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Ledger Domain and Other Spheres

1928–1930

HOW DO WE KNOW, really *know*, that work started in Santa Monica by 1926? The question is put that way in deference to those favoring 1927 or even 1928. A common trend in Hearstiana has been for events to be placed too early on the timeline, sometimes by a good many years. If Hearst said or did something in 1935, for example, the tendency has been to cite 1930 or 1925, if not a much earlier time. Thus it's almost refreshing to find a key moment like the groundbreaking in Santa Monica being post-dated, if only by a year or two. There's no need to dwell on what Fred Lawrence Guiles said in 1972 in *Marion Davies*. In his case it suffices to know, as we saw before, that in relying on the private Davies Collection (the items mentioned in the Introduction that few people have ever seen and that are now at large, mostly whereabouts unknown), Guiles was endorsing 1926. Nor do we need to cite other secondary sources beyond the Miriam Cooper or even the Irene Mayer Selznick level to drive home the point that 1926 is a date we can trust. The letter from Carpenter Bros. to Joe Willicombe in October of that year is proof enough. After all, a designer can do much on paper before a footing is ever dug or a foundation laid. But when a builder seeks \$14,000 in 1920s dollars to offset wages and other costs, construction has surely reached the active stage.

With 1926 and 1927 behind us, we're poised to tackle the period from 1928 through 1930. We can do so with two more of the job ledgers from the Morgan-Forney Collection. Good thing they survived. If they hadn't, this would be one impossibly hard path to take, beset

with rumor, myth, shoddy memoirs, and all the other failings of the undernourished approach to history. The Hearst Papers at The Bancroft Library are disappointingly slight in Beach House–Santa Monica matters for 1928–1930. The Julia Morgan Collection at Cal Poly is better off but still fragmentary. The George & Rosalie Hearst Collection held by Will Hearst III doesn't apply until 1931. That leaves Morgan-Forney in a class largely its own. But the diary-memoir of a man named Hayes Perkins also figures in this chapter. So does some other archival and literary miscellany, with more of Alice Head's *It Could Never Have Happened* being among the latter.

The more detailed of the two Morgan ledgers starting in 1928 is called "New Santa Monica Jobs #415 and #321 Ocean Front." The 415 number denotes the main Beach House structure, the 321 the much smaller building that still stands today, perpendicular to PCH at the north end of the property. Morgan's reconciliation cover sheet (typewritten, unlike the cursive entries inside) reflects a change made in her favor. Her 5% commission for 1926 and 1927 had been increased to 7% (San Simeon remained at 8.5%). This increase is important to note, even to emphasize. The widespread, frankly absurd belief that she was almost a pauper, that Hearst never paid her properly, that she was willing to go without comforts of all sorts—physical, spiritual, above all financial—has refused to fall silent.

The apocryphal aside, the New Santa Monica ledger begins on a typical note: "Travel Miss Morgan." The date: August 28, 1928, a Tuesday. A quick check of the woman's other ledgers shows that she went to San Simeon a day later. In contrast, her Riverside YWCA ledger, another good one to compare through much of this chapter, indicates she'd been in that city three weeks earlier and wouldn't be back until September 6—in concert then with her latest stop at the Beach House (Riverside is sixty miles due east of Santa Monica). Two

more check-ups on the Beach House were made in September, one by Morgan, the other by Jim LeFeaver of her office staff in San Francisco.

Amid these very exact entries, there's a new name: H. H. Benedict, a structural engineer. Benedict earned \$70 a week, this when Hatch Lovell, an on-site draftsman of Morgan's at San Simeon, was getting \$50 a week and her secretary in San Francisco, Lilian Forney, was getting \$30. Benedict had stature. We'll be seeing more of him. We'll also be seeing the better-known Frank Hellenthal, a local builder who succeeded George Loorz in 1928 as construction superintendent at the Beach House. For now, early in the New Santa Monica phase, Benedict's name crops up more often than Hellenthal's does.

The new ledger has a noteworthy sub-heading: "Douras Mausoleum and [the] Clinic." The Clinic portion pertains to the anticipated Marion Davies Children's Clinic in the Sawtelle district of West Los Angeles, a job Morgan didn't officially start until 1931 (whereupon it got its own ledger). For the time being, the Morgan office put any applicable Clinic entries, which were only sporadic, under New Santa Monica. The Mausoleum reference pertains to Rose Douras, the mother of Marion Davies, who died in January 1928. The proposed family crypt in Hollywood (no separate ledger exists) was designed for her sake and, as of his death in 1935, for Marion's father, Bernard Douras. Marion joined them in 1961, as did her longest-lived sister in 1963; the two other Davies sisters had been interred there in 1938 and 1940.

With Hearst being in Europe in the summer of 1928 (Marion and a good-sized party were naturally in tow), and with Morgan's most pertinent ledgers of the moment—New Santa Monica, Riverside, San Simeon—being replete with details too numerous to recount, we should avail ourselves of some glimpses of life as only these rare individuals could know it. Indirectly at least, allusively if not more so, the San Simeon diary excerpts that soon follow can add background and

perspective, can pose illuminating parallels to the probable experiences in Santa Monica of Hearst and Marion, of Morgan and LeFeaver, of Benedict, Flannery, and Hellenthal, and of many other people. Overall, we're still talking about the same clients, the same architect, the same allure, the same grandeur against the same California coastal backdrop in those seemingly pristine, unspoiled, idyllic times.

FAIR WARNING, THOUGH. Hayes Perkins, a gruff and eccentric vagabond, a nature lover and animal lover, a former missionary in Africa and a sanctimonious prude, and, for our immediate purposes, a man who hired on at San Simeon as a day laborer in the spring of 1928, was also not only a devoted diarist but a spinner of tall tales as well, sometimes wildly tall ones at that. Armed with a typewriter (a real boon to his efforts), he authentically recorded his thoughts about people and events soon after they occurred; those were his better moments, the ones worth singling out and savoring. But decades later in the foppish guise of a wise old memoirist—about 1960, while in his eighties and after several biographies of Hearst had appeared and been eagerly absorbed by Perkins—this eccentric fellow modified some if not all of his observations of yore, often embellishing them. Thus he made them more doubtful in their weaker aspects than they must have been already. He thereby produced a diabolical yet still-infectious blend of fact and fantasy, tinged with both cynicism and sympathy toward Hearst and most other people that got portrayed. The Hayes Perkins diary (entitled “Here and There”), a semi-diary or pseudo-diary it can also be called, a quasi-primary source occupying a gray area all its own, is a literary hoax at times, one that loosely recalls Clifford Irving’s take on Howard Hughes in the early 1970s. Yet it’s a work that remains eminently quotable on several points, very richly so. That said, that understood, and provided we’re armed with plenty of asterisks, we’re good to embrace some of the Perkins diary’s better moments. After all,

we read Marion's memoir, *The Times We Had*, selectively, analytically—or at least we *should* read it that way—poised to cast a wary eye on certain passages of hers. Why not the Perkins diary as well?

One of the first entries by Perkins is dated May 27, 1928. This was the Sunday right before Julia Morgan's next stop at San Simeon on Monday or Tuesday, the 28th or 29th:

Rodolph [Rudolph] Valentino, an actor who died recently [August 1926], had a stable of fine horses and Hearst has taken them over. Some of these horses are said to be worth as much as \$10,000 each. . . .

How much has been spent here is a question. Hearst favors antiques, has bought up several castles in Europe and has bodily transferred them here and built them into his castle. Millions of dollars have been poured into this place, and millions more are on the way. Other than a show place it is useless. It is a feudal castle on a feudal barony like those of the Middle Ages.

Hearst is married and has five sons. He has a mistress in one Marion Davies, who is forty years his junior some say, and others say thirty, which is probably nearer correct [1928 found her thirty-one as of January to Hearst's sixty-five as of April, a difference of not quite thirty-four years]. On every hand one hears the blasphemous sneers of the men, but Hearst cares not at all. He is a law unto himself, and has no check other than public opinion. He cares little about that, we all know.

A briefer entry by Perkins on June 3 included this passage:

There are three of Hearst's sons here now. Two of them are his twelve-year-old twins [David and Randolph]. Just bright, healthy, chipper American lads without the slightest bit of "side" [pretense]. They are learning to drive cars, and break all the speed laws that are rigidly enforced where the workmen are concerned.

On June 17, 1928, Perkins was pounding on his Underwood again, perhaps without knowing that Miss Morgan had been to San Simeon and Riverside in the interim:

His Imperial Majesty, William Randolph Hearst, is with us. He is surrounded by many movie stars, all of the first magnitude. . . . Chief among these bizarre-clad men and women is Marion Davies. A yellow headed baby faced sort of person, she is becoming passé and tries to beat the clock and stay young. Hearst is ever near her. He defies the civil and the moral law, none may touch one so high as he.

The Hearst party hadn't left for Europe quite yet, and so Perkins could make an entry like this one on June 29:

Hearst has been round the place a lot, and I see him daily. He is a large man, rather ungainly in appearance, but always immaculately dressed. When he addresses a man he speaks quietly, and seldom if ever raises his voice. He is uniformly courteous, and evidently understands [that] most of his guests are hanging round him, catching on his every word to try and get something out of him. Some of the more noted actors and actresses are with him. I see Charlie Chaplin, Adolph[e] Menjou, William Powell, who are big enough to stand on their own legs without publicity from Hearst. Marion Davies makes up the guest lists from Hollywood. She knows her hold on the publisher and sees that she holds her rivals off. She is his mistress, and her likes and dislikes mean more to him than anything else in the world. . . .

Despite the fact Hearst has the morals of a Belgian mammy fighter [during the World War], he is kindly and every man looks alike to him. Yesterday he wanted to be taken [photographed] by [William] Fox himself in the midst of a flock of white fan-tailed pigeons. These, if handled right, swirl down like falling snow flakes. I have had them for a few days [as their new zookeeper], and already they know me. I whistled for them, fed them at Hearst's feet, then jumped back out of the picture.

"Here! Come back into it!" he called.

So no less [a] person than the great Fox of Fox Films, Inc., turned the vcrank [*sic*] while I held the bucket and Hearst tossed out grain. Thus I became the champion feed bucket holder of the world.

