, Elizabeth Dewey became engaged to Robert Watt, a wealthy mining engineer who later served as California State Comptroller, then devoted the rest of his career to banking. Soon after marrying, the young bride gave birth to the first of the couple's five children. During the course of their marriage, Elizabeth Watt frequently entertained guests and became an old hand at moving house, relocating the family at least five times — once with just a week's notice — as her husband's career demanded. They renovated a few houses, once razed an old house to build anew, and once built a home on a previously empty lot. For all of her experience in building, decorating, and furnishing homes during her husband's lifetime, however, Elizabeth Watt admitted in her autobiography that she "was not thought capable of ordering a carpenter to put up shelves in a servant's apartment." She portrayed herself as a stereotypically dutiful Victorian wife who surrendered all decision-making authority to her husband. A woman firmly entrenched in America's ruling classes, Watt justified her public activities as a mode of *noblesse oblige* rather than rebellious acts against prevailing social and gender constructs, and cast her reform efforts in the mold of elite norms and ideals. She was a religious woman and believed deeply in the powers of moral materialism. Even as she worked to ameliorate social ills of modern urban life, she reinforced the status quo in race, class, and gender relations. Never did she consider herself a strong, independent woman or a feminist.¹⁰⁹

It was only in her widowhood, during the construction of a mansion in San Francisco's exclusive Presidio Terrace neighborhood in 1910, and at the age of sixty-six,

¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth Dewey (Eaton) Watt, "My Long Life: An Autobiographical Sketch," Manuscript (San Francisco, 1925), 225 (hereafter, Watt, "My Long Life"); Gutman, "On the Ground in Oakland," 287-93.

that Elizabeth Watt discovered in herself a capacity to transgress the strict boundaries of proper womanhood. Watt at first took little interest in the construction of her house, which drew its inspiration from Le Petit Trianon at Versailles, in France, save visiting the workers to deliver tea and cake. She also lacked the confidence to supervise the construction, furnishing, and planning the garden of this twelve-room mansion. As the project progressed, however, so did Watt's involvement. "I took a decided interest in the place," she wrote, "and little by little I gathered up courage and ambition to go ahead and do what was required of me." She discovered a new sense of self and authority, which she attributed first and foremost to her architect, Julia Morgan. The personal attention Morgan lavished on her client made Watt feel like the most important client Morgan had and encouraged her to define authoritatively her needs and desires in a new house. Though by no means did Elizabeth Watt become a self-identified feminist, her new home and the process of its construction came to symbolize a more independent life.¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Watt was just one person; multiply her sense of empowerment by the hundreds and the magnitude of Morgan's influence in changing the relationship between gender, space, and the built environment begins to emerge.

¹¹⁰ Watt, "My Long Life," 223-31.

Chapter 4

Housing the Twentieth-Century Woman:

Julia Morgan's Domestic Architecture, 1902-1930

Julia Morgan did not see any advantage to living on her own as she launched her career in the early 1900s. Having just returned from Paris, where housing issues frequently hampered her studies and otherwise preoccupied her time, she hardly desired to look for new accommodations yet again. With each successive move in Paris she had had to decide where and with whom to live; each time, she moved closer to the Ecole campus and usually shared an apartment with a female American friend or acquaintance. Roommates offered company, but not stability, for no other woman intended to stay in Paris as long as Morgan did. Avery Morgan lived with his older sister for just over a year – longer than any other roommate – but his inability to decide upon work or study, his distaste for Paris, and his tendency toward depression eventually created more of a burden than benefit. Julia Morgan's final apartment on rue Guénégaud had been ideal – spacious enough for both her and Avery, and located just around the corner from the Ecole and across the Seine from the Louvre – but during her last few months in Paris Morgan lived alone, lost her maid, and had to withstand significant disruptions caused by the installation of a modern plumbing system. These circumstances only amplified the pressure she felt as her thirtieth birthday neared: newspapers announced in France, England, and the United States that she had already become the first woman to earn a degree in architecture from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but she still had points to earn before she could make such a claim. Once back in Oakland, the Morgan house offered

familiarity, company if she desired it, stability, cheap rent, and convenient access to electric rail lines to Berkeley and Oakland as well as the ferry to San Francisco. Her fledgling architectural practice did not yet generate enough income to buy or build her own home; moreover, with a work schedule that often demanded sixteen-hour days, Morgan hardly spent enough time at home to invest in buying or renting her own place. Instead, Morgan electrified her childhood bedroom and another room that she turned into a studio, then retained 754 Fourteenth Street as her official home address for nearly thirty more years.

Circumstances changed sufficiently enough by the mid-1920s to prompt Morgan to purchase her own home and eventually move out of her parents' house. The family home was no longer a sanctuary of stability as it had been twenty years before. Bill Morgan suffered a stroke in 1923 and died a year later, leaving behind his frail and aging wife Eliza as well as his psychologically fragile son, Avery. Eliza Morgan's health, in particular, also required more attention than her eldest daughter had time to give. The daily commute from Oakland to San Francisco was taking its toll too. The West Oakland neighborhood through which Morgan had to travel to reach the ferry was increasingly working-class and ethnically diverse, making it less hospitable to this white, upper-middle-class single woman. Now in her fifties and dogged by inner-ear problems stemming from a childhood ear infection, Morgan also struggled to keep her balance and often had to walk close to walls to keep herself from falling. A botched surgery to attend to the problem cut a nerve in her face, causing one side to sag. Morgan laughed about these physical infirmities, joking that she walked down the street trying to pass for a drunk, but she was also a proud woman, scrupulous about her appearance, and cherished

her privacy.¹ The long commute from Oakland to San Francisco offered too much public access to her personal struggles and exposed her vulnerabilities. By the 1920s Morgan's independent financial status was secure as well; she could well afford to buy her own place.

San Francisco offered the best solution to Morgan's personal needs and professional responsibilities. In 1923 she bought one of five virtually identical Victorian houses built around 1900 in San Francisco's Pacific Heights neighborhood. At first, this property that Morgan bought on Divisadero Street generated extra income. Census records and oral histories indicate that she rented the units – often to employees and always to women. In 1930, for example, Morgan rented apartments to one of her office assistants, a forty-two year-old widow named Virginia Knowles, and Hildegard Henderson, a thirty-eight year-old unmarried physician. Within the next six years, Morgan decided to move to San Francisco as well. The Divisadero property was convenient in many ways: Morgan was familiar with the surrounding Pacific Heights and Cow Hollow neighborhoods, having designed numerous homes there, and it provided easy access to work – just a couple of blocks to California Street, then down the hill in her Hudson automobile to the Merchants Exchange Building. Morgan did not evict tenants to make room for herself; instead, she bought the adjacent property to the north and connected the two houses by adding an extension to the southern one. She also added a garage to the southern house and turned the northern house into three semi-autonomous apartments. To create more light for the apartments, Morgan removed the top two stories

¹ JMAHP, Vol. 2, p. 134.

of the southern property.² Sometime in 1930 or 1931, Morgan finally moved to Divisadero Street. Significantly, this woman who has earned a reputation for living to work and who maintained almost no social life nonetheless desired to live in community with other people, and particularly other single, working women. The Divisadero units fit a housing pattern for Morgan that began in Paris. She lived in places that best facilitated the development of her career and suited her personal, financial, and social needs; eventually, she used her own home to address similar needs of fellow unmarried working women as well. By the mid 1930s, Morgan was ready to find respite from work now and then; she bought a Spanish style bungalow in the forested hills overlooking Monterey and added to it a work studio.

This sketch of Morgan's personal housing accommodations provides an analytical framework to understand the broader significance of Morgan's professional work in domestic design. As indicated by her purchase of both Queen Anne buildings and a Spanish bungalow, Morgan was not particularly devoted to one style. She did not necessarily believe that aesthetic preferences could define the character of the persons who resided in a given house either. After all, the family home that she lived in for fifty years and the two houses on Divisadero Street suggest that Morgan did have a personal fondness for Victorian architecture and the Queen Anne style. As we will see, most architectural criticism in the late nineteenth century railed against this style not simply as bad architecture, but as a reflection of a morally corrupt American society. Few people now or a century ago would describe Julia Morgan as morally corrupt. Another notable pattern in Morgan's personal residences is that she never built a house from an original

² Sara Holmes Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, rev. edition (New York, 1995), 160 (hereafter, Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*); Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps of San Francisco (1899, 1913, and 1936).

design. She also did not hesitate to dramatically alter the appearance or spatial arrangements of a preexisting structure. These two details suggest that however much Morgan loved her career, she was not precious about the role of the architect as a master artist whose every work stood as a monument to his or her unique creativity and which should not be altered. Indeed, former employees reiterate time and again that function and a clients' individual needs and desires, rather than artistry, innovation, or any other consideration, guided Morgan's designs.

For Morgan and her female clients, the home served as a tool to redefine women's place in society and actually facilitate the movement of women from the domestic sphere to the world of real estate, work, education, and reform. A significant majority of Morgan's domestic commissions predate World War I, and the majority of those houses were designed in the Arts and Crafts style. Married, widowed, and single women, young and old women, professional women, and women who did not pursue careers outside the home all chose this style of domestic architecture. For all of these women, the Arts and Crafts style served as a spatial and aesthetic tool to engage in community building, critique the increasingly consumer-oriented culture in which they lived, and re-envision the role of women in society in the twentieth century. As important as the Arts and Crafts style was for articulating changes in the way women perceived themselves and their relationship to society, it alone does not explain the significance of Morgan's domestic landscape. Specific types of housing and clients – in this case, apartments and working women, respectively – reveal that Morgan's domestic designs actually advanced personal and financial independence for women as well as their move from the home to the work place. Penny Sparke has similarly argued that the home served as a middle ground in the

long transition from the Victorian age of unequal and separate spheres to the twentieth-century ideal of gender equality and independent womanhood, sometimes directly facilitating that change.³ What Morgan realized in her own life and subsequently applied to her work, is that no single housing solution could address the changing needs of women. Instead, one finds a remarkably diverse housing landscape designed by Julia Morgan, a landscape that reflected the increasingly diverse roles of the twentieth-century woman.

Housing Reform

Throughout the nineteenth century middle-class Americans expressed their individualism and status through their homes. As the wealth of the middle class increased and the cost of building and consumer goods decreased, interior spaces grew more complex, specialized, and filled with material objects. Builders capitalized on the populist spirit of home building by publishing pattern books that encouraged citizens to combine whatever variety of styles and ornament they desired to achieve visual delight and, according to Gwendolyn Wright, “reflect the individuality of the occupants and the vigor of the national creative spirit.” Nineteenth-century homes often featured bay windows, multiple gables, and turrets of varying heights, all of which created irregular façade and roof lines. The particular combination of architectural features of a house contributed to its individuality and followed nature’s tendency to produce irregular shapes and patterns rather than geometric shapes, straight lines, or symmetry. Large gardens often surrounded these homes, once again celebrating nature, but the stark contrast between the structure

³ Penny Sparke, “Elsie de Wolfe and Her Female Clients, 1905-1915: Gender, Class and the Professional Interior Decorator,” in Brenda Martin and Penny Sparke, eds., *Women’s Places: Architecture and Design 1860-1960* (New York, 2003), 48.

and the landscape reinforced the idea that the home stood as a sanctuary from the perils and corrupting influences of the outside world. Inside, the simple, single story, single or two-room house gave way to the multiple story home with kitchen, pantry, breakfast room, dining room, library, many bedrooms, maybe a bathroom, living room, rear parlor, and that icon of Victorian social life, the front parlor. The intimate size of these spaces was meant to foster the role of the home as the site of familial intimacy and stability, while the open staircase, many fireplaces, plush carpets, heavy draperies, and decorative objects – all features that were once available exclusively to the elite classes – represented at once the democratization of wealth in America and the rising status and refinement of the families who lived in these dwellings.⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century, critics from a variety of groups felt that the promise of this “populist vision,” as Gwendolyn Wright calls it, had failed miserably. Writers and cultural critics, architects, urban reformers, and women unleashed no amount of criticism and called for housing reform. Writers William Dean Howells and Edith Wharton attacked the nouveau riche millionaires of the industrial age. The latter, in particular, criticized the newly rich who infiltrated the circles of Old New York society and built ostentatious mansions in Newport, Rhode Island, transforming the wealthy, yet relatively modest and quiet, resort town into a stage set for public spectacle and conspicuous displays of wealth.⁵ Architects, as noted in previous chapters, were trained increasingly at formal institutions like the Ecole des Beaux-Arts where lessons in

⁴ Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago, 1980), 9-45 (hereafter, Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*). See also Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York, 1992); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985).

⁵ Renée Somers, *Edith Wharton as Spatial Activist and Analyst* (New York, 2005), 11-39 (hereafter, Somers, *Edith Wharton*).

classical architecture and art history fostered a belief in universal ideas of beauty and the need to create order and unity in design. They saw in the domestic landscape of America a visual cacophony. Moreover, from standard floor plans to mass produced furnishings and material objects, nineteenth-century homes represented the triumph of industry and ignorant builders rather than art or democratic individualism.⁶

The complaints of Californians against the state's domestic architecture echoed many of those voiced nationwide and reached a particularly feverish pitch in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1890s. For example, an 1897 issue of *Wave*, a magazine dedicated to California culture, published an article entitled "San Francisco's Architectural Monstrosities" [Figure 39]. It featured pictures of buildings with captions that described the Cliff House resort hotel near Ocean Beach as a "wooden birdcage." Other comments included "Chaos Avenue: An Architect's Nightmare," "An honest failure," and "executed by an intelligent but misguided foreman in a fit of melancholia."⁷ Progressive intellectual Herbert Croly was candid in describing the popular Queen Anne cottage as having "no virtue, either practical or aesthetic, except that of being cheap."⁸ Another critic, Herman Whitaker, was even less forgiving:

The Italian gingerbread period, imitation colonial, the Corinthian pillar rabies, occur like geological strata in the world of bad taste. Yes, they are all there with freakish decorations; every single abomination from gable peaks curved up to a point in impatient expectancy of some unfortunate aeronaut, to the bow window, cupola, or castle front. Every fool builder down to the idiot who placed painted siding under upper stories of weathered shingles found imitators.⁹

⁶ Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 46-55.

⁷ "San Francisco's Architectural Monstrosities," *Wave* (March 20, 1897), p. 6.

⁸ Herbert Croly, "The California Country House," *Sunset* 18 (December 1906), pp. 150-165.

⁹ Herman Whitaker, "Berkeley, the Beautiful," *ibid.*, 138-44.

Among the problems that plagued Bay Area architecture were ostentatious design, insufficient attention to the region's climate and landscape, excessive accumulation of meaningless ornament, bastardization of architectural types, and the perils of mass production by uneducated builders who were simply interested in making a profit rather than elegant and practical homes that were built with the best materials and careful craftsmanship.

Middle-class women voiced their complaints too. Urban reformers, like Jane Addams and the other women at Hull House in Chicago, or Charlotte Perkins Gilman, joined critics who saw the deterioration of the physical and moral fiber of society in the overcrowded, squalid conditions of apartment buildings and tenement houses. Women also complained about their own status in the home. Historian Jessica Kross has demonstrated that as early as the late eighteenth century, the increasing complexity and specialization of interior spaces of the house resulted in the marginalization of women from the affairs of her husband or the world outside the home. These spatial arrangements helped precondition American society to accept as natural the nineteenth-century ideology of separate spheres, which relegated women's role to the home and dominated cultural expectations (if not the reality) of true womanhood. While Catharine Beecher spent much of nineteenth century encouraging women to embrace their housekeeping roles and empower themselves in the home through domestic duties, Charlotte Perkins Gilman all but declared the housewife a prisoner in her own home by the end of the century. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," an autobiographical short story published in *New England Magazine* in 1891, Gilman chronicles the descent of an unnamed young wife and mother into the abyss of madness. Imprisoned in the nursery

with no means of escape, the protagonist cannot realize her own womanhood; rather she is reduced to an infantile state. The debilitating mental disorder was directly related to the physical isolation of women in the home and the drudgery of their undervalued and intellectually unsatisfying work.¹⁰ Housing reform could rectify the undervalued place of women in the home and help foster greater opportunities for them outside the home.

Housing reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century took on many forms. Dolores Hayden, for example, has documented a sometimes utopian and often explicitly feminist range of solutions proposed by various people and groups from the antebellum period through the post-World War II era. For much of this period, most of these housing reforms called for one or more communal spaces – kitchens, laundry areas, dining rooms, or yards, for example – in multi-unit compounds comprised either of single family homes or apartment buildings. These spatial arrangements were designed to reduce the isolation of women and increase the value of their domestic work. They also eased the burden of motherhood by encouraging neighbors to share childcare duties, or by arranging domestic work spaces in close proximity to children's spaces, which allowed women to work and mind the children at the same time. Technological innovation would reduce or make easier the domestic duties of women and improve sanitary conditions. Southern California-based architect Irving Gill, similarly applied his socialist tendencies to domestic design by creating groups of attractive and practical

¹⁰ Jessica Kross, "Mansions, Men, Women, and the Creation of Multiple Publics in Eighteenth-Century British North America," *Journal of Social History* 33 (1999), 385-408; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English* (New York, 1985), 1148-61; Ann J. Lane, *To 'Herland and Beyond': The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York, 1990), 123-32; Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, 1981), 55-58 (hereafter, Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution*); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York, 1976), 155-63.

homes that fostered community and social intercourse among working-class residents.¹¹

At the other end of the reform spectrum were the cultural elites and architects who, though often influenced by progressive impulses to improve living conditions for all, believed that a small, educated elite could – and indeed had an obligation – to release the population from its ignorance by building beautiful, architect-designed homes for the wealthy that were decorated tastefully and would serve as fitting examples for the masses to follow.¹²

In some respects, Julia Morgan’s clients appear to belong to this latter category. Though domestic commissions took Morgan to all reaches of the state, she designed the vast majority of homes for the immediate Bay Area: San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, and Piedmont. Berkeley alone accounted for a third of Morgan’s domestic commissions. During the first decade of her career, Berkeley clients built their homes in the neighborhoods located just north, east, and southeast of the University of California campus [Figure 40]. Particularly after 1910, as tracts of land in North Berkeley opened for development, Morgan’s clients built in that part of the city. Real estate developers for those neighborhoods assured potential residents that “adequate building restrictions insure high class homes for cultured people,” including covenant clauses that excluded people based on race.¹³ Nineteenth-century business leaders in Oakland and San Francisco built their homes on Madison, Alice, Oak, Brush and Castro Streets in Oakland – Morgan’s childhood neighborhood. Their children virtually replicated and transplanted

¹¹ Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution*; Thomas S. Hines, *Irving Gill and the Architecture of Reform: A Study in Modernist Architectural Culture* (New York, 2000), 150-69.

¹² See, for example, Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 46-78; and Somers, *Edith Wharton*, 95-128.

¹³ Sign in postcard ad picturing Arlington Avenue and Berkeley Highlands neighborhood, for real estate agency Meikle, Brock, & Skidmore. North Berkeley and Kensington Real Estate Development, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

these exclusive enclaves to Piedmont, once a hot springs resort in the Oakland hills. This Oakland township incorporated as a city in 1907 to protect the residents' fortunes from being taxed and funneled into programs for the poor and immigrant communities that migrated en masse to the East Bay city following the earthquake of 1906.¹⁴ In San Francisco, Morgan's clients built almost exclusively in affluent neighborhoods of Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow, Russian Hill, and Presidio Heights.

Morgan's clients reinforced their social status aesthetically as well. Those clients who did not opt for the more modest brown shingle, Arts and Crafts home (a style that I will discuss at length) tended to prefer near reproductions of the homes, villas, and estates of Europe's ruling classes. For example, a trip to the gardens of Versailles inspired Elizabeth Watt to build a house that resembled Le Petit Trianon, the site of many fêtes hosted by Marie Antoinette.¹⁵ In Piedmont, Allen and Martha Chickering asked Morgan to design a house that resembled Andrea Palladio's Villa Pisani (1552) [Figure 41]. Two Morgan houses bookend Farragut Street, located just a few blocks away from the Chickering house. At the one end is James Lombard's house, a half-timbered English Tudor style home based on a painting he and his wife purchased in England [Figure 42].¹⁶ At the opposite end of the street (and technically on Crocker Avenue) is Carmen and Benjamin Reed's 1926 Italian Renaissance villa.

The Piedmont home of Charlotte Playter, daughter of a large landowner and former mayor of Oakland, illustrates how Morgan and her clients organized interior

¹⁴ Evelyn Craig Pattiani, *Queen of the Hills: The Story of Piedmont, A California City* (Fresno, 1953), 88-110

¹⁵ Elizabeth Dewey (Eaton) Watt, "My Long Life: An Autobiographical Sketch," Manuscript (San Francisco, 1925), 223-26. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁶ Richard Longstreth has noted that Morgan's design for the Chickering house includes many modifications to the Villa Pisani, but nonetheless was "clearly derived from the front of Palladio's Villa

spaces to maintain class differences. The three main bedrooms offer space, comfort, convenience, and beauty. They all have large windows, two of which overlook the pergola and back garden. The third window sits atop the car port and faces the street. To compensate for this picture window's limitations in intimacy and aesthetic view, Morgan incorporated a flower box and window seat into the design. Two bedrooms have en suite entrances to the bathroom, while the third bedroom boasts a large alcove that serves as a private dressing room. All three bedrooms house radiators. In contrast, the maids' quarters are small rooms with small windows, isolated from the rest of the house by a separate stairway and narrow hallway. They have no radiators and less privacy. Servants had to share a split wash chamber and toilet chamber, located down the hallway from their rooms and accessible to anybody in the house.¹⁷ Playter's house represents only one of the most glaring examples of the class division of space; in both modest homes and lavish ones, Morgan's clients commonly replicated this pattern.

If Morgan and her clients did not intend to overthrow the basic class and racial hierarchy of the San Francisco Bay Area, they also did not simply build new status symbols. In June of 1913, for instance, Elizabeth Clark, wife of a man who managed Phoebe Hearst's estate, wrote a letter to Hearst expressing her thoughts about the blueprints Morgan had created for the new Clark house in Berkeley [Figures 43 & 44]. "This sketch Miss Morgan has made for us looks very very lovely to me," she wrote, "but I am sending [it] to you to see how you like it and to ask you to make any suggestions or criticisms you may wish to. I know so little about anything connected with building that I should appreciate any suggestions from you—for I know you do know about this

Pisani at Montagnana." Richard Longstreth, "Julia Morgan: Some Introductory Notes," *Perpecta* 5 (1975), 77; Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, 149, 157.

work.”¹⁸ Morgan’s design appealed to Clark’s aesthetic sensibilities, but evidently Clark was not part of an intellectual vanguard in housing design nor entirely secure in the quality of her personal taste. Phoebe Hearst, on the other hand, was a self-educated leader in supporting a number of competing architectural movements. *Hacienda del Pozo de Verona*, her home in Pleasanton, southeast of San Francisco, was a model of the regional expressionism that became popular in the 1890s; in 1898, Hearst underwrote the architectural competition for the new University of California campus, which was a model of Beaux-Arts architecture; and in 1902 she commissioned Bernard Maybeck to design a mountain lodge for her estate along the McCloud River in Shasta County. The result, called Wyntoon, was a fanciful arts and crafts masterpiece inspired by a medieval German castle.¹⁹ In seeking Phoebe Hearst’s intellectual and cultural authority Elizabeth Clark sought reassurance that she too would be building a practical and refined home in the tradition of leading California architectural styles, not just a meaningless display of wealth and prestige.

Morgan’s clients also understood their actions in hiring her to design their homes as part of and organized women’s movement. As noted in previous chapters, writers for local newspapers and columnists for social pages praised Morgan for her path breaking role in a traditionally masculine profession. By hiring her, they helped Morgan develop

¹⁷ Plans and Elevations for the house of Miss Charlotte Playter, JMC-CEDA.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Clark to Phoebe Apperson Hearst, June 10, 1913, GPAH.

¹⁹ William Randolph Hearst originally hired A. C. Schweinfurth to build a hunting cabin on the family’s Pleasanton property, and Phoebe Hearst asked Schweinfurth to transform her son’s cabin into a country mansion. Schweinfurth was one of several prominent architects who migrated in the late 1880s to California, where the open landscape and wealthy population created ideal conditions to experiment with architectural design. Rather than draw upon East-Coast or European styles for inspiration, he drew upon Spanish mission and southwest Native American vernacular design. Morgan later remodeled the home, adding balconies, pergolas, tile work, and landscaping. The house was famous for its distinct architecture as well as the parties Hearst hosted for the social and cultural elite of the region. Boutelle, *Julia Morgan: Architect.*, 172-73; Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the*

her career and could claim an active role in furthering women's opportunities. Marion Ransom, a former teacher at the Anna Head School in Berkeley, head mistress and co-founder of the Ransom–Bridges school in Piedmont (which Morgan designed between 1909 and 1916), and later a dean at Mills College articulated the general sentiment of Morgan's clients: "Being a woman's movement," Ransom stated to Aurelia Reinhardt, President of Mills College, "Miss M as the best woman architect in the state should do the work."²⁰ While Ransom was referring specifically to the construction of a new alumni hall at Mills College, her words could apply equally to the housing. The ratio of houses to women's clubs or other institutions run by women that Morgan designed between 1902 and 1920 is about three to one, making housing the primary mode through which women could advance their social, cultural, political ideas in a public and material way.

The Arts and Crafts Movement

In 1915, Oma and Ralph Eltse, a young lawyer and aspiring politician, hired Julia Morgan to design a house for them in Berkeley [Figure 45]. They decided upon a two-story Italianate home with a white plaster exterior, red tile roof, and teal blue, wood-framed windows, which Morgan positioned to maximize views of the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean beyond. The Italianate design, two open air decks, and a large sleeping porch all celebrated California's Mediterranean climate and the healthy outdoor life of the state's residents. Decorative features of the exterior included flower boxes, potted plants, and large boulders that bordered the walkway to the front entrance of the house.

Turn of the Century, paperback edition (Berkeley, 1998), 244-55, 279-86, 344-46; Roy Lowe, "A Western Acropolis of Learning": *The University of California in 1897* (Berkeley, 1996).

Like everything else about the house design, these decorative elements served a symbolic purpose: they emulated the variegated landscape of California, its natural beauty, and rich soil. Removed from the street level and situated among California oaks, the house seemed to emerge naturally from the landscape. While the Eltse house conveyed a sense of luxury and privilege, it did so through subtlety of form rather than unrestrained ostentation.²¹

Inside, the Eltse house followed a similar pattern of simple design and communicated a sense of openness. The first floor [Figure 46] accommodated the social responsibilities of a politician and showcased his family's cultural refinement. Guests entered a large reception hall, flanked on two sides by double doors that led to a formal dining room and the living room. Directly opposite the entrance to the dining room was a built-in sideboard where the Eltses could store their serving dishes, glasses, silverware, and other items necessary to host a dinner party. A fireplace welcomed guests as they entered the living room, and immediately to the left of the entrance was a built-in book case large enough to communicate a degree of literary refinement, but not so large as to render such a notion suspicious and pretentious. At the far end of this room was a relatively large music alcove for which Morgan incorporated a glass-faced music case into the design. This feature suggested that music was not just a convenient device for entertaining guests, but an integral part of the Eltses' everyday lives. Exposed beam ceilings in these three spaces served as decorative features and revealed the structural design of the house, which again reiterated the honesty and integrity of the Eltse name.

²⁰ Marion Ransom to Aurelia Reinhardt, [1915?], Aurelia Reinhardt Papers, Mills College, Oakland, California.

²¹ JMAD.

Upstairs [Figure 47], the 12' x 13' guest bedroom, with its single closet, paled in size in comparison to the 22' x 14' master bedroom and its matching walk-in closets. The master bedroom connected directly to the large deck, which had plants, flowers, columns, and panoramic views to the east, south, and west. Guests, meanwhile, had to step outside their bedroom to reach the other, much smaller and simpler deck, which offered significant views to the west only. Despite these apparent inequalities, the Eltse house embodied democratic principles. The guest porch, for instance, may have been smaller in size and panoramic scope, but its location shielded guests from the public eye and provided arguably the most spectacular view possible: the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean. Moreover, both host and guest had direct access from their bedrooms to the sleeping porch and shared the same bathroom and sitting room. That the Eltse house could accommodate only one guest—or couple—automatically elevated the guests to a privileged position and gave them special access to the private life of a public person.

The Eltse residence marked the 225th house Morgan had designed in the thirteen years since she began her professional career and embodies many of the common elements in her residential designs that have come to ensure her place among California's leading Arts and Crafts architects —using materials for which they are best structurally adapted; minimal external ornamentation; structural elements that doubled as decorative features; hand-wrought fixtures and built-in tables, cabinets, and benches; and a harmonious relationship to and celebration of nature. Function, beauty, and simplicity were her guiding rules.

Morgan's adherence to these principles of design, construction, and ornamentation have caused her biographers to associate her domestic work with the Arts

and Crafts movement. Jackson Lears identifies this movement as an antimodernist critique of the industrial capitalist economy that not only alienated the worker from the product of his labor, but prevented the white collar businessman and professional from the physical experience of labor and production. This resulted in a rootless, secular, and urban culture of accumulation that had little or no profound meaning. In contrast, Daniel Rogers has argued that the penchant of people like Morgan's clients for Arts and Crafts architecture represented little more than a diluted, aesthetic attraction to the politically inspired art forms of John Ruskin and William Morris in mid to late nineteenth-century England. Gwendolyn Wright also questions the ideological origins of Arts and Crafts houses in America. According to Wright, this style of domestic architecture reflects practical concerns of the Progressive Era for simple, standardized, sanitary, efficient, low-maintenance homes that served the growing consumer culture and economy.

Conversely, Cheryl Robertson has argued that the Arts and Crafts Movement simultaneously increased the household burden on women and devalued their authority over the home by demanding of women more handcrafted decorative items, on the one hand, and adopting a masculine aesthetic on the other.²² These are just a few of the arguments that the Arts and Crafts Movement in American has incited.

Julia Morgan and her clients embraced the Arts and Crafts movement for still other reasons. Their interest stemmed not from the workplace, for not all of Morgan's clients worked, or from the search for practical home design for servantless households,

²² Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimoderism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York, 1981), 3-96; Daniel Rogers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Chicago, 1978), 65-93; Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York, 1981), 158-176 (hereafter, Wright, *Building the Dream*); Cheryl Robertson, "House and Home in the Arts and Crafts Era: Reforms for Simpler Living," in Wendy Kaplan, ed., "*The Art That is Life*": *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920* (Boston, 1998), 336-357.

since Morgan's clients tended to have domestic help. Instead, one finds that through their houses, as in their social, civic, and charitable organizations, Morgan's clients promoted simplicity, refinement, honesty, and modesty; they advocated the importance of community over the individual; and invested in creating a culture of restrained, educated, and meaningful consumption in a new age of abundance. All of these principles infused the role of these women as community builders with a clear aesthetic and moral vision of the world in which they wanted to live. In creating a landscape of Arts and Crafts homes, Julia Morgan and her clients thus subtly began to reshape the boundaries of domesticity, often blurring notions of public and private space. Spatially, they created more equality in the home. Aesthetically, they refashioned dominant ideas about femininity.

Though men often acted as the public voice for housing reform, one of the earliest and most successful organized efforts to propagate widespread construction of simple Arts and Craft houses in the San Francisco Bay Area originated with women. In 1895, a house in Berkeley designed by Bernard Maybeck sparked women's interest in pursuing reform in domestic architecture. With its shingled exterior, redwood interior, exposed construction, natural finish, and the way it "seemed to settle most naturally into the landscape with the background of live oaks and upsweeping hillslopes," this house stood in striking contrast to the Queen Anne and Victorian homes that dominated the Bay Area's domestic landscape. Berkeley's own landscape was relatively undeveloped at this time, but new tracts of land were being bought at an increasingly rapid pace from farmers and other large landowners. The town was poised to grow rapidly, which would, of course, increase the demand on housing. This prospect of development prompted a few local women to ask, "What would be the effect when [the Maybeck house] was

surrounded by painted houses of more conventional types of architecture?" They responded with an emphatic, "This should not be," and proceeded to found the Hillside Club.²³

From its inception, a woman's role as consumer shaped the philosophy of the Hillside Club. Early activities included little more than gathering at one another's homes to collect drawings and prints of "good types of simple homes," from women's magazines, including *Ladies Home Journal* and *A Woman's Home Companion*. Such publications were rife with articles that featured floor plans, photos, budgets, and commentary emphasizing unpretentious, simple home designs that kept housekeeping labor to a minimum and placed health standards high on the list of priorities. As the Hillside Club's motto of "civic patriotism" suggests, however, these women did not intend to play passive roles in home design or limit their goals to making housework easier. Building a house was an act of citizenship, an act in the public sphere. Mrs. H. B. Breckenfield, president of the Hillside Club in 1909, defined their work as no less than the cornerstone of Western civilization. According to her, men had yet to evolve into natural homebuilders and effectively stunted the progress of civilization by excluding women from home design.²⁴ This belief gave women purchase to extend their roles in the domestic sphere to the public sphere of community building, and even fought City Hall (or its equivalent) to see their vision realized.²⁵ Though only a few of Morgan's

²³ "A Retrospection," *Year Book of the Hillside Club* (Berkeley, 1907), 2-3.

²⁴ Ibid.; Mrs. H.B. Breckenfeld, "A Few Impressions Gleaned from the Year's Work of the Club Season 1909-1910," *ibid.*, (1910-1911).

²⁵ In her book *Building With Nature: Inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Home*, Leslie Freudenheim recounts the story of some women who lived in the neighborhood just north of the University of California, Berkeley campus who protested the plans proposed by the Trustee of the Town of Berkeley for a new primary school. The women presented alternative architectural plans, promised to build within the budget proposed by the trustees, and women their fight to construct a simple, brown shingle school building. Leslie

clients belonged to the Hillside Club – membership was restricted to North Berkeley residents and by invitation only – many of them adhered to the principles advocated by the club.

Aesthetic conformity appealed to Morgan's clients as one way to curb runaway individualism and favor community spirit. Of the twenty-five Morgan houses I looked for in the Claremont and Elmwood neighborhoods in Berkeley, for example, twenty-one were in the brown shingle-style [Figures 48 & 49]. As the founding women of the Hillside Club first noted, these unpainted homes with little exterior ornamentation blended into the landscape more than any other style of domestic architecture, a characteristic that reinforced the club's idea that “a single house is but a detail in a landscape... a mere incident amongst the trees.”²⁶ These homes were presented as an organic outgrowth of the landscape rather than an object of man's ego imposed on the land. Of course, in a landscape relatively devoid of houses and not naturally verdant or overgrown with large shade trees and succulent flora, even the most idealistically designed house stood out. To create a better sense of community and intimacy in these new neighborhoods, Morgan included a shared driveway and front doors facing one another whenever clients requested two houses on adjacent lots. As a result, a common space existed between the two houses, facilitating interaction and communication between the neighbors.

As important as deference to community was, Morgan believed in the need for individual expression; otherwise, she would only be creating more meaningless mass produced objects her clients so decried. The homes of Henry Howard and his brother

M. Freudenheim, *Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Home* (Salt Lake City, 2005), 115-25.

John L. Howard, Jr., illustrate particularly well how Morgan achieved a balance between conformity and individuality. Both families built two-story, four-bedroom houses with shingle exteriors and nearly identical footprints and floor plans [Figure 50]. A pergola running along the eastern edge of both properties literally connected the two houses, thereby sealing the family bond. Particular features of the interior plans, however, reveal striking differences between the two families. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Howard preferred a more formal domicile and personal space reminiscent of the Victorian home. Instead of one multi-purpose living room, their house also included a den with a low ceiling and small windows [Figure 51]. The master bedroom contained separate walk-in closets, and the main bathroom featured a shower in addition to the bath tub [Figure 52]. A second bathroom and servants' quarters occupied the area next to the wash trays and ash pit in the basement, which could be reached via stairs connected to the kitchen and pantry or through a separate outside entrance.²⁷ Mr. and Mrs. John L. Howard, Jr., invested in a slightly smaller house that nonetheless created a greater sense of space by accentuating the outdoors [Figure 53]. A vine-covered pergola framed the front porch, which also featured flower boxes and a ceramic tile floor. They included a sleeping porch upstairs [Figure 54], as did the other Howard family, but replaced the cozy den with a large sun room that boasted a nearly ten-foot ceiling and three walls dominated by large windows. Designing from the inside out, Morgan was able to create two similar designs that reflected the family bonds and idiosyncrasies of her clients.

