

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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For Mrs. Hoover

Stanford's Hoover Tower, long one of the most impressive landmarks at the university, honors a famous former resident and U.S. president. Now a new YWCA center is planned as a memorial to his remarkable wife, Lou Henry Hoover, who was as adept at dodging bullets as in staging White House dinners.

With a current \$302,400 fund-raising campaign to build the Lou Henry Hoover Memorial YWCA (for Northern Santa Clara County and Southern San Mateo County), attention is being refocused on the woman who was more than just a first lady, but a remarkable woman who called Stanford University her home.

But previous to the years after her marriage to Herbert Hoover, who became president of the United States, and his wife the first lady of the White House, Mrs. Hoover, as Miss Lou Henry, lived in Monterey and taught school here. The family home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Henry, at that time was at the southwest corner of Pacific and Scott (Jackson) streets. The house is still standing, although it went out of the hands of the family many years ago when the Henry's built the rustic home at 600 Martin St. and resided there until their deaths.

Lou Henry's school room was in the old school which stood on Pacific street where the superintendent's office is now. That old building burned one night and Father Ramon Mestres, pastor of San Carlos Church, offered the parish hall for the use of the city until a new school was built. Miss Henry and the priest became very good friends and the future "first lady" asked the father one day, if, when she married, he would perform the ceremony. He gave his promise then and there and fulfilled it on Feb. 10, 1899, in the rectory of San Carlos Church in Monterey. The reception was held in the old house on Pacific street. The next day the Hoovers were on shipboard on their way to China - and to the Boxer Rebellion.

Mrs. Hoover was born in Waterloo, Iowa, on March 29, 1874, within 50 miles of the birthplace of Herbert Hoover. She was the daughter of Charles and Florence Henry and she showed an immediate zest for living. About 10 years later, the Henry's moved out West, where Henry assisted in establishing a bank in Whittier.

In 1890 they moved to Monterey, where Henry organized the bank of Monterey, where he was president for many years.

In 1894, Miss Henry entered Leland Stanford Junior University. Her goal was a rare one for a woman in those days: to seek a degree in geology.

Herbert Clark Hoover, a senior in engineering and a member of Stanford's first freshman class, met Miss Henry during the course of studies.

Hoover wrote in his "Memoirs" that he was attracted to Lou Henry "by her whimsical mind, her blue eyes, and a broad, grinning smile that came from an Irish ancestor."

We now quote from an article that appeared in Peninsula Living: The young engineering student was graduated in 1895 and soon began the first of a countless series of long trips. Miss Henry was graduated in 1898. The two kept up a regular correspondence between visits.

"While in Australia, young Hoover (then only 24) received an impressive job offer: a post as chief engineer for the Chinese government mines at a salary of \$20,000 a year. Hoover accepted. Then, without waiting a moment. Hoover cabled Miss Henry and asked her to marry him. She quickly cabled back "yes."

There appeared in the Monterey newspaper in 1898, a news item concerning the organization of the Monterey chapter of the American Red Cross announcing that a group of young women in the community had met for that purpose on June 7, at the residence of Mrs. Charles Henry, with Miss Lou Henry presiding as temporary chairman. At the meeting Miss Margaret Jacks was elected president and Lou Henry, treasurer.

So, we see, Monterey has a great affection for former President Herbert Hoover and his gracious wife, Lou Henry Hoover.

When completed, the Lou Henry Hoover Memorial YWCA will occupy a two-acre site on Alma street in Palo Alto. It is estimated that the building will cost \$302,400.

The story announcing the memorial was written by Herman Wong for Peninsula Living.