Chaplin is a rather insignificant looking sort of man. Hair as white as if he was sixty [he was thirty-nine in 1928], fishy grey eyes that stare out from under bushy brows in constant suspicion, he seems to hate himself. Yet he can be a charming companion when he tries. He is active

on the tennis court and wields a mean left-handed bat with accuracy. I like Menjou best, unless it be William Powell. I like the tricky glint in the latter's eyes, his quick wit and friendly manner to all.

On June 29 as well, with Hearst and Marion still in California pending their departure for Europe in July, the *Los Angeles Times* reported "Marion Davies Suit Heard; Linen Merchant Demands Payment for Largest Tablecloth Ever Made":

Henri Dumont, linen dealer, was before Superior [Court] Judge Hazlett yesterday asking that Marion Davies, motion-picture actress, be made to pay \$6,500 for the largest tablecloth in the world.

The cloth, which Dumont asserts was made especially for her on a verbal order, a masterpiece in the linen art, was unfolded during the hearing of the case.

It is forty-eight feet long and six feet wide. The largest banquet cloth ever made before in one piece, according to experts on the witness stand, measured only twenty-one feet.

The cloth the dealer wants Miss Davies to take is in linen, Venetian lace and Burano cut work and filet.

There are also five dozen napkins to match included in the \$8,500 bill Dumont is asking pay for from the actress.

According to the dealer he was introduced to Miss Davies by Conrad Nagel. The actress, he said, told him she desired a cloth that would care for sixty guests. He told her, he said, none as large as that was made, but he could get one for her. She said it would be all right to go ahead and get it, he asserted.

The linen merchant testified as follows:

"I went to the bungalow occupied by Miss Davies at the Metro-Goldwyn studio [MGM in Culver City]. I told her I had the big cloth. She said she did not have time to look at it now.

"I said please look at it anyway. She said all right. I then unfolded several yards of it.

"She said it was perfectly lovely and I asked if I should leave it. She said: 'No, Mr. Dumont, but don't worry about it, it is perfectly all right, but I have to submit it to Mr. Hearst first. He is not in town now but will

be in a few days and as soon as he comes back I will call him up and have you take all of the things to the beach house as Mr. Hearst is the one who has to see them, for he is paying for all of the things going into the house.” . . .

The hearing will continue today.

The *Times* article must rank as one of the earliest instances of Hearst’s being connected with the Beach House in Santa Monica—a project he was pursuing in Marion’s behalf, as the public was getting more and more conditioned to believe. The conspicuousness of the main building at 415 Ocean Front would beggar description by a curious outside world. Hearst’s name and Marion’s name or some combination thereof would increasingly be in people’s minds.

Hayes Perkins went almost two weeks before making his next diary entry on Sunday, July 15, 1928. It was his one free day to catch up, a day also preceding a typical Monday visit to the work site by Julia Morgan, whom he still hadn’t mentioned:

So busy I have little time to enter a word in my diary. . . . As it is, I’m feeling a lot better since getting off the bull gang [the labor crew, in favor of zookeeping] where little else is expected than the conventional strong back and weak brain. Being weak in both places makes it worse, as in my case. . . .

I see a lot of the Hollywood crowd, who are here constantly now. They are constantly attracted by the wild animals, and are about [are in the vicinity] asking foolish questions. One wonders what the public can see in them, especially the stars among the women. Few of them are beautiful, and all use so much makeup their skins become tanned to the texture of hippo hide. Constant use of cosmetics ruin their faces, and the loose lives they lead soon wrecks them physically. If they are perfect at love scenes in the pictures it is because they have plenty of practice, for they pair off here regardless of the marriage tie. One marvels at the bizarre clothing, the sallow faces in the morning before they get their war paint on. Most are affable enough, if they only wouldn’t tease the animals.

On that same Sunday at San Simeon, Hearst wrote a long letter that calls to mind the probable hand-carried message he'd written to Bill Flannery at the Beach House on a Sunday as well, a year before to the very month. The main job ledger for San Simeon lists both Morgan and Thad Joy as having been on the hilltop in mid-July 1928, either on Sunday the 15th or Monday the 16th, with Monday being the likelier prospect and Sunday having been their southbound travel day from San Francisco. And thus Hearst's detailed letter may have been awaiting them when they arrived the next morning (Morgan herself normally spent the wee hours in San Luis Obispo before being driven to San Simeon bright and early).

"Dear Miss Morgan, or Mr. Joy," Hearst therefore began. He told them he'd "probably be gone about three months." Although most of his letter pertained to San Simeon, he also had this to say:

In regard to the indoor pool [the Roman Pool at San Simeon], we have decided on the brilliant blue mosaic small tile and the border of fishes with gold similar to the beach house [pool].

The lower-case "beach house" stems either from Hearst's handwritten draft, as transcribed by Willicombe, or it was the latter's doing (as we saw once before) if he'd taken Hearst's dictation. Regardless, it was yet another instance of San Simeon's magnificent pools and the smaller, much narrower, yet likewise shimmering pool in Santa Monica being associated by Hearst in some vital way. Still other instances lay ahead of his making aesthetic ties like this.

Hayes Perkins, meanwhile, held off till the next Sunday, July 22, before making his next entry during that summer of 1928:

Hearst has gone to Europe. Marion has gone with him, and it is generally understood she is not liked by Hearst's wife. Which is only natural. Mrs. Hearst is here, got here before the party broke up, even overlapping her arrival with Marion's stay. . . .

Mrs. Hearst has lost no time in letting us know who she is. She came to see me [at the zoo] asking if the pheasants ever laid any eggs. I told her they did, and now she demands these be sent to her. "I'm Mrs. Hearst," she informed me, significantly.

Mrs. Hearst's set differs slightly from that of her husband. Of course Marion Davies makes up most of the parties when she is here, and her lord and master OKs it without question. Mrs. H. sent down for Charlie Chaplin, who flew up in his private plane. He is here as an entertainer for the set Mrs. H. has surrounded herself with. . . . Chaplin is silly in his actions often. He pulls that funny stuff, eating mouthfuls of roses and acting generally like a silly kid, but he can be charming when he tries.

FULLY THREE WEEKS passed between the Perkins diary's July 22 entry and its next one, dated August 14, 1928. Morgan had been on the job three times in the interim, an average of once a week. Perkins mentioned her now for the first time. And though he also mentioned Hearst, he did so in the abstract, knowing well that the man was traveling abroad:

Hearst is, I believe, a kindly man. He has no regard for the civil or the moral law where it comes into conflict with his own desires and ideals. But he tries to do the right thing by his men, I can see that. It is not his fault there are bad men at the head of things, that is [Camille] Rossi's fault, who is smooth in his dealings with Hearst and hides the trouble from the latter. Miss Julia Morgan, Hearst's foster sister and architect, who is next to Hearst in authority dislikes Rossi and would oust him if she dared. Rossi stands well with Hearst, and knows it. He runs things with a high hand.

A letter from Hearst to Morgan would have reached her long before this latest Perkins date of August 14—had it not gone astray while the Hearst party was heading east to New York, bound for its first voyage to Europe since 1922. The letter bore the date July 19, 1928. However, it was not until August 18 that Joe Willicombe could

send a replacement to Morgan. Good thing “the Colonel,” as Willicombe was known (an honorary title he’d gained in 1927), kept records as faithfully as he did. If not, some priceless details about the Beach House would have been lost. Hearst had told Morgan the following in that much-delayed letter:

Enclosed is a bid from Mr. Frank A. Hellenthal, 728 Santa Monica Boulevard, Santi [*sic*] Monica. He is a very reliable contractor. The bid is for work on a trunk-room addition at the beach-house. The important part about it is the third paragraph, which states that one of the main piers of the house is resting on an old cement slab which shows signs of cracking and which will cause a settlement of that part of the house.

The cement slab carried over from some earlier, much smaller structures that had been razed at 415 Ocean Front, probably in 1925 or 1926, to make way for the new Colonial Revival mansion. Hearst’s letter to Morgan continued:

Of course this is a true statement of the facts, and this at least must be corrected and a proper foundation provided as promptly as possible.

The house has settled in one or two other places, notably in the East wing, and Mr. Flannery admits that one of the piles was apparently not driven deep enough and has settled an inch or two.

We had an engineer visit the house twice, one provided by the [*Los Angeles*] *Herald*, I think, and he stated that [the] settling was not important, and there was no need of doing anything unless it got worse. Mr. Flannery is a good draftsman but is not a very experienced architect, and is nothing of an engineer.

The *Herald* was Hearst’s working-class, evening paper, a hugely profitable one at that. Its home was on South Trenton Street, on the edge of the downtown Los Angeles core, half a mile west of the morning *Examiner’s* more familiar headquarters on 11th and South Broadway. Hearst’s letter about Santa Monica of July 19, 1928, continued:

Carpenter Brothers, the contractors who built the house, are involved in various difficulties.

It is possible that the foundations were not as good as they should be, and I would rather remedy any defects now than wait until the defects become more serious.

I suggest that Hellenthal be given the work he has agreed to do, and that he furthermore proceed to remedy thoroughly the defect in the foundation that he has noticed, and finally that he go very thoroughly over all the foundations of the house and find what is necessary to be done in order to make them as perfect as possible.

It may be necessary to drive some more piles, but I do not see how this can be done now that the house has been built. It is possible, however, that concrete piers could be put in.

Will you kindly have Hellenthal and Flannery before you and see what can be done in these matters?

Grist for young George Loorz's mill this would surely have been. Loorz, however, was spoken for at this juncture in 1928—in Hearst's further behalf. He was now up at Wyntoon, as far north almost as the Oregon border, launching the first round of serious work for his long-term patrons, Hearst and Morgan (and Marion too), on that distant job: a swimming pool and tennis courts for starters, with much more to follow in the years to come.

Hearst had more to say about Santa Monica in his letter to Julia Morgan. Frank Hellenthal had written to him in early July about another matter, as Hearst's multiple enclosures for Morgan indicated:

The second letter of Hellenthal [enclosed in 1928 but no longer extant] contains a bid for certain additions to the house, including an elevator and a library extension.

I would not ordinarily go ahead with this construction at this time, but it occurs to me that it is possible that this construction might be made in a way to increase the strength of the foundations.

If so, I would be willing to do this while we are taking other measures to improve the foundations.

I am perfectly willing to do the work on a cost-plus basis with Hellenthal. He is a very thorough and very reliable contractor.