Other features of Arts and Crafts homes, and Morgan designs specifically, played a more direct role in shaping consumer practices. Whatever exterior a Morgan house had,

²⁶ Charles Keeler, "The Simple Home," *ibid.* (1912-1913), 6 (hereafter, Keeler, "Simple Home").

²⁷ Mr. and Mrs. H.S. Howard Floor Plans and Elevations (1911), JMAD.

plans, elevations, and specifications reveal that most homes had hardwood floors and wood paneled walls, at least downstairs; few had papered or colorfully painted walls. Vine covered pergolas, flower boxes, built-in furniture, and exposed beam ceilings also regularly adorned Morgan houses. Similarly, Morgan situated windows both to allow sunlight to flood the home, and to frame scenic pictures of the outdoors. Decorative leading in these windows replaced heavy drapes that surrounded the windows in Victorian homes. All of these elements created organic beauty and were permanent and unique fixtures not easily discarded or replaced. Theoretically, they also minimized frivolous consumption of mass produced commercial goods that bore no relationship to either the producer or the consumer — or even the house — and whose meaning was fashioned through advertising campaigns. For those clients who did choose to paint, hang curtains, or buy plush furniture, Morgan encouraged them to seek inspiration from the views outside their windows — greens and browns from trees, blue from the sky. Sun rooms and sleeping porches reflected a movement towards sanitary and healthy living environments as well as a belief in the value of physical activity and interaction with nature rather than passive consumption of material objects or patronizing commercial amusement parks.²⁸ Something as simple as a window seat, another common feature in Morgan houses, invited one to take a break from the demands of daily life and engage in a contemplative moment or take in the beauty of the picturesque scene outside the window. At a time when department stores and advertisers were appealing to them to buy increasingly disposable and manufactured consumer goods, many of Morgan's clients used their houses, the intended site for so many of those manufactured goods, to express

²⁸ As Charles Keeler, the voice of the Hillside Club once stated, porches and sun rooms were “the best means of promoting an out-of-door life in the family.” Keeler, “Simple Home,” 7; Wright, *Building the*

a preference for the natural world – or at least to live in harmony with it – to limit consumption and infuse it with meaning.

The Bay Area Arts and Crafts style contributed to an emerging aesthetic of femininity that grew out of rugged conditions of life in the American West and from increasingly popular recreational wilderness activities. Countless letters, diaries, memoirs and autobiographies, and histories of women in California during the Gold Rush and throughout the rest of the nineteenth century describe dusty, rugged conditions that forced them into situations they could not have previously imagined. For instance, when Eliza Farnham circulated a flyer in New York in 1849 to enlist a boatful of intelligent and respectable women of character to join her in the charitable cause of civilizing the West, she likely did not imagine herself in the role of journeyman carpenter and donning bloomers outside a gymnastics class, nor allowing herself to be seen in such gear beyond the boundaries of her private farm and orchard. Similarly, Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe (penname Dame Shirley) famously described to her sister in Massachusetts the crude conditions of the Sierra mining camps and the absurdity of white gloves, parasols, or fine dresses in that environment.²⁹

Hiking and mountaineering grew in popularity among American (and European) women during the nineteenth century as well, especially in the western United States. According to Susan Schrepfer, women equated wilderness with gender equity and found

Dream, 161-62.

²⁹ JoAnn Levy, *Unsetting the West: Eliza Farnham and Georgianna Bruce Kirby in Frontier California* (Berkeley, 2004), 2-6, 60-61, 77; Dame Shirley, *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851-52* (San Francisco, 1922). A few later autobiographies that describe a more settled California, but one that nonetheless provided ample opportunity for women to explore the wilderness and shed the formal attire and strict mannerisms of town/city life, include Mary Hallock Foote, *A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West: The Reminiscences of Mary Hallock Foote* (San Marino, 1972); Lucy Sprague Mitchell, *Two Lives: The Story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and Myself* (New York, 1953); and Mary Bennett Ritter, *More than Gold in California, 1849-1933* (Berkeley, 1933).

in nature a way to transcend some of the constraints that society imposed upon them. Women still attended to the domestic duties of camp, but their domestic duties were fewer in number and more highly valued by male members of the hiking party. Flower gathering and painting also reflected traditional ideas of women's delicate nature and innate sense of beauty, but women could engage in these activities outside of the domestic space, in places that were equally difficult for men and women to reach. Wilderness activities also allowed women to hike alone, without an escort, and wear clothing that would be considered scandalous in urban society. For most women, that meant trading in corsets, perfume, and fancy coifs for long sleeve shirts and skirts short enough to reveal boots. Other women wore bloomers.³⁰

By the turn of the twentieth century, boosters for California tourism played into this feminine aesthetic as a defining and positive characteristic of the state. A 1902 souvenir postcard published by Underwood and Underwood, for example, depicts a person overlooking Yosemite Valley from the edge of Overhanging Rock. The caption reads, "A mile straight down, and only one step from Glacier Point." The composition is reminiscent of Asher Brown Durand's 1849 painting *Kindred Spirits*, a scene with two men standing at the edge of a cliff overlooking a valley in the Catskill mountains of New York. In both pictures, the landscape offers awe-inspiring beauty, but the painting and photograph differ in significant ways. Whereas nature envelopes the two men in *Kindred Spirits* and the light of God illuminates the place where they are standing, the lone figure

³⁰ Susan R. Schrepfer, *Nature's Altars: Mountains, Gender, and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence, 2005), 67-95.

at Glacier Point is a woman who, though dressed in a high-collared blouse and long skirt, stands with confidence and power over the valley below.³¹

The Arts and Crafts houses extended this real and symbolic refashioning of femininity and gender relations into the urban environment. The overgrown – as opposed to carefully manicured – look of the gardens replicated the natural groupings of wildflowers women found so alluring in the mountains. Inside the houses, the dark woods of the walls, ceilings, doors, and furniture differed dramatically from other fashionable ideas about interior design and femininity. In their popular 1897 guidebook on interior design, *The Decoration of Houses*, Edith Wharton and her co-author Ogden Codmen advocated that Americans (and particularly the wealthiest Americans) find inspiration in the refined aesthetic of European aristocrats, including “brilliantly decorated” walls, light window treatments, a few statues and candelabras, and old French furniture.³² Similarly, Elsie de Wolfe, a contemporary of Morgan’s and popular interior decorator for wealthy patrons on the East Coast, commonly applied floral chintzes, ruffles and lace, lattice work, Louis XIV-inspired furniture, and ornate fountains into her designs. Penny Sparke has argued that such overwhelmingly feminine spaces represented a shift from traditionally masculine, architecturally-driven decorating practices of the past to the idea of the interior as “a setting for the personality of its female inhabitant,” or an aesthetic form of female empowerment.³³ This argument can apply to multiple aesthetics; whereas Elsie de Wolfe and her clients embraced a femininity of delicate beauty and refined,

³¹ *Yosemite Valley*, 1902, stereograph published by Underwood and Underwood, reprinted in Sheri Bernstein, “Selling California, 1900-1920,” in Stephanie Barron et al., eds., *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000* (Los Angeles, 2000), 73.

³² Somers, *Edith Wharton*, 96-99.

³³ Penny Sparke, “Elsie de Wolfe and Her Female Clients,” in Brenda Martin and Penny Sparke, eds., *Women’s Places: Architecture and Design 1860-1960* (New York, 2003), 50.

elegant taste for America's elite few, Julia Morgan and her clients preferred a décor that communicated an idea similar to the lone woman standing at Glacier Point: strength and rugged independence. The emphasis on nature, which is technically free and available to all, rather than the exclusive domain of Europe's aristocrats, rendered it a more democratic vision of womanhood as well.

Several common elements in Morgan's Arts and Crafts homes also a transition away from the ideological and gendered division of space and power that had developed over the previous two centuries. The blurring of these boundaries began with the relationship between indoors and outdoors. Morgan often situated her houses near the front of the lot, minimizing the size of the front garden and, therefore, the buffer zone between the street and the home. Main entrances were usually located at the side of the house, allowing her to incorporate large windows in the living room, which usually faced the street, and most of these windows featured simple decorative leading to minimize the need for heavy drapes. As long as the windows remained bare like this, they created a situation whereby residents could look freely onto the street and, similarly, passers by could see directly into the home, creating more fluid boundaries between the masculine public space of the street and the feminine domestic space of the home.³⁴ Inside, solid walls and doors that partitioned the downstairs rooms of Victorian houses into distinctly separate spaces gave way to paned glass French doors. Formal parlors and dens also melded into a single multi-purpose living room. These details marked a shift away from the oppressive formality of Victorian culture. They, too, created more fluid boundaries between public and private spaces in the home, and greater flexibility in the floor plan.

³⁴ Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, 1999), 17-41.

By closing the doors, one could achieve the separation of space found in Victorian homes; even then, however, the glass panes left the rooms partially exposed. Most importantly, the modern floor plan created more gender equality within the home; the woman of the house still had no private space of her own, but the man no longer had one either.

A Domestic Landscape for the Twentieth Century Woman

As important as Arts and Crafts architecture was to expressing women's concerns in the new century, it did not in and of itself separate women from the home or endow them with financial independence, two common traits of the new woman. A broader look at the domestic landscape Morgan designed, however, reveals that housing did facilitate such modern concerns. The apartment house lent women a new level of authority over their living arrangements, demanded new managerial responsibilities, and provided some level of financial stability. Single women who enjoyed their own income and worked outside the home still needed a place to live as well. If their homes did not facilitate the separation of work and home, their modern needs transformed the house.

Apartments provided one solution to increasingly limited space and rising property values in the rapidly growing urban centers, but they played an ambiguous role in American domestic architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the one hand, apartments were said to threaten the integrity of the American family. A perceived lack of privacy and inevitable promiscuous mingling among strangers undermined the woman's role as caretaker and protector of moral values. Husbands also lost the private sanctuaries that offered peace and quiet respite at the end of a busy day in the working world. Less likely to own the building or apartment,

residents could no longer control the exteriors of the buildings, which adversely affected the role of the house in the public display of status.³⁵

To others, apartments presented new opportunities for community and freedom from household drudgery. As Elizabeth Cromley has noted, equal rents and the fashionability of a building attracted people of similar economic and cultural backgrounds, replicating the social structure of a suburban neighborhood and creating a sense of familiarity in those same cities where rapid growth resulted in an anomie society of isolated individuals. Meanwhile, factories increasingly lured people away from jobs as domestic servants, resulting in a demand for new types of housing that required less housework. Smaller in size than houses and more likely to be equipped with modern amenities, like electricity, phones, gas stoves, and indoor plumbing, the apartment fulfilled this need too. Feminists also praised the redeeming value of apartment life in their many efforts to alleviate women's isolation from social and civic life as well as to remedy the disparity between the value—economic, social, or otherwise—of wage labor and unpaid housekeeping. Communes, cooperatives, and variations on kitchenless houses or apartments with centralized cooking, dining, and laundry facilities were among the most common feminist ideas.³⁶

The women who commissioned Morgan to design apartment houses for them raise yet another issue: they were invariably of two types – either widows or single, working professionals, not the nuclear family most apartment designers and cultural critics concerned themselves with in relationship to apartments and apartment design.

³⁵ Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "The Development of the New York Apartment, 1860-1905," (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1982), 199-215 (hereafter, Cromley, "Development of the New York Apartment"); Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley, 1994), 26-55.

Morgan's clients all could afford to build houses and the California landscape still offered plenty of space to build individual homes, but these women chose not to do so. Such a revelation may not be surprising; widows in urban areas had long run boarding houses for working men or women, but boarding houses of dubious moral character. If women of Morgan's class sought apartment-like housing, however, they opted for palace hotels. Certain features common to most of Morgan's apartment buildings signify lasting anxieties over social hierarchy and democracy, respectability, community, and privacy too. Her clients nonetheless decided to build and live in apartments for the personal independence and authority they offered as well as the steady income they provided.

Katherine Henley, Harriet Merritt, Minerva Miller, and Isabella Woodland were all widows and, following the deaths of their husbands, all hired Julia Morgan to design apartment buildings for them. One has to wonder why, at the age of seventy-five, Minerva Miller decided in 1908 to build a new home at all, let alone take on the responsibilities of an eight-unit apartment building in San Francisco's affluent Nob Hill neighborhood. The key to that mystery may lie with her children – Belle, a music teacher, and Estelle – neither of whom married and both of whom lived with their mother. By 1920, however, circumstances had changed. Minerva was dead, leaving to her daughters not only her personal effects and wealth, but also the apartment building. Belle Miller continued to teach music, but rather than hiring an outside manager, she and Estelle decided to manage the apartment building themselves. The building secured their housing arrangements and income, and provided them with jobs.

Katherine Henley's three daughters, all teachers, were still living with her as well when she hired Morgan to design a three-unit apartment building in Berkeley's Elmwood

³⁶ Cromley, "Development of the New York Apartment," 216-37; Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution*.

district. Like Minerva Miller, Henley inherited enough money from her husband to live comfortably. Unlike Miller, Henley was still relatively young – just forty-five – when she hired Morgan in 1905 and likely was not considering the financial security of her children when she died; rather, she considered her own security, comfort, and spatial needs upon the imminent departure of her daughters, aged sixteen, twenty-two, and twenty-five. They likely would not be living at home much longer. Charlotte moved out by 1907, followed by Ida that same year. The latter gave up teaching and moved back to her mother's home with her new husband by 1910, but Grace moved out by 1920. In short, Henley no longer needed a large house to accommodate her shrinking family and, again, the apartment building provided steady income and authority over who she surrounded herself with. (At one point, newly-trained architect, Henry Gutterson, was living with his sister in the building. Dorothy Wormser Coblenz, who worked in Morgan's office during the late teens, also worked for Gutterson and remembered him as one of the only other architects to employ women, offering his female employees even more freedom and opportunity than Morgan did. One cannot help but wonder if Julia Morgan somehow influenced his architecture or employment practices through discussions with his former landlady about the apartment building.) In each case, apartment buildings provided practical solutions to questions about income, security, and flexibility of women with newly found independence.

Louise Katz, a librarian at the University of California, Berkeley, established stability, community, status, and added income by erecting her apartment building [Figure 55]. Between 1904 and 1907 she lived at three different addresses, first on Bancroft Way, then LeConte Avenue, and finally Virginia Street. Katz always lived

within walking distance of work, but each successive move drew her closer to Buena Vista Way, also called “Nut Hill,” a bohemian neighborhood known for its eclectic assortment of university professors, teachers, artists, and architects. Among its residents were photographer Dorothea Lange, artist Worth Ryder, author George Stuart, painter and architect Lilian Bridgman, and dance instructor Florence Treadwell Boynton. Bernard Maybeck, architect of many homes on the hill and himself a resident, developed the most eccentric reputation, but that description more appropriately belongs to the Boynton family. Their house, with its curved Corinthian colonnade and originally designed with no walls, is also known as “Temple of Wings.” Florence Boynton built the home as a living memorial to her childhood friend, dancer Isadora Duncan. Early advocates of a vegetarian diet and known to don togas, the Boyntons drew heavy canvas curtains when weather or a need for more privacy called for more shelter.³⁷ In 1908 Louise Katz claimed her own stake in this famous neighborhood; she hired Morgan to design a three-story, three-unit apartment building in the English-influenced, Arts and Crafts style on Buena Vista Way.

Morgan’s design took full advantage of the hillside location and balanced needs of the formal with the casual, and privacy with community. In both size and aesthetic, the building blended in to the residential landscape, suggesting that Katz did not wish to make a spectacle of herself, despite her neighbors’ tendencies to do so. Katz also integrated a certain social hierarchy in her building. The ground floor apartment [Figure 56], suitable for one person, included a living room, one small bedroom with a large

³⁷ Margaretta Kuhlthau Mitchell, “Dance for Life: Isadora Duncan and Her California Dance Legacy at the Temple of Wings,” (Masters Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1985); Eleanor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West*; Mark Wilson, *East Bay Heritage: A Potpourri of Living History* (San Francisco, 1979), 85-88.

closet, a bathroom, and a rudimentary kitchen, or, as Morgan noted in the architectural plans, a “stove alcove.” Another, more formal one-bedroom apartment occupied much of the top floor and could accommodate a couple or small family [Figure 58]. It included a formal hall entrance that led to the living room, a full kitchen with a balcony, more closet space than the ground-floor apartment, and a larger bedroom. Katz’s own apartment occupied the entire second floor as well as the northern third of the top floor [Figure 57]. It featured all the formal amenities of a house, including a dining room with built-in china cabinets with glazed glass doors, a full pantry with wash bins and cabinets that separated the kitchen from the dining room; a kitchen with a screened-in porch where deliveries could be sent, a second bedroom upstairs, and a bathroom located off a hallway instead of connected to a bedroom. In the spirit of democracy and in keeping with the latest modern amenities, laundry facilities accommodated all residents and were located via a separate entrance at the back of the building. All three apartments had separate entrances, with the tenants’ entrances located on either side of the building to allow for privacy; a fire place; a bank of three, west-facing living room windows, with a window seat built into the bay window of the top floor apartment; and porches, creating direct access to the outdoors. The last two elements afforded sweeping views of San Francisco Bay.

With her neighborhood chosen and house built, Louise Katz could now fill her apartments. The 1910 census lists a single, middle-aged woman occupying the ground-floor apartment, and a childless, married couple occupying the top-floor apartment. Like his landlady, the husband in the latter couple was a librarian. Not surprisingly, the tenants had changed by 1920. By then, Katz was landlady to an elderly French-born widow and her two adult daughters, one who taught at the university and was herself a widow, and

the other who worked as a nurse for a private family (possibly for her own eighty-six year old mother). A male high school teacher lived in the ground floor apartment. Though Katz did not surround herself exclusively with women, she took care to surround herself with people whom she could trust. Both the fellow librarian and university teacher suggest that she often found new tenants through word of mouth at stomping grounds common to both parties, and otherwise chose people who posed little threat to her personal safety. This housing situation also offered Katz easy access to work, generated added monthly income to help pay the mortgage, and offered privacy – but not isolation – in a neighborhood that catered to her cultural, intellectual, and social persuasion.

Louise Katz also represents another subset of Morgan's female clients: the single working professional. While Katz chose to build apartments, many other clients decided to build single, detached houses. A few of them achieved complete separation of work and home, living up to a quarter of a mile away from the workplace. More often than not, however, these women combined work and home spaces; the home once again served as a middle ground between the private and public spheres; in this case, however, they facilitated that shift. As representatives of the “new woman” of the twentieth century, they challenged Morgan to devise a variety of solutions to address their particularly modern spatial problems.

The University of California hired Jessica Peixotto and Lucy Sprague in 1905, making them the first female faculty members. As momentous as these faculty appointments were in the history of women and the university, the women felt largely isolated from the rest of the faculty. Both women used their housing situations to ease the isolation they felt as the only women faculty. At first, the two women shared a house. In

1906, however, Sprague's work as Dean of Women quickly made clear that she needed her own house. While Sprague brought the women students to her house, Peixotto built a house, which Julia Morgan designed, near a section of campus that had increasingly become the women's corner. It was located on a section of College Avenue that intersected with and eventually became university property. Across the street from Peixotto's house stood Hearst Gymnasium, originally designed as a hall by Bernard Maybeck in 1899 to display and convene to judge entries submitted for the international competition. Phoebe Hearst donated the building to the university in 1900 for the purpose of converting it into a women's gymnasium. Baths, basketball courts, and tennis courts soon followed, creating by far the largest space for women on campus. Five years after the construction of Peixotto's house, the senior women raised funds for the design and construction of their own social hall, later called Girton Hall, along Strawberry Creek. This Morgan-designed building was just around the corner from the professor's residence. Within the highly masculine constructs of the university, Peixotto built a private residence that underscored her status as an independent professional woman, personified her marginal status on an otherwise almost exclusively male faculty, and which took advantage of and contributed to a growing space for women on campus. Like Louise Katz, Peixotto also chose a lot that was well within walking distance of a bohemian enclave, in this case Panoramic Hill, a neighborhood of craftsman homes overlooking Strawberry Canyon and famous for social gatherings among professors and nature lovers.³⁸

³⁸ Mitchell, *Two Lives*, 144, 193, 198-99; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps of Berkeley, California (1911), numbers 74, 90, and 92.

Grace Barnard hired Morgan to design a live-work unit where she could run her normal school, or two-year teacher training program, in 1916. Morgan designed essentially two half timber and brown shingle craftsman buildings separated by a large courtyard, but connected physically by a second-story open-air gallery. The school, being a public space, appropriately abutted the street, while the house stood at the rear of the property in complete privacy. Apart from gas heaters, a large blackboard, a few shelves, and a twenty-two inch long window seat looking onto the courtyard, the studios – or classrooms – were completely open spaces. Windows dominated all four walls, allowing natural light to flood the building at all hours of the day.

A courtyard and office operated as two buffer spaces between work and home. The former was a teaching space and included two dressing rooms with bathrooms for the students, but it served as an extension to the living room of the bungalow as well. A door to the office was located at the stair landing on the way up to the second studio, but a second door entered onto the open-air gallery and a third door opened into the kitchenette of the bungalow. This configuration did not allow students immediate access to Barnard's private quarters, establishing a discrete hierarchy between teacher and student, but it did allow her to move freely between work and home, again blurring the lines between public and private spaces.

The bungalow itself emphasized function over all else. A thirty-one foot deep living room, with a twenty-two foot wide stepped-up alcove comprised the entire ground floor of the bungalow. Such a large public space addressed the many social functions that go along with running a school. Three semi-private bedrooms occupied the second floor and, as mentioned, the office opened into a kitchenette, rather than a full kitchen, which

opened onto a small breakfast nook, rather than a formal dining room. Such informal spaces kept housekeeping to a minimum for this busy teacher who apparently did not maintain servants. The gallery, a deck, and the courtyard all served as exterior rooms, lending a greater sense of space without adding much housework. Once again, Morgan's client did not achieve complete separation between work and home, but the design for Grace Barnard's residence and work space created a flexible environment that allowed Barnard to retain complete control over her public and private life, even as she passed fluidly between them.

Little about the exterior strikes the passer-by as particularly noteworthy in the design of the home of Doctors Clara Williams and Elsa Mitchell. It looks like just another brown shingle bungalow in the Berkeley hills and adheres to the Arts and Crafts principles described earlier in the chapter. In accommodating the needs of these two women physicians, however, Morgan came up with one of her most innovative and modern domestic designs. More than any other house, this one is divided into three distinct spaces: public, private, and work. Immediately to the left of the front entrance lies the door to a small office. It is not clear if the two physicians ran their medical practice out of the house, but the office also has a complete bathroom, making unnecessary any distracting forays into the main house. In a way, the women never brought their work home or mixed business with pleasure.

Double doors lead from the front hallway to the first floor of the main house, which follows an open floor plan. Like Grace Barnard, Williams and Mitchell decided not to include a formal dining room or pantry, though they did include a full kitchen. The living room, with its exposed-beam ceiling, opens onto a small deck to the left and an

intimate dining alcove to the right. A swinging door leads directly to the kitchen rather than to a pantry that would act as a buffer between the social space of the dining room and the working space of the kitchen, a clear sign that these women had no servants and rejected the formalities of Victorian social life. Also missing from this house is an age-old status symbol: the open staircase. Instead, another door in the dining room hides the staircase, which is perfectly straight and leads downstairs to the bedroom floor.

The two physicians again requested some unusual features. Two of the four bedrooms contained a wash basin, while the other two – the master bedrooms – shared a basin. The toilet and bathtub, which everyone shared, resided in separate chambers. No extant documents explain this particular organization of space, but one can hypothesize. As doctors and busy, professional women, hygiene and efficiency ranked high on their list of concerns. By providing personal basins for guests and separating the parts of the bathroom, germs were less likely to commingle and nobody had to wait to be clean. A laundry room with a separate, outdoor entrance makes sense in this scenario as well. It kept the rest of the house free from the water and soil of dirty clothes, but made laundering facilities conveniently accessible. The shared basin between the two master bedrooms, which consequently renders those bedrooms only semi-private, presents a different scenario. This organization of space contradicts the strict separation of public and private spaces throughout the rest of the house. One can only speculate, but a request to share the most intimate spaces of the house suggests that Williams and Mitchell were romantic friends in the nineteenth-century fashion, or lesbians trying to create a space for

their relationship to thrive in a modern world that defined morally appropriate behavior between two women in increasingly limited terms.³⁹

Regardless of their sexual orientation, one final feature best underscores the particularly modern life these women embraced and the gender system they challenged: the garage. Early automobile ads played upon ideas of freedom, independence, and, above all, masculine virility. As Virginia Scharff has argued, though, women wanted to drive and, indeed, learned how to drive from the inception of the automobile's history; they embraced independence, freedom of mobility, strength, and speed as much as their male counterparts, signifying a new era of gender relations.⁴⁰ Still, a garage was a rare feature for any home in 1915, let alone a house shared by two professional women, and would have stood out in any neighborhood. With a garage adorning the front of their house, M.L. Williams and E.L. Mitchell announced that women might still need a home, but they could no longer be trapped within its walls.

Miss Morgan's Retreat

One of the defining characteristics of the twentieth-century woman is that she worked outside the home in an increasingly diverse range of professions. Julia Morgan visited Pacific Grove during the summer of 1908, and in 1913 she toured Yosemite and the Sierra with Ella Schooley, the first financial manager of the Asilomar Conference Center near Pacific Grove, which Morgan designed between 1913 and 1929. Morgan had to take some time to attend to personal tragedies as well, including the deaths of two brothers (Gardner in 1913 and Parmelee in 1918) and her parents (Bill died in 1924, Eliza

³⁹ See Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York, 1991), 1-61.

⁴⁰ Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York, 1991).

in 1930). Apart from these few episodes, work defined Morgan's life. By the mid-1930s however, she was ready to create more balance between work and leisure. Housing again facilitated this change.

In 1934, Morgan bought a Spanish style bungalow and seven parcels of land in the sparsely populated, woodsy hills of Monterey. She renovated the house and built a studio.⁴¹ Flora d'Ile North, the wife of Julia Morgan's nephew, Morgan North, remembered visiting the cottage numerous times. On many occasions during the 1930s and 1940s, North found herself trying to catch up to Aunt Julia who hiked expertly through the familiar hills and forests of Monterey. Afterwards, the two women would sit in the living room by the fire and talk into the wee hours of the night about all sorts of things.⁴² Only at the house in Monterey, surrounded by the simple elements of the sea, the mountains, and the forests of her beloved California, did Julia Morgan finally shed her professional persona and relax.

⁴¹ J.P. Pryor, Aetna Insurance Company, to JM, February 16, 1938. JMC-Cal Poly II/01/03/15; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Monterey, California, (1926), map# 34. For further details, see JM correspondence, JMC-Cal Poly II/01/03/10-17.

⁴² JMAHP, Vol. 2, pp. 234-36.

Chapter 5

“Women Who Build”: Women’s Clubs and Institutions, 1902-1932

The Ladies Evangelical Society of Oakland, established in 1877, was one of the earliest women’s organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. A few years later the organization changed its name to the Oakland Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). By 1908, this club still had fewer than 1000 members and rented or borrowed five decentralized buildings [Figure 59]: an administration building on Fourteenth Street, a cafeteria two blocks east on Fourteenth Street, the gym three blocks away at Oakland High School on Twelfth Street, a boarding house several blocks east on Franklin Street, and a second settlement building across town in East Oakland (address unclear). Grace Fisher, then president of the Oakland YWCA, enthusiastically led a campaign for a new, multiuse structure in the center of downtown. The club adopted a number of strategies to raise money for this goal, significantly raising its public profile in the process: A ten-day membership drive in September of 1910 doubled the membership; the club introduced lectures on suffrage to appeal to a wider audience; it held a citizens dinner in 1911; and launched a mass mailing to kick off the 1912 building campaign. The ten-day campaign raised \$213,600 from over 2500 people. On September 16, 1913, many specially invited guests, including leaders of the club, politicians, leading businessmen, and other prominent Oakland residents, attended the groundbreaking ceremonies at the Webster Street site. The event was covered by the local press.¹ Sixteen months later, the doors opened to the public [Figure 60].

¹ Michael G. Warning, “The Promotion and Construction of the Oakland YWCA Center: A Thesis,” Masters Thesis (SUNY Oneonta and its Cooperstown Programs, 1976), 2,4,13, 18, 22,25 (hereafter,

From the outset, the Oakland YWCA referred to its new building as a statement of modernity. The plan for the structure did not derive from women's fancies, but from thorough research of similar buildings throughout the country by "one of the most noted architects in our country," Julia Morgan, and two members of the Board. Its realization was a manifestation of years of planning and diligent hard work. In terms of amenities, modernity meant facilities for swimming, basketball, baseball, and dancing; educational facilities for domestic science and art, a reading room and club rooms; administrative offices, a cafeteria and lunchrooms; and residential accommodations. The women who patronized the Oakland YWCA would work, play, socialize, learn, and rest in one centralized space.

As historian Lee Simpson has recognized of many other women's organizations in Oakland and elsewhere in California, these women saw their activities as integral to the growth of the city as well.² Publicity articles emphasized the cost of the building, underscoring the property value it would add to the city, and with over 5000 people involved in its creation, the new building stood as a monument to community and civic pride rather than a single institution's selfish ambitions. The building activities of these women contributed to job creation and business growth in the city too. Construction of this three-story structure, touted as "one of the largest association buildings in the west," required a labor force of fifty men, and thirty contracts were let to various companies in the building trades. Members of the National Board of the YWCA in New York thought of Oakland as a place "that does not mean anything – has not any individuality." Indeed,

Warning, "Oakland YWCA"); "Fine Structure for Young Women," *Oakland Tribune*, September 17, 1913, p. II:1; Record Files, reel 164.

² See Lee Simpson, *Selling the City: Gender, Class, and the California Growth Machine, 1880-1940* (Stanford, 2004) (hereafter, Simpson, *Selling the City*).

the city lived in the shadow of San Francisco since its founding in the 1850s. As a “triumph of art,” the prominent Italian-Renaissance style YWCA building could help Oakland establish that identity.³ The location of the building in the center of downtown and its aesthetic style, which complimented the surrounding public architecture of government, financial, and commercial activity, further underscored that women defined themselves as integral to the growth of the city, not marginalized to the domestic sphere or as passive bystanders.

Elsa Black, President of the San Francisco Woman’s Athletic Club, coined a phrase for this kind of activity: “Women who build.” She further declared that her own club’s building stood as a testament to “courage, valor, determination, business ability, integrity, optimism...romance... [and] feminine foresight.”⁴ Julia Morgan did not design the Athletic Club, but during a period of thirty years she designed approximately eighty-eight structures for women’s organizations in California and beyond. Residential, recreational, and administrative buildings for local associations of the YWCA throughout California, as well as the YWCA’s Asilomar Conference Center near Monterey, California, account for many of these buildings. They also included cultural, social, and civic clubs for women; social, academic, residential, and recreational buildings for college and university women; primary schools and orphanages for boys and girls; and hospitals, sanitariums, and nursing residences. Historians have studied women’s clubs

³ Morgan toured new YWCA buildings in Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and St. Louis. She also studied the swimming pools at girls’ schools in Westover, Greenwich, and Boston. “Site for Y.W.C.A. Building Chosen,” *Oakland Tribune*, December 18, 1912, p. 6; “Y.W.C.A. Home to be Built Soon,” *ibid.*, January 21, 1913; “Y.W.C.A. Building Site is Selected,” *ibid.*, February 11, 1913, p. 14; “Y.W.C.A. to Have Fine New Home,” *ibid.*, March 16, 1913, p. 19; *lan for Y.W.C.A. Building Finished,* *ibid.*, September 4, 1913; “Y.W.C.A. New Building is Commenced,” *ibid.*, September 17, 1913, p. III; “Cornerstone Holds Dream,” *ibid.*, May 2, 1914, p. 19; “New Y.W.C.A. Home to be Opened Tomorrow,” *ibid.*, January 14, 1915, p. 5; Copy of letter from National Board of the YWCA, May 12, 1913, Record Files, reel 25; Simpson, *Selling the City*, 114-25.

⁴ Louis S. Lyons, ed., *Who’s Who Among the Women of California*, ed. (San Francisco, 1922), 47.

from a number of perspectives, including clubs as sites of female empowerment and gender consciousness; sites of class, ethnic, and racial conflict; or as mechanisms through which women generated power in numbers and, consequently, an influential voice in City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce.⁵ Few historians, however, have considered the importance of the buildings themselves as a tool for social change and political power. In his article on women's power and political style, Michael McGerr encouraged historians to recover alternative strategies to volunteerism that women employed in their paths to power during the early twentieth century. McGerr concentrated on ephemeral strategies that suffragists used – educating through pamphlets and the press; advertising and using automobiles and trains as advertising vehicles; putting on films, plays; or making pageantry out of parades and meetings – and which largely disappeared after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.⁶ As Elsa Black's comment suggests, building programs and the buildings themselves constituted another path to power and political style.

From the pre-fundraising publicity to the actual building campaigns, from months of construction to the opening-day ceremonies, building marked one of the most public activities of women in the Progressive Era. Although the era for building lasted only about thirty years, it was one of the least ephemeral activities of Progressive reformers. The building activities of California women's organizations, and specifically the YWCA, brought national recognition to them as well. California barely registered in the minutes

⁵ See, for example, Karen Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York, 1980); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York, 2000); Gayle Ann Gullett, *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement* (Urbana, 2000); and Lee Simpson, *Selling the City*.

⁶ Michael McGerr, "Political Style and Women's Power, 1930-1930," *Journal of American History* 77 (December 1990), 864-885.

of the National Board of the YWCA before 1911. Phoebe Hearst's offer to host the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast branch of the YWCA at her home in Pleasanton, California, brought the activities of California women to the attention of the national organization. Between 1911 and 1915, with the funding campaigns and construction of the Asilomar conference center in Pacific Grove, the new buildings in San Jose and Oakland, and the YWCA building at the Panama Pacific International Exhibition (PPIE) to be held in San Francisco in 1915 (the interior of which was also designed by Julia Morgan), California emerged from the sidelines of the National Board's agenda to center stage. Indeed, one member of the Board referred to the PPIE activities as "the largest single piece of work before our department."⁷ By 1932, when Julia Morgan's participation in this aspect of the women's movement essentially came to a close, she and her clients had left a permanent and material expression of their commitment to the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic development of their cities and the state, and, above all, to the role of women in realizing those goals.

Spectacular Fundraising, Fiscal Responsibility

While many of the organizations for whom Julia Morgan designed buildings had established histories in their respective towns and cities, the new buildings drew them into the public arena more prominently than ever before. For instance, building enterprises mobilized large numbers of women throughout the local communities, not just members of a given club or institution. Fundraising activities ranged from bake sales and rummage sales, to banquets and teas, mass mailings, membership drives, and selling stocks and bonds. The groups made sure their activities appeared in at least the social

⁷ See Minutes of the National Board, Record Files, reels 2-4; National Board Minutes October 1, 1913, Record Files, reel 2.

pages of local newspapers, lending the activities a certain air of festivity and spectacle.

As important as spectacle was to attracting positive public attention and monetary donations to the building campaigns, women's clubs had to engage in fiscal responsibility to sustain their institutions. Over time, methods for fund raising and money management grew more sophisticated, signaling the fiscal maturity of women's organizations.