“Cost-plus,” meant labor and materials plus a fair percentage for the builder. It’s a term also seen in George Loorz’s correspondence both with Hearst and with Morgan, in full swing from 1932 onward. For now, we’ll have to get by with this letter of July 1928. Regarding Beach House matters for that year, it has no peer, no equal in the Cal Poly holdings (whence it comes) or in any other archives.

The Morgan Collection at Poly also contains the reply to Hearst that Miss Morgan wrote on August 21; she addressed it to him care of Universal Service in Paris. At the end of that letter, right before she wished him a *Grand Time* on his European trip, she stated: “I will do as you ask in seeing [about] foundation conditions at Santa Monica, with Mr. Flannery and Mr. Hellenthal this week.”

If we can tarry once more before returning to Hayes Perkins, this next paragraph, which is also from the same letter of Morgan’s dated August 21, is delectably worth quoting. She told Hearst about his Northern California property:

Wyntoon work is progressing very well. It is feasible to finish the pool and its operating equipment, and perhaps lay the concrete for the tennis courts. This will get the heavy dirty work out of the way, and the court enclosures could be placed quickly next year. The heater room is a concrete box at present, but will be entirely covered by the river pavilion. Perhaps you will bring a grand inspiration for this.

The river she meant was the McCloud River, which was to Wyntoon what the Pacific Ocean was to San Simeon and Santa Monica: enchanting, mesmerizing water, the stuff that paradise is made of.

THE HEARST PARTY was back at San Simeon from its European trip of 1928 by Halloween. It was then, on October 31, that Hayes Perkins, the

secret diarist (he surely had to conceal such furtive efforts), made one of his next entries. As for Julia Morgan in October 1928, she'd last been at San Simeon on the weekend of the 27th and 28th; also, she'd wired Hearst in New York on the 16th, assuring him that he would "find Santa Monica in fine shape." Perkins, who earlier in the year had gone from day laborer to zookeeper, had the following to relate on the 31st:

The usual entourage from Hollywood is here. Among them I see Gloria Swanson and her current husband, the Marquis Henri De La Falaise De La Coudraye [Henri, the Marquis de la Falaise de la Coudraye]. If that is all his name I cannot say, but it is enough for this pimply faced punk [Henri] who is so favored by the gang from Hollywood. Gloria looks more like a farmer's wife, almost coarse. Her many jewels do not become her at all, and look more like [those of] a Zulu maiden with beads and brass wire and rings of tin and beads for settings. Marion [Davies] is always the queen. There is among them a beautiful girl, not more than twenty if that. She is not an actress, but she is always here when Hearst comes. She occupies Hearst's apartment with him when he is here, for Marion is becoming passé, or *nkuruntu*, as the Africans aptly put it. It appears a man can get anything in this world if he will pay enough for it.

The gorgeous raiment of these actresses, or rather the lack of it makes them conspicuous. The marriage tie does not seem to matter. They pair off as chickens would, change [partners] when they become bored with over indulgence. I hear them calling each other all the sweet names in the calendar; then they tire and turn to someone else. The noble marquis [Henri] is already tiring of Gloria, but if it was me I would be tired before I begun. I note Dorothy Mackaill snuggles up to Hearst's left side nightly when we sit in the open air at the nightly run of moving pictures, for old Hearst is a good sport and lets us all come. I sit behind them. Dorothy on one side and Marion on the other, snuggling close, but Marion always retains the seat of honor. Dorothy wears magnificent jewelry, and she is the only one of the Hollywood crowd I have seen who knows how to wear it. It becomes her. The rest of them are as gaudy as African mammies with their beads and brass wire.

I have some young parrots in a nest at the zoo, and the other day Marion and a lot more girls were down to see them. I raise a lot of young birds, and these draw more attention than the big cats.

“OO-O-O-O-O isn’t it bootiful! O-O-O-O lemme hold it! Isn’t it dawling!”

Then a big macaw squawked and crashed by us. Eileen [Aileen] Pringle, clad in a very attenuated bathing suit, screamed and grasped my arm. Then she hugged me, her warm arms trembled as they clung close, her zephyr clad body seemed so fragile when so near. Being naturally a hero, I saved her from harm.

Perkins was back at the keyboard on Monday, November 12, 1928 (or closer to 1960, with a retrospective glance of some thirty years, whichever was really the case):

Hearst has been with us for two weeks now. He seems out of place at his age with all these young people surrounding him. The girls, to get the publicity his papers can give them, fawn and flatter his ego, flirt as if he were their own ages. . . . He has been so profligate with women one would believe he would slow down at 65 years of age, but he appears as virile as ever. Coupled with Marion are Doris Kenyon, Dorothy Mackaill, Gloria Swanson and many others who hang on his every word and movement. Old Marie Dressler is among them, but she is now *nkuruntu* [passé or elderly, b. 1868 versus Hearst’s 1863] and out of the love scenes Hearst loves to stage. She comes down to the zoo and chats with me, and I find her a cheerful, homely old soul. Being in the sere and yellow leaf of life, she no longer has illusions concerning her looks and attractiveness to men. In other words, she acts her age. Because of her unaffected way and good natured manner I like her.

Hearst is seldom satisfied with any house built for him. When anything is finished, he looks it over. Usually it is “I don’t like it. Tear it out of there!” he exclaims in his rather womanish voice. When a large building or any other sort of construction is half up he will have it torn to the ground, then rebuild another way to suit him. A gang of experienced Mexican miners work with jack hammers, gads [digging bars], sledges and drills constantly breaking down concrete and steel so

hard and costly to build, just to suit the whims of this strange man. He is a feudal baron born a thousand years out of his time. Cost means nothing, though his secretaries are at their wits end often to find cash to carry on. He is as petulant as a child, is a fatalist, believing in his star of destiny like Napoleon. One wonders if there is a bottom to Hearst's purse.

Before we let Perkins close out the year almost six weeks later, here's a final word in 1928 from Hearst to Morgan, sent by telegram from Los Angeles to San Francisco:

Would like marble stairs to San Simeon pool like those at Santa Monica Beach [House] Pool soon as convenient. They are very successful.

Yes, they were. They're still very successful in their form and beauty today at both places, a good eighty years later (although in Santa Monica their carved, above-water portions have long been removed from the steps themselves).

The last round belongs to Perkins, whose installment for December 21 included this paragraph:

Most of the construction crew have been laid off for the winter. Hearst, ever a good sport, gave us a splendid Thanksgiving dinner, and now a Christmas dinner a week beforehand, this to catch the men laid off [before they leave]. He is always generous.

The job at San Simeon that was shutting down for the winter of 1928–29 had kept Morgan on her toes recently. She'd made three trips in November and as many thus far in December (the first of these to San Simeon was also marked "to L.A. to see Mr. Hearst"). Quickly consulted, the New Santa Monica ledger confirms her appearance on December 3 at the Beach House. A similar glance reveals that Jim LeFeaver had also checked recently on the work in Santa Monica, as he had periodically since September. More so, the ledger shows that H. H. Benedict had been his usual busy with his engineering; in fact, a new ledger got started in late December. Its first entry says, "H. H. Benedict

fence & sea wall.” This was the second of two 1928 ledgers mentioned earlier. Although the first one’s called “New Santa Monica Jobs #415 and #321 Ocean Front,” the second one’s more simply headed “321 Ocean Front, Santa Monica.” So there’s some overlap, some kindredness. This smaller 321 ledger can be followed now into 1929, hand and hand with its larger New Santa Monica counterpart.

ON MONDAY, JANUARY 21, Julia Morgan was in the midst of a greater Southland swing that put her first at San Simeon followed by stops in Riverside and Santa Monica.

In saying “greater Southland,” the allusion here is to Franklin Walker’s generous, very pliable definition in his *Literary History of Southern California* (1950):

This land stretches from the hill at San Simeon on which William Randolph Hearst perches in his baroque castle, like another Saint Simeon Stylites on his pillar, to the little Mexican border town of Tijuana where tourists gape at colored peasant-ware and lose money at roulette.

Carey McWilliams, renowned for *Southern California Country* (1946), would staunchly protest; but then McWilliams was no fan of Hearst whereas Walker taught English at Mills College in Oakland for many years, in a sylvan setting graced by Morgan’s campanile and other noble buildings.

All such regionalism aside (Hearst was one who dismissed the trumped-up rivalry between self-important but fogbound San Francisco and middle-class but smog-free Los Angeles), Morgan was joined in Riverside on January 19 by H. H. Benedict from the Beach House job. A groundbreaking ceremony would soon be held in Riverside to launch its new YWCA. Morgan would not be present; plus

there's no entry in her Riverside ledger to indicate that anyone else in her circle was there.

Tidbits, morsels, fragments—all such details as these are scarcely more than that. They're choice details, without question, for we've had too few of their kind in past years. Yet without correspondence or other explanatory, elaborative data, we have to zero in on scattered ledger entries for the Beach House like "H. H. Benedict Fence & Garden" (also dated January 19, a Saturday coinciding with the trip Benedict made to Riverside). We can also let the droll, quizzical Hayes Perkins keep acting as our guide. No documents, no history, as the old saying goes; less Perkins, surely less lively a passage through elusive 1929, with sporadic relief, as always, from the Morgan ledgers and other nuggets of solid data.

For example, Willicombe wired Morgan on February 5, Los Angeles to San Francisco, telling her that Hearst wanted the balky elevator in the main building at San Simeon to work as efficiently as the new one in Santa Monica. Otherwise, for 1929 there's the problematic yet irresistible Perkins as the best means, however oblique, of illuminating by analogy, by parable and parallel, the dimly known reaches of Beach House history. His entry for February 10 is a voluminous one, made on the same day at San Simeon that the diarist turned fifty-one:

The crew is very short just now. Hearst is in New York City, for he loves the bright lights and the limelight. Being one of the most important personages of the country he meets everybody worthwhile and a lot not so worthwhile. . . . Hearst and his wife are seldom here together. Then it is at Christmas, or on the birthday of some member of the family. Hearst dotes on Miss Julia Morgan, his architect and a protégé of his mother in days gone by. Miss Morgan is very elderly [b. 1872, nine years after Hearst: fifty-seven in 1929], and it is good to see the tenderness shown by him when he is with her. There is so much good about the man, and yet enough bad to spoil it. Mrs. Hearst has the society bug

badly, and with Hearst's wealth and prominence behind her manages to crash the highest [circles] in New York. Yearly she promotes a prizefight there to get money for her milk fund for the poor. She has such a different crowd here, and among them are some English snobs. I like the British, but snobs of any sort of people are poison. . . .