Particularly during the first decade of the twentieth century, women's organizations secured money for their buildings through conventional modes of fund raising that they had employed for various causes since the 1870s. For example, in its initial announcement that the "ladies of Fabiola" planned to build a \$12,000 residence for nurses, the editor of the *Oakland Tribune*'s society pages added, "The directors of the association will probably plan a large social affair of some kind, in which case we will all go, and make it a success, and help them to pay for the home."⁸ In the following months the Fabiola women organized a rummage sale and holiday tea, combined with musicale and holiday sale.⁹ Just over two years later, the members of the King's Daughters Home for Incurables boasted a "large attendance of people" to an Easter reception and fundraising event. In this public solicitation for funds, the group also included a drawing of the proposed building to advertise the artistic contributions it would be adding to Oakland's landscape [Figure 61].¹⁰ Like the Fabiola women before them, the building committee experimented with a number of fund raising schemes, including convenient, pre-made money pouches that could be filled and mailed back, a request for "birthday gifts" in honor of the institution's tenth anniversary, and, finally, a simple and outright

⁸ "Fabiola Ladies to Meet," *Oakland Tribune*, October 15, 1904, p. 10.

⁹ "Rummage Sale for Fabiola," *ibid.*, November 5, 1904, p. 7.

¹⁰ "All Kinds of Oakland Realty in Great Demand," *ibid.*, April 7, 1906, p. 19.

request for donations.¹¹ The fund raising methods differed little for these two institutions from those used by the Ladies' Relief Society in Oakland in the 1870s: door-to-door canvassing for monthly subscriptions, bazaars, fairs, and other events, donations, lunches, dinners, dances, and entertainments.¹²

As detailed earlier, Grace Fisher and the women of the Oakland YWCA adopted some of these older fund raising methods too, but they also employed tactics that marked a shift toward more systematic, efficient, and modern modes of fund raising. Fisher deftly persuaded club members of the need for a new building by including shocking propaganda in the monthly newsletter. For example, in February of 1910, Fisher related to members that the association had new quarters for the Employment Bureau. "Do not gasp," Fisher continued, "when you hear it is located in the bathroom of the Administration Building.... The leather-covered table conceals the bath-tub."¹³ As Michael Warning has argued, periodic anecdotes like this made the new building seem inevitable to the membership. Persuading the people who would actually fund the construction and equipment of a new building, however, required greater sophistication. To that end, Fisher created a brochure for the city's leading political, business, and philanthropy leaders. She juxtaposed photographs of new YWCA facilities located in cities around the country with the cramped quarters of the association in Oakland, which both showcased Fisher's research and appealed directly to the civic pride and competitive spirit of potential donors.¹⁴

¹¹ "Directors of the Alameda County Kings' Daughters' Institution Raising Money for Project in Novel Manner," *ibid.*, March 28, 1907, p. 20; "Gift Day for the Incurable," *ibid.*, July 28, 1907, p. 27; "New Home for Incurables," *ibid.*, August 17, 1907, p. 15

¹² Marta Ruth Gutman, "On the Ground in Oakland: Women and Institution Building in an Industrial City," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000), 109-10, 116.

¹³ "Notes," *The Messenger* 2 (February 1910), 3.

¹⁴ Warning, "Oakland YWCA," 23.

In 1929, organizers of the building campaigns for a new residence in San Francisco as well as new headquarters for the Japanese and Chinese local associations adopted a new arsenal of aggressive fundraising tactics and a higher degree of spectacle. During the two weeks preceding the commencement of this funding drive, the San Francisco YWCA published ten articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* detailing the organization's activities and goals. These articles told the reading public that the organization drew support from a wide variety of people and institutions. The numerous churches of all denominations that declared their support for the new building underscored the Christian origins of the organization and lent an air of moral gravity to the otherwise brazenly capitalistic efforts at property accumulation and building construction. Lest anyone underestimate the capacity for a bunch of volunteer women to raise over \$400,000 in two weeks, the YWCA revealed its organizational strategy: Five divisions of forty-four women, officered by a colonel, five majors, twenty-four captains, and ten lieutenants would soon infiltrate the club rooms and luncheons of various organizations until the mission was completed. If San Franciscans did not witness this dedicated army of 500 women carry out their duties, they would see the posters hanging throughout the city and hear campaign speeches on the radio.

Photographs of club leaders and ordinary members figured prominently in these articles as well. They served several functions: Quite simply, they put faces to names and lent to the funding drive a degree of transparency. Photographs of YWCA leaders [Figure 63] showed women with mink stoles or fur-lined coats and white gloves standing gracefully on a staircase, while ordinary members [Figure 64] played the piano and banjo, danced and sang, and donned high heels and short-sleeve dresses that exposed the

knee. All the women wore bobbed hair, but the leaders only turned up the corners of their mouths on their unpainted faces – if they smiled at all – while the young members flashed pearly white smiles that were framed by painted lips. The pedigree and stoicism of the YWCA leaders appealed to potential donors who could be sure that their money would put to good use, while the sexualized and exuberant nature of the young YWCA residents communicated to potential new members that this was not the YWCA of their mothers and grandmothers. Rather than protect the moral virtue of young women from the vices of the city, the modern YWCA facilitated the extension of women into the workplace by providing “Adequate Housing for Business Girls” where they could socialize and have fun.¹⁵

All of the organizations mentioned thus far raised significant funds for their buildings and were able to secure mortgage loans to cover the rest of the costs. In contrast, local banks refused to grant a large enough loan to the San Pedro YWCA when it planned to expand its buildings and activities in 1926 because, a National Board representative reported, “there is little education of the community on giving to the Association.” The original building had been funded in 1918 through the National Board’s War Work Council funds rather than a building campaign and its accompanying publicity machine. This rendered the building in the eyes of banks as a gift, not a testament to the financial solvency of the institution or a manifestation of the important

¹⁵ “Speakers Ready for Y.W.C.A. \$410,000 Building Campaign,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 14, 1929, p. 13; Y.W.C.A. Housing Campaign Committee to Give Report,” *ibid.*, September 17, 1929, p. 11; “Churches Pledge Support to Y.W.C.A. Building Fund,” *ibid.*, September 18, 1929, p. 5; “Clubs to Aid Y.W. Drive,” *ibid.*, September 19, 1929, p. 12; “Y.W.C.A. Fund Drive to Have Help of 500,” *ibid.*, September 23, 1929, p. 15; “Workers in Y.W.C.W. Drive Meet Today,” *ibid.*, September 24, 1929, p. 14; “Y.W.C.A. Building Fund Workers Ready for Campaign,” *ibid.*, September 25, 1929, p. 8; “Pastors from Pulpits Will Urge Aid for Building Fund,” *ibid.*, September 26, 1929, p. 13; “Active Workers in Y.W.C.A. Building Fund Drive,” *ibid.*, September 29, 1929, p. 10S; “Y.W.C.A. Drive Will Provide Low Rent for Business Girl,” *ibid.*, September 20, 1929, p. 4.

contribution women's work made to the city.¹⁶ Efforts to educate the public, combined with a bit of pageantry, a lot of ambition, and persuasive use of booster rhetoric and the media, raised the public profile of women's activities and gave them greater purchase to invest in the city and expand their reform efforts. These public activities in relationship to building were not only beneficial to the goals of the women's movement, but essential in achieving them.

From buying the property to designing the building, from accumulating funds for building the structure to securing a budget to maintain the building and the people who worked there, the language of the Berkeley Women's City Club [Figures 67-71] signaled that capitalist education among women's clubs had reached maturity. Financial considerations fueled the mission of the City Club from the outset. Mrs. Olga Beebe, Chief Accountant of the American Trust Company in Berkeley, witnessed the struggles of various women's clubs to survive. Collecting funds for the construction of club houses had been one issue that many organizations skillfully surmounted, but taxes, upkeep, service, repairs, and incidental expenses created constant financial difficulties that membership dues alone could not remedy. As club buildings proliferated, moreover, competition increased between clubs, which further taxed financial resources. The buildings that had brought so much attention to the activities of women and created the geographical and special landscape for modern womanhood to flourish had become cash drains; that model of growth had become largely unfeasible. In response to these developments, Beebe devised a plan in 1925 for a modern women's club that would provide facilities for numerous individual clubs, housing for single women, and social, cultural, recreational, and retail spaces for women. The new club would be "financed and

¹⁶ San Pedro, CA, history. Record Files, reel 165.

operated on a sound business basis,” and with fiscal matters being managed by professional specialists, individual clubs would once again be able to concentrate on their intended interests.¹⁷

The founders of the Berkeley Women’s City Club further argued that the new organization would be an asset to the city’s business community. For years, they noted, local business leaders had been trying to attract women to shop locally, but with no luncheon site located conveniently near a shopping district, women shopped elsewhere. The new building would not only entice Berkeley women to shop locally, but would attract many more women from outside Berkeley to shop in the city as well. Women would not be passive consumers either. “The modern woman will not be coerced or persuaded by slogans,” a contributor to the club’s newsletter declared. “She demands facilities commensurate with progress.”¹⁸ Businesses would respond to rather than merely exploit women’s needs, desires, and expectations. By providing rental spaces of its own, moreover, the club would foster the growth of women’s businesses. The new club would also create a demand for more consumer products, including food, clothing, and local housing for employees. Members of the Berkeley Women’s City Club understood their institution’s existence within a complex economic system, not just as a single, self-sustaining unit.

Asilomar, which Julia Morgan designed for the YWCA between 1912 and 1929, marked one of the most ambitious land development efforts of women in California, and demanded constant financial attention. The Pacific Improvement Company, a holding company founded in 1869 by the “Big Four” owners of the Southern Pacific Railroad

¹⁷ “A Woman’s Club,” *Berkeley Women’s City Club Bulletin* 1 (August 1927), 1; “Service to Women’s Clubs,” *ibid.*, 3-4; “Growth,” *ibid.*, 2 (September 1927), 1; “History,” *ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁸ “An Asset to Business,” *ibid.*, 1 (August 1927), 2.

(Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins), owned the land that would become Asilomar. The sole purpose of the company was to manage the extensive landholdings of the Southern Pacific and develop the land to increase ridership on the trains. The most famous and successful experiment to that end during the nineteenth century was the construction of the luxurious Hotel Del Monte in Monterey, which transformed the quiet fishing village into a popular seaside resort.¹⁹ In 1913 the Pacific Improvement Company agreed to offer the National Board of the YWCA between twenty and thirty-five acres of land at Moss Beach, near the Christian resort town of Pacific Grove, and just south of Monterey. The YWCA would pay one dollar per acre per year, with the stipulation that \$20-35,000 worth of capital improvements (dependent on the amount of land) be made over the course of ten years. If the YWCA accomplished this feat, it would then own the deed to the land.²⁰ While the Pacific Improvement Company did not demand significant outlay, and though at the time the company was interested in selling off significant acres of property, which was advantageous to the YWCA, it was not in the business of charity. According to Russell Quacchia's history of the conference center, the Pacific Improvement Company figured that the development of Asilomar would potentially quadruple the property value for the company's Monterey area landholdings and entice further development.²¹ The Pacific Improvement Company's offer challenged the YWCA to engage in property development on an unprecedented scale for women.

¹⁹ Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley, 2005), 116-26 (hereafter, Orsi, *Sunset Limited*).

Russell Quacchia, *Julia Morgan, Architect, and the Creation of the Asilomar Conference Grounds* (Carmel, 2005), 125-27 (hereafter, Quacchia, *Asilomar*).

²⁰ Minutes, National Board of the YWCA, May 29, 1912, pp. 21-22; October 2, 1912, p. 16. Record Files, reel 25.

²¹ Quacchia, *Asilomar*, 127.

The National Board appointed Ella Schooley to manage the financial affairs for the new conference site and the concurrent work for the Panama Pacific International Exposition to be held in San Francisco in 1915. She had owned a large business in Kansas City, Missouri, before serving as general secretary of the St. Louis YWCA association. During her tenure in that position, Schooley had orchestrated the funding drives and worked closely with the architect in the erection of a \$500,000 building.²² At first, Schooley addressed the immediate task of cobbling together enough resources to see the Asilomar conference grounds ready enough for an August 1913 opening date. To this end, Phoebe Hearst donated all moveable parts from the conference held the Hacienda in 1912. Schooley also solicited donations from some of the wealthiest and powerful business leaders of Southern California, including Edward L. Doheney, a miner who claimed his fortune when he discovered oil in Los Angeles in 1892. In addition, Schooley hatched a number of creative schemes to raise money and minimize costs. For example, she requested discarded silverware and dishes from the Southern Pacific, Western Pacific, and Santa Fe Railroads, and organized trips for potential donors to visit the grounds and experience for themselves the natural beauty of the site and aesthetic beauty of Morgan's designs.²³

Schooley quickly realized that YWCA activities alone would not generate enough income to make the conference center a self-sustaining institution nor enable the organization to invest in further capital improvements, as stipulated by the contract with the Pacific Improvement Company. She organized visits of diverse women's organizations to visit the grounds in the hopes of attracting their events, and she launched

²² Harriet Taylor to Phoebe Hearst (hereafter, PH), October 7, 1912. GPAH; minutes, February 5, 1913, Record Files, reel.

²³ HS to PH, May 12, 1913, and July 16, 1913. GPAH, 50:24.

a campaign to advertise the grounds as a vacation camp for women. Schooley also distributed 1000 posters to Southern Pacific Railroad depots, information bureaus, YWCA association buildings, and churches; and she distributed 3000 informational booklets to libraries, stores, Sunday schools, and women's clubs throughout the state.²⁴ The Pacific Coast Field Committee also organized an advertising campaign to increase the exposure of the new conference grounds and persuade other organizations to rent the facilities. In 1917, for instance, local papers for every city represented at the annual summer conference were encouraged to publish stories related to the dedication of Hearst and Dodge Halls, the first two buildings to be completed at the site (They were named after the most important benefactors to the organization, Phoebe Hearst and Grace H. Dodge, who sat on the national board and donated the funds for the YWCA building at the Panama Pacific International Exposition). Schooley also encouraged the female employees, who were usually college girls, to be creative and industrious in securing their own funds for special amenities. The employees accepted Schooley's challenge: during the summer of 1916 the young women shined shoes, took in laundry, and mended clothing to raise money for a piano for their living room.²⁵

As the project progressed, Schooley managed to reign in the financial chaos. Several factors helped her efforts. Grace Dodge donated \$25,000 toward the San Francisco Exposition activities, which allowed Schooley to devote more attention to the monumental task of raising funds for the conference site. In addition, the Board decided that all proceeds from the YWCA building at PPIE would go towards paying off

²⁴ Ella Schooley (hereafter, ES) to PH, April 23, 1914. GPAH, 50:24; Pacific Coast Field Committee Minutes, May 25, 1914, GPAH, 51:6.

²⁵ Chairman Conference Grounds Committee to Mrs. F.E. Shine, President YWCA, Bisbee, AZ, March 14, 1917, GPAH, 50:21.; ES to PH, July 20, 1916, ibid., 50:24.

expenses and establishing an endowment for the development of Asilomar. The cafeteria, in particular, proved to be a phenomenal success for the YWCA; on the first day alone, it served over 2500 lunches.²⁶ By 1918 Schooley could report to Phoebe Hearst over \$5000 in profit; 93 percent of the conference center's revenues came from room and board that year, indicating how well known and popular the site had become in just five years. Indeed, so solid were the conference center's finances that the National Board decided to purchase an additional twenty acres.²⁷

Morgan's architecture was integral to the continuing success of Asilomar. With the first building alone, Julia Morgan and the YWCA were making an indelible mark on the landscape. According to Ella Schooley, the builder for the administration building at Asilomar remarked that he had seen nothing like it in the area. Schooley then asked if it compared favorably with the recently completed Pebble Beach Lodge, a luxury hotel located near Carmel, California, to which the builder replied, "It has it skinned a mile."²⁸ Morgan combined modern technology with the Arts and Crafts aesthetic to create this social hall. Locally found river rock covered the reinforced concrete foundation, exterior walls, and pylons. Upon entering the building one faced an enormous stone fireplace with built-in benches on either side. This created an intimate atmosphere in an otherwise large space. Exposed redwood beam trusses and wood paneling further added to the warmth of the space, while the series of windows along the front and rear walls of the building united visitors with their natural surroundings. Natural light illuminated the interior, and as visitors gazed through the windows to the cypress trees, sand dunes, hills, and ocean,

²⁶ Minutes for meeting of the National Board, April 7, 1915, p. 17, and May 26, 1915, pp. 9-10. Record Files, reel 2.

²⁷ ES to PH, April 1, 1918. GPAH, 50:24; Minutes for meeting of the National Board of the YWCA, April 3, 1918, Record Files, reel 2.

²⁸ ES to PH, May 19, 1913. GPAH, 50:24.

the architecture receded into the background. A writer for the *Epworth Herald* waxed poetic about Asilomar in 1916 when only the Phoebe Hearst Social Hall, Grace Dodge Chapel [Figures 65 & 66], and ten tent houses had been completed:

Imagine, first, a shore where ageless rocks are ceaselessly smitten by the surge of the Pacific, and in between the rock-reaches a stretch of snowy sand.

Then back a little from the high water line, a forest of gnarled, twisted cedars, brow-beated but undiscouraged by the winds from the sea; san dunes, cedar crowned; and in the midst of the woods, a camp.

Now, there are camps and camps. This one would satisfy alike John Burroughs and John Ruskin; Thoreau and Roosevelt would be equally at home here.

It is the wilderness plus running water and decent beds and three meals a day.

Not that alone; the camp has been planned by an artist. It has a noble service building a hundred and fifty feet long, whose chief glory is a fireplace that takes six-foot logs without trying. And a nobler chapel, whose altar screen is a crystal window framing a picture of cedars and sea-rocks and the tossing ocean.

Fill in this outline with paths and playgrounds, with ten houses and a visitors' lodge, with the noise of many waters and sunlight chasing the mists across the dunes, with two or three hundred happy youngsters (if during a conference) studying and playing and eating and sleeping for their very lives; and that's Asilomar.²⁹

Conferences alone could not keep the coffers full for further development and maintenance, so by the 1920s the YWCA ran the site as a tourist resort. During this period a writer for the *Los Angeles Times* described Asilomar as "ideal for whoever is looking for a pot or rest and recreation, sharing alike the advantages of sea and forest, of beach and pines." He noted the natural beauty of the location, but credited the equipment – Morgan's twenty-five buildings and recreational facilities, which included a tennis court, baseball diamond, basketball and volleyball courts, a swimming pool, and croquet grounds – with creating the ideal vacation spot. The variety of sleeping accommodations further added to Asilomar's popularity. Tent houses were rustic and cheap, while the steam-heated Scripps Lodge appealed to less rugged types who could afford more luxurious accommodations. The many fireplaces, meanwhile, created cozy gathering

²⁹ "Asilomar Unpictured," *The Epworth Herald* [1916], enclosed in letter from ES to GPAH, July 20, 1916, GPAH, 50:24.

spaces for all. When David and Paulson Visel assumed management of the site in the 1930s they were awed by its beauty, both natural and built.³⁰

A Working Relationship

Women's organizations did not have to hire Julia Morgan. Particularly by the 1920s, California organizations could choose from a crop of women architects who had training, experience, respect, and, for those clubs outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, were located more conveniently. Marjorie Williams, director of the Hollywood Studio Club, articulated her building committee's reservations about hiring Julia Morgan: her physical distance from Hollywood, a reputation for underestimating expenses, and "occasional impracticability" in her designs.³¹ Williams had good reason to cite these potential problems. The Morgan firm's first estimate of \$140-145,000 ballooned to \$166,000 by the time of completion. In addition, neither the members of the building committee in Hollywood nor the women of the National Board in New York, who owned the property and had final say on this project, liked the first plans Morgan drew. Elevations for the original design show a Mediterranean style building that grew progressively taller from the one-story arched entrance to the three-story rear wing. An open loggia ran the length of the entire street front façade of the second story, while an open courtyard occupied the center of the building and two towers stood at either end of the third story. The final building retained the arched entryway, courtyard, and open loggia, but followed a more Italianate style and symmetrical plan. Marjorie Williams

³⁰ "Resort Notes," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1924, p. F11; "Asilomar Lodges Popular Among Nature Lovers," *ibid.*, June 26, 1929, p. A7. "Along El Camino Real," *ibid.*, August 27, 1936, p. 10.

³¹ Marjorie Williams to Katherine Scott, April 17, 1923. Record Files, reel 163.

described the final design as more beautiful, more conducive to centralizing administrative functions, and overall better suited to club activities.³²

Williams not specify those factors that made Morgan the most desirable choice for the Hollywood Studio Club, despite her shortcomings, but one can elicit some of them from remarks made throughout the project. As was her style, Morgan demonstrated respect for her clients' particular needs. She visited southern California on numerous occasions and produced entirely new plans within three months and without complaint. She considered the residents' needs too, not just those of the clients. For example, in designing a slightly larger dining room than necessary, Morgan explained, she wanted to "allow for the kind of entertainment [the residents] have to give in connection with the moving picture industry." The National Board also expressed its hearty approval in the Studio Club's decision to hire Julia Morgan because the architect knew California and the ideals of the YWCA. Put another way, the National Board knew Morgan because she had worked with the organization for nearly fifteen years, since the Hacienda conference in 1912, which would facilitate working relations between Hollywood, New York, and San Francisco.³³

Over the years, both the National Board and the California associations had witnessed Morgan's consistent ability to mitigate tensions between rival parties. Asilomar, for example, was built just as tensions between San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California leaders of the YWCA were reaching a peak. Phoebe Hearst had played a particularly pivotal role in shoring up power for Bay Area women since the

³² Marjorie Williams to Mary Sims, November 25, 1924; Auditor's report, March 27, 1926. Record Files, reel 163.

³³ Williams to Sims, May 26, 1923, September 6, 1924, and November 25, 1924; JM to Miss Farrar, November 28, 1924. Record Files, reel 163.

1890s. Securing the Capitola Hotel near Santa Cruz for the annual West Coast Conference was her doing. Southern California's influence in the organization, however, grew significantly during the first decade of the twentieth century, marked by the opening of a large residential building in 1908. The National Board of the YWCA, headquartered in New York City, was organized in 1906 to facilitate the growth of local associations nationwide and establish national standards for the organization. Field Committees, or regional headquarters, were set up between 1909 and 1912. Notably, Los Angeles served as the headquarters for the Pacific Coast Field Committee, not San Francisco.³⁴ With the loss of the hotel in Capitola, the new conference site could easily have been located closer to Southern California, undercutting the leading influence of Bay Area women. Phoebe Hearst did not let this happen. Instead, she volunteered to host the 1912 meeting. Harriet Taylor, an executive secretary of the National Board, assured Hearst that she and everyone in New York was "inexpressibly appreciative" of Hearst's generosity and that it "would mean more to the association work on the pacific Coast than anything."³⁵

Hearst's offer also came with two stipulations that directly undermined the influence of Southern California associations: the conference would have to be held in May rather than the usual August date, and securing a permanent site for a Pacific Coast conference center must be the primary item on the conference agenda. The former stipulation undermined Southern California representation at the conference. One of the primary functions of these conferences was to train university women in all aspects of the YWCA's work, so university women comprised the majority of attendees. Many colleges

³⁴ Regina Bannan, "Management by Women: The First Twenty-five Years of the YWCA National Board, 1906-1931," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1994), 43-44, 157-58 (hereafter, Bannan, "Management by Women").

³⁵ Harriet Taylor to PH, August 16, 1911. GPAH, 50:21.

and universities would still be in session during May, however, rendering it impossible for Southern California associations to send full delegations and likely that Bay Area universities would send extra representatives.³⁶ Phoebe Hearst's undeniable generosity to the organization also insured that she would play an influential role in the creation of a new conference center.

By 1914 regional factions within the Pacific Coast Field Committee were affecting the ability of the organization to communicate effectively and achieve collectively desired goals. The National Board voted to transfer the headquarters of the Pacific Coast Field Committee from Los Angeles to San Francisco in January of 1913. Eight reasons justified this decision, including a San Jose building campaign, the conference grounds, and PPIE. Plans for the building in Oakland soon followed.³⁷ While the recommendation came from the Pacific Coast Field Committee, with representative from all parts of the state, Angelinos soon grew disdainful of the Bay Area's leadership role. After all, the Los Angeles association alone counted nearly six thousand members, while the San Francisco and Oakland associations combined counted just over three thousand members. As a percentage of YWCA members per capita, Los Angeles outpaced Oakland two to one, and San Francisco five to one. National Board members further noted that only four percent of San Francisco's population belonged to churches. For every one man who belonged to a church there existed two saloon keepers. In debates about where to hold the 1915 annual national meeting of the YWCA, some members of the National Board argued that the secular and sinful nature of San Francisco rendered it a lost cause and waste of time; others deemed it the site of highest priority for

³⁶ HT to PH, October 27, 1911; March 2, 1912. GPAH, 50:21.

³⁷ Minutes of the National Board of the YWCA, February 5, 1913, Record Files, reel 3.

moral regeneration. The National Board recognized the incongruity between power and numbers. Cognizant of the tensions regional rivalries were creating, the Board tried to appease Southern California women by voting to hold the annual conference in Los Angeles in 1915.³⁸

This was the state of affairs when Julia Morgan was hired to design Asilomar. Hiring Morgan at this time could have fueled tensions further, but her architecture fostered the community spirit of the YWCA instead. Russell Quacchia has produced a detailed description of the architecture at Asilomar. A few of his observations deserve further examination within the context of rivalries within the state women's organization. The Lodge, completed in 1918, and the Scripps Lodge Annex, completed in 1927, reflect the hierarchy that existed within the institution. Designed for the executive and administrative leaders of the organization, these buildings include formal features like balconies, galleries, open stairways, and carpet. Stone columns at the entry porches further connote the stature of the people who reside inside the buildings. Undermining the formalities of these buildings, however, are the pathways that lead to them, for they approach at an angle, rather than head-on, which created a more informal effect. Indeed, nature, far more than social convention, dictated Morgan's design. Not only did she choose the rustic aesthetic of the Arts and Crafts style, but also positioned the buildings according to the natural contours of the land, grading building sites only enough to achieve structural stability. By finding her aesthetic inspiration in the California landscape and using local materials whenever possible, Morgan expressed a love for the state rather than a bias towards any region. Throughout the camp grounds Morgan also created spaces that facilitated community rather than exacerbate division – in the living

³⁸ Copy of general letter, May 12, 1913, Record Files, reel 3.

rooms of the lodges and in the open plans of the dining hall, assembly hall, church, and the auditorium. The many fireplaces made for natural gathering points as well. All of these factors contributed to Morgan's reputation for creating spaces that accommodated the mission of YWCA to encourage inter-communal fellowship for the sake of all women.³⁹

A contracting debacle during the Vallejo YWCA project of 1920 illustrates Morgan's ability to mediate conflict on much more practical grounds too. Miscommunication between Morgan and a board member of the local association resulted in the latter awarding the building contract to a company that she preferred for purely personal reasons. A Miss Parker gave the specifications for the YWCA building to a Mr. Burlingame, who took them with the understanding that he was being awarded the contract. Upon learning of this development, Morgan offered Burlingame the opportunity to make a competitive bid, which he refused to do. In the meantime, Morgan, who actually had the sole authority to review bids and award contracts, wanted to award the contract to a firm called Taylor and Jackson. She felt she could fairly judge the work of this firm because they had contributed to the original plans for the YWCA and were currently building some emergency housing in Vallejo. More importantly, they presented the lowest bid. Burlingame complained of unfair treatment, so Morgan suggested the association pay him for two days work and express the deepest apologies for the inconvenience. This solution apparently appeased all concerned parties.⁴⁰ Morgan's ability to devise a solution to this awkward situation demonstrated a level of professional tact that came only with experience. This episode also underscores how Morgan educated

³⁹ See Quacchia, *Asilomar*.

⁴⁰ Grace Southwick to Mrs. Kellock, President, War Work Council, February 6, 1920. Record Files, reel 163.

herself about potential builders and contractors and, more importantly, that she knew how to maintain good working relations with them.

Still other factors increased the likelihood that Julia Morgan would receive building contracts over other qualified women architects in the state. She could not easily control the fluctuating cost of labor and supplies, but she did come up with creative solutions to minimize debt expenditure. Morgan biographers usually cite St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley as exemplary in this regard. Generally considered a model of Arts and Crafts architecture, it demonstrates Morgan's ability to create beautiful spaces with the utmost economy by allowing structural elements to double as decorative features. Other examples abound. For instance, the earthquake of 1906 struck just eleven days after the Kings Daughters Home for Incurables published plans for a new building and solicited the public for funds. The earthquake rendered the old building uninhabitable and increased the number of patients – who had to be housed in tents – which underscored the need to build a new structure. The earthquake also slowed fundraising efforts and inflated the cost of building supplies and labor. Morgan's plan for a massive three-storey brick and concrete structure was now both too expensive to build and potentially unsafe in the event of another major earthquake [Figure 61]. Moreover, the organization had only been able to raise \$25,000 of the initial \$40,000 estimate. With these limitations in mind, Morgan suggested that the building committee abandon the original design for a new one that called for multiple Mediterranean style, wood frame buildings with brick facades and terra cotta ornamentation [Figure 62]. They would be organized around a central courtyard, which would allow natural light to filter into every room of the buildings and add to the aesthetic effect of the design. Most importantly, the

overall plan for the Home for the Incurables allowed for incremental growth with less risk of incurring debt.⁴¹

From her earliest years in the profession, Morgan also lent star power and continuity to the building enterprises, which again increased public exposure and gave them better leverage to raise funds. The first public notice for a nurses' residence to be built adjacent to Fabiola Hospital, in Oakland, for instance, noted that "that talented architect, Julia Morgan," had been hired. A few months later they again remarked upon "that rising young architect, whose ability is so universally acknowledged."⁴² Morgan literally mingled with the stars during the ground breaking ceremonies for the Hollywood Studio Club and was introduced by the president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America to the politicians, clubwomen, and actors who attended the event.⁴³ Lyla Mills expressed most explicitly the advantages of hiring Morgan. In her public explanation behind the Foothill Study Club's desire to build a new clubhouse in Saratoga, twelve miles west of San Jose, the club president stated, "The purpose of the organization is to further educational and social and civic work of the community....Hoping to provide a structure that will be a distinct addition to the attractions of Saratoga we have engaged a well known woman architect, Miss Julia Morgan of San Francisco."⁴⁴ As with so many clubs and organization founded and run by and, largely, for women during this period, the women of Saratoga understood that the

⁴¹ "All Kinds of Oakland Realty in Great Demand," *Oakland Tribune*, April 7, 1906; "To Build Home for Incurable Patients," ibid., March 28, 1907; "Gift Day for the Incurables," ibid., July 28, 1907, p. 27; "New Home for Incurables," ibid., August 17, 1907, p. 15; "Report Shows Splendid Work Among Incurables," ibid., September 28, 1907, p. 20.

⁴² "Fabiola Ladies to Meet," ibid., October 15, 1904, p. 10; "Dedication of Nurses Home," ibid., April 29, 1905, p. 16-17.

⁴³ "Break Ground for \$150,000 Club Building," *Hollywood News*, June 15, 1925; "Stars Gather as Clubhouse Work Starts," *L.A. Express*, June 15, 1925. Record Files, reel 163.

⁴⁴ "Foothill Club Plans New Home," *Oakland Tribune*, June 4, 1915, p. 6.

construction of their building marked an important phase in the contributions they made to the physical landscape and growth of the community. Though women would never develop the built environment on the same scale as men, they made sure their contributions were invested with quality craftsmanship and symbolic meaning. Morgan's gender, reputation, fame, and credentials fulfilled this need.

Just as these organizations took some risk in hiring Julia Morgan, so did Julia Morgan take risks in accepting commissions for women's organizations. Certain characteristics of many women's organizations precluded them from ever developing a secure source of revenue and adequate funds for capital improvements. These variables included a commitment to non-profit status; finding women to perform all duties when more highly trained and better connected men could execute a job more cheaply and efficiently; a desire to protect women's jobs rather than cut staff to balance the budget; and a reluctance to surrender direct control of finance and management. However creative and sophisticated women's organizations tried to be in raising revenue, they found themselves dependent upon the fortunes of husbands and donations of individual philanthropists. In her study of the management style of the National Board of the YWCA, one of the largest and wealthiest women's organizations in the country, Regina Bannan found that only 20-30 percent of revenue came from conventions, training programs, residence fees, publications, and cafeteria operations. The organization relied on contributions, endowments, and grants to fill out the rest of its budget, and increasingly found itself running a deficit.⁴⁵

With this kind of fiscal uncertainty affecting many women's organizations, Morgan found herself executing plans without any guaranteed source of payment, losing

⁴⁵ Bannan, "Management by Women," 8, 27-29, 152-78, 206-60.

commissions to a loss of funds, and taking other commissions at a financial loss to her business. For example, funding for a gymnasium that Morgan was hired to design for the Mills campus in 1906 disappeared because the donor's sons "objected to their mother's using so much money for this purpose."⁴⁶ The project materialized three years later, but only after Susan Mills sold some of her own stock in Fresno real estate.⁴⁷ Similarly, the Friday Morning Club in Los Angeles commissioned Morgan to design a clubhouse for them and struggled to raise money for it. When the women learned that they could save money by purchasing stock in the building they already rented, however, they abandoned the building project and Morgan lost the commission.⁴⁸ In 1918 the National Board of the YWCA donated \$20,000 from its War Work Council funds to build a recreation center in Vallejo. The local association, however, proved inept at finances. It approved plans for a building that would cost \$24,655 and did not organize a building campaign, leaving it short of funds. To keep the commission, Morgan pared down the building as much as she could, charged a 6% commission rather than the typical 8% for this type of project, and agreed to base that commission on the \$20,000 budget rather than the actual cost of the building. After all of these negotiations, the bill for Morgan's commission fees "came as a total surprise" to the Vallejo chapter. Six months later the Pacific Field Committee paid the bill.⁴⁹ In other cases, Morgan donated her labor.

⁴⁶ Susan Mills to Board of Trustees, January 29, 1906, CSM.

⁴⁷ Buildings history, MCA.

⁴⁸ Exactly how Morgan became involved with the Friday Morning Club women is not clear, but appears to be related to her University of California connections. Club members were involved with the building of Girton Hall, a women student's social hall that Morgan designed for Berkeley in 1911. Mrs. Henry Christian Crowther, *Highlights of the Friday Morning Club* (Los Angeles, 1939), 28, 31-32.

⁴⁹ Abby A. Rockefeller, Chairman of Housing Committee War Work Council of the National Board to Grace Southwick, December 9, 1918; Julia Morgan to National Board of the YWCA, March 1, 1920; Mrs. J.W. Thomas to Miss Grace Ruth Southwick, April 25, 1920; Mrs. Parker to Miss Smith, May 17, 1920; Grace Southwick to Rose Kellock, July 14, 1920; and Mrs. Rose S. Kellock to Miss Grace Ruth Southwick, July 26, 1920. Record Files, reel 166.

Still, Morgan continued to accept these commissions – and even fought for them. She had her reasons. Morgan once advised Walter Steilberg not to turn down a job “because you think it’s beneath you, because you think you want to do something larger.” During the early years of her own career, Morgan continued, Grace Fisher had commissioned her to design “one of the smallest jobs I ever had.” Later that woman became chairman of the Oakland YWCA, “and from that has come all these fine big jobs we have.” Steilberg attributed Morgan’s philosophy to a general sense of decency in showing clients equal respect.⁵⁰ The advice also underscores Morgan’s business instincts and how well she understood the women’s network, how it functioned, and her place in it. As noted before, any one client quickly linked Morgan to dozens of others [Figure 35].

Though she never admitted as much, Morgan had another motivation for accepting commissions for women’s groups: a commitment to furthering the liberalization of opportunities for women outside the home. Her gender consciousness had developed along two lines: As she sat in university lecture halls, often the lone woman in sea of men, she could not help but note that she was an anomaly, undermining the unspoken division of academic courses for men and women. At the same time, the organized activities of women students to develop a women’s culture and her membership in a sorority exposed Morgan to the empowering bonds of collective action and feminine community. More strident gender discrimination and regular interaction with feminist activists at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts politicized that consciousness, while her encounters with clients and colleagues during the early years of her professional career confirmed that gender would always somehow define her. Morgan’s business

⁵⁰ JMAHP Vol. 2, pp. 53, 83.

strategies and professional style marked efforts to downplay gender and avoid being typecast as a “woman architect,” but she was quietly committed to celebrating women’s achievements and working to liberate them further from the cultural constraints of so-called womanhood.

Miss Morgan’s Politics and Some Forward Thinking

While Julia Morgan respected her clients’ wishes, she did not passively translate their needs and desires into four dimensional spaces. Moreover, while Morgan worked directly and almost exclusively with privileged white women as she designed these buildings – and particularly the YWCAs – she had to keep in mind the diversity of the young women who would patronize them. The Pasadena YWCA was anomalous, in that the city was largely residential, rich, and conservative; still, residents persuaded the National Board that Pasadena needed a boarding house and recreational facilities for its young women.⁵¹ In contrast, most hostess houses built during World War I served young working women with newly found jobs near isolated military posts, or as spaces for wives and mothers to meet their husbands and sons during breaks in their military service. Morgan designed two official Hostess Houses, including Camp Fremont in Menlo Park and Camp Kearny in Linda Vista (near San Diego).⁵² The Vallejo YWCA,

⁵¹ Excerpt from Miss Sylla, July 1926, in Timeline for Pasadena YWCA; Olga K. Ihlseing, “Study of Pasadena, October 22, 1920–November 5, 1920,” pp. 17–18. Record Files, reel 164.

⁵² The Berkeley, Vallejo, and San Pedro YWCAs were also funded through donations from the War Work Council. For more on Hostess Houses see individual files in the Records of the National Board of the YWCA, particularly reels 153 and 165. See also Raymond B. Fosdick, “The Commission on Training Camp Activities,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York*, Vol. 7, Economic Conditions of Winning the War (February 1918), 163–70; Mary Alden Hopkins, “Conserving Woman Power in War Time,” *Journal of Home Economics* 10 (April 1918): 171–73; “Housing Girls for War Work,” *Architecture* 37 (May 1918): 137–39; Fosdick, “The War and Navy Departments Commissions on Training Camp Activities,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 79, War Relief Work (September 1918): *ibid.*, pp. 130–42; Joseph Lee, “War Camp Community Service,” *ibid.*, 189–94; and A. Estelle Paddock, “War Work of Young Women’s Christian Association,” *ibid.*, 208–12.

which was also built with War Work Council funds, was intended to serve “Sea Gulls,” married or single girls who flocked from one port city to another to work in restaurants or cafes during the period of a ship’s internment.⁵³ Commissions for the YWCA, especially, took Morgan to all reaches of the state and brought her into contact with the diverse populations who lived there, including Hollywood actresses; Central Valley workers in the agriculture and canning industries; women associated with military bases in San Diego, Long Beach, and Vallejo; and Chinese and Japanese American women in San Francisco. With each building, Morgan tried to resolve class, ethnic, and gender battles or conflicts among factions of the women’s movement. Embedded in this built environment, then, are some of the architect’s own politics about gender, class, and race.

The case of the Riverside YWCA exposes Morgan’s more strident feminist tendencies. Prominent businessman, Frank Miller, wielded tremendous power in Riverside. He envisioned a city unified aesthetically by Mission Revival architecture, showcased by his ornate and sprawling Mission Inn. As National Board member Lucile Lippett noted in her case study of the local YWCA association in 1931, “The ‘host’ of the Inn has had the power to make or mar any civic or private enterprise,” including the design and construction of a new YWCA building.⁵⁴ He saw potential value in the women’s organization towards his urban development schemes, but wanted to ensure that their plans reconciled with his vision. To that end, he promised in 1923 to donate a lot to the YWCA, only to deed that site to the city two years later for the construction of a municipal auditorium. More property battles followed. Morgan was hired in 1925 to design a building for one lot, only to learn within months that nearby property owners

⁵³ Abby A. Rockefeller to Grace Southwick, December 9, 1918. Record Files, reel 166.

⁵⁴ Lucile Lippett, “Case History of Riverside, California, July 1931.” Record Files, reel 164.

protested the construction of an institutional facility in their residential neighborhood; after designing a second building for another lot, Frank Miller more or less demanded that the YWCA build on the lot adjacent to the Municipal Auditorium. He also desired that the club building match in style to the auditorium, and wanted the YWCA to be connected physically to the civic auditorium, which would be conducive to his vision for the women's organization to serve as hostess to the auditorium. Miller did not approve of a swimming pool or of Julia Morgan. He tried to discard Morgan's plans, questioned her competence, and held the mortgage in escrow until building plans had been accepted and a contract let. Despite these aggressive actions, the women of the YWCA refused to follow Miller's demands and instead accepted Julia Morgan's plans.⁵⁵

While her building fits harmoniously into the historic landscape, Morgan never conceded to Frank Miller's aesthetic preferences; nearly thirty years after her battles against the administration of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, she was still loath to relent to masculine power. Her reinforced concrete design was stark and modern in comparison to the eclectic Mission Inn located two blocks away or the Mission Revival style Municipal Auditorium next door. The YWCA building combined Italianate, Spanish Moorish, and Mission styles in simple forms: a series of Palladian windows across the entire front elevation, a wrought iron balcony on the second story of one gable, a frieze on the other gable, and an open loggia punctuated by plain columns on both gables. Large urns topped the balustrades on either side of the entryway steps, and the entrance itself consisted of simple, pane-glass doors flanked on either side by pilasters and topped by a broken arched pediment, in the center of which stood a third urn. The left end of the building lies

⁵⁵ Laura L. Klure, *Let's Be Doers: A History of the YWCA of Riverside, California, 1906-1992* (Riverside, 1992), 18-27.

in the shadow of the municipal auditorium, but the Riverside YWCA grows progressively higher as it moves from left to right, culminating in the massive three-story gable. While the design created balance with the auditorium, it also clearly differentiated the women's building from the auditorium and the Mission Inn. Morgan also included the pool in her final design, and the women of the YWCA built it. Morgan's creation emphasized the independence of her clients and their organization; her design quietly liberated them from Frank Miller's overbearing control.

Just as the Berkeley Women's City Club espoused the most modern business practices, so did Julia Morgan's design reflect the modern impulses of this new organization [Figure 67]. The City Club called for a more complex multi-use facility than any organization Morgan had worked for in the past. She divided the reinforced concrete building asymmetrically into three sections: a small, two-story western section featuring an interior court, a six-story central section that measures nearly a third narrower and a third longer than the western section, and an expansive eastern section measuring nearly one and a half times as wide as and a third longer than the western section [Figure 68]. Like the western third of the building, the eastern third features an interior court. Topping the central section are two towers – one in the middle and one at the north end – that rise up two more stories. The bottom two stories of the building house all of the public or semi-public rooms: On the first floor are the main lobby and general reception areas, a small men's lounge, meeting rooms, a beauty parlor, and the pool and dressing rooms. Two dining rooms, a card room, a public lounge, the library, an outdoor terrace, and the auditorium occupy the second floor. Starting at the third floor, residential quarters occupy the entirety of the central section, and an additional two levels of residential rooms were

originally planned for construction above the auditorium, along northeast side of the building. The pool runs almost the entire length of the building on the eastern side, resulting in an entirely hollow space [Figure 71]. While the garden terrace rests above this room for half of its length, the stage area of the assembly room occupies the other half, and two additional stories were originally planned to be built above that. This design demanded that the hollow space of the pool be able to support the weight of three stories. Walter Steilberg cited this building as the most complicated engineering problem of his long career, and as of 1976, probably “the most complicated concrete structure in this part of the country.”⁵⁶

Aesthetically, Morgan created a modern design as well. This comment will strike the observer as odd given the club’s location and overtly Gothic motifs. The organization bought two adjacent lots on Durant Street, a largely residential street located two blocks south of the track and baseball fields of the University of California. As Julian C. Mesic noted in her article on the City Club, the location was appropriate for a partly residential facility.⁵⁷ It evoked conservative ideas about women’s domestic roles and kept them separated from the world politics and commerce too. This particular block also included two sizable churches, St. Marks Episcopal Church and Trinity Methodist Church. Berkeley’s First Congregational Church stood across the street. Again, the site evoked traditional values like women’s moral virtue. Like the Riverside YWCA, Morgan’s design complimented the surrounding built environment. The arched entryway, with its tendrils, rosettes, shields, and flowered capitals clearly draws its inspiration from a Cathedral [Figure 69], and upon entering the building one immediately notices the

⁵⁶ JMAHP Vol. 1, p. 111.

⁵⁷ Julian C. Mesic, “Berkeley City Women’s Club,” *Architect and Engineer* 105 (April 1931), 27.

vaulted ceiling and archways of the front hall and main staircase [Figure 70]. Gargoyles holding shields protect the space and its inhabitants. The open loggia flanking the interior courts are also reminiscent of cathedral aisles and cloisters, while the towers and the scalloped motif of the exterior recall castles. Yet rebar doubles as structural reinforcement and decoration in the arches over the pool, literally exposing the modern technology that made the building possible. Morgan also incorporated unadorned rebar into the design of the front hall's grand light fixtures. At six stories, the City Club was the tallest building on the block – hardly a skyscraper, but tending towards tall building construction. By drawing upon castles, cathedrals, and skyscrapers to design this structure, which Julian C. Mesic called “symbolic of the changed status of women and their broadening outlook,” Morgan explicitly appropriated for women the historic architecture of religious, political, and financial power – the architecture of male power. Mesic also suggested that Morgan was influenced by her concurrent work on La Cuesta Encantada, William Randolph Hearst’s mansion and grounds along California’s Central Coast, and other writers emphasize direct similarities between the two designs.⁵⁸ Though one would be remiss to suggest that men and women shared an equal playing field in 1930, the allusions to one of the country’s most powerful media tycoon’s castle underscored the great strides women had made to date, and the optimism that gender equality would eventually become a reality.

Just as Morgan did not wish to be defined by any single term – other than “architect,” by which she fought and chose to be identified – so too did she try not to define womanhood in any single fashion; rather, she recognized and respected diversity. For example, her buildings reveal her sympathy for the lives of young working women.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 25, 32; Marion Dietrich, “Julia Morgan’s Jewel,” *Oakland Tribune*, March 10, 1968, pp. 6-12CM.

In her 1937 report on the San Francisco YWCA, National Board member Myra A. Smith noted that “several women of means and social influence” had recently resigned from the local board because their conservative politics clashed with the more liberal tendencies of the younger women in San Francisco and those of the leadership in New York.⁵⁹

Morgan could attest to Smith’s assessment of the older San Francisco board. For all of the emphasis on modernity and diversity in the publicity materials for the building campaign in 1929, the YWCA leadership held conservative some social views.

According to Hettie Marcus, a member of the San Francisco board for the YWCA, Morgan suggested that some extra space in the plans for the San Francisco Residence be used for “one or two little private dining rooms with little kitchenettes so that the girls can invite their friends, and cook a little meal and have a little private dining room.” A lot of women on the board opposed this idea as spoiling merely minimum wage girls.

Drawing from personal experience, Morgan replied, “That is exactly why they need the space.” She could remember the pleasure she enjoyed by entertaining guests while she was living and working far from home and on a relatively tight budget in Paris.⁶⁰ The board also opposed Morgan’s plans for a sewing room, sewing machine, beauty parlor, and laundry room. Again, Morgan had once grown tired of institutional life in Paris and ventured off on her own to live in an apartment. Her plans for the Residence also suggest that she recognized the growing trend for young women to live on their own in apartments, so she tried to balance the convenience of institutional life with some of the independence an apartment could provide.⁶¹ In both cases, Morgan saw her ideas

⁵⁹ Myra A. Smith, “San Francisco Standards Study Report,” May 24-June 4, 1937. Record Files, reel 165.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, JM to LeBrun, December 28, 1898. JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/02.

⁶¹ JM to LeBrun, August 15, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly, I/04/02/01.

realized.⁶² Notably, in its brochure to lure prospective residents, the San Francisco YWCA listed the laundry facilities, beauty parlor, kitchenettes, and private social spaces as the most practical and enticing features of the club.⁶³ The more liberal leadership cohort that Myra Smith interviewed was in place by then; their emphasis in advertising the features that Morgan fought for serves as a testament to Morgan's own liberal sensibilities towards working women and her foresight in creating spaces that adapted to the changing needs and desires of a younger generation. This foresight helped keep the San Francisco Residence running at 98.5% capacity from the day it opened its doors through at least World War II.⁶⁴

Morgan consistently demonstrated respect for the Chinese populations of the San Francisco Bay Area as well. One can only speculate about Morgan's exact level of exposure to or interaction with the Bay Area's Chinese populations, but enough evidence exists to suggest that she did have regular contact with this ethnic group throughout her childhood and adolescent experience. The population of Chinese in Oakland grew steadily during the late nineteenth century, making them increasingly visible in the urban landscape. It was common, too, for vegetable and fish peddlers to carry their goods in baskets at either end of a pole, then "jogtrot" through the streets or knock at the back door of homes in white neighborhoods. Though census records only list Irish-born servants in the Morgan household, Morgan North suggested that his Aunt Julia's family hired Chinese servants too. Mary McLean Olney, whose family moved in the same social circles as the Morgans did, further remarked, "A good Chinaman in your kitchen was just

⁶² JMAHP Vol. 2, p. 138.

⁶³ "A Delightful Place to Live," brochure for the Residence Club, San Francisco YWCA. Record Files, reel 165.

⁶⁴ Questionnaire, 1946. Record Files, reel 165.

the height of excellence. They were invaluable,” and highly respected. The most direct evidence of the normative place Chinese people held in Morgan’s daily existence comes from her older brother. Parmelee Morgan once wrote to Julia, “It is hard for me to realize one Frenchman working for the betterment of another as I have only general materialized idea of them, the same as we may hear some people express when they will say they cannot see one Chinaman from another.” At the very least, the Morgan kids were familiar enough with the Chinese population to be able to distinguish individuals from one another and not depend exclusively on stereotypes to define the ethnic group.⁶⁵ In any case, over time, Morgan developed a great fondness for Chinese art and material culture. She visited Chinatown often and sent employees to scour the neighborhood for embroideries and other decorative items to include in various commissions. The walls of Morgan’s cottage in Monterey were covered with Chinese frescoes too. Walter Steilberg remembered sneaking up behind Morgan one day to find her copying Cantonese lettering. It was the only hobby he ever knew her to have.⁶⁶

Morgan carried her respect for the Chinese culture into her work. Her first commission for the Chinese community was the Methodist Chinese Mission School, or Gum Moon (1907-1910). At the time, San Francisco was recovering from the earthquake and fires of 1906 and at first, city authorities wanted upon their most racist impulses and remove Chinatown from its longtime location near the financial district to Hunters Point, an area near the southeastern edge of the city that was characterized by mud flats and slaughter houses. The Chinese community successfully protested this plan, but it did not

⁶⁵ Mary McLean Olney, “Oakland, Berkeley, and the University of California, 1880-1895,” An Interview Conducted by Willa Klug Baum, Berkeley, 1963, under the auspices of the Regional Cultural History Project. Typed Manuscript on file at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; JMAHP, vol. 2, p. 157; Parmelee Morgan to JM, March 21, 1897, JMC-Cal Poly I/01/01/16.

⁶⁶ JMAHP Vol. 1, p. 91; *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 133.

have a great of power to determine what the new Chinatown would look like because it did not own the property on which it would be built. Improvement societies, the San Francisco Board of Real Estate, and white property owners, in cooperation with Chinese business and political leaders, planned a new Chinatown that would be more orderly and sanitary than the old, with wider streets too. Above all, however, the new Chinatown would be an oriental fantasyland that catered to white tourists. As a result, historian Erica Pan has stated, “The new Chinatown... was full of the pagoda like embellishments that looked like a forest of gilded turrets and fantastic cornices.”⁶⁷ Gum Moon contrasted significantly from this architecture, in part because the Mission was not a tourist destination, but a refuge for orphans and would-be prostitutes. Built with clinker bricks, it looks mostly like an ordinary three-story square building with stairs leading up to an arched entryway. Morgan applied subtle details to create a “Chinese feel” rather than “strictly oriental character.” For instance, she included Chinese motifs in the cornice, the brightly colored terra cotta frieze and entrance vault, the iron railings, and the lanterns.⁶⁸ The subtlety of design reflected a balance between the Americanization goals of the Christian organization and respect for – rather than a desire to exploit – the cultural origins of its inhabitants.

Twenty years after the completion of Gum Moon, Julia Morgan was hired to design the Chinese YWCA association building in San Francisco. Even more than the Methodist Mission, the Chinese YWCA stands as Morgan’s artistic tribute to Chinese culture and the Chinese women of the San Francisco Bay Area. The design differs

⁶⁷ Erica Y. Z. Pan, *The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on San Francisco’s Chinatown* (New York, 1995), 61-81, 89-98.

⁶⁸ Walter Steilberg, “Some Examples of the Work of Julia Morgan,” *Architect and Engineer* 55 (November 1918), 40.

significantly from Morgan's other YWCA structures, a reflection of the local organization's functional and cultural needs, as well as Morgan's particular sensitivity to them. Unlike most of her YWCA buildings, which follow Mediterranean color schemes and lines, the Chinese building has a red brick exterior, broken up by carved inset tiles [Figure 72]. Morgan imported hand-made tiles from China for the roof, which varies in height and has three spire-topped towers [Figure 73]. Like other buildings I have described, the Chinese YWCA complimented the architecture of its neighborhood, but, as with Gum Moon, Morgan and her clients demonstrated a preference for subtle gestures that celebrated, rather than exploited, Chinese culture.

Morgan saved most of the cultural references for the interior, underscoring a respect for the sacred privacy of certain cultural beliefs and practices. For instance, Morgan applied a traditional Chinese color scheme to the interior, with red posts, a red and green ceiling, and blue and gold stencils. A Chinese dragon was also painted into the concrete floor of a hallway, which looks out onto the private and quiet patio and fish pond [Figures 74 & 75]. While the Chinese women wanted to retain these traditional cultural references, they also requested a gymnasium, one of the most explicit signs of Americanization efforts that the building could communicate.

In her 1937 survey of the San Francisco YWCA, National Board representative Myra Smith declared the building beautiful, but "inadequate for YWCA purposes."⁶⁹ Interviews with members of the Chinese board, however, revealed that they did not really know much about the program of the YWCA. They also did not have time to attend meetings with the central board because virtually every woman associated with the

⁶⁹ Myra A. Smith, "San Francisco Standards Study Report, May 24-June 24, 1937," p. 6. Record Files, reel 165.

YWCA worked long hours – whether they needed to or not – and when they did attend meetings, the issues discussed remained remote to the needs of the women in Chinatown. In contrast to most other YWCA associations, moreover, the Chinese YWCA was run and patronized by a particularly exclusive and well-to-do constituency.⁷⁰ In contrast to Gum Moon, which was run by a white board of directors, Morgan had worked with an almost exclusively Chinese board to design this building. Rather than imposing upon them a formula that worked for most associations around the state or country, Morgan created a space that addressed the particular needs and desires of its occupants. Their enthusiasm for the final design underscores the good working relationships Morgan fostered with them, as well as her ability to design according to the ideals of the Chinese women's community.

The End of the Building Era

The 1930s marked the end of building for the California women's movement. A number of reasons can explain the demise of this political style and path to power and influence. Funding for maintenance of old buildings, let alone money to build new ones, disappeared with the onset of the Great Depression. Generational differences also rendered residential club life obsolete. With increased governmental oversight and expenditure in social programs that had been the mainstay of private organizations for decades, women saw their influence in the continual development of the charitable landscape curtailed. All of these factors were written in the buildings.

Even as the building programs of women were reaching their height in the 1920s, the privately run institutions were vulnerable to sharp criticism. In 1921, for example,

⁷⁰ Myra A. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 6; *ibid.*, interview with Mrs. Lee, p. 2.

architect Charles K. Sumner published an article in *Architect and Engineer* about school architecture.⁷¹ He intended to illustrate for other architects what he perceived as some of the most important and neglected aspects of designs for this building genre. He chose photographs of the Katherine Delmar Burke school, a school for girls in San Francisco that Julia Morgan designed in 1916, to highlight the features of good design. He complained of the “brute bigness, remoteness and general unhomeliness” of most schools. In contrast, the Burke school had plants in every classroom, an intimate courtyard, and a library that compares to living rooms in any number of Arts and Crafts homes in the San Francisco Bay Area. Built-in bookshelves, a tile surround and wood mantle, and exposed beam ceiling further added to the warmth and domesticity of the school.

While Morgan’s design for the Burke school provided some exemplary guidelines for schools to follow, it also stood as a prime example of inequality in education. Implicit in Sumner’s article is a stinging critique of private institutions. He argued that the vast majority of students attended run-down, make-shift, or soon-to-be razed buildings. Efforts to ameliorate the situation come to late and result in poorly designed public school buildings that cannot accommodate future growth. Sumner blamed city governments, in part for this situation, but he chastised the voters for a lack of vision and community spirit even more. Governments hesitated to tax citizens directly, and voters did not always back bond measures for public schools, yet wealthy residents donated money to construct and operate private institutions. Only the most privileged children had access to the best faculties and most beautiful, state-of-the-art facilities. In this sense,

⁷¹ Charles K. Sumner, “Some Neglected Aspects of School Architecture,” *Architect and Engineer* 64 (March 1921), 47-57 (hereafter, Sumner, “School Architecture”).

then, the Katherine Delmar Burke school represented as much a part of the problem in schooling generally as it did solutions to architectural problems specifically. Apart from Lakeside elementary school in Oakland (1909-1916) and Marysville Grammar School (1916), all of the dozen schools Morgan designed were private institutions, and all of them were organized and managed by women. Though he saw local government as part of the problem, Sumner also saw the solution in the Boards of Education and “trained executives in their employ” in developing thorough building policies that matched thoroughly thought out curriculum and educational policies. Of all the public schools in California that were featured in *Architect and Engineer*, not a single one was designed by a woman. As education was democratized and government took a vested interest in it, women played more marginal roles.

The last four buildings Morgan designed foreshadowed imminent economic failures. For all of their efforts to streamline the club movement and create a more efficient financial model, the members of the Berkeley Women’s City Club were never able to raise the funds necessary to build the extra residential wings. The women of San Francisco similarly raised less than \$200,000 of the \$400,000 they campaigned for to build the Residence, Chinese, and Japanese YWCA buildings.⁷² The non-profit or charity status of most women’s organizations meant that they still depended heavily on large donations from wealthy philanthropists, membership dues, or special event proceeds. These resources all diminished dramatically with the onset of the Depression. Maintaining the existing buildings had to be a priority over building new ones.

⁷² Interview with Miss Else Schilling, Chairman o the Building Committee, by Myra A. Smith, included in “San Francisco Standards Study Report,” May 24-June 4, 1937. Record files, reel 165.

Women were also the victims of their own success. Like education, they had seen their causes taken up increasingly by local, state, and finally federal governments over the years. As Estelle Freedman first argued, women's groups since the late nineteenth century espoused separatism as a strategy to create opportunities in education, professions, politics, and reform – to achieve access to many of the same privileges as men without having to compete ferociously against them.⁷³ Their efforts had resulted in a transformed landscape for women, particularly in urban areas, which drew them into more heterosocial spaces, created jobs, particularly for educated women who early in the century found very few places where they could apply their knowledge, and fostered a general desire to live independently. The social, educational, economic, and political structures that had brought women together were no longer so firmly entrenched in society, rendering the need for women's clubs and institutions less important, and their building programs less viable.

Several of the buildings Morgan designed for women's organizations created a path to this more independent way of life. For example, Katherine Towle and Winifred Heard were both members of Kappa Alpha Theta at the University of California, Berkeley, and lived in the sorority house that Morgan had designed in 1909. After graduating from college, both women also went on to teach at the Ransome Bridges School, a private boarding school for girls in the affluent community of Piedmont, which Morgan also designed (1908-1916). From there, Towle returned to the University of California and led a distinguished career as Dean of Women Students. Heard went on to be one of the most influential forces in the West Coast branch of the YWCA, overseeing

⁷³ Freedman, Estelle, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979), 512-529.

Asilomar for years and orchestrating its sale to the California State Department of Parks and Recreation in 1958. Neither woman made any note of the architecture or architect who designed the spaces where they were trained in institution building or gained work experience; both women took for granted that the institutions existed at all. Morgan and her clients had achieved their goal of liberating women from the confines of the home and providing safe passage and practical experience for them to survive and even thrive in that journey. Changes in the built environment, in this case Morgan's buildings, had been integral to that process.

While the era for women's organizations to build new institutions came to a close, the buildings they constructed during the first third of the twentieth century did not disappear. Some of them continue to be used according to their original purpose, some have been destroyed, and still others have been adapted to new uses, including a Zen center, an art museum, a retirement community, and a historical society. Among other things, they stand as reminders of the work women achieved and the goals they pursued, as contributions to the built environment, and remain influential in social, cultural, and economic development of California's cities and towns. Finally, these buildings reveal to us that whether she liked it or not, Julia Morgan did leave an extensive and permanent record of her personal views on the world in which she lived. She just did not talk about it.

Conclusion

“Julia Morgan, Architect”: Remodeling a Legacy

I think it is too early to say what contribution women are making in the field of architecture. They have as clients contributed very largely except, perhaps, in monumental buildings. The few professional women architects have contributed little or nothing to the profession — no great artist, no revolutionary ideas, no outstanding designs. They have, however, done sincere, good work along with the tide; and as the years go on undoubtedly some greater than other architects will be developed, and in fair proportion to the number of outstanding men — to the number in the rank and file.¹

Two years after the University of California, Berkeley, conferred upon Julia Morgan its highest award, an honorary Doctor of Laws degree, for her contribution to the field of architecture, Morgan articulated this typically self-deprecating assessment of women in her profession. A sense of optimism does underscore Morgan’s commentary; as women continued to enter the profession and became a norm rather than an anomaly, they would experiment with the built environment in more daring and creative ways. More importantly, quality alone would define achievement, or, as Morgan always desired of her work, the buildings would speak for themselves. Overall, however, she prophetically, and with sadness, painted a rather grim picture and deemed herself neither an exception to the absence of innovative women architects, nor a contributor to great change in gender norms of the profession. Indeed, in 1958, the year after Morgan died, the United States counted only 320 registered women architects, representing just one percent of all architects.² A decade later, former Morgan employee, Louis Schalk, offered his assessment of women in the profession: “[Julia Morgan is] the only woman architect I’ve

¹ Marcia Mead, “Women’s Versatility in Arts Enriches Field of Architecture,” *Christian Science Monitor*, November 27, 1931, p. 5.

² Torre, *Women in American Architecture: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (New York, 1977), 90.

ever known, or ever heard about, who ran a full program. Most women architects get a house job now and then, and that's it. Then they marry architects and retire.”³ He could have been describing the profession in 1906 just as well as in 1966. All the factors contributing to the absence of women in the profession that Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred found in their study of women architects in Quebec, which was conducted in the 1990s, could describe the professional climate in Morgan’s day too: a lack of stable jobs, haphazard schedules, long work hours, little room for advancement within the architectural world, and a demand that workers choose between professional and domestic concerns rather than balance them.⁴

This rather grim assessment of women in architecture depends on a narrow definition of the term. Julia Morgan, who only allowed label “architect” to be attached to her, might agree with the term as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “A designer of buildings, who prepares plans, and superintends construction.”⁵ In contrast, the women in Adams and Tancred’s survey have forged careers in urban design, art history, engineering, sculpture, architectural journalism, and business; though not designers of buildings, they have applied the artistic, technical, management, and descriptive skills they learned as architects to a broader range of careers and continue to identify themselves as architects. They are actively transforming the definition of “architect”.⁶

This perspective changes the dynamics of Morgan’s contribution to women in architecture. By the 1920s she maintained a staff composed of men and women, and her

³ Louise Wright, “Julia Morgan’s Architecture to Highlight House Tour,” *Oakland Tribune*, March 27, 1966, p. 7S.

⁴ Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred, “*Designing Women*”: *Gender and the Architectural Profession* (Toronto, 2000), 98-109 (hereafter, Adams and Tancred, *Designing Women*).

⁵ Leslie Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1993), p. 109.

⁶ Adams and Tancred, “*Designing Women*,” pp. 104-5.

dedication to arts and crafts kept many job opportunities open to women before World War II. Two women, Dorothy Wormser Coblenz and Elizabeth Boyter, became licensed architects themselves and eventually established careers in the field. C. Julian Mesic earned her architectural license too, but worked mostly as a sculptor and made architectural models at the Morgan atelier. She continued to work as a sculptor after leaving Morgan's office, worked as an editor for *Architect and Engineer*, and published articles for that journal as well.⁷ Several other women enjoyed successful careers in the arts as well, particularly Maxine Albro, who became a celebrated Bay Area muralist.⁸ Grace Moran became the head of the School of Domestic Science at Cornell University and proselytized about beautifying the home, and Alice Joy found direction in life because of the “glowing vision of the world [Morgan] opened for recalcitrant me.” After working at Morgan’s office, Joy went on to earn a masters degree in mathematics from Columbia University, then teach mathematics at Columbia’s school for women, Barnard College.⁹ Though we do not know how many of them self identified as architects, Morgan and her female employees, like the women in Adams and Tancred’s study, did

⁷ See, for instance, Julian C. Mesick [*sic*], “Unique Plaster Model at California Industries Exposition,” *Architect and Engineer* (November 1925): 75-76; and J. C. Mesic, “Berkeley Women’s City Club,” *ibid.* (April 1931): 24-47.

⁸ Maxine Albro (1903-1966) studied art at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, the Art Students League in New York, and the Ecole de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris before traveling to Mexico to study with Diego Rivera (she did become acquainted with Rivera, but studied with his assistant). Morgan first commissioned Albro to create frescoes at the Seldon and Elizabeth Glide Williams house in Berkeley (1928). By the 1930s, Albro was a celebrated muralist, especially in the Bay Area, and commanded thousands of dollars for her frescoes. Her murals of four Sybils at the Los Angeles Ebell Club sparked controversy over patron censorship of artists’ work when the club women deemed the four murals undignified “circus posters” and had them destroyed in 1935. Albro also worked for the Works Progress Administration, which produced some of her most famous murals, including an Italian mosaic at the old San Francisco State College campus (destroyed) and *California Agriculture* in San Francisco’s Coit Tower. Sara Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, pp. 85, 165-66; Orville O. Clarke, Jr., “The Destruction of the Murals at the Ebell Club,” *Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles Newsletter* Vol. 9 (Fall 1998); Mary McChesney, “Oral History Interview of Maxine Albro and Parker Hall, Carmel, California, July 27, 1964,” Smithsonian Archives of American Art, artarchives.si.edu/oralhist/albro64.html.

⁹ See *Journal of Home Economics* 20 (August 1928): 612; Alice Joy to JM, May 25, 1929, JMC-Cal Poly I/06/02/12; Alice Joy, “Vector Analysis as Developed by Carl Runge from Grassmann’s Ausdehnungslehre, with an Historical Introduction” (M.S. thesis, Columbia College, 1928).

transform the architectural landscape throughout the first half of the twentieth century, if not in designing buildings directly, then in applying knowledge and skills they gained within the profession to expand the very meaning of word “architect”.

All of these women achieved a certain degree of success in traditionally male dominated field because of the gender dynamics that Morgan fostered in her own office. Several male employees particularly remember Morgan as a champion of women in the field. Bjarn Dahl stated simply, “She always loved to have girls.”¹⁰ Dorothy Wormser expressed the feeling that Morgan’s level of control and professional criticism was amplified in relationship to her female employees, but ultimately had to credit Morgan for treating all employees equally, and distributing responsibility and creative freedom to employees according to merit and skill, not gender. When the Emanu-El Sisterhood required that a Jewish woman design their new home for girls, for example, Morgan did not hesitate to assign Coblenz to this project and made sure that Coblenz passed the state architecture license examination. Once licensed, Coblenz enjoyed great freedom in designing this building.¹¹ Most female employees experience a far more neutral gender environment. Polly Lawrence McNaught, a graduate of the University of California school of architecture, began working for Morgan in the 1930s with some freelance drafting and as a purchaser for items related to interior decoration. She remembered a boss who approached all employees as potentially great artists, architects, or designers whose talent she could foster. “She just assumed you could do anything she wanted, so you never felt like you could let her down,” McNaught explained. “And you always tried

¹⁰ Ries, JMAHP, vol. 2, p. 149.

¹¹ Ibid., 108-26.

your best. She had a marvelous capacity for making you feel you could do anything.”¹² It took a move to New York City in the 1930s for former Morgan draftsperson, Elizabeth Boyter, to awaken to the still reigning masculinity of the profession. Boyter wrote to wrote to Julian Mesic, that the engineering firm where she was working promised her promotions and higher pay, only to deny her both in the end. The man she trained to replace her subsequently earned twice her salary. Gender discrimination within the profession, combined with the failing economy of the Great Depression, ultimately rendered architectural work an impossibility for Elizabeth Boyter at this time.¹³ During a period when most women who graduated from university with a degree in architecture did not expect to find placement in an architectural firm, Julia Morgan opened doors to a lucky few who could explore their potential in that professional field.

Ironically, for a woman who spent a lifetime trying to resolve how she and her female clients could best design their domestic arrangements to facilitate their non-domestic interests, Morgan did not try to remodel standard professional practices to accommodate working mothers. After Dorothy Wormser Coblenz married and her children were old enough to be away from home, she sought part-time work at her former employer’s office, but “[Morgan] had a policy against that. You worked full time or not at all for her.” Such inflexibility in the structure of the work week effectively limited the extent to which women found architecture a practical and fulfilling career path; thus,

¹² Ibid., 131.

¹³ Boyter ended up working in the Chintz department at Macy’s, which did not pay enough for her modest accommodations: a one room, apartment with a basin, wardrobe, and electric grill, but no room to store food for real cooking. When Macy’s fired her for low sales performance, the only possible alternatives this 1925 graduate of the University of California School of Architecture could find included typical pink collar jobs: selling subscriptions of a new fashion magazine, secretarial work, or substitute teaching. Elizabeth M. Boyter to C. Julian Mesic, January 27, 1932. JMC-CEDA.

while Morgan gave many women a start in architecture, her strategies to foster that goal had significant limitations.¹⁴

As Morgan noted in her assessment of the field, women contributed most greatly as clients during the first third of the twentieth century. Other historians have made similar observations, most notably Alice T. Friedman and Thomas Hines. Inspiration for some of the most famous, innovative, and influential domestic designs of the twentieth century came directly from the female clients of such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Irving Gill, Gerrit Rietveld and Truus Schröder, and Le Corbusier.¹⁵ Where Morgan and her clients differ (and, undoubtedly, other women architects and their clients) is in their all-female cast. Architecture is inherently a public art form, making the hundreds of houses; more than one dozen local YWCA association buildings in California, Hawaii, and Utah; the Asilomar conference center in Pacific Grove, California; and the many clubs, orphanages, schools, hospitals, and business establishments commissioned and designed by these women a formidable public expression of the many issues that concerned them during the Progressive Era. With each new building the women raised their public profile and renewed their commitment to the broad development of their cities and state. Each building also created new jobs for women, new spaces for women

¹⁴ Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred have identified a similar situation in their study of women in the contemporary Canadian architectural community. Deregistered architects cite a number of reasons why the profession has failed to produce a more balanced gender ratio in the same way that the medical or legal professions have been able to achieve. Adams and Tancred conclude, “From women’s perspective the so-called normal track is totally abnormal; it makes demands of the professional worker that can be fulfilled only if domestic responsibilities are limited by childlessness, or if the major part of domestic responsibilities is hived off from public ones and undertaken by a separate worker.” These women have forged their careers according to the same thing Coblenz sought: “fusion”, or a working situation that balanced family and career as well as enough income, stability, and status to render it fulfilling. Bernice Scharlach, “The Legacy of Julia Morgan,” *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, August 24, 1975, *California Living Magazine*, p. 27; JMAHP Vol. 2, pp. 104, 111-12; Adams and Tancred, *“Designing Women,”* 98-109.