When people get too much money what they get for it is likely to be bad for them. So it is here, for this Hollywood crowd runs to the sensual side of life rather than the spiritual. No regard for the marriage tie, let alone the virtue of a boy or girl. . . .

All convention is laid aside, from what I see. Broad minded, they call it, but flattened out would express the situation better. I saw Charlie Chaplin and Clara Bow playing out on the tennis court during an interlude in the game.

Chaplin wore whites, but Clara was clad in a tiny lappet [garment] less than the naked Shillook women on the [White] Nile wear, with two tinier brassieres, or covers for each shapely breast. Charlie had hold of both of them, being behind her. All the froth and bubble of Hollywood were interested spectators, giving advice in the best and latest movements in cohabiting. They didn't actually do it [have sex], but wriggled round for ten minutes, much to the delight of the creme-de-la-creme of Hollywood. I'd get ten years if Hearst knew I wrote this, even in my diary. He has just obtained an eight-year sentence for a chap named [Frederic] Girnaou in Los Angeles for saying a good deal less [about Clara Bow] than this [an event of 1931, not 1929]. Doubtless Girnaou told the truth, but like me he couldn't prove it.

And yet how could Perkins prove . . . *anything?* Why a workman of his common stature was at liberty to witness so much at San Simeon, ostensibly firsthand without question or restraint, is worth our pondering—and it surely elicits our skepticism. Nevertheless, he continued as follows on February 10, 1929:

There are 265 marble statues in the nude in the marvelous gardens here [an extreme exaggeration]. This is Jim Crowe's count, for Jim cares for them. For the greater part they are images of women whose limbs and

breasts are shapely and seductive. Chaplin caressed the breasts of one of these.

“Come on! Put a little more pep into it! Show some life, some interest!”

This from the self appointed director the Marquis Henri De La Falaise De La Coudraye, scion of the ancient French nobility. And Gloria Swanson his wife and all the world famed cream of Hollywood stood by and laughed themselves into ecstasies [*sic*] of mirth. Such is the feudal barony of La Cuesta Encantada, the home of the great and only Hearst. In the dressing rooms the men and women walk about nude, brazen, blasé. They pet in the swimming pools, pet in the palace, pet openly in the gardens, pet anywhere. Surely they keep in good condition for the sloppy pictures the boys and girls go mad over and emulate the world over. It soon breaks the girls. They become hard eyed, look like those I used to see on the Barbary [in San Francisco] when I was a kid.

Everybody drinks to saturation. At least, most everyone. Chaplin don't drink, he is too cold blooded to do that. He will toy with a glass of wine, so will Hearst. Chaplin has a bad name among the help at the castle, for two bits is his limit in tips. He keeps a Jap valet [Toraichi Kono] who looks after his boudoir, too cheap to have a white man. He is the richest of them all too. I laugh at the stewards when they recite their woes to me.

“Tight!” they exclaim in disgust. “Good for two bits at most!” . . .

. . . Within the castle walls none of the white help other than a selected few are permitted to see these people in the seclusion of their boudoirs, for Filipino servants who are tongueless flit about from room to room. These latter never talk, while white help would. It don't matter to a Filipino whose wife sleeps with some other woman's husband, whether all are as naked as the day they were born, whether they are soused to the ears in these cargoes of booze Hearst gets from the distant land of somewhere.

The only one who must not step out is Marion. Whispered tales of Hearst's wrath and heavy hand falling on such trespassers [Marion's suitors] pass from lip to lip among us. Most of the time Hearst and Marion are like two sixteen-year-olds. Arms about waists, a gentle slap on the cheek, Hearst holding her tightly in his capacious arms

murmuring sweet nothings. A pretty picture it makes in these untellably beautiful gardens and under the bright light of the silvery moon. She drinks like a fish, which irks him.

Perkins, let's not forget, wrote for an audience of one—himself. Although the Oregon Historical Society and Cal Poly State University each have copies of his diary (as modified and bound into multiple volumes as “Here and There” in the early 1960s), and although Perkins sent some of his material to W. A. Swanberg after *Citizen Hearst* appeared in 1961, the diary has been all but unknown until now. It has mostly occupied a historical vacuum, unseen, unsuspected. Had Marion known of the Perkins diary, she could have contradicted this latest claim of ribald behavior at San Simeon with these words from 1951/1975, an instance of *The Times We Had* at its most useful, its most plausible:

There was a story that someone walked into the swimming pool nude, but it was just a legend. It could never have happened. There were always lights around the pool, and all the watchmen.

W. R. didn't want to have anything happen. He was very, very austere, and he always demanded that the girls wear wraps over their bathing suits. He thought they might catch cold.

It was for his own protection, too. Somebody might get raped or murdered and he'd have been accused. Nobody got away with anything.

That goes for the pseudo-omniscient Hayes Perkins as well. He could commit to his diary pages whatever he liked, no matter how farfetched. No one else in that era would have seen it.

THROUGH ALL OF February 1929 and into March, the two Morgan job ledgers on the Santa Monica work are replete with entries. “Clinic” and “Garden & T[ennis] Court” and “Mausoleum” appear next to H. H. Benedict's name. Some of the same goes for entries recording Miss Morgan's trips to those job sites in the winter of 1929. The inclusion of

the Douras Mausoleum under the New Santa Monica umbrella may explain why Sara Boutelle and other researchers missed this rare sidelight. Without a job number, prominent in Cal Poly's Morgan holdings, and without a separate ledger in Morgan-Forney as well, the Mausoleum has long escaped notice (although Marion mentioned in quick passing in 1951/1975 "the Hollywood Cemetery, where we had a mausoleum"). Moreover, instead of their being specified by name in Morgan's annual "Distribution of Expenses" sheets, these small jobs in 1929, their only applicable year, were always part of the much larger fabric of New Santa Monica. It's not clear why. Plenty of insignificant jobs in Morgan's *oeuvre* were accorded ledgers of their own and, in turn, a presence in her annual sheets that at times contain the tiniest of expenses. (The smallest entry in 1929 was \$0.20—twenty cents—for Potrero Hill, San Francisco, whereas the Mausoleum expenses that winter, though likewise small, were surely many times greater.)

BEGINNING ON MONDAY, April 25, Thad Joy got the "1929 Scheme" going on the job in Beverly Hills that, in its original phase in 1925, had immediately preceded all the Beach House work. He was at 1700 Lexington Road on May 2, 1929, commanding only \$25 for "Travel" in the reactivated ledger whereas \$75 (a substantial \$900 in present-day dollars) had applied to his trip there on April 25. If the smaller figure for May 2 was offset by his checking on New Santa Monica, the ledger for that job is mute.

As to Hayes Perkins, he waxed eloquent about San Simeon on May 22 (or post-eloquently *for* May 22, as it may have been); nonetheless, when he was good, he was quite good:

In all the world I have seen few fairer scenes than this great ranch. Now that the rains have been plentiful and seasonable, the grass is high everywhere. The creamy-gold of the poppies, the almost delphinium blue of the lupin[e]s, the white star-shells and so many other blossoms

carpet the entire country, particularly the flats in the mountain valleys make a glorious and a gladsome land. When the sea winds blow on the wild oats, now ripening in the pastures, they are blended into a silvery carpet whose sheen sweeps back and forth over the whole area of hills. The blue of the boundless sea, the purple shadows of the ranges make a picture beyond any painting for its beauty. The only evil thing is man.

Sobering in its way, that final line. It's just as sobering, though more plainly so, to pluck a notation from the New Santa Monica ledger—this in reference to one week earlier, May 14, 1929. “W[alter] T. Steilberg,” the May 14 line reads, with “\$20” written next to it. Twenty dollars for an engineer's consultation? That's peanuts, even by 1920s standards (equivalent to nearly \$250 today). Elsewhere in the same ledger, for July 1929, Morgan's other Bay Area-based engineer, Walter Leroy Huber, commanded \$40. In contrast, the old Beverly Hills-1700 Lexington ledger contains only one instance of engineering. Namely, a retaining wall for \$17 worth of calculations done by Huber. And for its part, the original Santa Monica ledger, which covers from 1926 to 1928, contains this one engineering entry alone: “Steilberg services on pool and bridge” for \$75.

Weigh all these minor figures against the hefty \$850 (think of \$10,600 today) for Walter Huber's services on the Riverside Y in December 1928—to say nothing of the big numbers generated at times by San Simeon's delegated engineering (Morgan always gave such tasks to people like her “two Walters,” Huber and Steilberg)—and the pattern emerges. The Beach House had more bark than bite. It was a wood-frame structure, after all, albeit a big one, but not a steel-skeleton or reinforced-concrete production like many of Morgan's larger homes and most of her institutional buildings.

How could such a building have been stout enough, massive enough (except in its profile) to hold the heavy, San Simeonesque objects—paneled rooms like the one from Cassiobury Park,

mantelpieces to harmonize with them, and all the other architectural antiques mentioned by Howard Heyn in 1949? Steilberg or Huber would have been quick to tell us: the Beach House held them to a comparatively restricted degree. Its structural limitations, despite even Hearst's tendency to expect the impossible, must have been implicit from early on.

THE RENEWED WORK in the spring of 1929 on the Davies house in Beverly Hills (1700 Lexington Road) brought Warren McClure into the Hearst-Morgan fold. The job there was minor this time, extending only into July. "Mac" was soon reassigned to the smaller of the two Santa Monica accounts, the one simply called 321 Ocean Front. For July, his name appears in the larger New Santa Monica ledger, pertaining to the main address of 415 Ocean Front; obviously, he was used as needed and wherever needed for the greater good of the Beach House project.

Morgan, in addition to keeping abreast of things in Santa Monica and, as always, of those at San Simeon, made stops in Riverside in 1929 during May, June, and especially July. Among the welcome archival fragments for this period is a letter she sent Hearst in Los Angeles, dated June 17. There were bills and budgets for her to air with him: never an easy subject but one that was innately part of the big-league ball these people played. She explained that she'd be forced to draw on her office reserves in July unless money came in "from the old Santa Monica account." The funds indeed came in—less than a week later, nearly \$8,500 strong on top of Hearst's payment of \$10,000 on the same account late in 1928. Of the \$18,500 total (akin to \$230,000 today), a small part pertained to the older Beverly Hills job, now entering its brief renewal phase.