¹⁵ See Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (New York, 1998); and Thomas S. Hines, *Irving Gill and the Architecture of Reform: A Study in Modernist Architectural Culture* (New York, 2000).

to occupy in the urban landscape, and new spaces to address intellectual, cultural, physical, or social needs for women outside the home. If the individual designs Morgan's do not strike one as revolutionary, artistically daring, or monumental – as Morgan claimed and her biographers to date have generally agreed – their collective impact on the lives of women in the twentieth-century suggests otherwise. Julia Morgan created a flexible and multi-layered stage on which twentieth-century women could act out their many interests. And though her costume and reticence conveyed the disinterested modesty of a secondary player, her family and friends, clients and colleagues, knew that she commanded a leading role.

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Images and Illustrations



Figure 1: Morgan Family house, located at 754 Fourteenth Street, Oakland. Courtesy of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.



Figure 2: None of the homes where Eliza Parmelee Morgan grew up or her sister, Julia Parmelee Thornton lived, exist any longer. The architect Pierre LeBrun and his wife Lucy (Eliza Morgan's cousin) lived in this house at 111 Joralemon Street in Brooklyn Heights.
Source: Melissa Waldron-Lehner.



Figure 3: 111 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn Heights. Source: Melissa Waldron-Lehner.

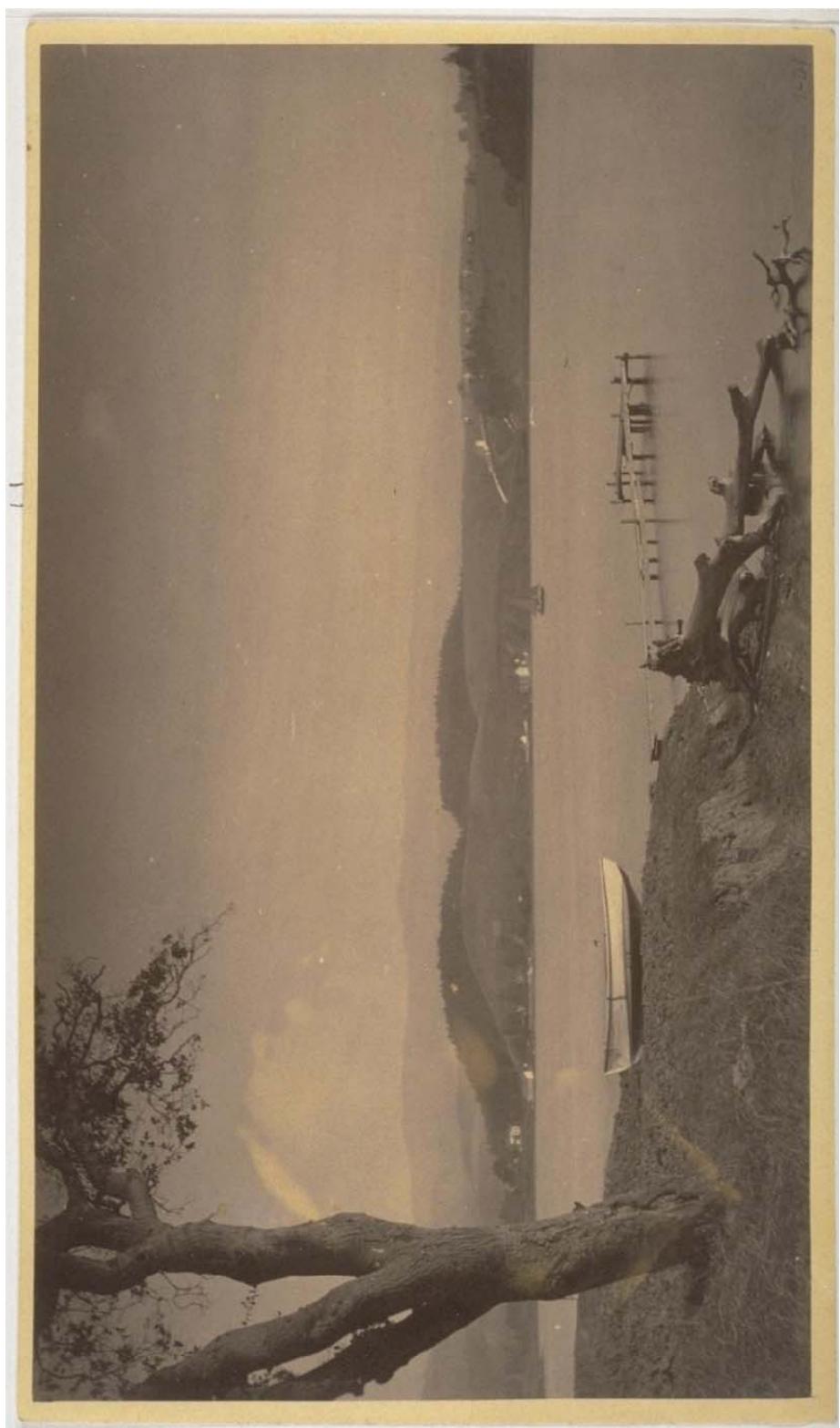


Figure 4: View of Lake Merritt from Adam's Point, Oakland, California, 1884. Frank Rodolph Photograph Collection, Album 7, BAN PIC 1905.17152-PIC. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 5: Pacific Grove, 1887. Frank B. Rodolph Photograph Collection, Album 3: BANC PIC 1905.17148-PIC. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 6: Parmelee, Emma, and Julia Morgan (left to right), Brooklyn Heights, c. 1876. JMC-Cal Poly IV/01/11/01. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.



Figure 7: Gardner Bulkley Morgan, c. 1912. *Oakland Tribune*, March 18, 1913, p. 1.



Figure 8: Oakland High School, June 1888. Frank B. Rodolph Photograph Collection, Album 4: BANC PIC 1905.17149-PIC. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 9: The Campus [U.C. Berkeley], 1895. Looking north from Mechanics Building. Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks Documenting San Francisco History and Law Enforcement, Vol. 27: 129a, BANC PIC 1998-067-fALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 10: North Hall. South Hall. Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks Documenting San Francisco History and Law Enforcement, Vol. 27:119a, BANC PIC 1998.067-fALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 11: Mills Seminary, Brooklyn, Alameda Co[unty, Oakland], Cal[ifornia] [1876]. Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material. BANC PIC 1963.002:0219—B. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California.



Figure 12: Omega Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta, c. 1893. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.



Figure 13: Julia Morgan, c. 1896. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.



Figure 14: Chronicle Building, c. 1889. Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material, BANC PIC 1963.002:0567—B, Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 15: Spreckels Building. Third and Market [*Call* building], c. 1904: 7. Roy D. Graves Pictorial Collection, I/1/5, BANC PIC 1905.17500-ALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

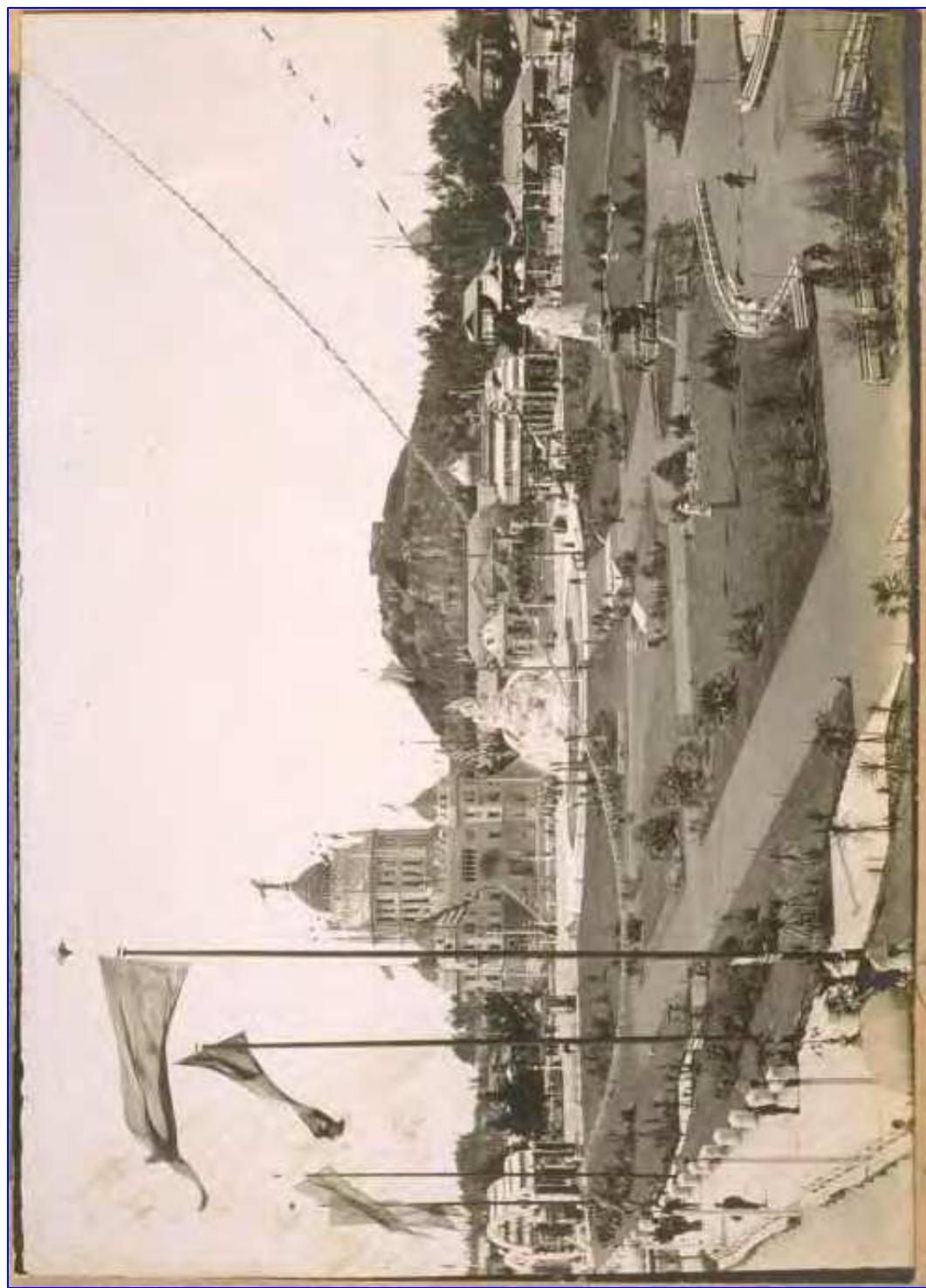


Figure 16: Midwinter Fair in G.G. [Golden Gate] Park about 1895: 130b. Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks Documenting San Francisco History and Law Enforcement, Vol. 14, BANC PIC 1998.067-fALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

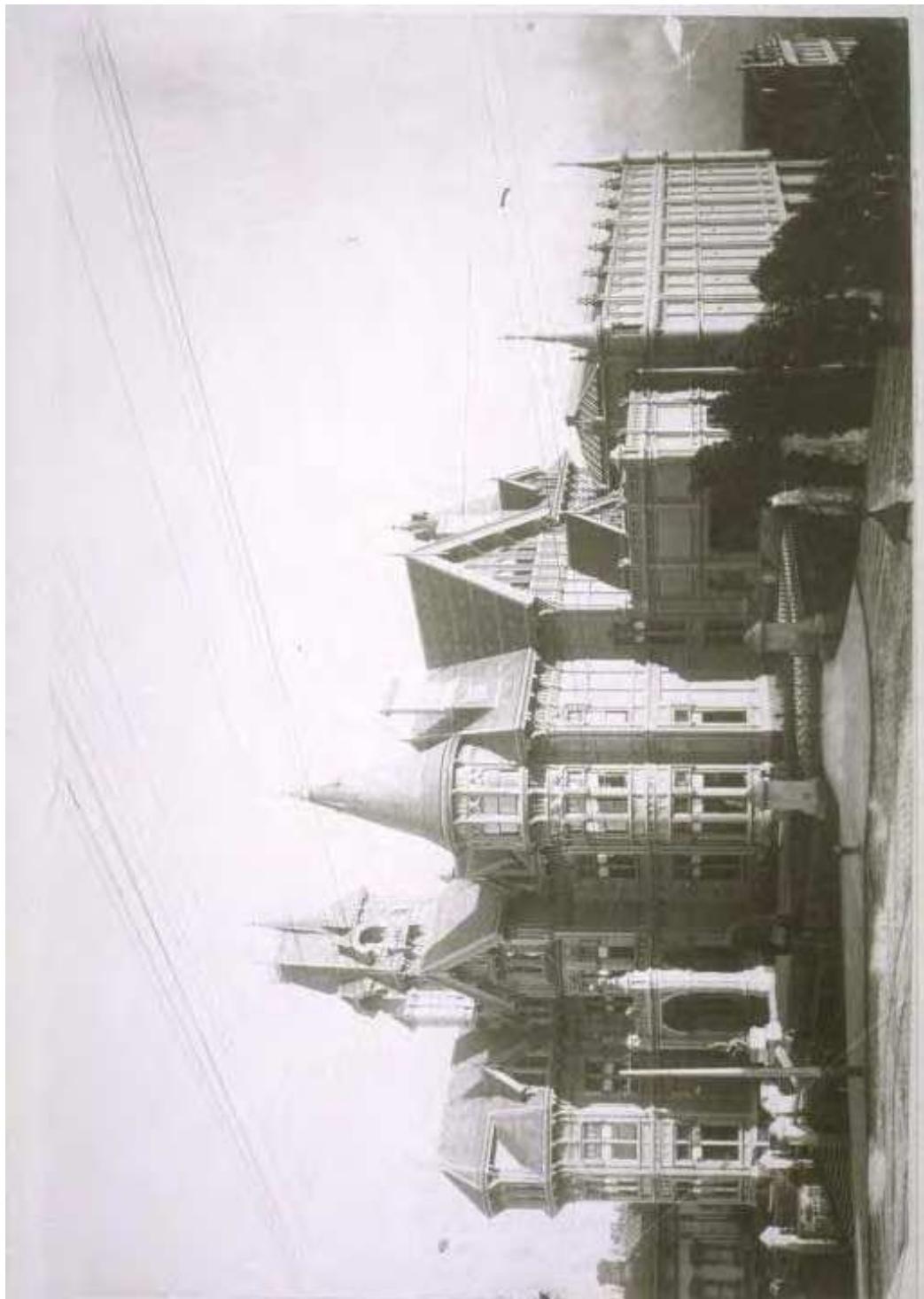


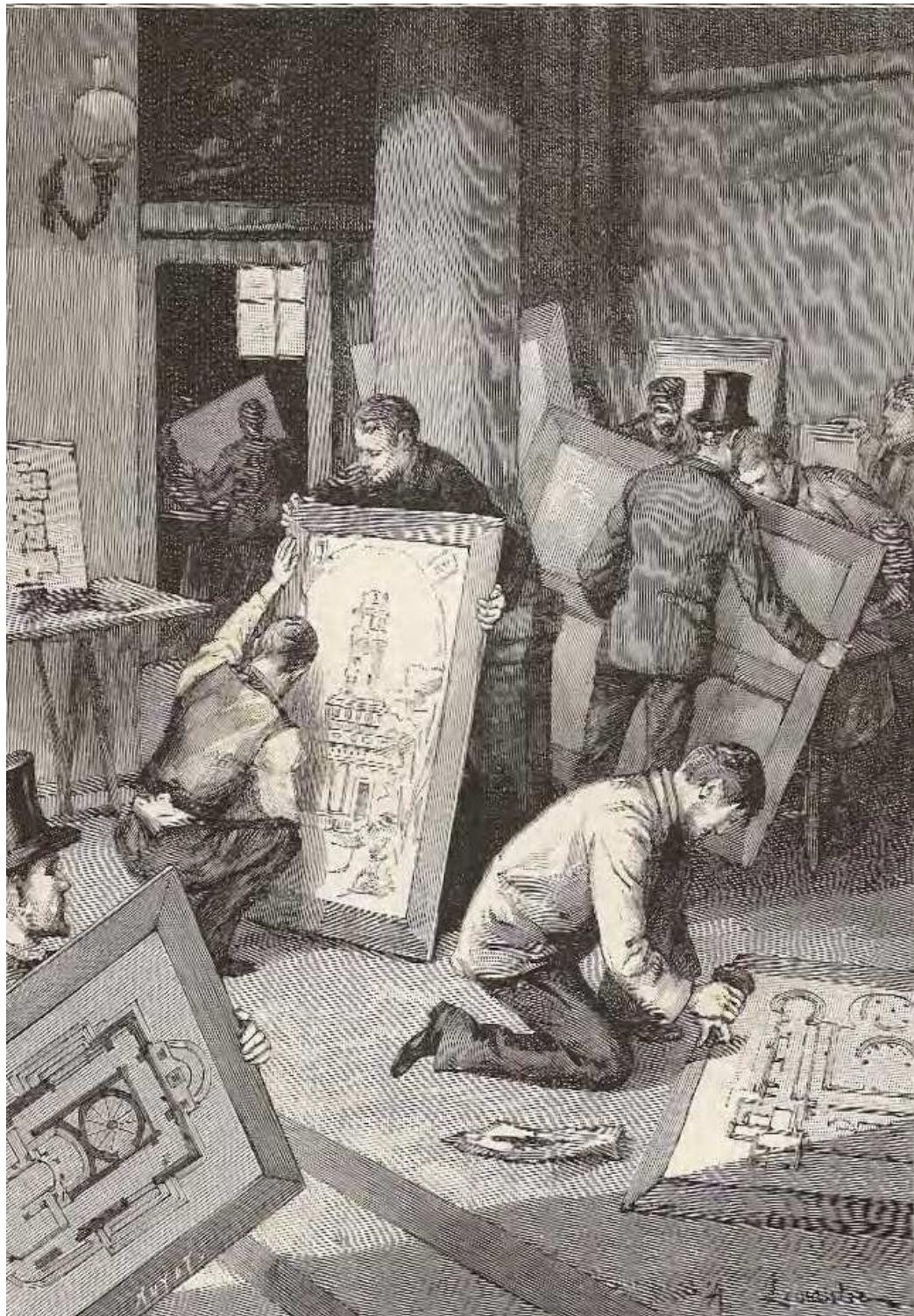
Figure 17: Mark Hopkins Home. Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, c. 1880: 45. Roy D. Graves Pictorial Collection, I/1/4, BANC PIC 1905.17500-ALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 18: Bernard Maybeck, c. 1895. Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck: Artisan, Architect, Artist* (Santa Barbara, 1977), p. 37.



Figure 19: Julia Morgan, Ecole des Beaux-Arts ID card photo, c. 1899. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo



LE PROJET.

Figure 20: “Le Projet,” in Alexis Lemaistre, *L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (Paris, 1889), Plate 55, p. 361 (hereafter, Lemaistre, “*L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts*”)

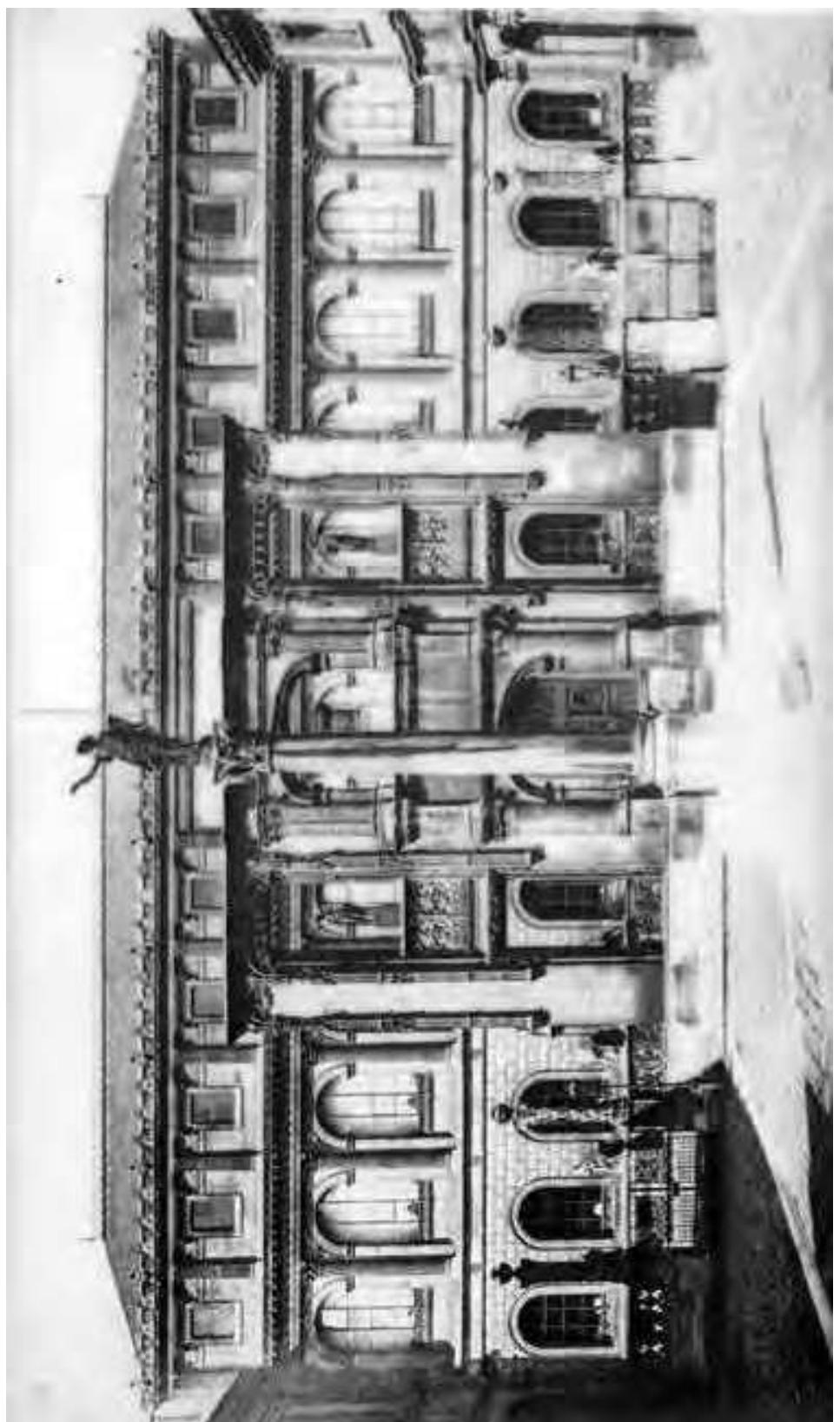


Figure 21: Arc de Gaillon, from Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (New York, 1977), p. 81.



Figure 22: Interior courtyard of the Palais des Etudes, from Arthur Drexler, ed., *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (New York, 1977), 60.



AN ARCHITECT AT THE GATES OF THE BEAUX-ARTS—DRAWN BY GUY ROSE.—[See PAGE 1221.]
1. Main Entrance on the Quai. 2. Reading the "Livre des Aspirants aux Examens." 3. Procession of the "Nouveaux." 4. Working, with a Cuirassier in one Hand, a Paint Brush in the other.

Figure 23: Guy Rose, “An Architect at the Gates of the Beaux-Arts,” in *Harper’s Weekly*, December 22, 1894, p. 1221.

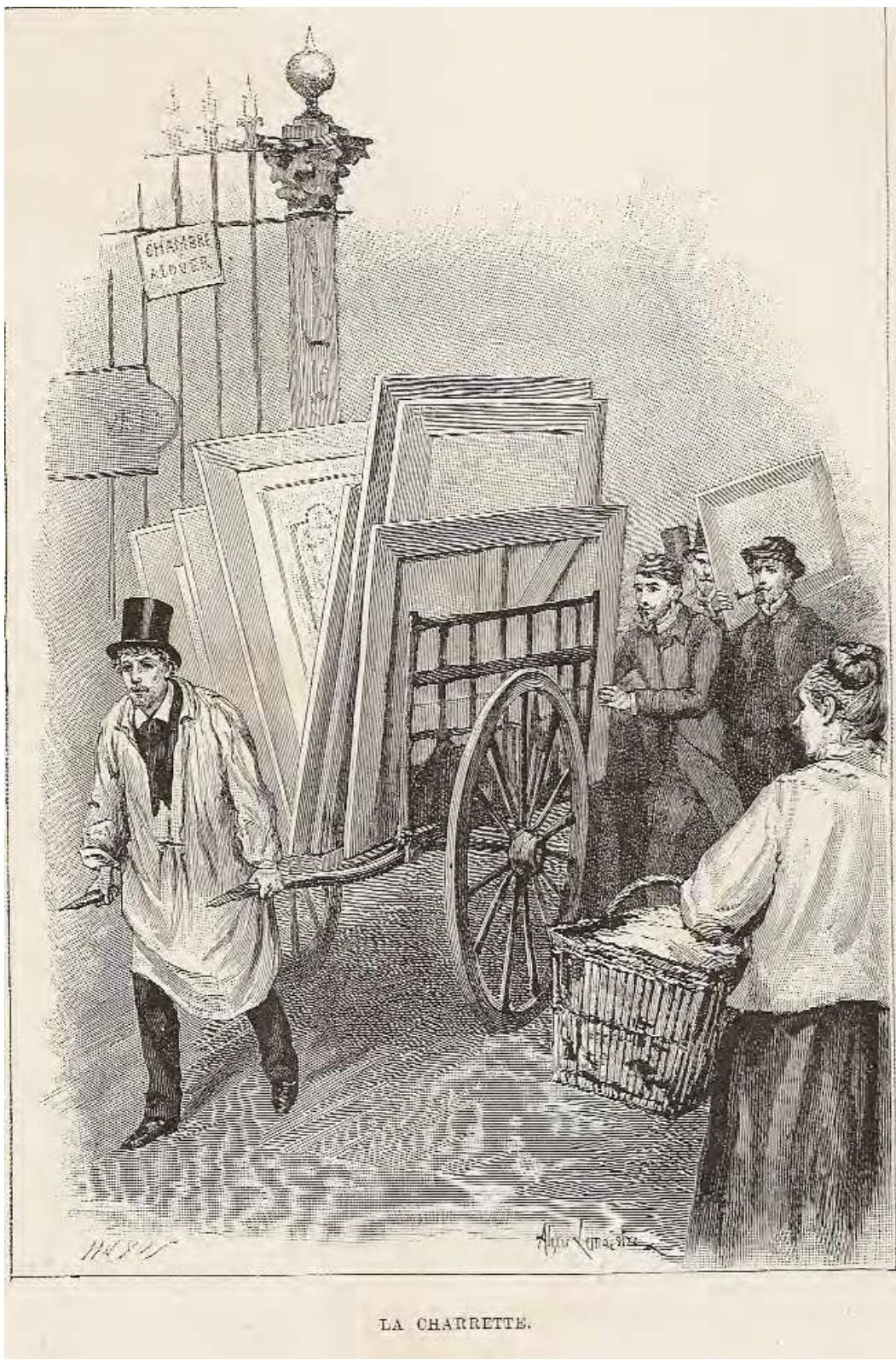


Figure 24: “La Charrette,” in Alexis Lemaistre, *L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts* (Paris, 1889), Plate 35, p. 221.

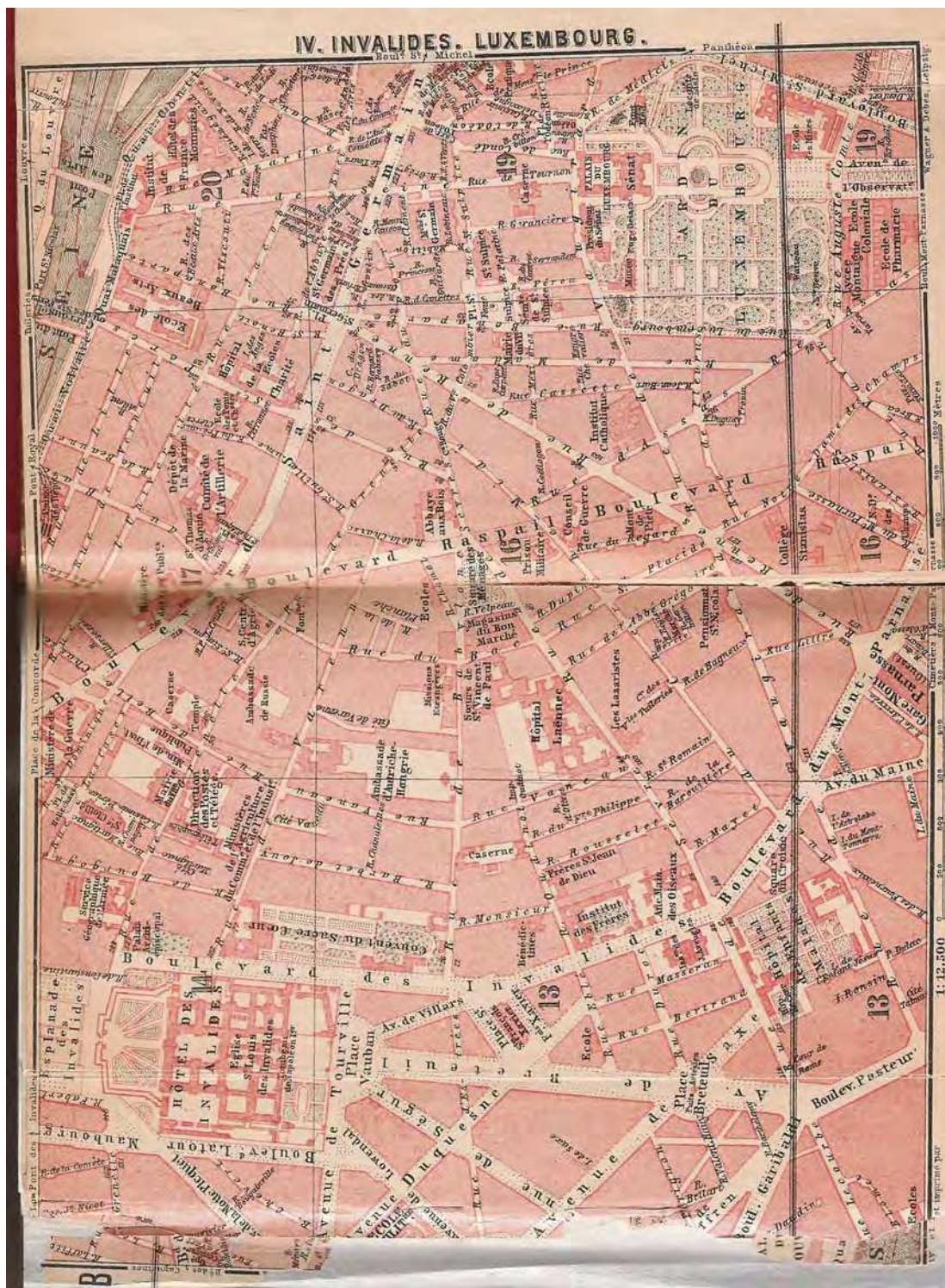


Figure 25: Karl Baedeker, *Paris and Environs* (London, 1900), Map IV.

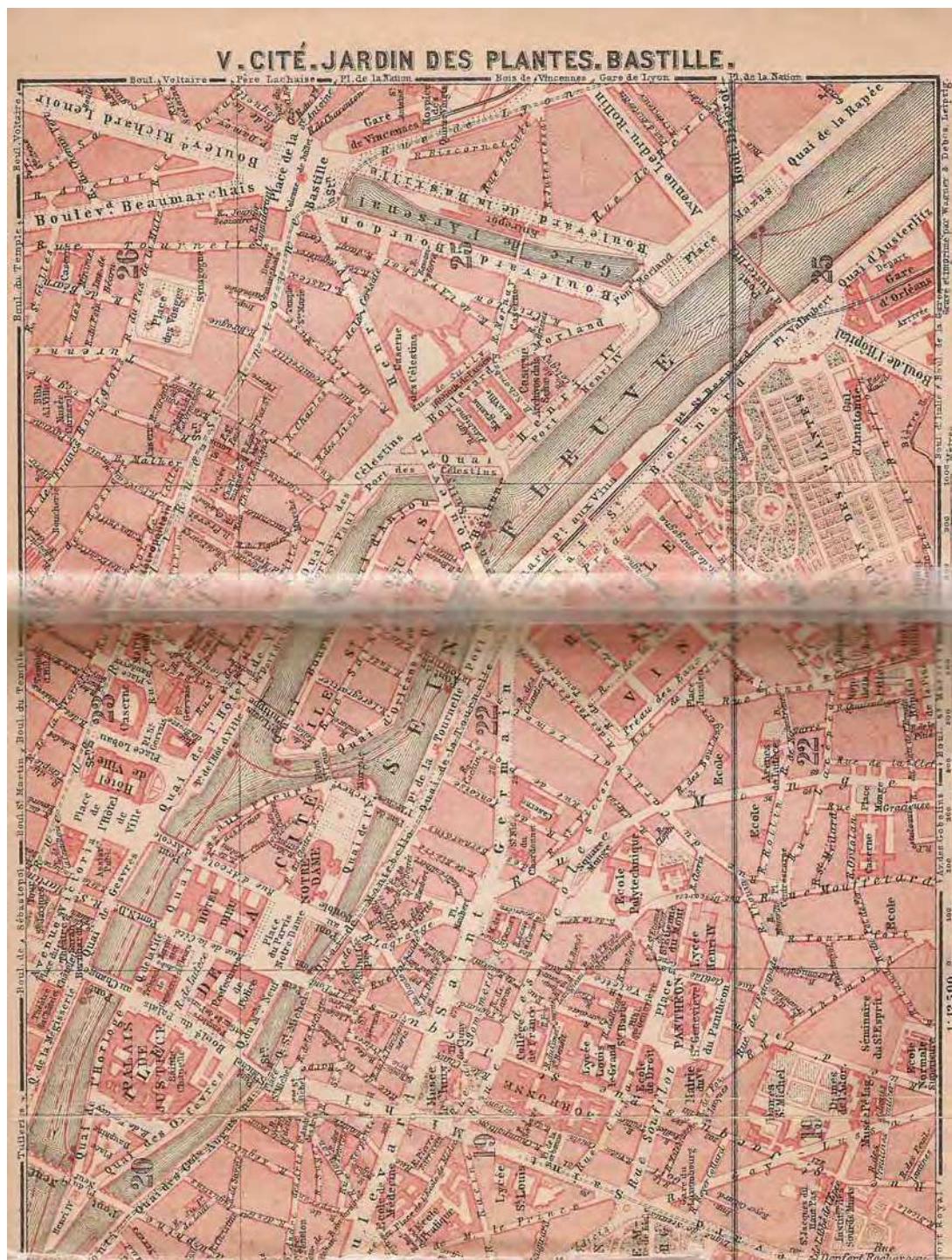


Figure 26: Karl Baedeker, *Paris and Environs* (London, 1900), Map V.



Figure 27: American Club (now Reid Hall), 4 rue de Chevreuse, Paris. Source: Author.



Figure 28: 7 rue Honoré Chevalier, Paris. Source: Author.



Figure 29: 15 rue Guénégaud (building with A.C. Mazo store). Source: Author.



Figure 30: Morgan seated in the kitchen of 15 rue Guénégaud, c. 1900. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.



Figure 31: Julia Morgan in front of Notre Dame de Paris, c. 1900. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

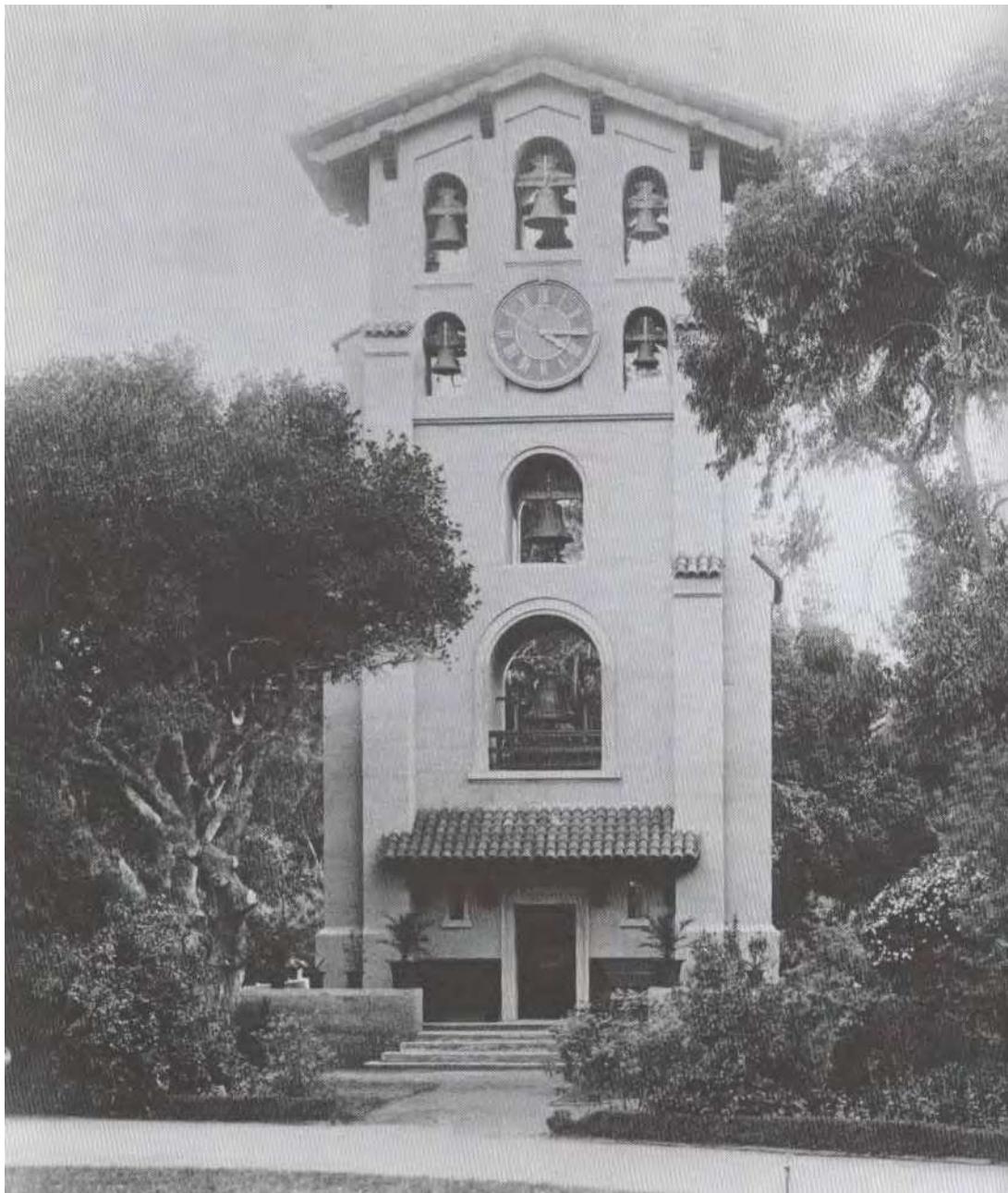


Figure 32: *El Campanil*, Mills College, c. 1905. Courtesy of Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.



Figure 33: Margaret Carnegie Library, Mills College, c. 1906: 36. Mills College: Record of a Campus, BANC PIC 1984.014-ALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

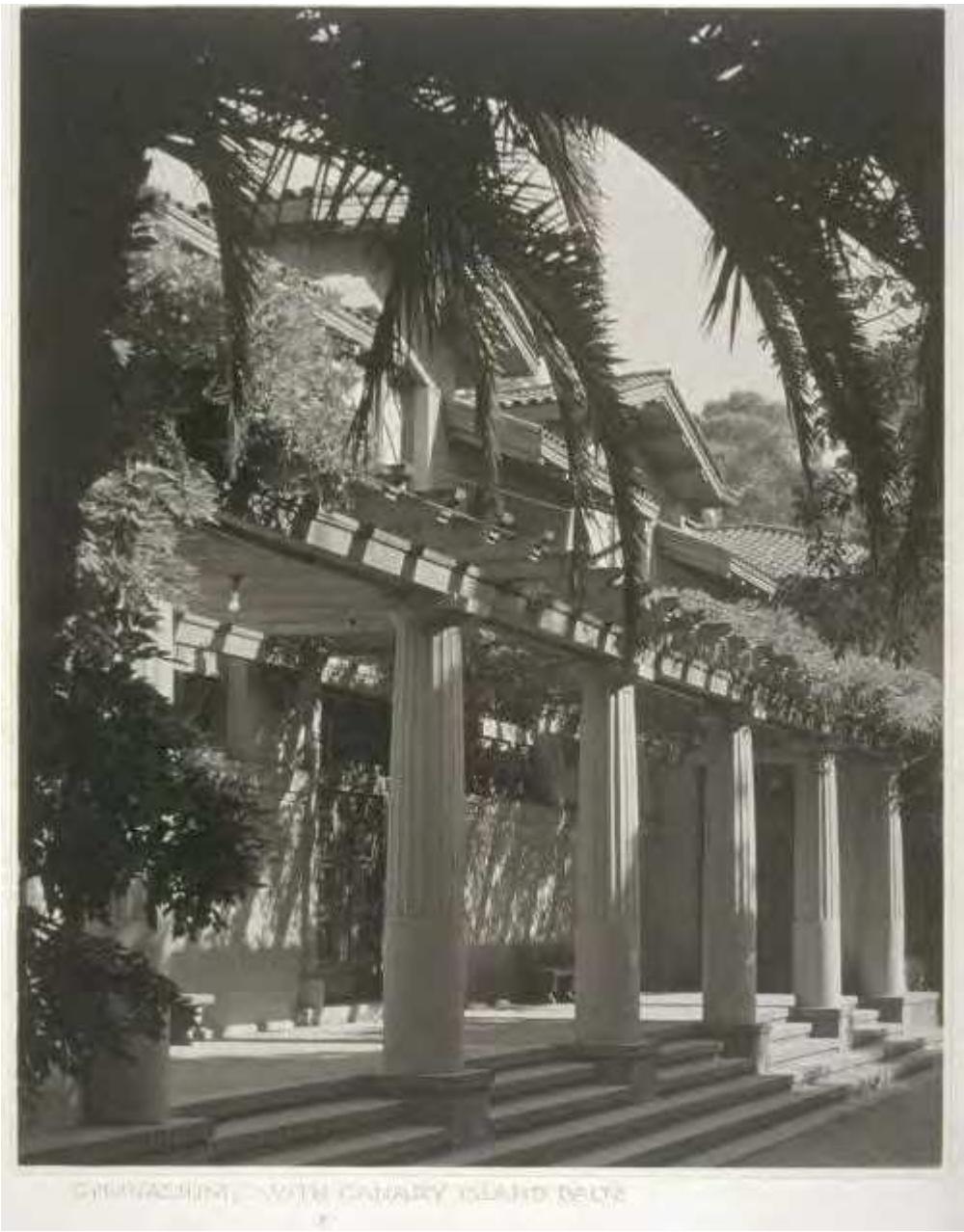


Figure 34: Gymnasium, Mills College, c. 1910: 28. Mills College: Record of a Campus, BANC PIC 1984.014-ALB. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

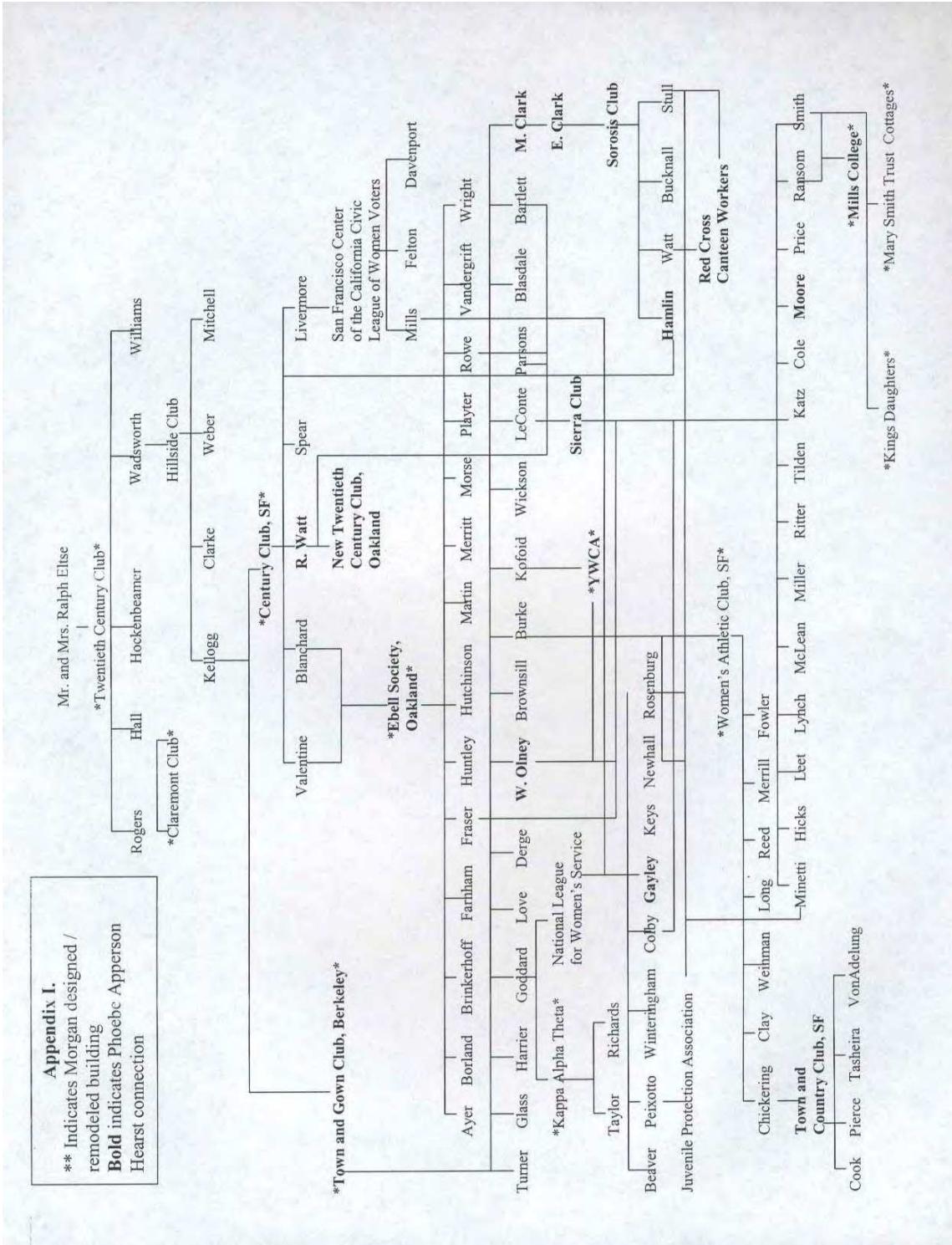


Figure 35: Sample genealogy of Morgan's clients. Source: Author.



Figure 36: Julia Morgan (back row, center) and Bernard Maybeck (front row, center) at Morgan's office, c. 1928. Courtesy of the Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

San Francisco To-Day

Some Recent Photographs Showing the Marvelous Building Activity in the Burned Section. The Pictures were taken from the Roof of the Merchants Exchange Building which Stands in the Centre of the Commercial and Financial District.



*Merchants Exchange Building, San Francisco
D. H. Burnham & Co., Architects*

Figure 37: Merchants Exchange Building.
Architect and Engineer of California (May 1908): A5.

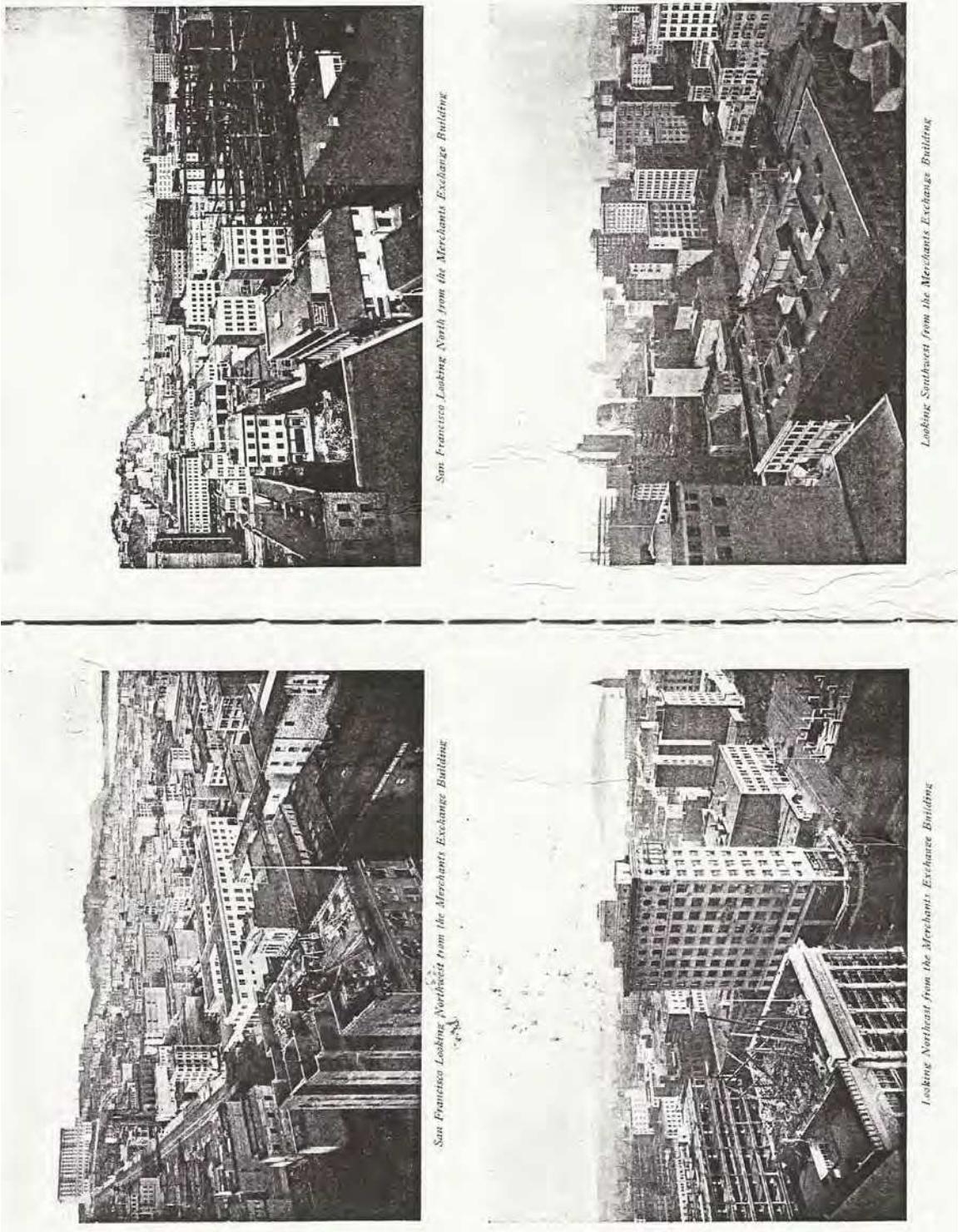


Figure 38: Views of San Francisco from the top of the Merchants Exchange Building, *Architect and Engineer* (May 1908): A6, A7.

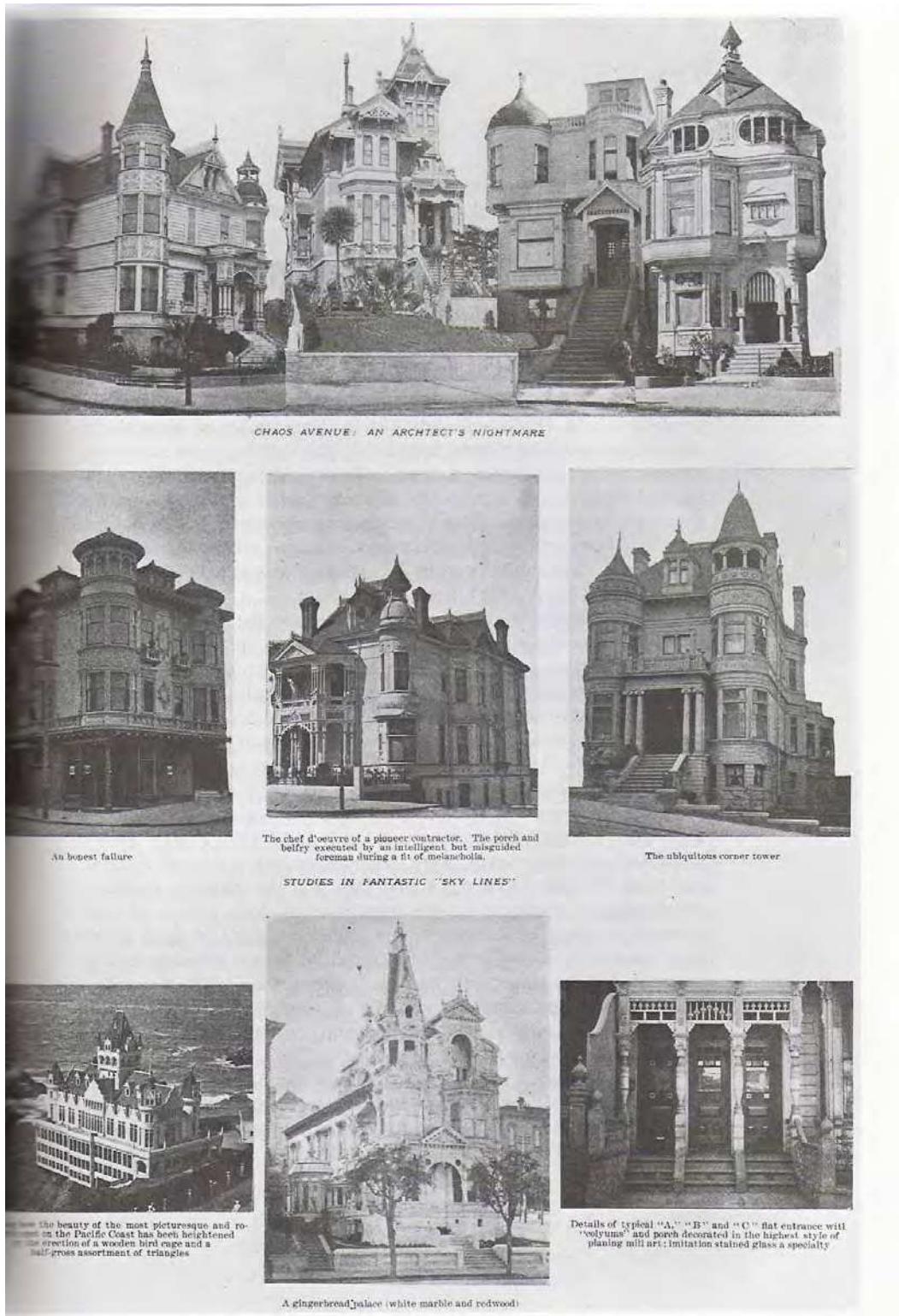


Figure 39: "San Francisco's Architectural Monstrosities," *Wave*, March 20, 1897, p. 6, in Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, 1983), 79.

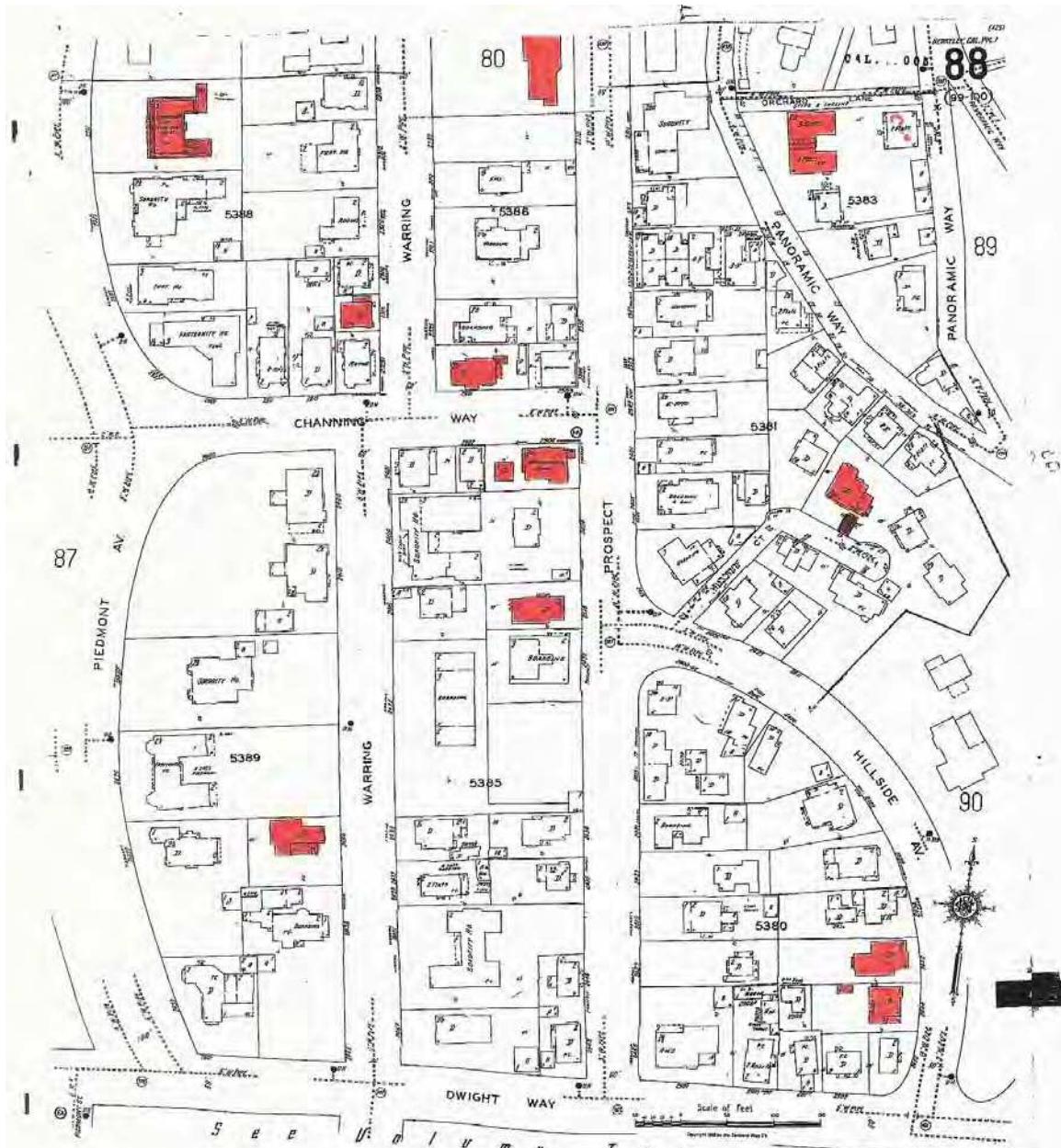


Figure 40: Sample of how Morgan's clients clustered, in this case to the southeast of the University of California, Berkeley campus. Sanborn fire insurance map of Berkeley (1929), no. 88.



Figure 41: Allen and Martha Chickering house (1911). 11 Sierra Avenue, Piedmont, California. Source: Author.



Figure 42: James L. Lombard house (1915). 62 Farragut Street, Piedmont, California.
Source: Author.

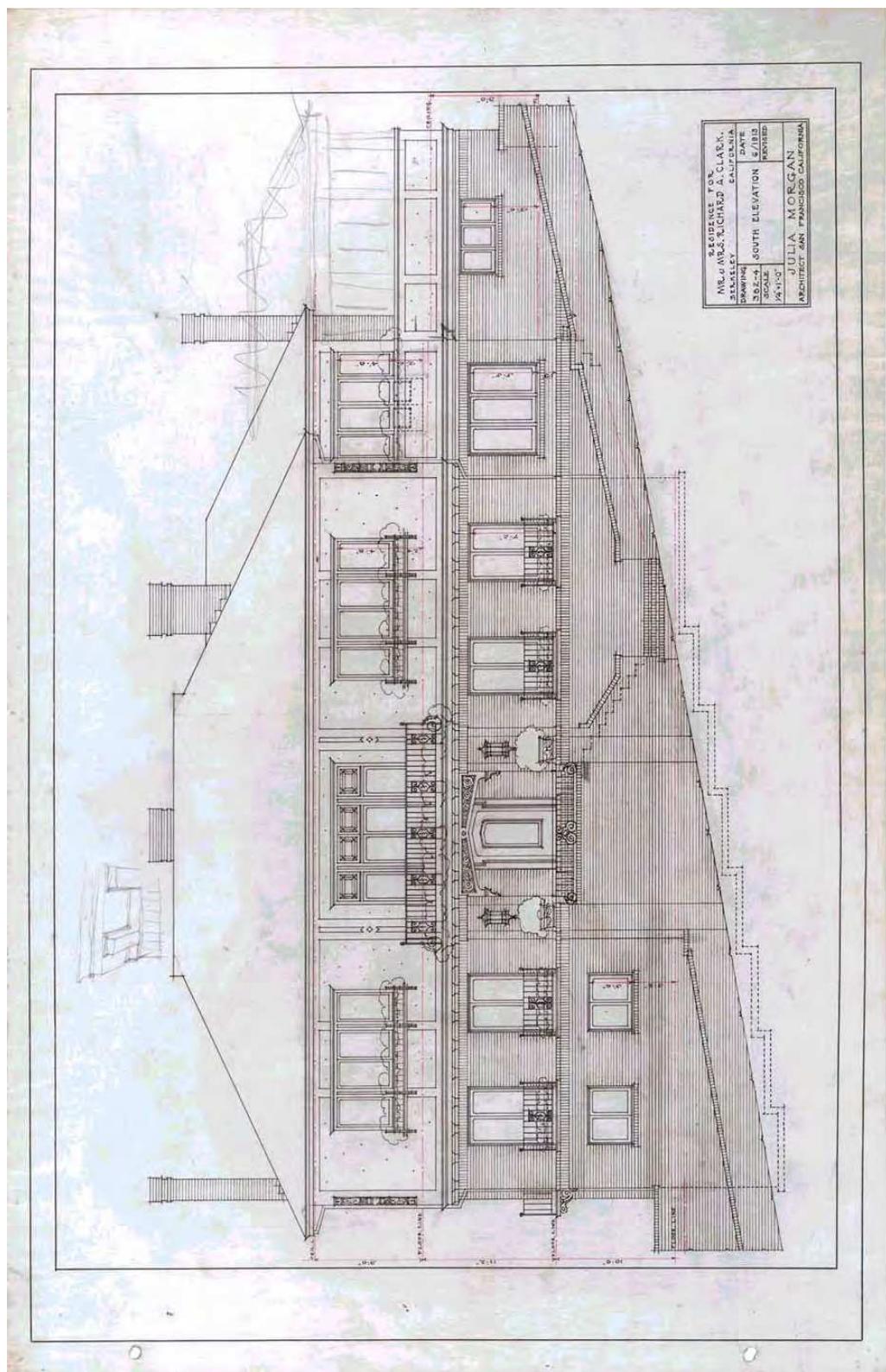


Figure 43: South elevation of Elizabeth and Richard Clark House (1913), 2833 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, California. JMAD, oversize folder 18B. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

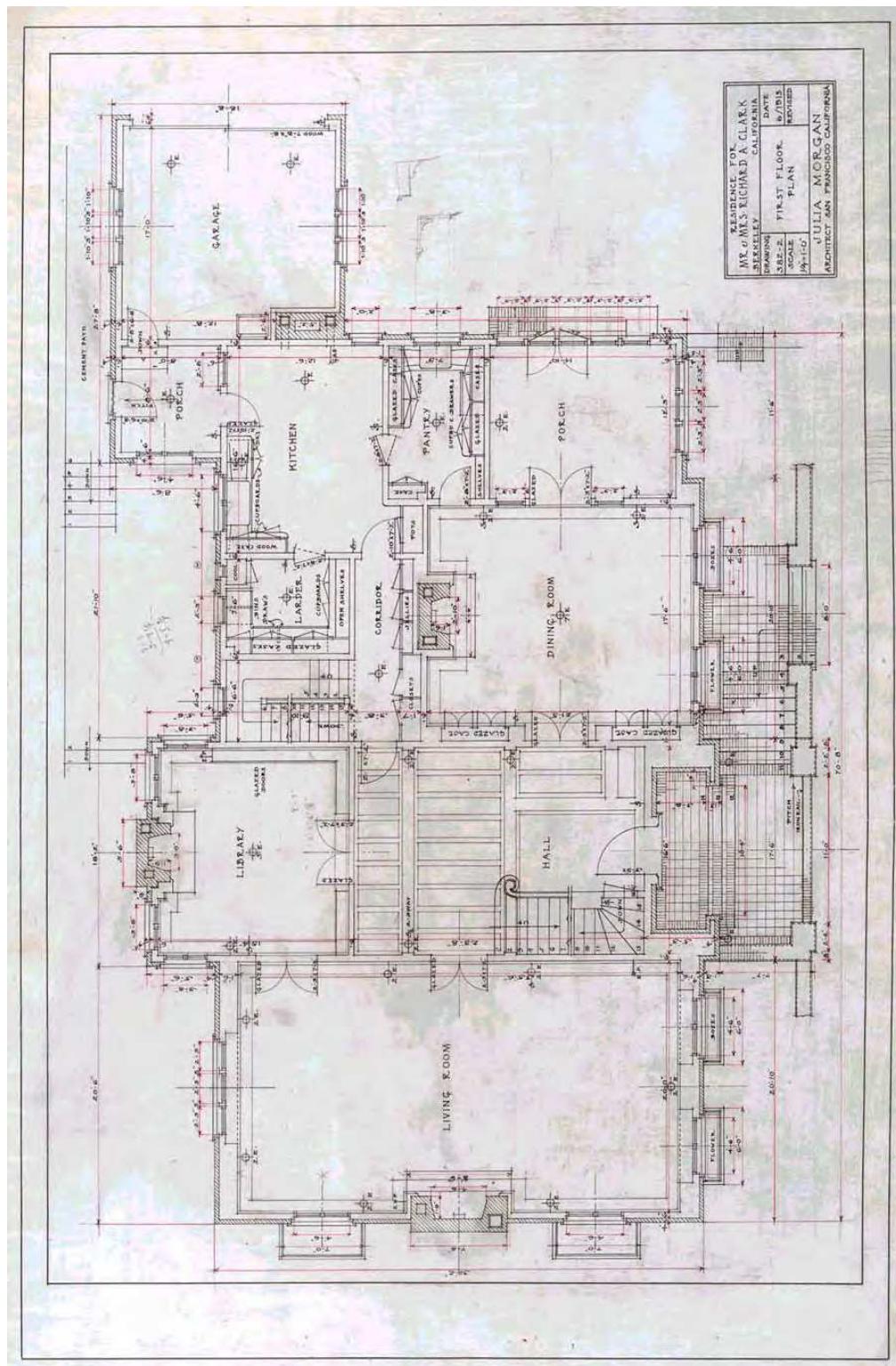


Figure 44: Elizabeth and Richard Clark house, first floor plan. JMAD, oversize folder 18B. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

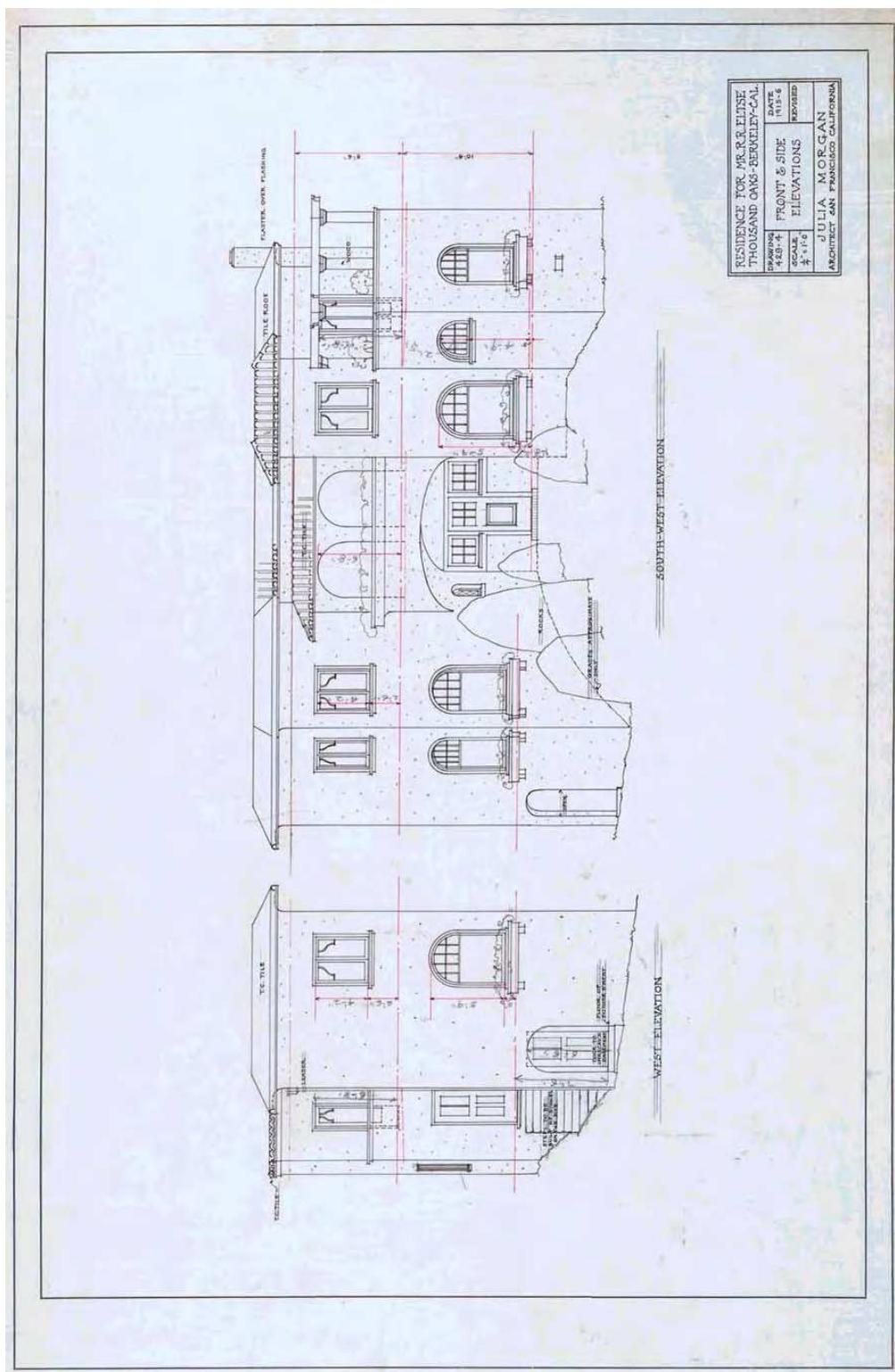


Figure 45: Front and side elevations of Oma and Ralph Eltse house, 1937 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Berkeley, California. JMAD, oversize folder 22B. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