The next day—Tuesday, June 18, 1929—found Morgan writing to Hearst again. Camille Rossi, George Loorz's hot-tempered predecessor

as construction superintendent at San Simeon, had told Morgan of Hearst's directions "to go ahead and finish the tennis courts" there. Thus she said to Hearst:

On thinking it over I asked Mr. Rossi to stop off any more preparatory work, and sent for the Los Angeles firm who did the actual work at the Beach house. They had been unwilling on account of a trade agreement as to territory to do the work last year [at San Simeon], although agreeing with the local firm to come up and put on the green top coat.

I asked them for a full report on what they considered necessary to do to make just as fine a job as the Beach courts and the figure they would contract to do it for.

I saw them in Los Angeles Saturday afternoon [June 15], and intended to give you this explanation and the enclosed papers Tuesday. They say if you contract with them, it will take (for the 2 courts) two weeks after getting the material onto the job to finish the two courts, but that they could have one done in ten days.

The cost according to their bid is about 40¢ per sq. ft. and the work would be guaranteed, and also "serviced" for two years without extra pay.

If you think well of this, the San Francisco firm will turn over to the Los Angeles firm their part of the material and there will be no complication.

Regarding "Tuesday" (three paragraphs above), this situation poses a tough call. Morgan was writing on Tuesday the 18th as it was. She may simply have meant its counterpart a week later, June 25. Her San Simeon ledger cites a visit of hers on Monday the 24th. But there are no Santa Monica travel entries in that immediate range. Maybe she meant to see Hearst in Los Angeles on the 25th anyway, apart from whatever was brewing on the Beach House job.

That omnipresent zookeeper Hayes Perkins had more to say in the meantime; these passages came under the date of June 15, 1929:

Cupid is the god of the La Cuesta Encantada, who rules this estate from Hearst and Marion at the top down to the lowest Mexican ditch digger.

We all see Hearst and Marion sporting in the gardens in bathing suits. He looks like a monster then, his awkward body roughly fitted with a pouchy suit. Marion's figure yet is trim, but she is slipping. They play about among the flowers in the garden, though he is an old man and she is whatever [age] she is [thirty-two as of January 1929]. Reputed to be born in 1900, she is actually seven years in advance of that, so her maids say. [b. 1897, not 1893]. She looks more too after a hard night's debauch, but any woman does that [looks older] when she is out as these here are.

"Hoo Hoo Marion!" calls the aged Lothario [sixty-six now, b. 1863], peeping from behind the green bay trees that shadow the swimming pool.

"Hoo Hoo Willie!" replies the voluptuous Delilah from her hiding place in a clump of hydrangeas near him.

Onward during that summer of 1929, skipping past more entries in the Perkins diary and coming to roost on August 30:

Have been in San Francisco for two weeks [on vacation]. While there the great [Graf] Zeppelin came across the Pacific from Tokyo, arriving late in the afternoon [of Sunday, August 25]. Her great body shone like silver in the light of the setting sun, and I counted 22 planes about her as she circled over the bay and cities, then soared away to Los Angeles.

Hearst is gone again and Mrs. Hearst is here with a crowd of society people from New York. They don't seem so greatly different from the lot the old man brings. People are much alike, whether rich or poor. We all have the same capacity for enjoyments, and we who are poor appreciate the little we have as much as the wealthy enjoy that much that is theirs. Mrs. Hearst has the extreme "Nouveau Riche" manner, something she never had when she was playing on the stage before she met her heavy sugared papa in Hearst.

Some six weeks later, under the date of October 9, Perkins had a good deal more to tell:

Mrs. Hearst is gone now, and her former lord is with us. She is, like Marion, a Catholic, so the holy church has a strangle hold on Hearst's big fortune. Hearst has returned, now that his wife is gone, and with

him is Marion and a lot more Hollywoodlians [*sic*] here to eat Hearst's bounty.

Perkins would have been hard-pressed as early as 1929 to know much about Mrs. Hearst's past. John K. Winkler's *W. R. Hearst: An American Phenomenon* of 1928 (the first biography of the man) would have been his best hope; however, if Perkins wrote or at least revised this passage afterwards—as he did many of them, even decades later—his sources would have been more extensive. Be that as it may, his entry for October 9, 1929, continues:

For a change we have bigger fish than is usual. What we call small fry here are governors, senators, congressmen and the like. Now we have Winston Churchill, who I believe is Chancellor of the Exchequer of Great Britain, who with his brother Major John Churchill has a large party of guests. Most of the lesser lights of Hollywood have faded into the shadows during the stay of these luminaries, for they are merely entertainers of the great and only Hearst for a brief moment of love.

There are contrasts in the family of the house of Churchill that are surpassing[ly] strange. Winston is no beauty. An owlish face surmounted by a baldish head, but with penetrating eyes that miss nothing. His brother John is a fine looking man when he has his hat on, for he too is bald, only balder than Winston. Strangely Winston's daughter Diana is an enchantingly beautiful girl, and each of the brothers have a son with them who would be an answer to any maiden's prayer. They had better keep an eagle eye on old Hearst, for he has a watchful eye for feminine pulchritude.

In reality, the Churchill brothers had visited San Simeon from September 13 to 16, 1929, nearly a month earlier than the Perkins date of October 9. The Churchill party consisted of just four people: besides Winston and John, their sons Randolph and Johnny were also present. They'd been touring Canada and the United States since August 9. The party did *not* include Diana, Winston Churchill's eldest child, or any other women; instead, Diana was in America with her father and mother early in 1932. Both sons (first cousins to each other) mentioned

the San Simeon visit in their memoirs, published in the 1960s, Winston's son in *Twenty-One Years*, John's son in *A Churchill Canvas*. The latter book, the first of them to appear (1961), offered these details:

After four days [at San Simeon] we climbed into another large fleet of cars and were taken to Los Angeles. Hearst and my uncle [Winston Churchill] occupied the leading car, my father and some dignitary sat in the second one, and Randolph [Winston's son] and I were in the third [one]. . . .

In Los Angeles our hostess became Marion Davies. We were given bedrooms in a plush hotel but for entertainment were taken to her villa at Santa Monica. As exotic as one would expect a villa in Hollywood to be, it had black marble bathrooms. A huge swimming pool separated the house from the beach.

Hearst said to Randolph and to me: "Draw up a list of all the film stars you would like to meet and I'll get them to come along for a banquet." . . .

Hearst was as good as his word. The first night on which he was our host and Marion Davies our hostess, we entered the villa [the Beach House] to find an enormous line-up of stars. Except for Greta Garbo, whose disinclination for company is well known, the cream of Hollywood was there. All four of us walked down the line shaking hands. We felt rather privileged, because usually meeting a film star is a matter of being presented; on this occasion the stars were presented to us.

The evening went well. Charlie Chaplin and Marion Davies danced a *pas de deux*, the interesting thing being that Charlie's feet were so small he was actually able to step into Marion's shoes. Hearst, plump, rotund and hospitable, was in very good form. He contributed to the entertainment with a solo act in which he let his legs go wobbly and lurched his enormous frame across the room to the rhythm of the band. It was so funny that it has been part of my own parlor trick repertoire even since.

John's cousin Randolph—Winston's son—gave his version four years later, in 1965; he did so through a diary entry headed "Wednesday, September 18 [1929]":

At 12:30 we attended a lunch given at Hollywood [Culver City] in the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, by Mr. [Louis B.] Mayer and Hearst. He has a very large financial interest in this company. There were about 200 people at the lunch—mostly film stars and producers. . . . I thought Marion Davies was the most attractive. . . .

Then general speeches were made. Hearst very good and helpful, and much more [politically] friendly to England than expected.

The Churchill party backtracked from the Los Angeles area to Santa Barbara, hence the heading for the entry by Randolph dated Thursday, September 19:

Hearst has certainly been greatly won over by Papa. Not only did he make his very helpful speech yesterday, but today it is all featured in the *Los Angeles Examiner*. This morning he rang up to know how soon we were returning to Los Angeles, and seemed delighted when we said we would come to lunch tomorrow. One thing particularly amused me in his speech. He said that Papa had been anxious that there should not be too much speaking, "like the man who did not take his wife abroad as he was going for pleasure." Considering that he had just left Mrs. Hearst [at San Simeon] and was in Los Angeles with his mistress—Marion Davies—it seemed to me rather good value!

Randolph Churchill's next entry is headed "Hollywood, Saturday September 21":

Yesterday we motored into Hollywood from Santa Barbara and lunched at the Montmartre Restaurant [on Hollywood Boulevard]—the luncheon haunt of the cinema world. Hearst, Marion Davies, P. G. Wodehouse & daughter, Ogden Stuart (the American P. G.), Virginia Vallia [Valli] and four or five others were there

After lunch we visited various studios and then went out to Marion's house to bathe. It is about 17 miles from [downtown] Los Angeles. It is a magnificent place looking on the sea, with a wonderful marble

swimming bath of great length and very well heated—all provided by William Randolph. Marion had collected a dinner party of 60 for us. . . .

After dinner we danced and then Marion stimulated Charlie [Chaplin] into doing some impersonations. She did Sarah Bernhardt & Lillian Gish, and then he did Napoleon, Uriah Heep, Henry Irving, John Barrymore as Hamlet and many others. He is absolutely superb and enchanted everyone.

Apart from chatter by Louella Parsons in her gossip columns for the Hearst and other newspapers, these observations by the Churchills, had they been published in 1929, would have ranked among the earliest ones about the Beach House, perhaps the very earliest of any real substance. The date would have been noticeably early regarding San Simeon for that matter.

WE'D BE REMISS TO SKIP past October 1929 without noting anything about the Great Crash on Wall Street that month. Hearst's wealth was not stock-market wealth—at least not on the surface, not in the obvious jump-out-the-window way come Black Tuesday on October 29. A letter to him on November 6 from Arthur Brisbane, typewritten by Brisbane barely a week after the debacle, began on a hopeful note, followed by guarded counsel:

The present situation in Wall Street may be more than a mere stock gamblers panic.

After a big war [1914-1918] there comes a boom. And after the boom there comes trouble. You know what happened after the Civil War. There was a big boom and then one of our worst panics, in 1872 [the Panic of 1873, when Hearst was ten and Brisbane nine].

It may be that this is only a stock gamblers panic. Business looks very prosperous. I hope it is so.

But I think it is a very good time for those that have important affairs on their hands, to pull in sail and prepare for a storm. Unfortunately the position of the market makes it impossible, probably,

to do any kind of financing, therefore the idea in that direction for our [news]papers will have to be abandoned now. The thing to do is to get some cash ahead, and especially try to accumulate it, and be ready for trouble if it comes. And also to be ready for the very great bargains that may present themselves.

Fortunately for me, I have no Wall Street worries, as I don't speculate. I own only two stocks, Hudson & Manhattan, which is better than it ever was, paying 7 per cent on the present market price, with its dividend of \$3.50 [per share] a year. I hope my friends that bought it will keep it. They have a good return on their money now, and a stock which represents a monopoly of transportation between New York, Jersey City, Newark, Hoboken, and three great railroads. It is at 50 [dollars per share] today.

The stock is worth \$100 today. It pays a good interest rate on what any of my friends paid for it. I am the biggest stockholder in the company as the records show, haven't sold a share and hope that my friends won't sell any. In fact, I bought another 1,000 shares the other day when there came a violent drop, caused by our friend Bill Fox [William Fox of Fox Films] throwing away 15,000 shares "at the market"; it went to 38 and then back to 53. I picked up a thousand shares of it on the way.

Watson and Cobbie [Victor Watson and Edmond D. Coblenz of the Hearst newspapers] both tell me that our friend Bill had his troubles quite serious for awhile. His own stock, Fox Films, dropped off almost a half, and it looks as though it was in the hands of professional moving picture people to a considerable extent. They even said that the banks had taken him over. Of course they could not throw him out as they could not get anybody else to run his companies as he can run them.

Courtland [Smith, managing editor of Fox Films] who sat up with him all night on the day of the big break [the Crash], says that he is perfectly all right now, although he has some moments of worry.

If the break continues there will be some wonderful bargains. Then of course everybody will be afraid to buy and the average individual will have no money.

I am negotiating a mortgage for a million dollars on that 57th Street property [in Manhattan] in front of your apartment house on East 56th

Street which you thought at one time you wanted to buy. I want to have some money on hand in case the bargains should be good.

I began this letter (excuse its prolixity) to suggest that you tell your managers to KEEP as much as possible of the money that comes in. “We” may need it.

Bill Fox was the same man, of course—the same film and newsreel mogul William Fox—that Hayes Perkins mentioned on June 29, 1928. Now in November 1929, two days before Brisbane’s letter of the sixth, Perkins had this to relate:

Hearst is at his Wyntoon estate somewhere in northern California. I have never been there, so can’t say anything about the place. At least it should be cool in the mountains, which it isn’t here.

It’s true that Hearst used Wyntoon in 1929. Hedda Hopper, whose memory for such dates and events was much sharper than average, recalled the occasion a decade later, a trip that she said did much to restore her shattered nerves at the time. But how close Perkins came to the actual mark is obviously a toss-up at best. Nonetheless, he has no peer for late 1929, no other diarist or memoirist to go him one better—besides the momentary Arthur Brisbane. Under December 9, Perkins produced these lines:

Hearst is back [at San Simeon] from northern California. Many stars of various magnitudes are with him. I see Joan Crawford and her current husband, young Doug Fairbanks [Jr.]. His [last] name is Ullman [Ulman], but a movie star never uses his or her real name. I’ve forgotten what Joan’s is [Lucille LeSueur]. Marion is here, no need to mention that. When Hearst comes she rides in with him [arrives on the hill by the same car]. Clara Bow, Louise Fazenda and many others. Louise looks bad off the screen and worse on it. Joan [Crawford] is not so bad—for an actress. Her eyes seem ready to pop from her head, otherwise she is fair [looking]. Young Doug has a badly puffed head [inflated ego], hates himself like poison.

. . . This bunch of stars must vacate before Christmas, Mrs. Hearst is coming then for a family reunion. Even Marion will have to go. This is

what Uncle Willie (we call Hearst this behind his back) gets for having a plurality of wives.

On that note, except for citing that Thad Joy and Julia Morgan checked on the New Santa Monica work in November and that Morgan alone checked on the 321 Ocean Front job in December, the year 1929 can be bid adieu, with one surprising exception. Morgan wrote to Hearst at San Simeon on December 30 as follows:

Tonight I am leaving for New York—the first trip there since we began on San Simeon [in 1919]. Mr. [Thad] Joy is much better and is at your service, and Mr. [Warren] McClure will arrive for good the middle of January [for on-site drafting at San Simeon]. All three of the young men [Joy, McClure, and Lloyd] who worked at #321 [Ocean Front] have had the same long hard illness. Mr. [F. E.] Lloyd is still in bed. The illness turns out to have been para-typhoid and the Lloyd doctor who was the only thorough one, apparently, thinks the infection possibly was contracted through impure sea water as all of them bathed on the beach. Of course they also drank the Santa Monica faucet water.

That and other news aside, Morgan told Hearst she was anticipating her vacation (a working one of course) “like an infant just out of school.” What neither of them could anticipate, however, is that Thad Joy would never fully recover from the para-typhoid condition, which for him would hang like a curse from the Beach House from then on, effectively ending a promising career.

ALICE HEAD of Hearst’s National Magazine Company, London, was back on the coast at the outset of 1930, her second visit to San Simeon:

This was my first experience of California in mid-winter. It was quite as warm as a normal June day at home and on New Year’s day I bathed in the outdoor bathing pool at the Ranch for more than an hour. . . .

On January 7th we left the Ranch and the next few days were occupied with seeing life in Hollywood. I was taken to a party at Dolores del Rio’s, where I met Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Ramon de

Navarro, and Madame Argentina. There were parties, too, at Marion's beautiful house at Santa Monica, parties where Charlie Chaplin, who seemed always to be in his best form, entertained us excitingly with his sketches and impersonations.

Thus went her first mention of the Santa Monica place. The fall of 1926 (her previous trip) had apparently been a bit too soon for that.

Those "next few days" in the Los Angeles area in 1930 found Hearst writing to Morgan in San Francisco. "I am not going to do much building on the ranch this year and not going to do what we expected to do at Wyntoon." Nothing was said about the Beach House. In turn, neither of them could possibly know that, before the month was out, the core of Wyntoon—Phoebe Apperson Hearst's original castle that Bernard Maybeck had designed about 1900 on the McCloud River, thirty years earlier—would burn to the ground.

Not to be outdone by Miss Head, or by Mr. Hearst, Hayes Perkins had plenty to say about the latter on January 4, 1930:

The great castle on the hilltop is his prize display. I have heard various statements as to the cost of construction here. All material, the steel, the cement, everything comes from San Francisco on a steamer, is then trucked up the long five-mile hill, 1,600 feet above the sea. . . .

His most prized possession is Marion Davies. He hand picked her out of the [Ziegfeld] Follies in New York in 1916. She was a pretty blonde then, and if she has ever dyed her hair it has not been while I have been around Hearst's [place]. She gave herself to him for the publicity he could give her, and sometimes she seems to rue [regret] her bargain. But more of that anon [later]. At least he has paid her well for her favors, for she is reputed to be worth \$5,000,000, and she gold dug him for most of this. Because of the publicity he has given her she has done well in the picture game. She works very hard at her chosen profession, is courteous to all about her, even the humblest. She drinks to excess. She makes up the personnel of the house parties from Hollywood, but international statesmen and other celebrities Hearst

assembles as he will. She seems shallow, superficial, insipid, when you meet her.

It has been said Hearst has two children by Marion, but I don't believe it. His butler, his housekeeper, her maids, Hearst's valet, none of them have any inkling of such children, and if anyone would we who are near them ought to know. Hearst is very jealous of Marion. But he does not extend her the same degree of virtue he expects of her. . . .

Have I mentioned this girl [besides Marion] previous to this? If not, it is as well. Recently, or rather until recently and ever since my arrival here a most enchanting vision of feminine loveliness has always accompanied every party on the hill. She has never been an actress, but got in on her looks. In all the world I have seen no lovelier woman, and she is aware of her beauty. Not so long ago eleven cars came up the hill on one of these parties. She was in the first car, this I know, for I guard the top gate [in the main zoo "pastures" area] to keep back tame birds and animals from running out with the cars. Hearst came in the tenth car, he is always near the rear. Later I saw her on the tennis courts. Clad in shorts and a brassiere, her superb figure showed to its best advantage. Her lustrous black hair hung in masses over her white shoulders and her limbs were as shapely as the marble statues in the gardens. She had everything. This girl shared Hearst's apartment for the night as she always has.

But something has gone wrong, for five doctors and two nurses were summoned hastily in the night, and one doctor and the nurses remained for a week after four doctors had gone. Then she too [the girl] left as unobtrusively as possible, and she has been back no more. The chit-chat about the castle says Hearst has injured her as Fat[ty] Arbuckle did Virginia Rappe [in San Francisco in 1921].

In calling the ill-fated Roscoe Arbuckle "Fat Arbuckle," Perkins was either the world's worst typist or, more likely, the most tasteless of frauds, as we already know. Marion's account in *The Times We Had* of how Hearst was "very, very austere" in all such matters could just as readily be cited here, by way of convincingly refuting Perkins. In any case, all melodramatics aside, Perkins said on January 15 of his efforts

on the 4th that they were “rather long” but that he’d “had to check up on Hearst.” The wayward, often pathetic and even paranoid scribe also said, “As he is the sole cause for us being here, he is our chief interest.”

With regard to the 415 and 321 jobs at Santa Monica, 321 was finished about this time, early in 1930. The 415 effort—New Santa Monica, the larger of the two—continued apace into the fall of 1930. A salient detail amid its ledger entries is that starting in August 1929, a certain “Guest House” gained identity. (Apart from the ledgers per se, such a building had already been mentioned to Hearst by Thad Joy on July 19 that year.) Several ledger notations for September 1929 also indicated a Guest House; but then there’s nothing further about it. Exactly where on the Beach House property it was is unclear, although Joy’s message in July spoke of the “sea wall” the new building would require. But evidently the Guest House fell within the realm of 415, not in that of the humbler 321. Marion recalled in 1951/1975 that there had been “my house [415] and then another guest house and then a lawn of about sixty feet, on the right [the north side].” She described “the left-hand side”—the south side—as having “two extra houses and the staff house.”