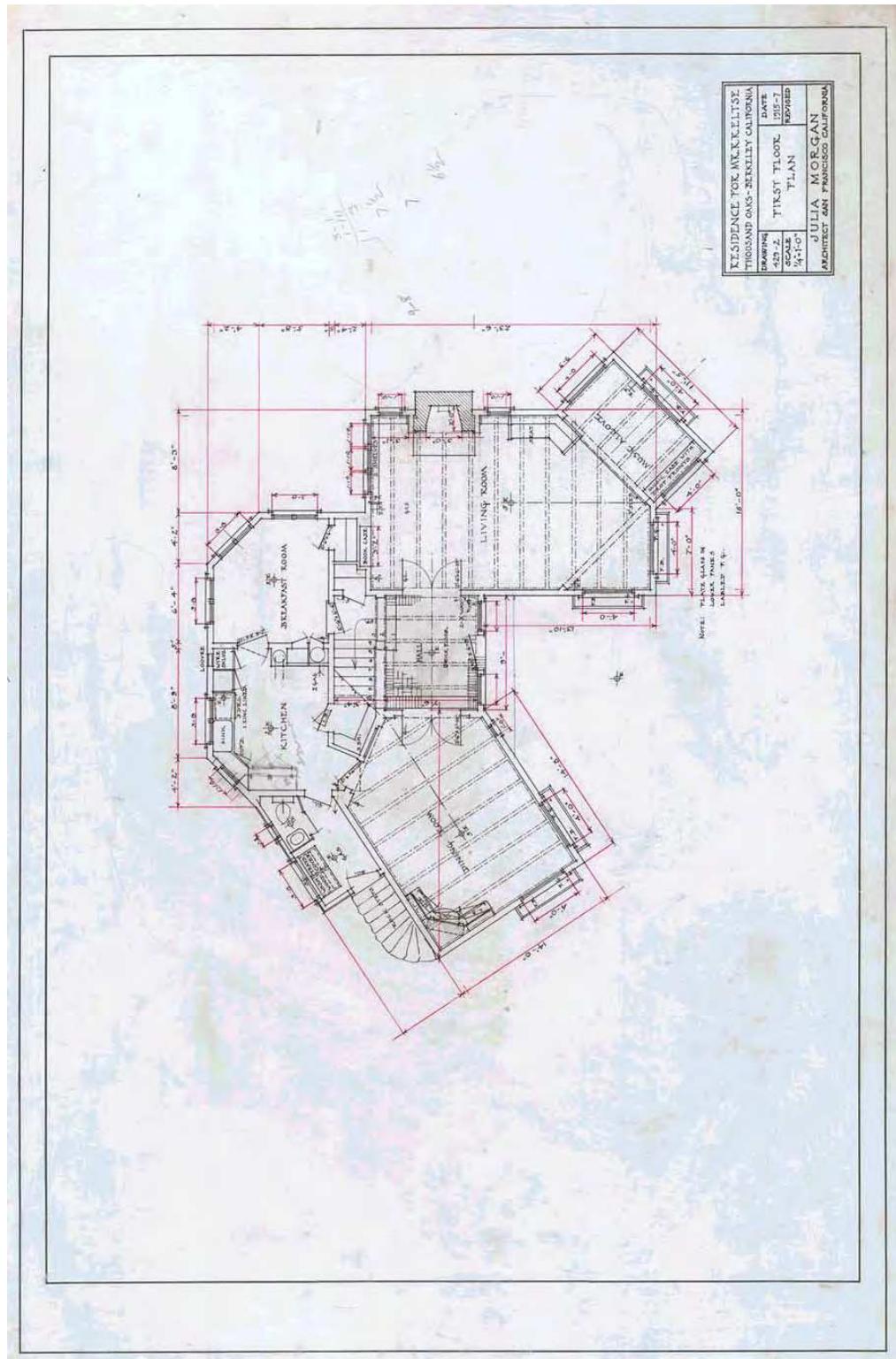


Figure 46: Oma and Ralph Eltse house, first floor plan. JMAD, oversize folder 22B. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

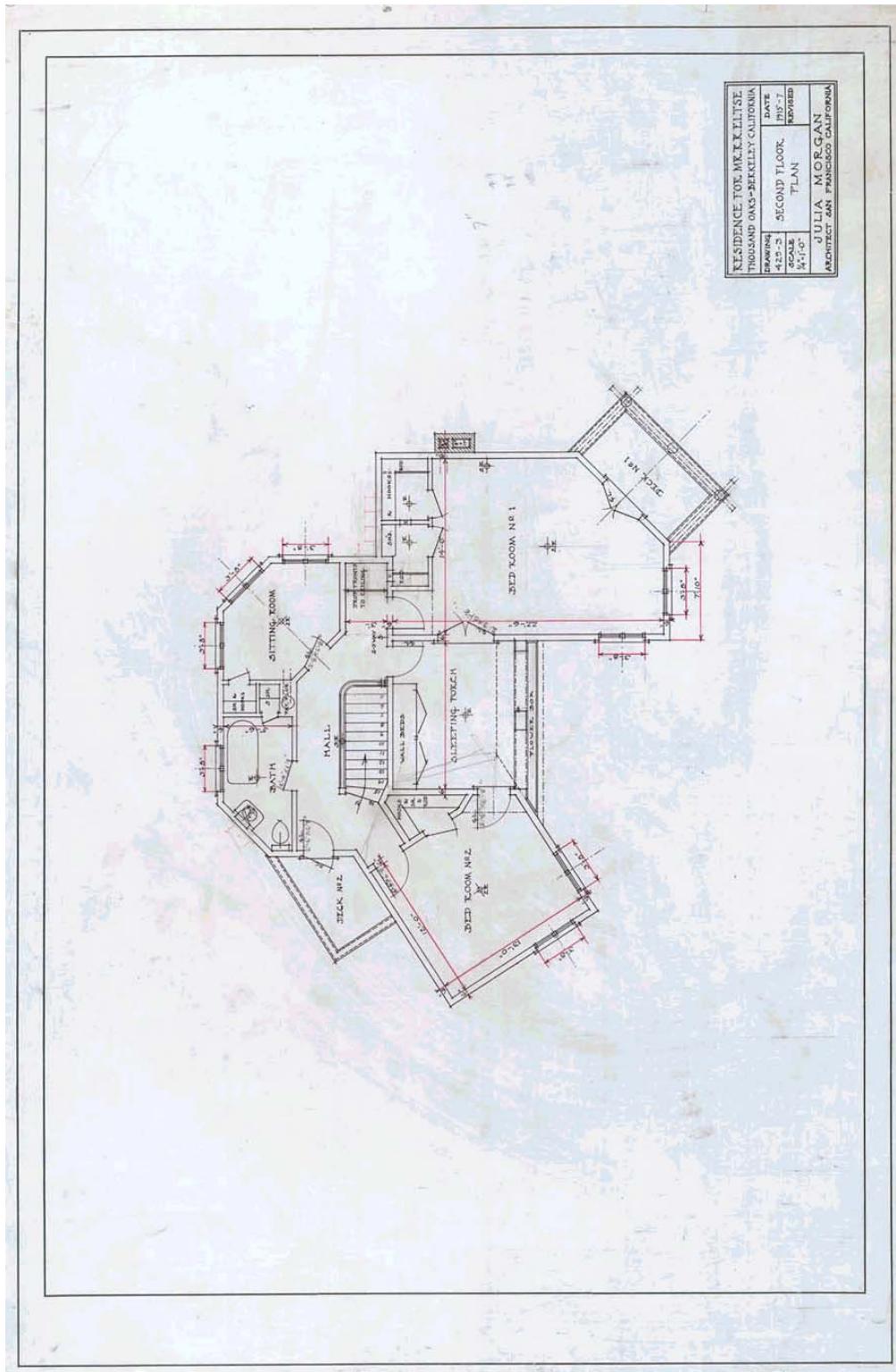


Figure 47: Oma and Ralph Eltse house, second floor plan. JMAD. oversize folder 22B. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 48: Dorothy and Frank Andrews house. 2828 Forest Street, Berkeley, California.
Source: Author.



Figure 49: Speculative houses for Louise Goddard (1905-07), 2531 and 2537 Etna Street, Berkeley, California. Soure: Author.

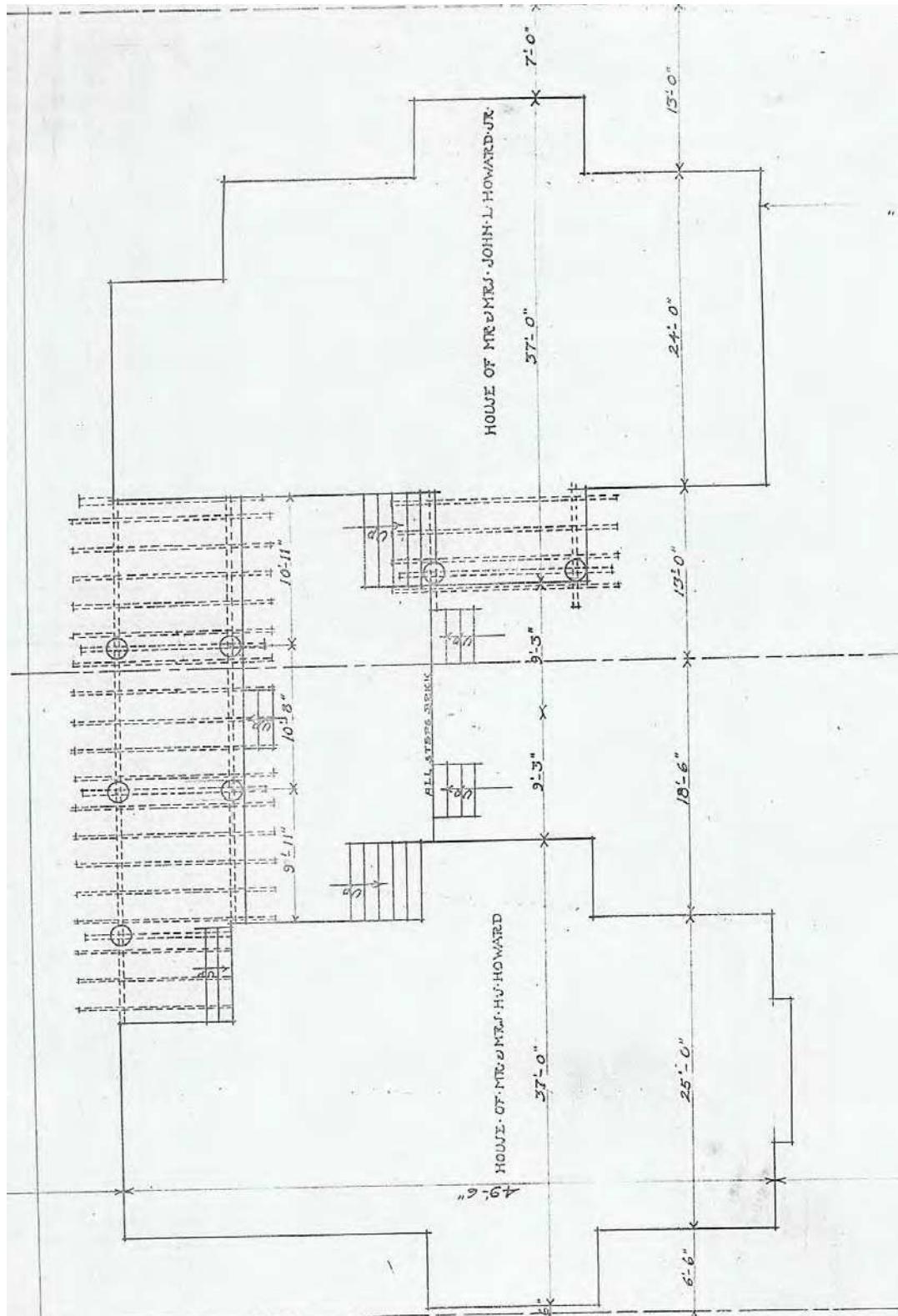


Figure 50: Ground plan for Henry S. and John L. Howard houses, c.1911. JMAD.
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

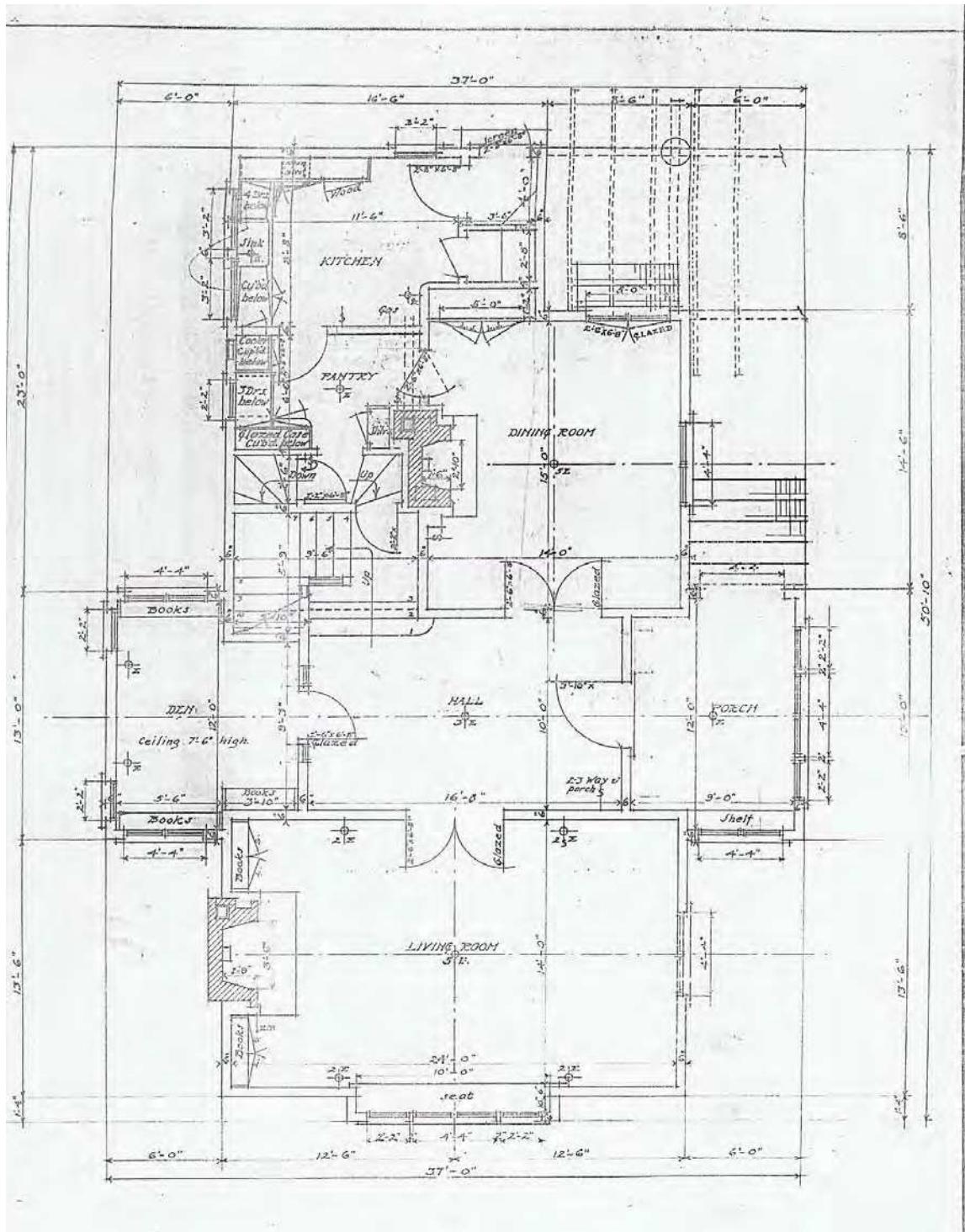


Figure 51: Henry S. Howard house, first floor plan. JMAD. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

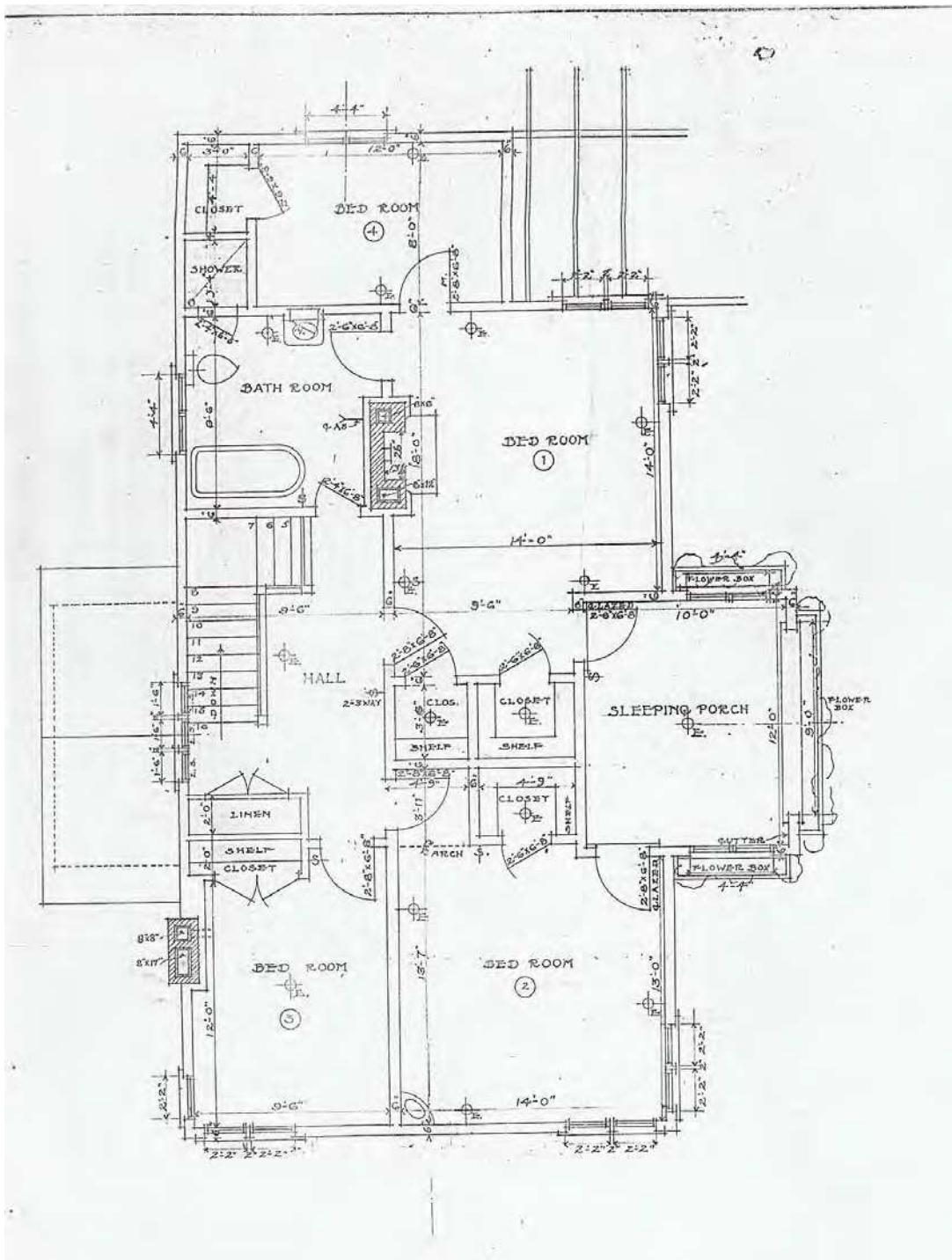


Figure 52: Henry S. Howard house, second floor plan. JMAD. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

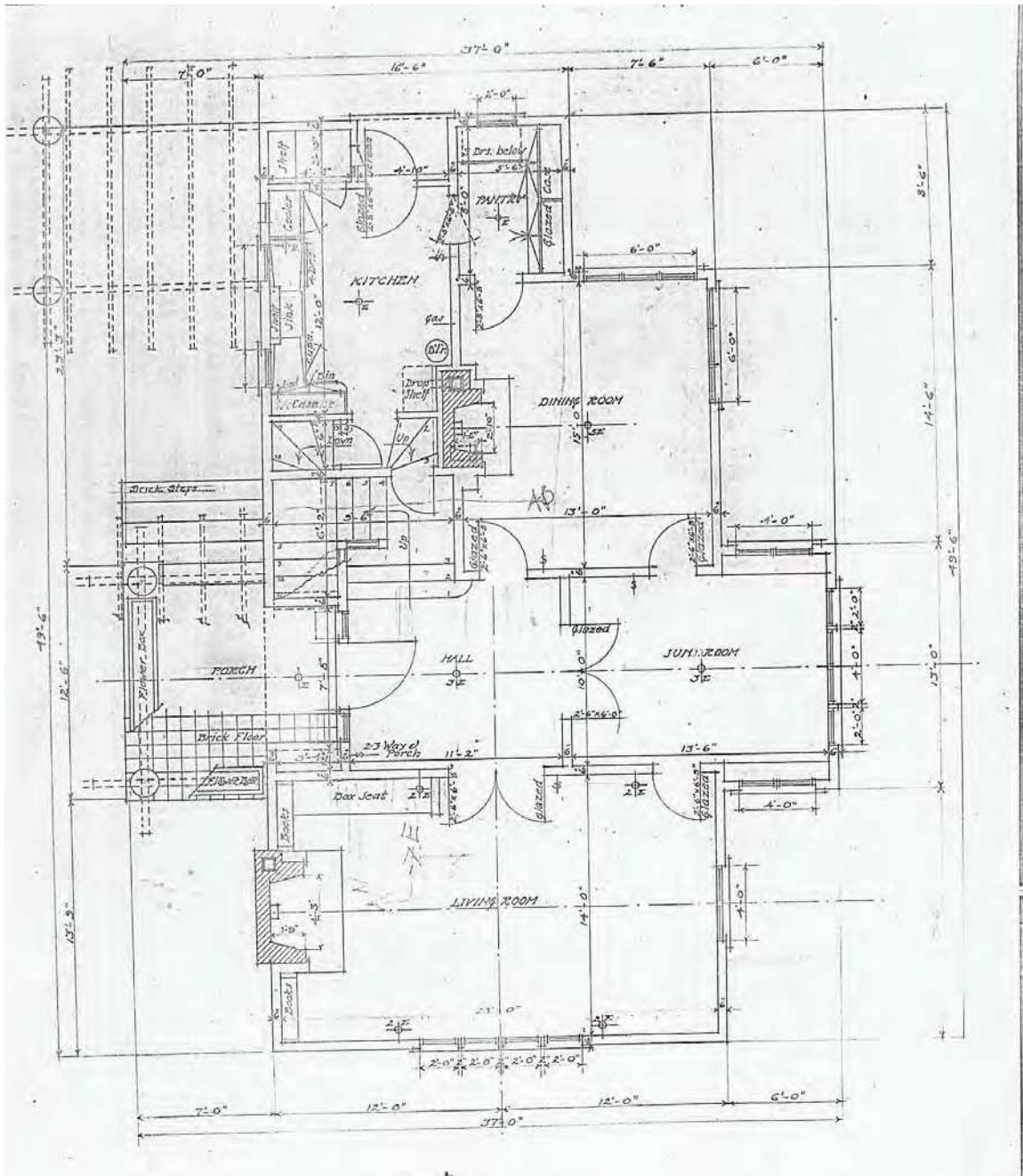


Figure 53: John L. Howard house, first floor plan. Courtesy of the Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

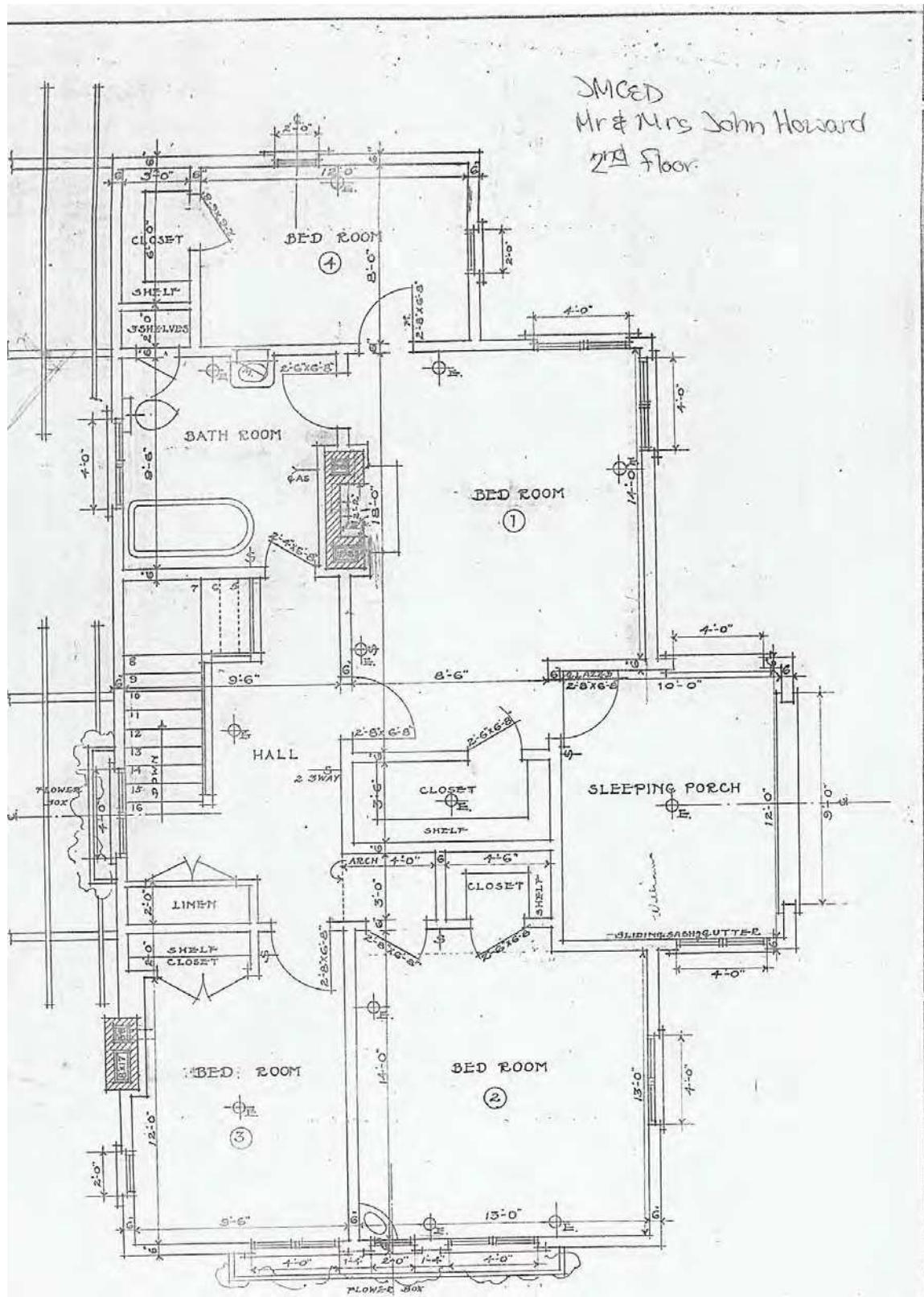


Figure 54: John L. Howard, Jr., house, second floor plan. Courtesy of the Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.



Figure 55: South elevation for Louise Katz apartments, 2556-2560 Buena Vista Way, Berkeley, California. JMAD. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

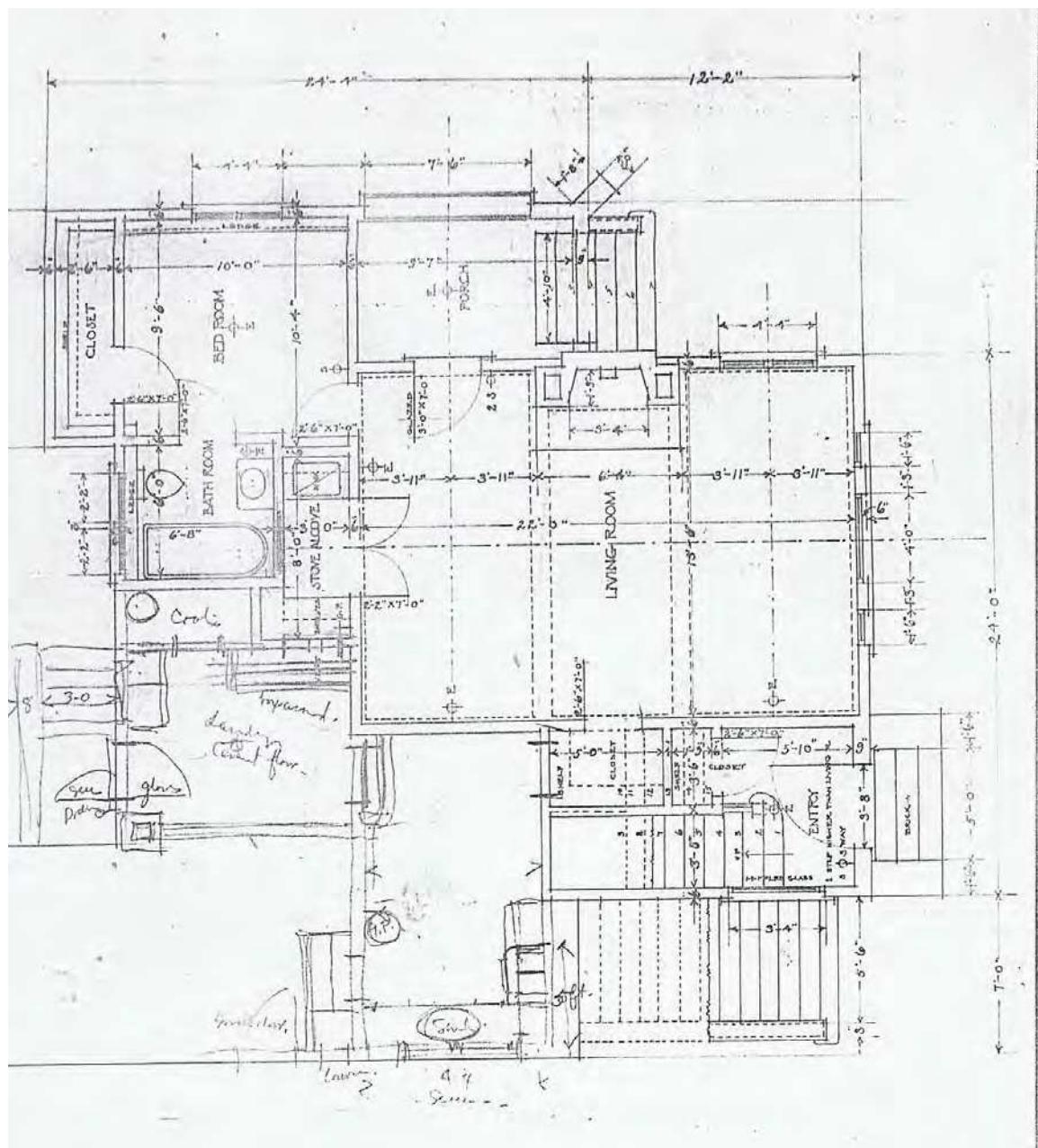


Figure 56: Ground floor plan for Louise Katz apartments, 2556-2560 Buena Vista Way, Berkeley, California. JMAD. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

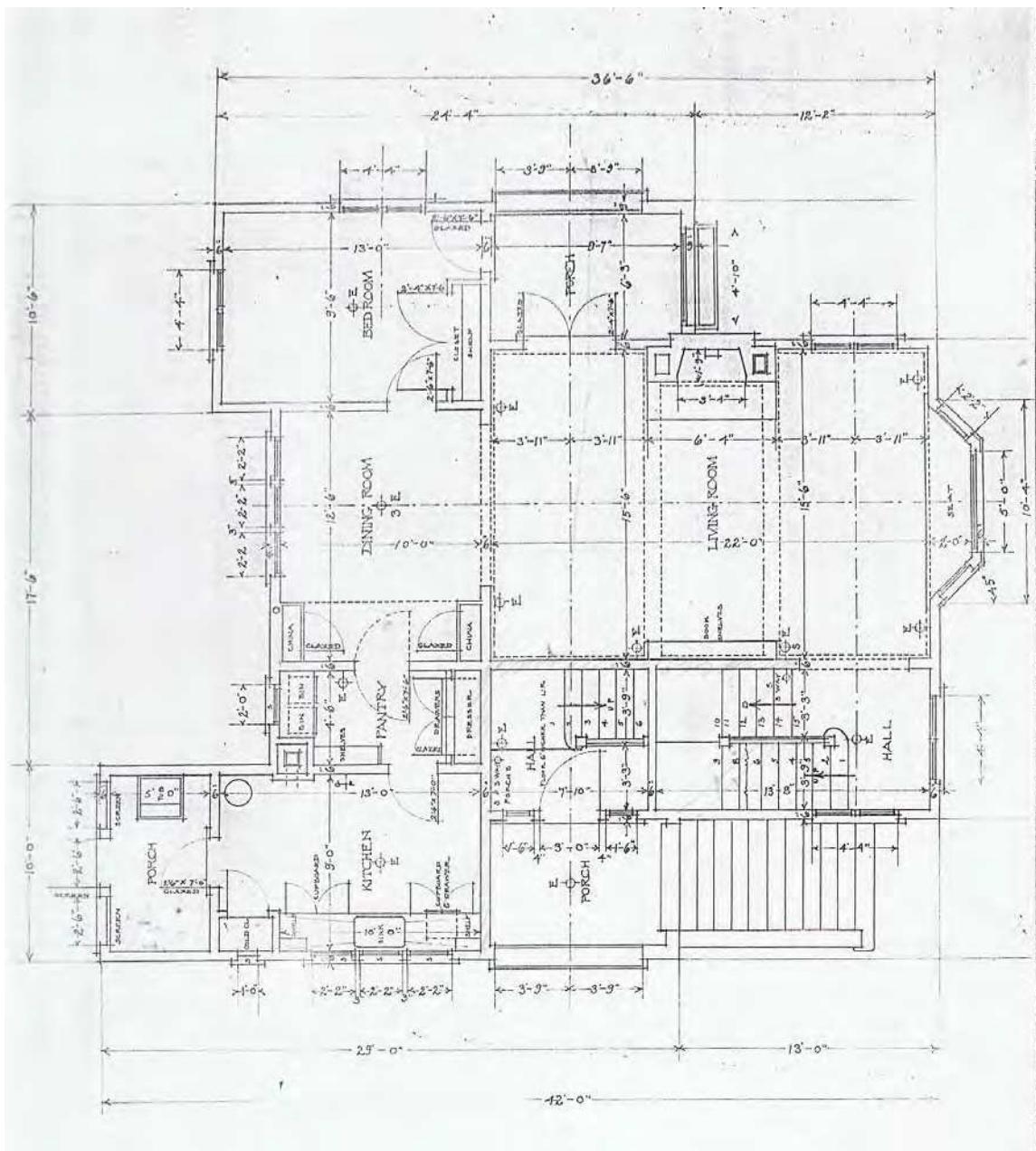


Figure 57: First floor plan for Louise Katz apartments, 2556-2560 Buena Vista Way, Berkeley, California. JMAD. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

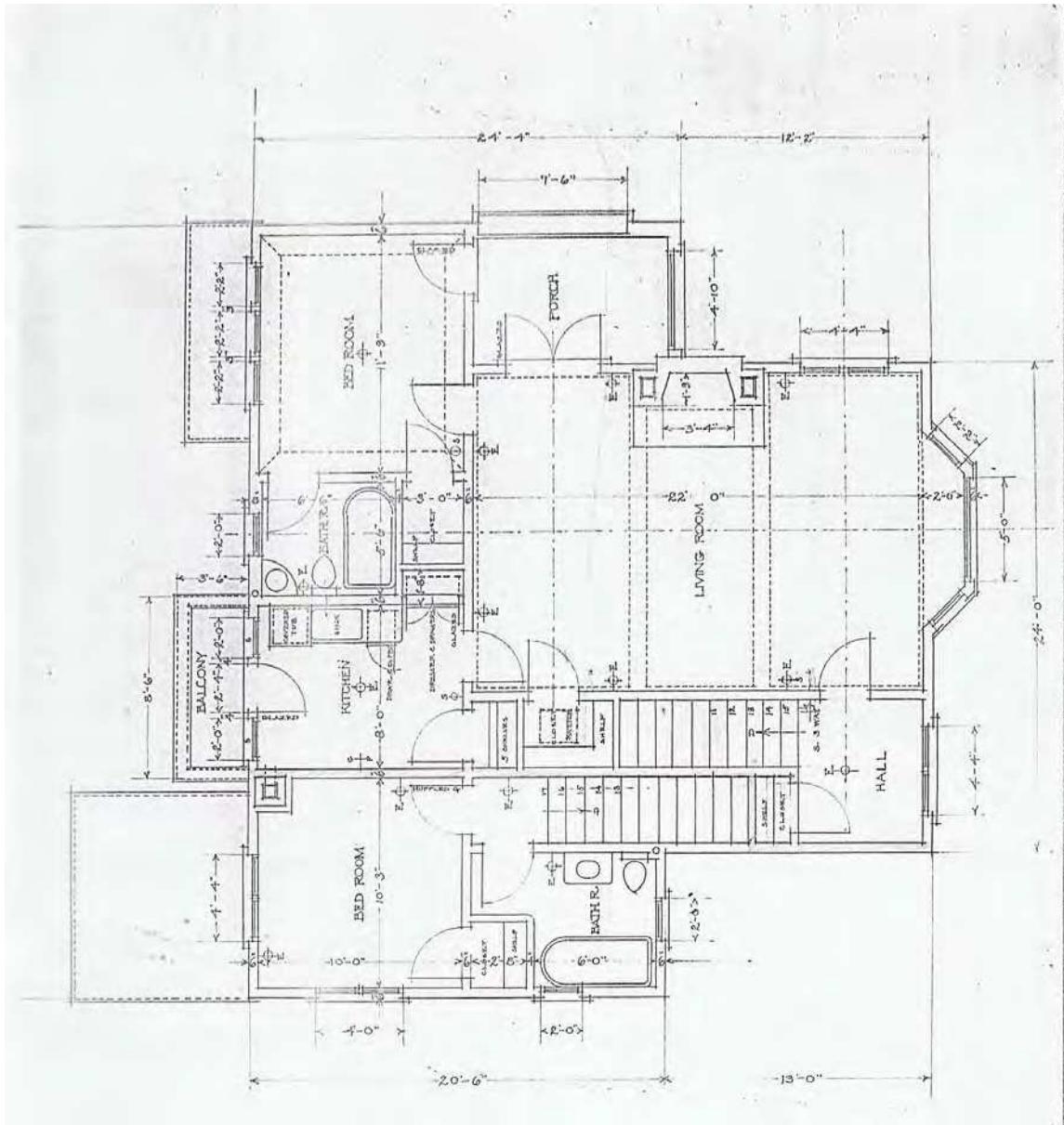


Figure 58: Second floor plans for Louise Katz apartments, 2556-2560 Buena Vista Way, Berkeley, California. JMAD. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