Back to Perkins to guide us, however oddly, imperfectly, even crazily at times through still more weeks or more of 1930, there being so little else to rely on. This quasi-historical passage appears under February 28:

Hearst is with us again. For once he failed to bring Marion, and this we can understand. With him are Calvin Coolidge and wife [Grace], Governor [James] Rolph of this state and many other notables. Coolidge is not much to look at from a distance, but on approaching him one realizes here is a man. Quiet, observant, always smoking, he sees everything. His wife is one of the most gracious women I have ever seen, and Hearst could never flaunt a mistress in the face of this woman, one who has been first lady of the land.

Sunny Jim Rolph was still mayor of San Francisco at this juncture; he wasn't elected Governor until November 1930. The vacationing Coolidges reached San Simeon on February 25 and didn't leave until the morning of March 3. Marion Davies, not Millicent Hearst, was on hand for the Coolidges' week-long visit; the Perkins account stands alone in omitting Marion. Perkins kept plugging just the same. This next passage appeared under March 6, 1930:

The Coolidges, a prince of some country or other in Europe, the politicians are all gone, and Hearst accompanied them to Los Angeles. He has returned [to San Simeon] with his harem, and everything is normal again. It is ridiculous to see this man posing as the champion of law and order and of human rights when he runs in booze by the carload. Two cars came in yesterday, but it no longer causes comment among the crew. We take it as the regular thing. I wonder where he gets it?

And then this passage by Perkins for a date not quite three weeks hence, March 23:

Hearst is commuting back and forth to and from Hollywood with astonishing regularity these days. For companions he has the movie stars and their hangers-on, the cake eaters, parlor poodles and lounge lizards who hang on the fringe of society, crime or anything that offers a living. There are gigolos and male prostitutes, which is more like it. One had to see for himself to realize just what they are like. This time there were thirty-five in the party. All drunken, like the row [the noisy people] in the old-time mining camps when I was a kid.

In his entry for April 10, Perkins contradicted what Hearst had told Morgan on January 9. Sure enough, her operating expenses for 1930 kept San Simeon far in the lead over all her other jobs. And thus chalk one up for Perkins this time:

Fortunately Hearst has not reduced his crew for this year. Instead he has put on many men recently, beginning operations as if he never felt the depression crushing most business men these days. That is the fine

thing about Hearst. One can condone his faults when he has so much good in him. I can't expect him to be good like me, anyhow. The old man is beginning to show the result of his debauchery. His face is all blotchy this spring, and he has a pasty, unhealthy look in his complexion that denotes fast living.

Thad Joy had recovered enough, albeit solely in the short term, to put in a full week in mid-April at the Beach House. Julia Morgan was there for a single day later in the month. Joy was there by himself once in May but then never again in 1930. Morgan did the once-a-month honors in June, July, August, and September as part of closing out New Santa Monica, its "Total Cost to Date" in her ledger standing at nearly \$8,200 (equal to \$102,000 today) in drafting-room hours, travel, and other operating costs. This time, Hearst would not be paying these in full until 1933, the same ledger reveals.

Hayes Perkins rode (or rides) again, ostensibly on May 11, 1930, at San Simeon:

The Baron has been here two weeks now. April 29th he celebrated his 67th birthday. A big crowd, chiefly Hollywood, were here to help him, but there were some notables from the outside. It was just a big bust [drinking spree], with oceans of illicit liquor and a great display of nudity. Marion gave we employees a special running of her latest picture, "The Floradora Girl" in the new theatre [in Casa Grande, the main Castle building]. As far as the theatre is concerned, it is easily the finest I have ever seen. One sinks in the soft carpet a half inch, the soft Morris chairs seem to enfold one in their arms. Silk tapestries said to cost \$45 per yard adorn the walls, and the ceiling has been done by specially imported artists who worked here for weeks decorating it. For months an army of artisans have been here adorning this ornate hall, and it is the last word in luxury and beauty.

It is a marvel that Hearst allows us to share the pictures with him. He is generous to a fault, but the men don't appreciate it enough to behave when they come in. Just a gang of human hogs. Chewing gum and sticking it under chairs, smoking, though this is forbidden, cat-

calling and talking, it will be but a little while until we who try to act decently will be barred with them.

In this picture [*The Floradora Girl*] Marion posed as the innocent country girl who scorned to act as mistress to a wealthy man. I was sitting just behind she and Hearst, and he was petting her while this part was displayed. She was half shot at that, and playfully slapped him as he roughly drew her to him. More from derision than any other reason we cheered her to the echo. Her face flushed with pleasure, she believed we meant it. I clapped my hands until they were sore, she deserved it after brazening it out in front of a picture like that. Afterward we had a wonderful picture of the Russian Revolution, done in color. Marion and Jean Harlow were on a toot, both of them half seas over, almost maudlin.

Hearst is generous to a fault, even if he is a libertine. I suppose I should tone down my statements in this journal, but what else could I write? I remember [Frederic] Girnau who so recently got eight years at Los Angeles for saying less than this, and I might get more. You see, I can't prove it.

The screening preceded the public release of *Floradora* by nearly three weeks; Perkins deserves points for veracity on that score. But less so does he for describing the décor of the new theater at San Simeon. Giant caryatids and their surmounting corbels, not the ceiling itself, were the features most emphasized. Theodore Van der Loo and other regulars of Julia Morgan's (mainly men from the San Francisco Bay Area) were the "imported artists"—yet their plaster-of Paris castings that prompted Perkins's portrayal weren't finished until much later in 1930. Regardless, such workmanship as this is quite likely what stood behind much that comprised the Beach House interiors. But with regard to the scalawag Frederic Girnau, who defamed Clara Bow in Los Angeles, Perkins was still a year too early, not to mention lamely and foolishly kind toward the criminal that Girnau was.

The Floradora Girl was mainly what inspired Ilka Chase's words about the Beach House, published in her memoir *Past Imperfect* in

1942 (a book later deplored by Marion), from which vantage point Miss Chase was looking back in this instance to 1930:

There was a beach sequence in *The Floradora Girl*, most of which was done in the studio, but one afternoon we went to the shores of the Pacific for the reverse shots. The scenes were done in front of Marion's house, and the close-ups were taken in the pool, for that is one of the peculiarities of the cinematic rich: they build their houses twenty feet from the high-tide mark of the Pacific Ocean, and between the house and the ocean they put a swimming pool.

Marion was the perfect hostess, with buffet tables heaped with food and drinks set out when the sun had gone, and she showed a handful of us who were interested through the house. The cellars were particularly entrancing, as shining and well kept as those ads for oil burners, where you see a happy American family playing ping-pong and serving toasted-cheese sandwiches in what was, till the advent of the oil furnace, just a grimy old basement. The Hearst-Davies mansion has a system of oil burners and waterpipes to knock your eye out, and even Marion, to whom they must have been an old story, looked at them in awe and murmured, "T-t-t-terrific, isn't it?" She has an engaging way of blinking when she stutters, and though you think sternly of lilies of the field and the worthy poor, it is hard not to feel a warm affection, pried with only the gentlest laughter. She also has a huge bedroom facing the ocean, with a bathroom at either end. . . .

While we were working on the picture I dined once or twice at the Santa Monica beach house. It abounds in portraits of Marion in all her roles, and there are also portraits by the Messrs. Holbein and Rembrandt, but no one looks at them much, being more engrossed in pictures by Metro [MGM], Paramount, and RKO, which invariably run after dinner. Mr. Hearst watches them too, surrounded by movie actresses and pansy decorators, but he has been known to commit acts of *lese majeste* [imperiousness] and leave in the middle of the second reel. Once, when in search of surcease myself, I stumbled over him in the pantry, drinking a glass of milk and reading the next morning's *Herald-Examiner*. It may not sound like much of an improvement [over the movie], but at least the *Examiner* was his own baby.

If the paper was truly the next morning's *Los Angeles Examiner*, Hearst would have been looking at the bulldog, as the earliest edition was called. His evening paper in Los Angeles in 1930 was simply the *Herald*, as it had been for years; it didn't become the *Herald-Express* until 1931. The *Herald-Examiner* was a name coined well after Hearst's death, occasioned by the merger of the *Examiner* and the *Herald-Express* in 1962. Ilka Chase can be forgiven her error; but whether she actually meant that Hearst was looking at his evening *Herald* at that moment in 1930 is impossible to say.

IN THE WAKE OF Thad Joy's recent week in Santa Monica, and before he was there for the last time in late May, Hearst wrote to him from San Simeon on May 19, 1930:

I do not think we should wait any longer to have the marble steps put in the pool at the ranch.

There is no necessity for having a new design.

The marble steps at Miss Davies' pool are entirely satisfactory. I would like to have four of these put in our pool up here, and all you have to do is to order duplicates made by the same people who made the steps at Miss Davies' pool.

The pool Hearst meant in his paramour's case was the one at 1700 Lexington Road, Beverly Hills, or the one at 415 Ocean Front, Santa Monica. Joy knew both settings well (and unlike us would have known exactly which of them Hearst meant).

Hearst's innate sense of chivalry, his insistence on treating Marion in the queenliest way, not to mention in the most paternal or at times smothering way, is typified by the message sent the next day in 1930—Tuesday, May 20—to H. O. Hunter in Los Angeles. Bill Hunter, as he was better known, was the secretary to George Young, publisher of Hearst's powerful morning paper in the Southland, the *Los Angeles Examiner*. Hunter was also Willicombe's second-in-command as

needed, the backup man for moments when the “Colonel” got time off or otherwise needed Hunter to assume his duties for the greater good of the Chief. Here’s what Hunter received from one of Colonel Willicombe’s clerical helpers on May 20, a Tuesday:

Will you kindly have the following guests invited for Miss Davies; (to be telephoned).

“Miss Marion Davies is entertaining with a formal dinner party, Thursday evening, May 22, at 7:30, at her beach home, for the Baron de Rothschild. She would like very much to have you as her guest. Also, she would like to have you as her guest at the ranch this week-end.”

According to chicken-scratch notations made on a copy of the list, these people accepted: Diane Ellis, Eddie Kane, Eileen Percy, Gene Markey, Lenore Bushman (daughter of Francis X. Bushman), Flo Ziegfeld and Billie Burke, Cedric Gibbons, Julanne Johnson, Virginia Valli, Colleen Moore, Marilyn Miller, Betty Bronson, Richard and Jessica Barthelmess, Josephine Dunn, Charles Farrell, and John Gilbert and his wife (currently Ina Claire).

Others had “issues,” as we might say today. They included Charlie Chaplin (“he will call back”); Dorothy Mackaill (“call at 12”); Sam and Frances Goldwyn (“sorry, previous engagement”); Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks (“working on picture can’t make it”); the Harold Lloyds (“ill”); Billie Dove and Howard Hughes (“will call tomorrow”); Irving Berlin (“no ans[wer] Beverly Wilshire [Hotel]”); Ethel Davies (“will call tomorrow”); and so on. A major Hollywood event in the offing, by any standard.

One screen idol of the period left more exact details for us, courtesy of her secretary:

Miss Gloria Swanson has accepted dinner invitation for Thursday night [at the Beach House] and said she would very much like to bring along Miss Virginia Bowker who is her house guest. Please advise.

The reply from Willicombe's office came promptly the next day, Wednesday the 21st: "OK for Miss Swanson to bring along Miss Virginia Bowker." Another message from on high said, "OK for Dolores del Rio to bring an escort to party. Please ask name of escort."

On that same Wednesday—May 21, 1930—the Willicombe staff asked that Bill Hunter "kindly invite to the party Thursday night the following." This last-minute, supplementary list was aimed at Edgar and Ruth Selwyn, Bill Emerick, Edmund Goulding, Charlie Lederer, Matt Moore, Billy Haines and Jimmy Shields, and Adolphe Menjou.

"Will you kindly send me the names of acceptances to the dinner party, also names of acceptances to ranch this week-end?" So asked the same underling of Willicombe's in as formal, as organized, as lengthy an approach to such matters as researchers are apt to see in their archival wanderings. But the Beach House was a big place. So was San Simeon; and the party the next day in Santa Monica, followed by the "week end" (the preferred two-word form then) were slated to be big events, both of them. With friends like these, who would ever need Hayes Perkins again?

The sobering truth is . . . *all of us do for now*. For there's still precious little to rely on in getting a year like 1930 in better focus and perspective. Besides, Hearst and his entourage would soon be heading to Europe again, having been there in the summer of 1928 but not in 1929.

First, though, more word from on high—from all the way at the top, as in Hearst to Morgan on June 2, 1930:

Please hold up everything at the Beach House until the pool [and] the part of pavement that is sinking and the marble front are all fixed. This should all be done while I am East [in New York and then in Europe] and later we can take up the pantry and the hothouse and other things.

Never mind that Carpenter Bros. had long been out of the picture: Santa Monica, with its chronically poor foundations and the black stain it had put on Thad Joy, could be a problem child. It would remain one in many ways. Morgan would soon be telling Hearst, by cable to Europe (he and the party had sailed in late June), that the Beach House's problem was one of "dry rot" behind the marble he'd mentioned on June 2. She would therefore be using concrete to rectify things, as should have been done by Carpenter Bros. or even by George Loorz or H. H. Benedict or Frank Hellenthal. What a nightmarish mess—the Murphy's Law of Hearst's palace-building efforts.

DURING HEARST'S TRIP ABROAD in 1930, smack dab in the middle of summer, Hayes Perkins had yet another crisis to relate, this entry on August 1:

A great brush fire this week, burning over some 2,000 acres before it was finally headed [extinguished]. Hearst was gone, but his missus [Millicent Hearst] was here, and Bill, his [second] son. The twins too [David and Randy, now fourteen], and they all turned out and helped like men. . . .

Fortune favored us in that The Cuckoo [Carey Baldwin, the head zookeeper], was in San Diego. He is cultivating Mrs. [Belle] Benchley, curator of the zoo at that place [the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park]. . . .

Had Baldwin been here he would have run hog wild. [Warren] McClure, the architect, had come down in the pastures with me, and we figured it out, to backfire if possible.

Mac McClure, a mostly self-taught draftsman, on par with Bill Flannery and about the same age (b. 1897 to Flannery's and George Loorz's 1898), gets "architect" billing at times in the Hearst annals. Evidently it was well deserved. As Loorz once said, no one else understood Hearst's ideas and passions and architectural ideas better than Mac did, perhaps not even Julia Morgan. Mac McClure, though,

had none of her formal training, none of her worldly background, certainly none of her no-nonsense business skills.

Morgan had better news for Hearst on August 16, a letter she sent to New York, whence it would go forward to him in Europe:

Your cabled instruction as to replacing wood basement stud walls [at the Beach House] where opened up, with concrete instead of wood, has been followed, and yesterday the last concrete was poured—giving you a concrete wall under the columns nearby along the whole [ocean and swimming pool] frontage, including those carrying the third story sun room. The marble is being replaced, and the premises should be in good shape by the end of the month.

The dust from the dirt road in front has been excessively bad this summer. I have been wondering if the dirt spaces could not be oiled. It would be so much less in cost than continual repaintingings. . . .

The castle model [for Wyntoon, where fire had struck in January] is very pretty—like a little dream.

No responses from Hearst exist on any of these points. In fact, the Julia Morgan Collection at Cal Poly, the source of this mid-August letter, contains nothing further on Santa Monica or the Beach House in 1930.

Hayes Perkins was at his Underwood again on September 5, 1930. We can do better than that, though, can get more primary with our sources. The Morgan office in San Francisco started a new job ledger in late September. The subject? Hearst's Los Angeles Examiner Building, completed in 1915, worked on further by Morgan in the early twenties, and now ready for more work: the usual Hearst pattern of giving at least intermittent attention to his more important properties, if not even greater attention. Hearst was still abroad in late September. In fact, his recent ostracism by France was still in the news. The expulsion marked the beginning of the ultra-controversial side of his life; up till then he'd more often been a barnyard variety of jet-setter bad boy, except when Perkins was doing the talking.

The new ledger for the Examiner Building contains a first entry of the usual kind: “Travel Miss Morgan,” with “\$60” marked alongside, an enticing amount during the financial downturn that, by late 1930, was becoming the full-blown Depression we’ve long heard about, the one that reached its nadir between 1931 and Herbert Hoover’s dreary exit from the White House in 1933. Perkins himself, lucky to have employment of whatever strange, unprecedented kind, would soon be saying in 1930:

Business very bad. Men walking the roads everywhere, manufacturing plants closing down, it looks like a hard winter.

THE NEW JOB for Morgan on the Examiner Building in Los Angeles would run through the fall and right into the winter, comprising by December about \$300 in drafting and travel expenses. The job would continue well into 1931.

And thus back to Herodotus Hayes for October 24, 1930:

Hearst is back again. He does not look well. He is railing on Hoover, who has deeply insulted him. As Hearst backed Hoover for president, he feels the latter should in some way pay for that support. Rumor saith Hoover and wife have been invited here to meet Princess Marion. Louis B. Mayer carried the invitation to the White House, and Hoover almost chased Mayer out of the place. As Marion means more to Hearst than all else he has, he is much peeved, and threatens dire vengeance. So great is his fascination for this woman he has built a theatre in Los Angeles and another in San Francisco, naming both of them the “Marion Davies.” In every way he has publicized her, and tries to force his liason [*sic*] on the public as [something] decent and honorable in the sight of all men. Nothing Hoover does is right now, just as with Baldwin toward me.

Following Hearst’s expulsion from France, he’d announced in Oakland on October 17, “I am going to board a train and go down to my

ranch and find my little hideaway on my little hilltop at San Simeon.” It was through words like these that Imperial Hearst began losing stature in the public’s eye. The sentiments against him would become more heated and hateful—gradually, unstopably—from here on. And to think that as recently as May 1930, when the first public issue of stock in behalf of Hearst Consolidated Publications hit the open market, “Hearst” was still an admired name, even a revered name—a wildly far cry from its derision in 1941 through the parody that Orson Welles delivered with such devastating effect in *Citizen Kane*.

As to the spurned Louis B. Mayer, he’d visited the White House twice in 1929, not as the stooge portrayed by Perfidious Perkins, as Hearst might have called the madcap diarist, but as an honored guest (Mayer was supposedly offered the ambassadorship to Turkey before Hoover’s inauguration). Mayer would soon make a third visit to the White House, early in 1931.

But as to the Marion Davies theaters in Los Angeles and San Francisco—they’re just another Perkinism. No such theater existed in either city; moreover, Hearst had no theater so-named in *any* city. His only property of that kind was the Cosmopolitan Theater on Columbus Circle in New York, designed by Joseph Urban, the same art director who lent his sensual touch to the Cosmopolitan Bungalow at MGM in Culver City.

Perkins kept going, hapless one minute, fairly attuned the next. He had this to say on November 28, 1930, the day after Thanksgiving:

Still on the hill, but will be gone in a day or two. . . .

. . . In Los Angeles we [Perkins alone] will have a look-see at what there is, for one may find something despite the crisis in the business world. I’m not particular what it is so long as it brings in a little.

He followed up on this new theme, this temporary new direction on December 7, 1930—a date mistakenly rendered in the five volumes

of the Perkins diaries as December 7, 1961. The all-time Freudian slip!
For what its retrospective stature is worth, the entry goes like this:

Left the hill on November 30, came into San Luis Obispo and stayed the night, then came on to Los Angeles.

Perkins, or whoever did his typing for him years afterward, got back on properly clever and convincing track in time for the entry of December 17, 1930:

I have been down to Redlands and vicinity [east of Los Angeles] to see Dave and Lewis Perkins my cousins. . . .

With Dave I hiked round the snowy hills at the foot of San Gorgonio, southern California's highest mountain.

And then this on December 24, with no hint of its having been altered or written anew, thirty years later:

Just another Christmas Eve. They come and go, and mean nothing to me now.

Perkins followed a week later, on the 31st, with his final entry for 1930:

New Year's Eve, and the streets [of Los Angeles] are filled with people acting foolishly. I'm supposed to get a thrill out of all this noise and folly, but I don't. Letters have reached me by the dozen, but all these will have to go [without answering], now that I am adrift. I am lonely and alone in this big town.

He didn't walk or hitchhike or take the trolley the fifteen miles or so out to Santa Monica to see if anyone there might give him shelter for the night, or perhaps for even longer, pious San Simeonite that he was.

He seemed not to know about the Beach House at all.