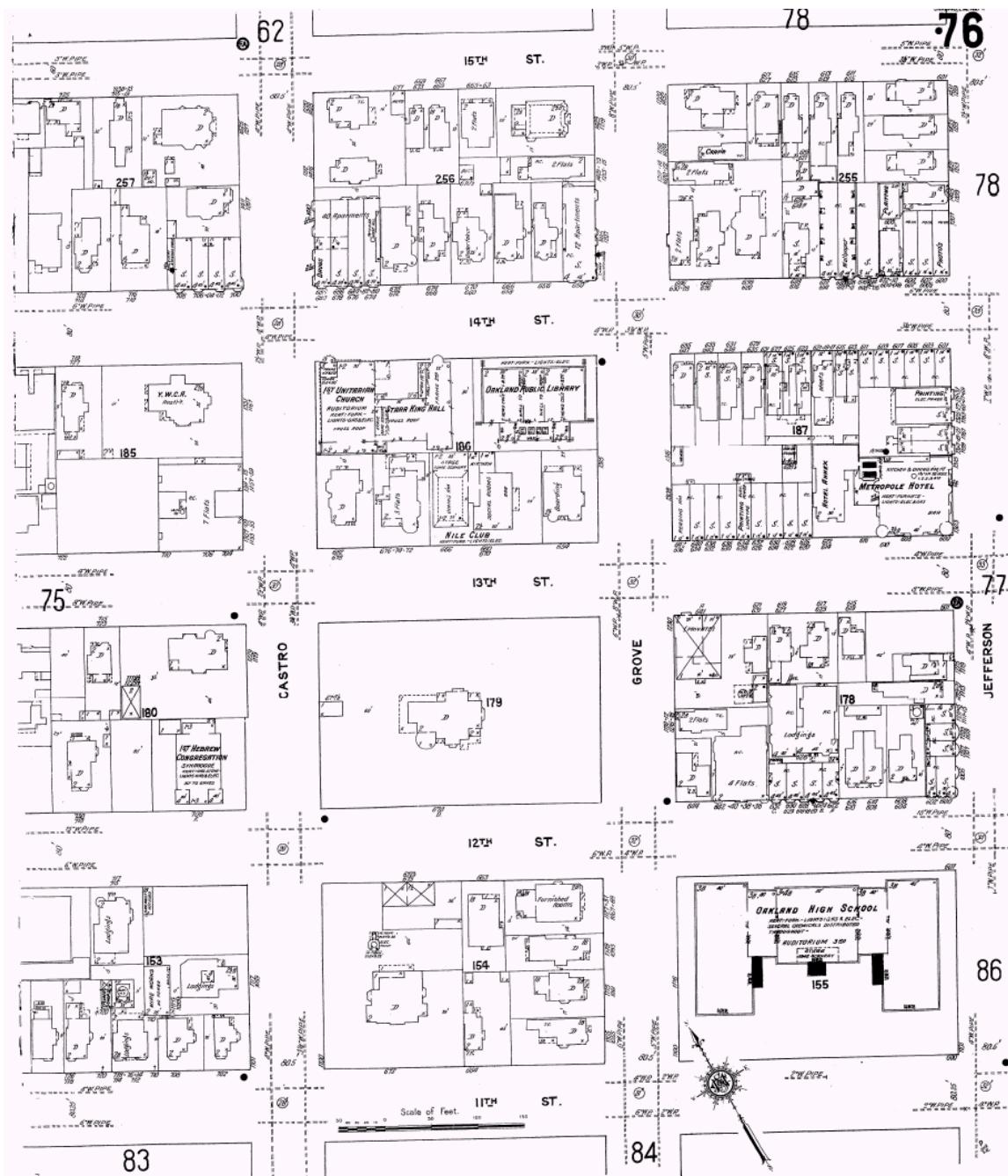
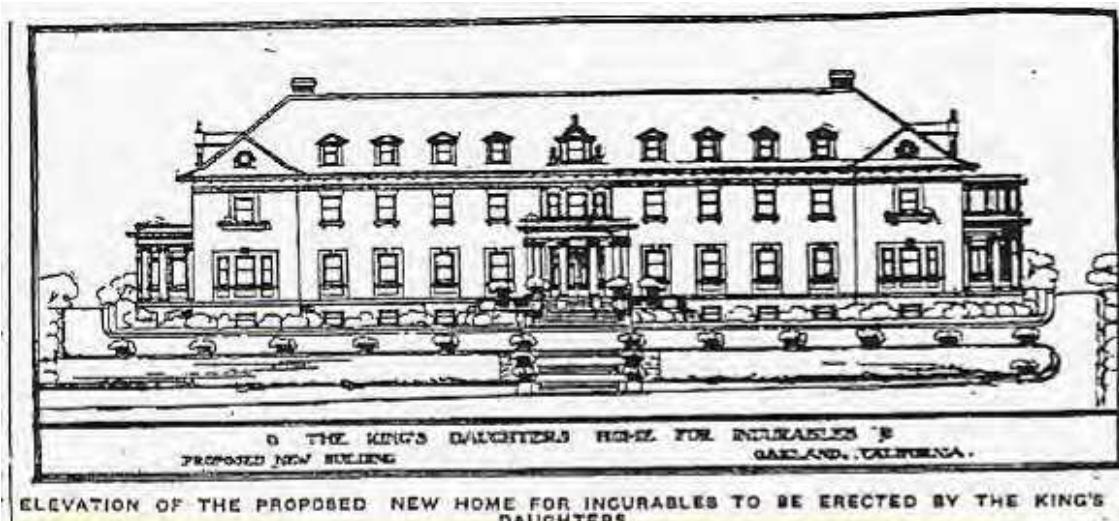


Figure 59: YWCA headquarters were at Fourteenth Street and Castro; the restaurant/cafeteria was near Fourteenth and Jefferson; and YWCA members used the gymnasium at Oakland High School, on Twelfth Street, between Grove and Jefferson. Sanborn fire insurance map of Oakland (1911), No. 76.

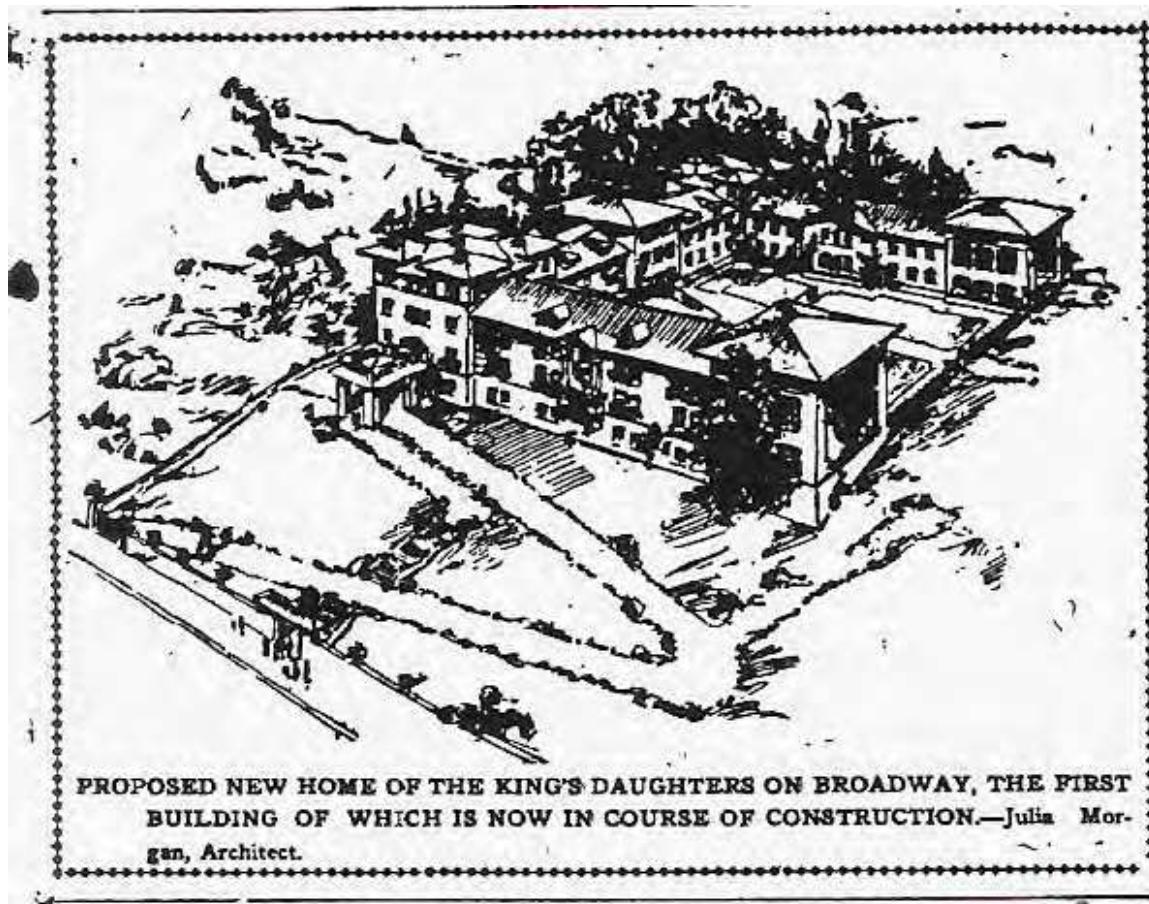


Figure 60: Oakland YWCA. Courtesy of Mary Ann Sullivan.



THE KING'S DAUGHTERS HOME FOR INCURABLES IS
PROPOSED NEW BUILDING OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.
ELEVATION OF THE PROPOSED NEW HOME FOR INCURABLES TO BE ERECTED BY THE KING'S
DAUGHTERS.

Figure 61: Original drawing for Kings' Daughters' Home for Incurables, 1906. *Oakland Tribune*, April 7, 1906.



PROPOSED NEW HOME OF THE KING'S DAUGHTERS ON BROADWAY, THE FIRST
BUILDING OF WHICH IS NOW IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Julia Morgan, Architect.

Figure 62: Revised drawings for Kings' Daughters' Home for Incurables. *Oakland Tribune* [May 1907?]

SAN FRAN

Y. W. C. A. Building Fund Workers Ready for Campaign



GRONAGEL-HEERMANN PHOTO

Mrs. Sanford M. Dickey and Mrs. Daniel Shoemaker inspecting condemned Y. W. C. A. building.

Figure 63: San Francisco YWCA leaders. *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 25, 1929, p. 8.

Y.W.C.A. Housing Campaign Committee to Give Report



Leoma Singmaster, Verna Cornwell and Teru Moore

Figure 64: San Francisco YWCA members. *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 1929, p. 11.



Figure 65: Phoebe Hearst Social Hall, Asilomar. Courtesy of Mary Ann Sullivan.



Figure 66: Grace Dodge Chapel, Asilomar.
Courtesy of Mary Ann Sullivan.



K. E. Parker Company, Builders

DURANT AVENUE ELEVATION, WOMEN'S CITY CLUB, BERKELEY
ULIA MORGAN, ARCHITECT

Figure 67: Berkeley Women's City Club, from Julian C. Mesic, "Berkeley City Women's Club," *Architect and Engineer* 105 (April 1931), 26.

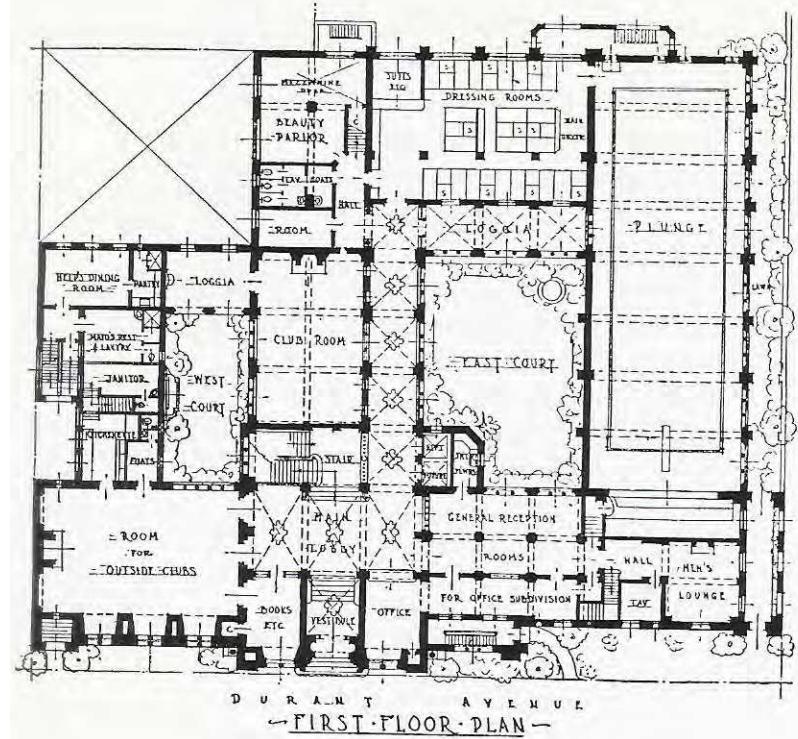
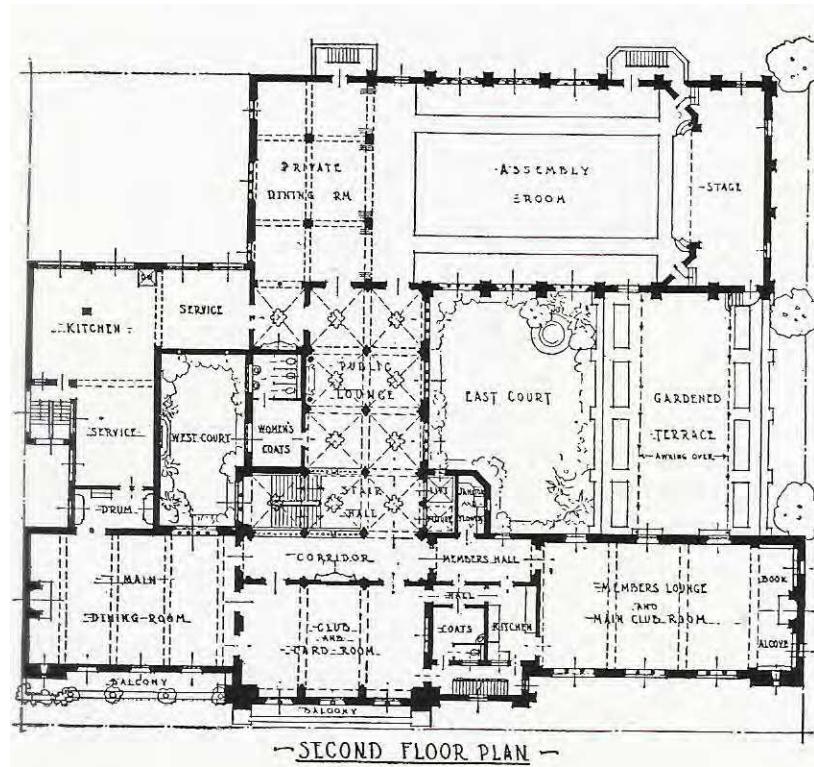


Figure 68: Berkeley Women's City Club plan, from Julian C. Mesic, "Berkeley City Women's Club," *Architect and Engineer* 105 (April 1931), 30.

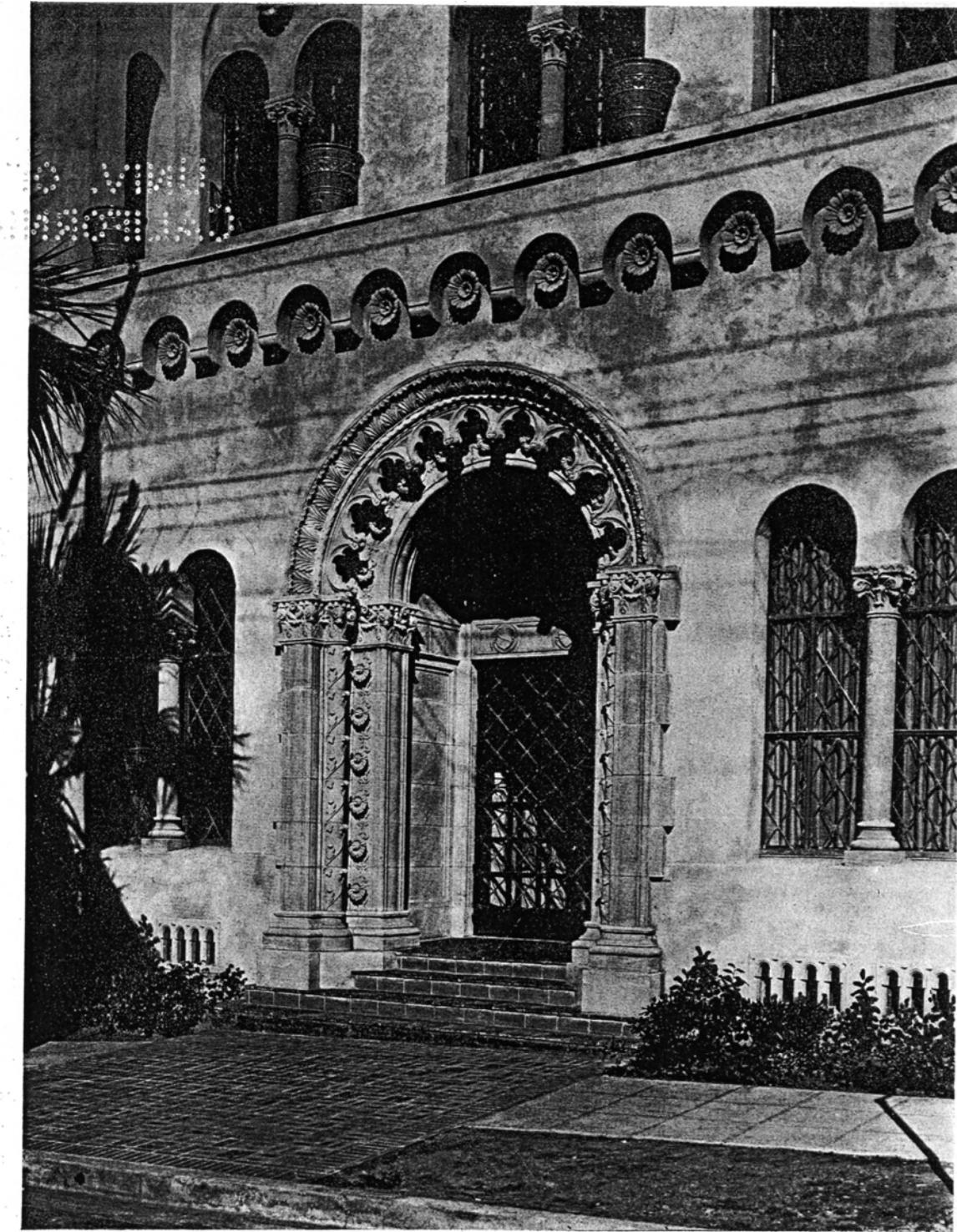
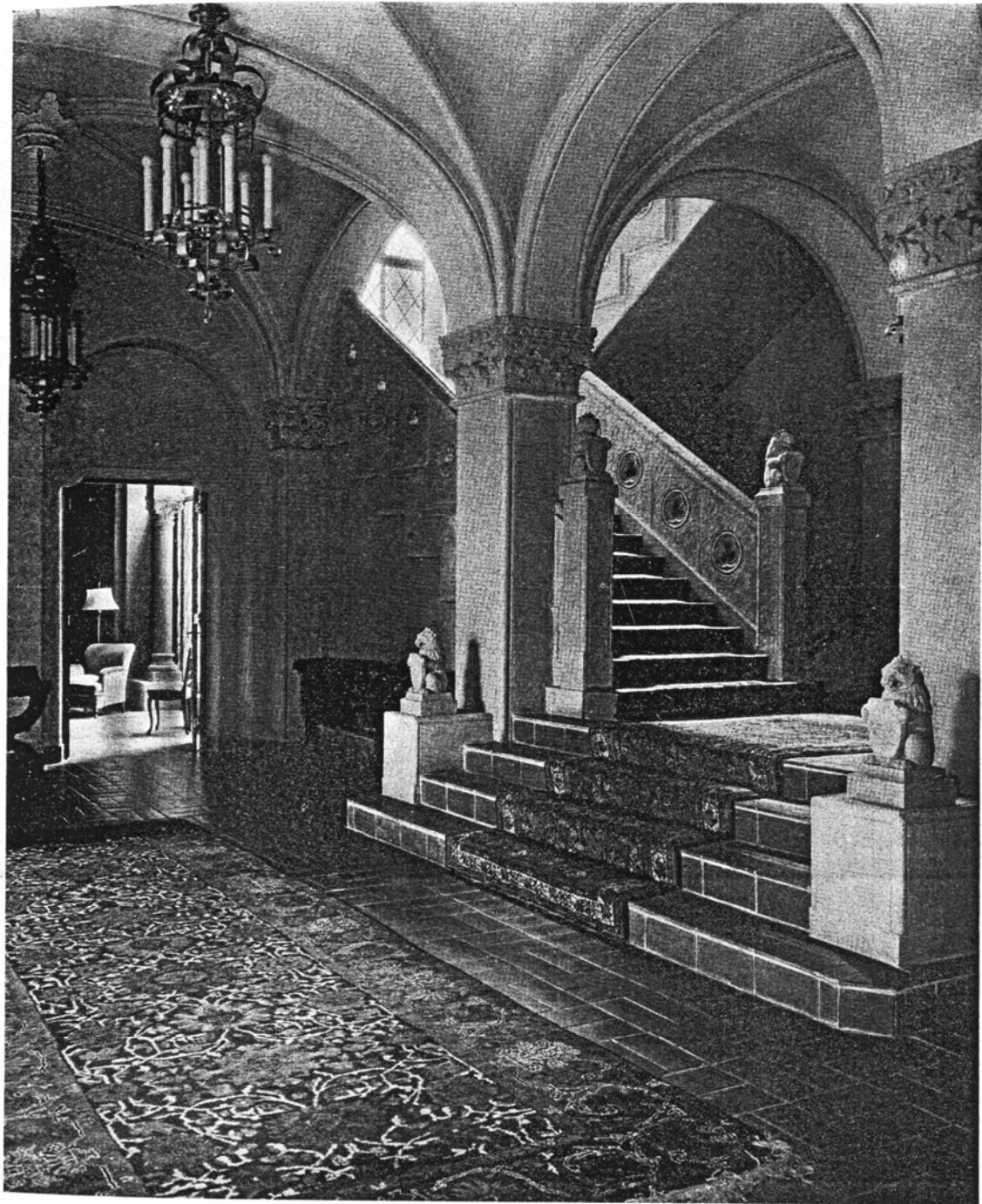


Photo by Sponagel

ENTRANCE, WOMEN'S CITY CLUB, BERKELEY
JULIA MORGAN, ARCHITECT

Figure 69: Berkeley Women's City Club entrance, from Julian C. Mesic, "Berkeley City Women's Club," *Architect and Engineer* 105 (April 1931), 27.



ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE, WOMEN'S CITY CLUB, BERKELEY
JULIA MORGAN, ARCHITECT

Figure 70: Berkeley Women's City Club main stairs. Julian C. Mesic, "Berkeley City Women's Club," *Architect and Engineer* 105 (April 1931), 43.

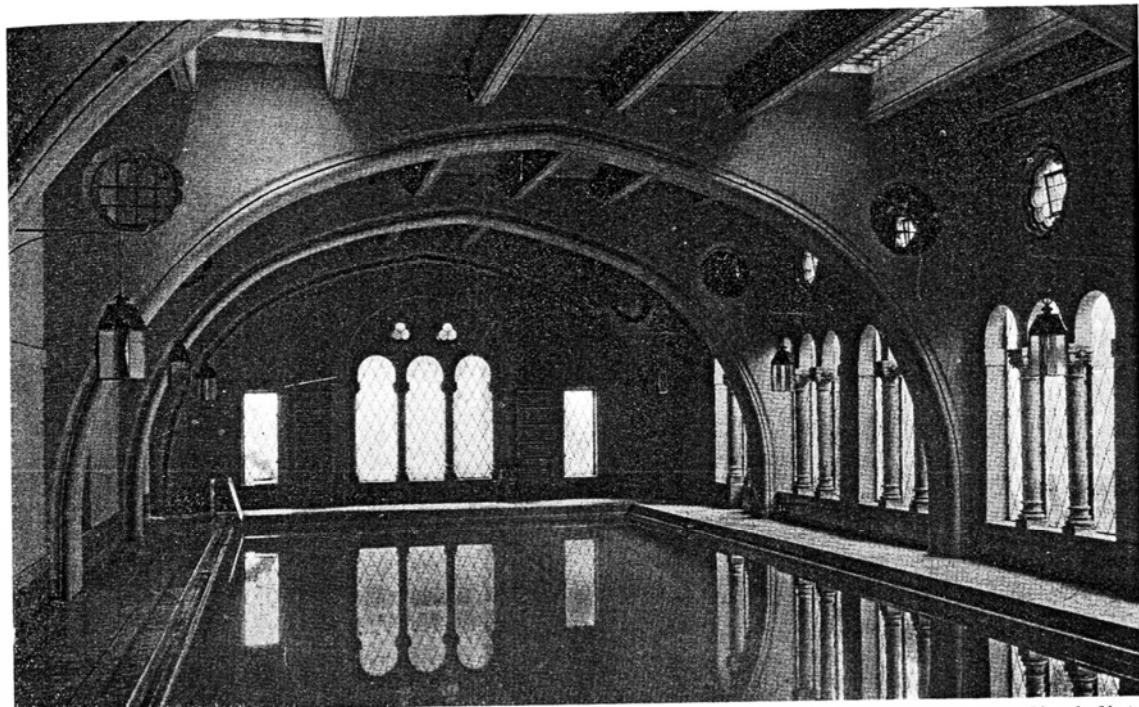


Photo by Morto

PLUNGE, WOMEN'S CITY CLUB, BERKELEY
Julia Morgan, Architect

Figure 71: Berkeley Women's City Club pool. Julian C. Mesic, "Berkeley City Women's Club," *Architect and Engineer* 105 (April 1931), 33.



Figure 72: Exterior view of Chinese YWCA, San Francisco. From "Chinese Y.W.C.A. Building, San Francisco, Calif.," *Architecture* 67 (April 1933), 195.



Figure 73: View of tower, roofs, interior courtyard, and roof garden, Chinese YWCA of San Francisco. From "Chinese Y.W.C.A. Building, San Francisco, Calif.," *Architecture* 67 (April 1933), 196.

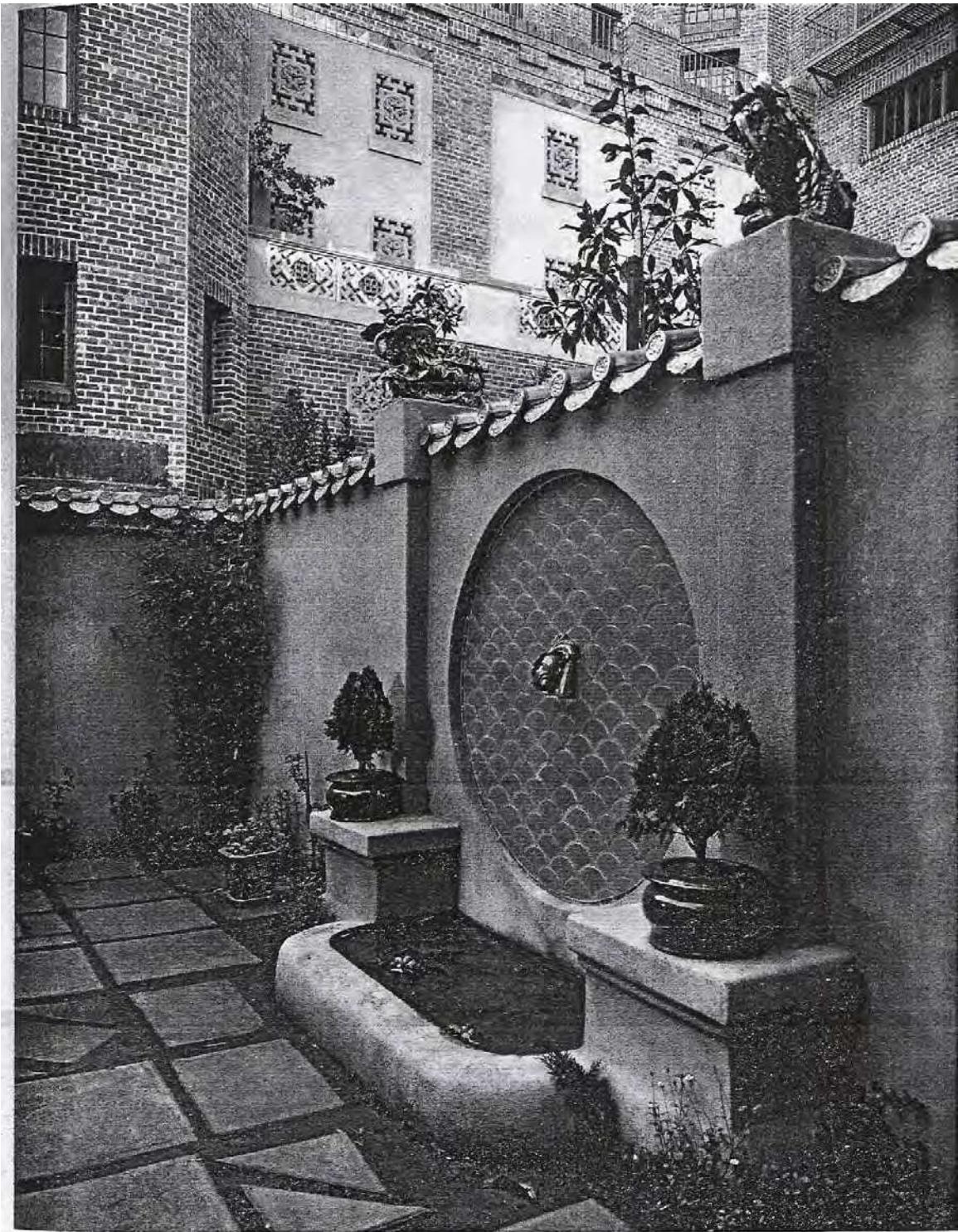


Figure 74: Chinese YWCA courtyard. From “Chinese Y.W.C.A. Building, San Francisco, Calif.,” *Architecture* 67 (April 1933), 197.

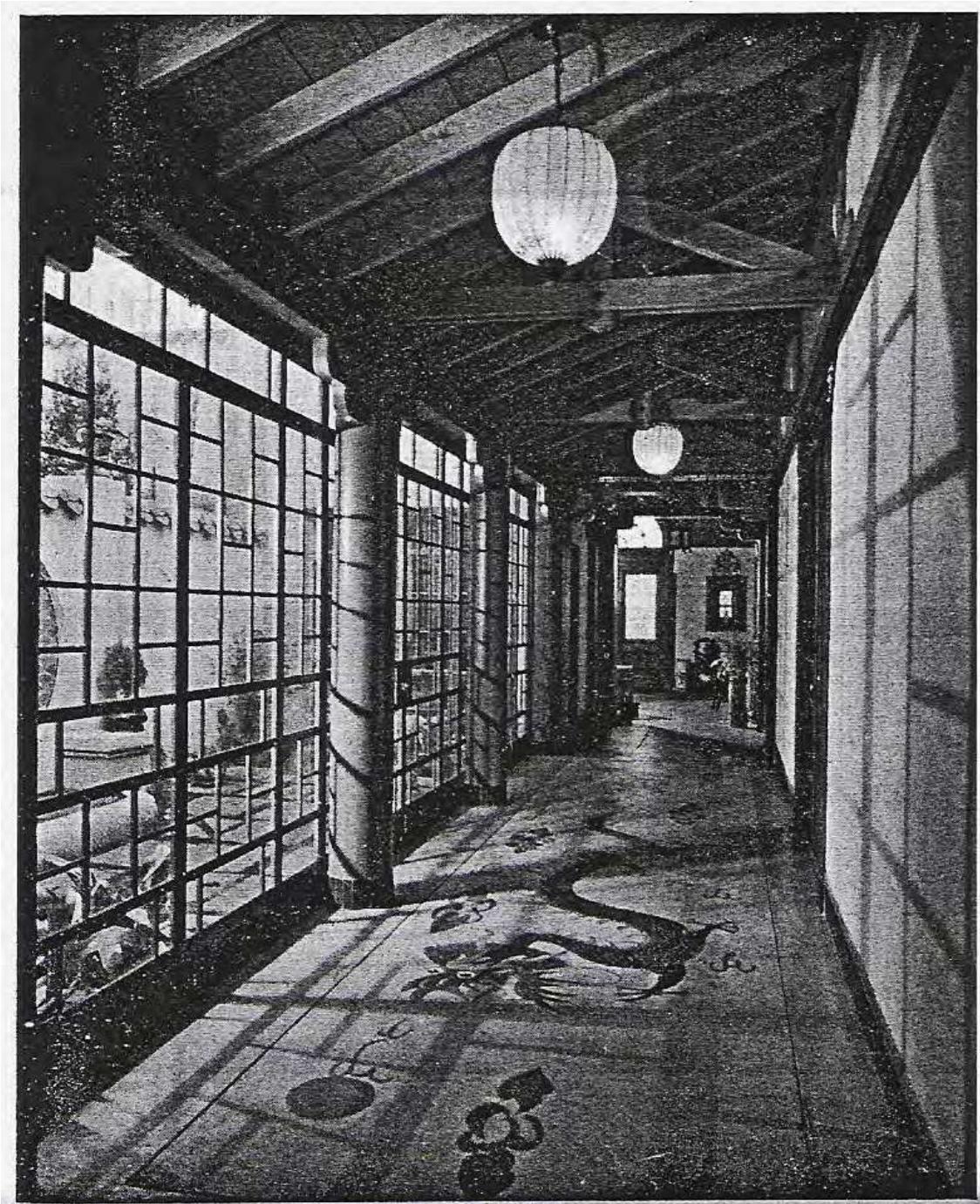


Figure 75: Chinese YWCA, dragon motif, main hall. From "Chinese Y.W.C.A. Building, San Francisco, Calif.," *Architecture* 67 (April 1933), 195.